

February 23, 2012

Dear Interested Participant,

The citizen-led Boise Forest Coalition is regrouping and moving to a new geography for its next project area. We invite you to participate in this collaborative approach to craft sound forest management for multiple resource and community benefits.

The west side of the Emmett Ranger District is proposed as the next area for the Coalition to consider recommendations for Boise National Forest activities. The actual project area and project components would be determined by the Coalition through a series of meetings and field trips, working in consultation with U.S. Forest Service staff.

The Boise Forest Coalition formed in September 2010 and worked through consensus to form recommendations for a forest restoration and recreation project in the Clear Creek watershed on the Lowman Ranger District. These recommendations were submitted to the district in August 2011. The recommendations formed the basis for a proposed action from the district and the Forest Service continues to analyze the project through the National Environmental Policy Act requirements.

More information on the coalition efforts is available at:

<http://www.idahoforestpartners.org/planning-and-organizational-resources.html>

More information on the Boise National Forest NEPA planning is available at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=37159>

The Boise National Forest project introduction for Clear Creek describes it as:

"This collaborative project proposes vegetation restoration in low- to mid- elevation forests, fuel reduction in WUI areas, mountain bike trail construction, road closures/decommissioning and aquatic organism passage elements within 2,630 acres of a 22,850 acre project area."

The next project would also be crafted according to the resource needs of the project area and the Coalition members' interests. The project area being considered on the west side of the Emmett district runs north from Banks to the west of Highway 55, to the north of the Snowbank Inventoried Roadless Area and west to Third Fork and the Washington County line. The potential project area includes parts of Gem, Valley and Boise counties, although the scale is not pre-determined. Additional project areas might also be considered.

The next meeting of the Coalition will be in Emmett in mid-March, with date and location also to be determined. Members of the Emmett Ranger District and representatives of the Boise National Forest Supervisor, Cecilia Seesholtz, will be present. While members of the Boise National Forest staff do not vote in the

Coalition or direct it, they are partners in the process through providing information and ideas. Some citizen participants in the Clear Creek project will continue to work on the next project area and some new members of the coalition are being sought for the new project. Bob Rainville from Common Ground has agreed to continue to participate as a facilitator for the group.

The desired outcomes for the first meeting are to recruit new members to expand the collaborative effort and to agree on the watershed or watersheds where new project recommendations will be considered. The previous work of the coalition in the Clear Creek project will be reviewed and an update on the NEPA work will be presented by Lowman District staff. The goals, structure and procedures of the coalition will be reviewed and modified as appropriate. A preliminary timeline and schedule will also be considered.

We, the members of the Coalition steering committee, county commissioners from the proposed area and Boise forest staff, encourage you to participate in the meetings or to remain on the e-mail list to be informed of the efforts. Please let us know if you would like to stay on the mailing list and if you can attend a meeting in mid-March.

Sincerely,

Bob Rainville, Common Ground, facilitator
Rick Brenneman, Woody Biomass Utilization Partnership, steering committee
John McCarthy, The Wilderness Society, steering committee
Pam Elkovich, Trout Unlimited, steering committee
Mike Edwards, Southwest Idaho Mountain Bike Association, steering committee
Sharon Pratt, Gem County Commissioner
Jamie Anderson, Boise County Commissioner
Gordon Cruickshank, Valley County Commissioner
Paul Bryant, Boise National Forest
John Erickson, Emmett District Ranger