

October 15, 2014

The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners met for a regular session on October 15, 2014 in the Eureka Annex of the Lincoln County Courthouse. Present are Commissioner Tony Berget, Commissioner Mike Cole, Commissioner Greg Larson, Executive Assistant Bill Bischoff and Clerk and Recorder Tammy Lauer.

10:00 AM: Commissioner Berget **opened the meeting** with the Pledge of Allegiance.

10:00 AM: **Eureka Resource Group:** Members of the ERG that have come today are Scott Mattheis, Josh Letcher, Steve Curtis, Don Truman, George Williams and Kurt West. Commissioner Berget began by telling the group about a report that the commissioners have been reading on the Wild and Scenic Rivers. Scott talked about how the ERG would like to be involved in the process of the Forest Plan objections. They want to be an advisory group and help the commissioners with some questions and talking points for the Forest Plan. The commissioners said that they appreciate all the help they can get. Commissioner Larson said that he is trying to contact the Idaho counties and get them involved as well. Scott said that they have been in contact with some people in Idaho but agreed that more would be better. Scott said that they are not against Wilderness but want the Forest Service to abide by their own rules. Don said an example is the Ten Lakes Wilderness area that had been watched for wilderness in 1977 however it was too busy to make it a wilderness area. They slipped it in as a study area in 1987. The uses are still too many to make it a wilderness area. He feels that the Ten Lakes study was never intended to be finished so it would be locked away by defacto. He thinks the Forest Service should have to follow the same rules as everyone else. Commissioner Berget said that the report he has been reading makes that more evident. He read a couple of examples in the report that are not acceptable and contradicts the things that we have been told. Scott said that the Forest Service has a lot of different names for wilderness now which is another way to sneak it past the public. Steve said that it is important that no one wander off on their own but that they group together so that no one gets caught in the Forest Service diversion tactics. Their objective is to put together a large group that will be a body to be reconned with. The restrictive manner of the Wild and Scenic rivers can be very scary because they can close roads and we simplify it too much. He feels that the battle can be won if we can hold their feet to the fire and make them follow the rules they have laid out. Josh said they are taking revenue from the county as well with the new restrictions. He said he has heard that they are promising 80,000 board feet but only budgeted for 40,000. Commissioner Cole said the county told the Forest Service that we would need 125M board feet to bring us to even. Don said that there are plenty of examples of the Forest Service not logging an area and then a fire destroys it and the cost is extremely high. Commissioner Larson said he couldn't agree more. He said the new laws are usually just to restrict access under the guise of wilderness. Josh had an analogy of the Forest Service not allowing logging for fire risk reduction: Allowing a drunk driver to go free because he will sober up sometime. Scott said that he isn't saying that some of the areas shouldn't be Wild and Scenic but the public should have had the opportunity to provide input and the guidelines should be followed. One of the criteria is outstanding remarkable value, 728 streams on KNF were checked as free flowing, they just threw out the bar and didn't follow their own qualifications. Jim Voyles said the wilderness was fought and won but they gained nothing because they just renamed it 5A, which was more restrictive and doesn't have definable boundaries or definable rules. "Conformative Uses" are changing as well. Snowmobiles and Chainsaws are non-conformative but started out as conformative years ago. Josh said it isn't about following rules or science is it personal opinions and if we follow the rules they will not win. ERG tries to follow all the rules and have done very well so far but the Forest Service does not follow the rules and will say anything to get a warm and fuzzy feeling from the people to get a "W" on the map. Commissioner Berget said he feels that everyone in this room is on the same page and he thinks they should get their information together because the only effective answer may be a lawsuit. Fay has stated that the Forest Service met with Lincoln County 81 times. Which may be true but none of those meetings were about the Forest Plan content. Most of the talk was just the where it was in the process but not about the content of the plan. Commissioner Cole said that the group should all gather and put the ideas on a white board to get a consensus of what the strategy will be going forward to fight this. Steve said that "coordination" is the only thing that is defined in the law that makes the process workable. He feels that we are still in the process because of the objections that have been made by local government and ERG. Kurt said NEPA should have contacted people to let them know that they were changing the process. He feels that the coordination was set up to stay out of lawsuits and was created with good intentions. Commissioner Berget said that the commissioners will keep the Eureka Resource Group informed of any information they receive and they will continue to meet and work on this process together.

11:00 AM: **Tim Thier, Wildlife Biologist, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks:** Tim is the Wildlife Biologist for the North part of Lincoln County. Tim started by talking about lion hunting rules and the lion management quotas. He talked about the fact that the older cats will stay higher in the mountains and the younger cats will be the ones that come into the populated areas. Tim said that the wolves have decreased significantly in our area. Coyotes are down as well, maybe due to the wolves. He feels that the numbers are leveling out on both wolves and coyotes. Commissioner Larson talked about the mule deer numbers being lower as well. Tim thought it could be due to fewer fires, less clear-cuts and an increase in whitetail deer. He talked about some theories that people have about the mule deer vs whitetail deer. Commissioner Cole asked if there have been a lot of deer loss in our area due to disease. Tim said not in our area like on the other side of the mountains. Tim talked about ticks and some of the effects they can have on the deer populations. Commissioner Berget asked about the grizzly bears. Tim said he deals with grizzlies all the time and feels that the numbers are increasing. He said they are working on de-listing the grizzlies. Tim said that so far this fall no bears have been moved out of the area. He has been working hard with people encouraging the electric fencing, which is very effective. Commissioner Cole asked about the project that they are going to look at tomorrow. Time showed the commissioners on the map an area that was given to the FWP from the Corp of Engineers for wildlife. The deer and the elk use the area heavily because it is very thick in there. However, if a fire broke out they would lose the whole area.

They had a plan for thinning the area three years ago but it was too expensive. Then they received a grant to pay half and the FWP will pay their half of \$41,000. Meanwhile the price of logs has increased. They put the job out for bid hoping to get some revenue from it. People in West Kootenai won the bid and will thin the land and use the logs for various purposes. It looks as though it will be a break-even at this time. Tomorrow at 1:00 PM Tim will be giving a tour of the area and explaining the procedure and why it is necessary. Commissioner Larson would like to see an analysis of how this process works out from an economic standpoint. Tim said he would be doing a report on the job.

1:30 PM: **Indian Springs RV Park North**, 68 lots, Sec 2, T36N, R27W, Public Hearing: Lisa Oedewaldt, County Planner, presented the subdivision conditions and recommendations and then opened for public comment. Marc from APEC Engineering is present for questions as well. Two letters were received from adjacent land owners and both were concerned with the developer not contacting them properly. Cheryl Clark is the only member of the public present. She received notification from another land owner. She has been told that there is no easement existing. Lisa said that would have to be proven by the developer prior to approval. Cheryl said that the creek was an issue before. Lisa will check on that. Commissioner Cole is concerned about the intent to irrigate by Indian Creek. Lisa said right now they are on public water but that statement is for the future if required. Cheryl is also concerned about GLID taxing the RV South and the 3 lots in front of it. She stated that GLID is not willing to listen to her protests. She wishes to be notified of any future plans. Public Hearing is closed at 2:00 pm. Planning Board recommends approval of the subdivision.

2:00 PM: **The Hills Subdivision**, release of Irrevocable Letter of Credit: In 2006 this subdivision was filed with a \$42,000 letter of credit for roads. This lien was never released so the commissioners need to sign a formal release. Commissioner Cole move to sign the lien release and it carried.

2:15 PM: The commissioners read **the minutes of the October 8, 2014 meeting**. Commissioner Cole moved to approve the minutes as amended and it carried.

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Anthony Berget, Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Tammy D Lauer, Clerk of the Board