

COMMISSIONERS APPROVAL

IMAN JFR

CHILCOTT [Signature]

FOSS S [Signature]

STOLTZ [Signature]

KANENWISHER [Signature]

Members Present.....Commissioner J.R. Iman, Commissioner Greg Chilcott, Commissioner Suzy Foss, Commissioner Ron Stoltz and Commissioner Matt Kanenwisher

Date.....December 1, 2011

► Minutes: Glenda Wiles

► The Board met at 1:30 p.m. to address a public request to discuss natural resource management in Ravalli County. Commissioner Chilcott was not present for this meeting. The Board indicated they wanted to capture the narrative of this meeting within the minutes.

Commissioner Foss indicated she met with a group of citizens, which included Mark Shepherd, Bill Grasser and Robin Conner, relative to the natural resource management issues in Ravalli County and decided the best way to bring this issue forward is to have them meet with all Commissioners.

Mark Shepherd stated he has lived here for the last 24 years He has concerns over what the Forest Service has not done in our valley. Due to the lack of logging, forest fires have occurred and now watersheds are polluted as well as creating a negative impact on wildlife. The lack of logging has affected Mark as he is raising three children on his own and does not want to uproot his children in order to seek other employment. He wants to take the forest back and utilize the natural resources available to community.

Bill Grasser owns the Lost Horse Ski area, and is concerned about the “death of Darby”. On his way here today he counted thirty vacant buildings due to the lack of logging. In 1967 there were four active saw mills. Now there is nothing, and the Forest is overgrown. The fires seem to be the only way to keep the forest from being overgrown, but he feels there is a better way. He would like to see good forest management, and have the county help the citizens in regard to the relations with the Forest Service. Bill stated this is our forest, it does not belong to the Forest Service.

Robin Conner of R& R Helicopter Logging Company stated her business owns three helicopters that are currently flying in other states. Due to the lack of forest products, local businesses have to go out of state and the wives are left here to raise the families. She stated this meeting is not just for logging, but about natural resources. She would like to see some coordination efforts

between government and agency noting she has attended some of the coordination training. She felt this is not just an economic issue but a social and human issue.

Public Comment was now called for:

Mike Jeffords president of the Ravalli County Off Road Users Association stated they promote access to the Forest Lands. He addressed the Rye Creek Drainage (Darby Lumber Lands) in regard to road usage and how they have attempted to work with Forest Service for the past three years. Use of roads provides great recreation for residents and tourists which then help local businesses. He stated there is only one dedicated trail in West Fork (Overwitch Trail) thus Darby Lumber Lands are desirable. He would like the Commissioners to help them in making the roads available for public travel.

Rick O'Brien, Executive Director of Chamber of Commerce addressed economic development, free enterprise and their support of the natural resources. Currently the Chamber is negotiating with Montana Rail Link (MRL) for rail use south of Hamilton to Darby. He indicated returning that service to Darby will allow commercial shipments to and from Darby. He too would like the Commissioners to consider assisting them as they work with MRL.

Betty Swift spoke about her husband Bernie and how they were involved in the timber process. She is pleased this group is coming together noting that mining and agriculture are two important economic industries. She felt there is a lot of timber going to waste. In the 1970's 40% of the economy in the valley was from timber.

Charles Wissenbeck used to work at Darby Lumber and at the time they were the best jobs in the valley. He stated they wouldn't ask Chicago to give up their steel manufacturing or to ask San Francisco to not use their sea port, so why does that occur here? He felt something should be done with the burned trees noting that after the Sleeping Child Burn in 1961 saw mills worked for 5 years. But no timber work resulted from the fires of 2000, rather now we are going to Canada to obtain lumber when trees are right here on federal ground. He feels using local timber would have kept the log home industry in business.

Craig Thomas a Stevensville Forester would like Commission support of the forest industry. He agrees that the rail link is important infrastructure and that bio mass can be used to heat many buildings such as the Ravalli County Administrative building. He also noted no changes will occur with the Forest Service unless the law is changed or they are sued. He built a logging yard but with the lack of business has had to leave the state in order to find work. It is difficult to do that when your family is here.

Bob Pauley supports this discussion of natural resources usage. He is in real estate but supports the timber industry. While we grow timber we harvest very little, so the schools suffer (return of School Resource dollars). He stated instead of creating jobs, they put out fires. So we now pay to lose it.

Bret Nelson of the Ravalli County Off Road User Association has been in Montana since 1965. One of his largest concern is the access to wilderness dams which affect the local stockmen and

valley agriculture. He feels the Forest Service is thwarting our livelihood in the valley. Bret presented a copy of Forest Service EIS and correspondence on that issue.

Doreen Sain has lived here 35 years and has been in real estate for 25 years. She feels this is a good conversation to have for our families. She wants to have smoke free summers and everyone needs to be more pro-active in this regard. The 2000 fires devastated the south valley. Land cannot be sold in the south area because of the burn and that has a negative impact on the valley's economy.

Lyn Owings is a Bitterroot native and had a family run business for 30+ years. In the 1980's he owned a trucking company. He then read a letter from Canyon Springs which addressed how the forest has died, which then results in the death of the log home industry. He feels the special interest groups have taken over and have now regulated them out of jobs. Also the resources (timber) is being wasted. Tourism drops during fires because of the smoke. When people leave the valley for jobs they take their families, then schools are affected and without schools, you lose a town. He would like to see some coordination of this issue in order to develop a sound resource policy

Pete Elmer was a member of the Resource Advisory Council. As a committee member they had some say on the use of budgeted monies for the Forest Service. He applauds the Commissioners as they become more involved in this issue.

Terry Polumski thanked the Commissioners for getting this conversation started. She has lived here for 35 years and compares what she is seeing today versus what she saw years ago. She feels our area could be a poster child "for how not to run the economy".

Nikki Sardot spoke as President of the Ravalli County Farm Bureau. She relayed the new Forest rules state in part that "no regional input from local government" will occur. She has taken the coordination training twice and feels this needs to be put into place now.

Mike Jennings has lived here for 45 years. He has worked in saw mills and timber was the livelihood for his family and many others. His wife went to work for the Forest Service when they use to thin and burn. Now the job of clearing and trimming does not occur. The Forest Service workers leave timber and the trimmings on the ground. He felt the forests are a brush hole and fire hazard which the Federal Forest Service creates. He also stated they use to get right on the fires and put them out. Now they take 30 days to plan their attack on the fire. He lived in the middle of the 2000 burn and what he heard every day was 'we are planning our plan of attack'. The Forest Service says they don't want to hurt the green trees but they don't mind them being black. He also stated the Forest Service does not even keep the roads clear of downed trees anymore.

Theresa Manzella is a professional horse breeder and the horses need fresh air for their training and competition. She had to haul her horse to the eastern side of state during training and noted the hooves actually got stress rings due to the smoky air. In a study by Pullman University smoke in the air to the degree that occurred in 2000, for a horse is like smoking 10 packs of

cigarettes every hour. She feels agriculture and the logging industry is under attack by the animal rights groups.

Erin Krueger is a valley logging contractor and has concern for the safety of his daughters. All of the areas they use to recreate in are all burnt now. Winds can bring down the dead timber and hurt someone. When the forests are re-burnt like the 41 complex fire, the loggers have a hard time cutting down trees because the old burnt timber comes down creating a hazard to them and the fire fighters.

V.A. Ciliberti is retired from BLM. He feels it is to reestablish a vibrant economy with coordination. He wants to see a redevelopment of the forest and industries. Forest Land management needs to be proactive – with local interest – timber harvest can be done without adverse impacts to water, roads etc.

Dan Thompson of the Off Road User Association and Snowmobilers' Club stated for decades the local forest policy has been dominated by population centers on the west and east coast. Obtaining coordination status is one of the few legal ways to have more influence in our natural resources. He urged the BCC to select a committee to draft a natural resource plan, not Missoula or California based.

Ken Payne has a background in planning and discussed the book "Collapse" by Jared Diamond in regard to resource extraction. This is based on ideology not science and the idea it to make it difficult to live here.

Ron Porter owns a wood product manufacturing plant and has lived in the valley for 45 years. He stated this valley grows 95 million board feet of timber but little is harvested. Other National Forests around this valley are cutting 20-30 million board feet a year, but not our forests. He estimates the Bitterroot may sell 5-10 million board feet per year. Currently his wood plant has to receive wood 180 miles from this location and 100% of the wood for his manufacturing plant.

Barbara Christ of Darby knows firsthand of the loss from timber industry. 11 years after the fires of 200- the burnt timber is still falling. She understand the Forest Service is going to reduce 80 seasonal employees and these employees. Right now the forests are a mess and without their work the forests will get even worse.

Ron Pfier has a back ground in plants and engineering. He has seen what has happened since 1989 in this valley and pretty soon the mountains are all going to be black. When a fire occurs the Forest Service does not re-plant. In regard to economic development, other states create non polluting industry with tax incentives. creating incredible jobs with good money.

Jim Pearson is pleased to see the people here today and would like to see the Commissioners take action. He just left Boulder, Colorado and sees a lot of people around the world having influence in this valley. Those people want us to leave and a major fire would drive us all out. He thinks that is what they want.

Judy Kline lives in Stevensville and owned a 172 acre guest ranch up the West Fork for many years. When a fire occurred on Nez Perce Road, the loggers were the first there and the fires were put out. She encouraged the BCC to become involved in the coordination. What has happened here is a disgrace and everyone has allowed it. She stated the residents need to get our fighting gloves on and clean our forests so we don't have a tragedy.

Jay Toops lives up the Nez Perce stated his concern is the environment of fear and that we need to look at this from a market (economic) focus. He has a company that produces fuel from any carbon (trash to septic), thus the piles of trash and dead trees can be cleaned up and used.

Kyle Makki is a 5<sup>th</sup> generation in Bitterrooter. His Great Grandfather worked at a saw mill in Darby. Kyle is 20 and just about to be a father. He has great concern because he can hardly make a living for his family. There is no place to do what he knows which is logging.

Robin Conner thanked everyone who came today. Many were unable to attend today noting they have 2,000 people on their Facebook Page. She stated there are multiple mills who have looked at our valley for business locations, but profits are eaten up in trucking just to bring the lumber in. The timber in Oregon and Washington is selling internationally. Robin felt the people need to tell the Forest Service what we want to remove from the forest noting this is about our access, our heritage, our well being, having profitable jobs, raising our kids and having their fathers home. She applauds the BCC to work on the coordination effort.

2:40 p.m. Public Comment closed.

Commissioner Foss thanked everyone for coming stating this is a wonderful valley and the people make it great to live here. The decisions coming down don't come from our local people, it comes from another ideology. She wants her grand kids to have a choice to live here or not.

Commissioner Kanenwisher hears what the people are saying and understands. There is a lot of work to do and this will take some time.

Commissioner Stoltz stated it lifts his spirits to see people here who want to turn things around.

Commissioner Iman stated Commissioner Chilcott has also shown diligence over a period of time on this issue and agrees the Commissioners cannot tackle this without help. The meeting was adjourned.

► The Board met at 2:50 p.m. with Paula Woods, the Tobacco Free Grant Coordinator for an update and discussion on the coffee house activities at the Tobacco Free Office on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. Present at this meeting was Chief Financial Officer Klarryse Murphy, Grant Coordinator Verona Stromberg and Human Resource Director Robert Jenni.

Paula explained how she and other adult volunteers mentor the teens and act as role models. She plans to use her office as a place for kids to come on Friday nights and watch movies, play board games etc. She has a waiver prepared for the volunteer help which include counselors, school teachers, and parents.

Commissioner Kanenwisher expressed concern that the activities of the grant exceed the purposes of promoting tobacco cessation and how these night time activities open the county up to liability. Discussion included the lack of supervision for Paula's position and the lack of Commissioners being noticed on the activities. Commissioner Kanenwisher suggested the county look at separating themselves from the grant, noting he is not against the program just the operation of it within the county.

Commissioner Foss concurred noting any liability will fall squarely on the county. Commissioner Stoltz expressed concern that the waiver was never reviewed by the county.

Paula stated she will cancel the Friday night activities and expressed her disappointment.

Commissioner Iman felt this night time event involves young kids and the location is right behind a bar.

**The Board had consensus that this activity would not be appropriate in a building rented for operational purposes within the county, and that this activity not occur.**

November 30, 2011

Ravalli County Commissioners  
215 S. Fourth Street  
Hamilton, MT 59840

My letter concerns your efforts to reestablish a vibrant economy in Ravalli County. You are to be complimented for your efforts. Coordination with federal and state agencies is a necessary and integral part of your program.

Perhaps the most important part of establishing a much improved economy in Ravalli County is the redevelopment of forest and related industries. In consequence of my career in natural resource management as a Forest Hydrologist (retired) for the U. S. Bureau of Land Management I can address forest management from a perspective provided by over 25 years of field experience supported by 2 graduate college degrees (Soil Science and forest hydrology) and in-service training in soil science, hydrology, and geology. My work experience includes timber sale evaluation for hydraulic impacts, soil survey, riparian management, stream channel reconstruction, and participation in the Montana's timber sale evaluation program from its beginning.

That National Forest land management in Ravalli County needs to be more pro-active is an understatement. Enhanced management coordinated with local interests via cooperation with the Ravalli county Commission would provide many benefits to the local population.

Present day forest management programs are able to implement timber harvest without impacting water quality. Employing site-specific silvicultural, riparian (for both logging and grazing), road location, drainage, and construction techniques, my experience has been that adverse impacts can be almost totally avoided, and where necessary, mitigated.

Forest fire hazard reduction, and associated air pollution via removal of dead and dying trees is an issue that should receive a very high (if not the highest) priority. In any case accelerated fire hazard reduction and the usual timber harvesting will provide many good paying jobs. Reduction in air pollution from removal of fire-prone materials will create a better atmospheric condition in the county.

I urge you to move forward as rapidly as possible with your coordination program.

  
V.A. Ciliberti  
Hamilton, MT



Robin Conner &lt;rrconner1@gmail.com&gt;

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**RE: FW: Natural Resources**

2 messages

Canyon Springs Log Homes &lt;al@canyonspringsloghomes.com&gt;

Wed, Nov 30, 2011 at 3:31 PM

To: Robin Conner &lt;rrconner1@gmail.com&gt;

Robin, hope this is ok as have written quickly. Al

In 2003 I moved to the Darby area and immediately became involved in local activities and politics. Even though the previous fires left an unsightly landscape I felt it was a prime location for a future filled with opportunity. All the outdoor activities were readily available and the beauty of the South Valley seemed to offer an unlimited opportunity. A local ski area that equals the best anywhere and the need for the demand for log homes that would complement the landscape. There is no prettier place anywhere in the world.

However, over the past 7 years I have seen a decay of these resources. After a successful startup in the log home industry I must fight to hang on. Advertising our product as Montana grown becomes more of a stretch each year. The local loggers and logging industry have virtually been shut down by special interest groups and over regulated. Trees ready for harvest stand as dangers in the forest as they rot and fall. Revenues are wasted as one of the most valuable Montana resources becomes untouchable, Timber. It has been a source of pride to advertise and fill orders with Montana logs. However, I cannot continue without ordering timber from outside the state and now Canada.

Tourism dropped in our part of the valley because of the effects of fire and smoke. During our prime time to invite tourist to stop and enjoy the resources, we are watching fires burn and smoke fill our valley floors. Again, my business suffers as the walk in customer drives to alternate states or destinations. Also while we have such a high unemployment we are not able to use our unemployed work force to fight these fires rather we watch the valley fill up with trucks and firefighters from other areas. Our work force could hit the fires immediately and extinguish in many cases prior to the massive losses we see each summer. An immediate harvest of these timbers could become the future home/cabins of a growing economy. Because of these failed policies our schools loose students as their parents must move elsewhere to find employment. Without our schools our towns lose their identity.

My final comment is the effect that without local input (coordination policy) I have seen the values of my property fall. I have tried to improve this property but without visitors and potential customers wanting to stop, stay and live in our area there is no value.

It is my opinion that problems are easily identified and solutions somewhat more difficult to address. I feel however, the solution is available. Develop a sound Natural Resource policy utilizing local resources and residents through the utilization of the coordination policy.

Thanks, Al Milton, Canyon Springs Log Homes

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**From:** Robin Conner [mailto:[rrconner1@gmail.com](mailto:rrconner1@gmail.com)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 30, 2011 4:42 PM  
**To:** Canyon Springs Log Homes  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Natural Resources

We'd like to hear how things within the Natural Resource industry has effected people's lives, ie: fire - how it effects health, property values, tourism. Grazing - effects on forest floor, hardships faced by ranchers. Timber- effects both economically on your business not being able to get local wood, property values of non-management, families being separated because they must go out of state to work. Off Road Use - road closures, etc. Because you have a log home business, you would have a story worth sharing. It doesn't have to be statistical based, it can be economically and emotionally driven. Make sense? I'd love to share it at the meeting tomorrow or I can just give it to them for the record.

On Wed, Nov 30, 2011 at 1:52 PM, Canyon Springs Log Homes <[al@canyonspringsloghomes.com](mailto:al@canyonspringsloghomes.com)> wrote:

My statement to Suzy, hope it is ok.

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**From:** Canyon Springs Log Homes [mailto:[al@canyonspringsloghomes.com](mailto:al@canyonspringsloghomes.com)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 30, 2011 2:42 PM  
**To:** '[sfoss@rc.mt.gov](mailto:sfoss@rc.mt.gov)'  
**Subject:** Natural Resources

Hi Suzy,

Thank you for all you and the current commissioners are doing to address the needs of our Natural Resources in Ravalli County. I am still out of state but support the establishing of a Natural Resource Policy within our county. If things continue to go as they have these past several years we will lose this most valuable resource. It is easy to see how the policy of letting burn, no grazing and VERY strict restrictions on

logging has and continues to ruin our valley and communities.

I support your efforts and applaud the coordination initiative to manage our resources. Thanks again,  
Al Milton

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**Robin Conner**  
**R&R Conner, Inc**  
**406-821-2286 office 406-821-0288 fax**  
**www.rrconner.com**

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Robin Conner <rrconner1@gmail.com>  
To: Canyon Springs Log Homes <al@canyonspringsloghomes.com>

Wed, Nov 30, 2011 at 3:46 PM

This is amazing! Exactly what I was hoping! Thanks!

Robin

[Quoted text hidden]