



BIG HORN COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN



OPERATING GROUP

Big Horn County Commissioners

Big Horn County Fire Districts

USDA Forest Service

USDI Bureau of Land Management

Wyoming State Forestry Division

Big Horn County Office of Homeland Security

Wyoming Game and Fish

Technical Forestry Services, LLC

Date: 2/19/09 **Time:** 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
From: Technical Forestry Services, LLC
Subject: BH County CWPP Operating Group - Minutes from 2/19/09 Meeting No. 2
Location: Alamo Room – Basement of Bank of Greybull
Submitted by: Chris Weydeveld - BH Co Firewise Coordinator

Call to Order

OG Members Present

Present: Jim Waller (BH County Planner), Paul Morency (WSFD District Forester), Brian Russell (WSFD Assistant District Forester), Jack Mononi (BLM), Mike Wengert (BLM), Eve Warren (BLM), Tom Shirran (Hyattville Fire Chief), Bob Mangus (Lovell Fire Chief), Cecil Mullins (Manderson Fire Chief), Terry Mueller (Shell Fire Dept.), Butch Kraus (Burlington Fire Chief), Tom Easterly (WGFD/Greybull Fire Dept.), Jack Lindsey (USFS Cabin lease holder), Jake Jarrett (BH County Weed & Pest), Marvin Hunt (BH County Assistant Firewise Coordinator), and Chris Weydeveld (BH County Firewise Coordinator)

Guests Present

Nathan Oster (Greybull Standard)

Previous meeting's minutes: OG reviewed minutes from previous meeting. No changes needed.

Agenda Item 1: Communities-at-risk

1. Chris showed some before and after photos of a prescribed fire administered by the Cody BLM on Rattlesnake Mountain in Park County. Significant reduction in down and dead fuels can be seen in the comparison photos. Also shown were before and after photos of the 2007 Big Horn River "Dike Fire" within the Greybull city limits. Photos show vigorous re-sprouting of salt cedar (tamarisk) in the spring of 2008. In September of 2008 the salt cedar sprouts were head high. Also observed was the prolific re-sprouting of Russian olive in the burned area.
2. Jim Waller explained to the group that there are 9 incorporated towns and 3 unincorporated towns in BH County. Using ArcMap GIS tools, Jim showed the group each town and at-risk community with aerial photo images to show the vegetation and other land features present. The communities of Frannie/Deaver, Burlington, and Otto were omitted from the list. These communities are not considered at-risk.
3. Methodology used to develop the boundaries of the identified at-risk communities:
 - a. ½ mile (2,640 ft) buffer on either side of the main river/creek channel (1 mile total width).
 - b. 1 mile radius from the center of towns
 - c. Boundaries adjusted as needed in response to direction from the OG. Some town buffers, for example, extended into the desert and did not serve to address areas considered "at-risk". In these situations Jim edited the boundary to reflect changes needed.
 - d. Certain river/creek segments were eliminated due to an absence of structures and/or minimal or no hazardous fuels present.

To improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System lands and Bureau of Land Management lands aimed at protecting communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape, and for other purposes. HFRA, 2003

Agenda Item 2: Prioritize communities-at-risk

Table 1 shows at-risk communities and the priority rating assigned. As a group each community was discussed and given a rating of low, moderate and high. Additionally, the following criteria were used:

- Is the community in a fire protection district?
- Does the community have adequate emergency management resources?
- What is the condition of access into the community? Are there good roads (ingress/egress), are there bridges? What are weight limits?
- What is the structure density like? What kind of building materials are used on the structures?
- Fuels conditions? Are there easily accessible water sources?
- Is the topography favorable for increased fire activity?

Table 1. BH County River Bottom Communities-at-risk.

At-risk Community	Priority Rating
Basin (Town)	High
Manderson (Town)	High
Lovell (Town)	High
Greybull (Town)	High
Shell (Town)	High
Hyattville (Town)	High
Paintrock Creek (Hyattville to Nowood River confluence)	High
Medicine Lodge Creek (2005 CWPP boundary to Hyattville)	High
Paintrock Creek (2005 CWPP boundary to Hyattville)	High
Greybull River (Park Co. line to Bighorn River confluence)	Moderate
Bighorn River (Greybull to Basin)	Moderate
Bighorn River (Basin to Manderson)	Moderate
Bighorn River (Manderson to Washakie Co. line)	Moderate
Byron (Town)	Moderate
Bighorn River (Sheep Canyon to Yellowtail)**	Moderate
Bighorn River (Greybull to Sheep Canyon)	Moderate
Shell Creek (Bighorn River to Town of Shell)	Moderate
Horse Creek	Moderate
Shell Creek (Forest boundary to Town of Shell)	Moderate
Nowood River (Washakie Co. line to Manderson)	Moderate
Dry Creek (Big Ole Emblem Draw)	Low
Cowley (Town)	Low
Shoshone River (Mantua Draw to Park Co. line)*	Low
Whistle Creek	Low
Sand Draw	Low
Foster Draw	Low
Shoshone River (Lovell to Bighorn River)	Low
Crystal Creek	Low
Bear Creek	Low
Beaver Creek	Low
White Creek (USFS boundary to confluence w/ Shell Cr.)	Low
Trapper Creek (USFS boundary to confluence w/ Shell Cr.)	Low
Poverty Flats	Low
* Includes Byron Oil Field	
** Includes Spence/Cane	

As the group discussed at-risk community characteristics a few points were made regarding communities:

- There was some discussion on the concern about fires started by the railroad. Paul told the group that northeast Wyoming has an agreement with the railroad to maintain “fireguards” along the tracks. These areas are graded clear of vegetation and serve as a fire break along the tracks. If the OG determines it is needed Paul will bring the subject up with the railroad.
- The Town of Lovell was identified as a high priority due, in part, to the Globe Canal which runs west to east through town. Heavy vegetation, densely occurring structures, and steep slopes above the canal make this area significant and in need of treatment.
- A few communities such as the Shoshone River from Lovell to the confluence with the Bighorn River have seen recent and ongoing fuels reduction treatments. The current Shell Valley Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) is also currently undergoing treatments to reduce Russian olive and salt cedar and replace with native vegetation.
- The OG is asked to review Table 1, make any changes needed and let Chris know. Are there any communities we missed? Are the ratings accurate?

The group discussed the need to hold another meeting to discuss specific treatments in key areas throughout the CWPP analysis area. If there is an interest in holding another meeting to look at the communities on a case-by-case basis and recommend treatments to mitigate against destructive fire please contact Chris or Brent. If there is a need then another meeting will be scheduled this spring.

