

North Fork Road Committee Meeting

February 20, 2009; Two Medicine Building in Kalispell

Committee members in: Ed Heger, Margaret Heaphy, Steve Berg, Steve Weber, and Betsy Holycross (by conference call)

Discussion about the Inter Local Agreement meeting:

At the Feb. 10 Inter Local Agreement meeting in Kalispell, Flathead County Public Works Director Dave Prunty announced that a cost-share proposal has been approved by the county. North Fork landowners should be aware of this proposal and watch for upcoming postings in The Daily Inter Lake and keep an eye on the NFLA Web site.

The cost-share proposal was discussed by Prunty and the North Fork Road Committee on Jan. 21. Essentially it mimics a program Gallatin County is using for dust abatement. Flathead County is proposing to pay half the cost to apply magnesium chloride if a landowner or group of landowners want to put up the other half. The applications will come out in March if a landowner is interested. Minimum length to treat is 1/2 mile. Magnesium chloride costs about \$3,500 per mile to apply.

Prunty said the county would run an article in the Daily Inter Lake explaining the program when it is ready to accept applications

Prunty has submitted a proposal to the county to improve the gravel road from Camas Creek to Polebridge this summer; however, the proposed project is contingent on obtaining federal funding. U.S. Forest Service authorized use of gravel from its North Fork resource for this project. The county would contract with a local outfit for the crusher.

Dust abatement methodologies:

We reviewed alternatives other than oil and magnesium chloride, including Envirokleen and Soil-Sement. The county road department has previously advised our committee that it has not found an agent superior to magnesium chloride but seemed to be open-minded on the issue. We reviewed the Eagle, Alaska, rural road experience. The committee will contact Gallatin County about its established dust-abatement program.

National Environmental Policy Act:

We reviewed pertinent National Environmental Policy Act information and agreed to continue to look at NEPA issues related to the North Fork Road. Ben Conard, representing the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, has responded to our inquiry about earlier NEPA documentation, and the committee intends to set up a meeting with him and other appropriate parties. Betsy Holycross will follow up on this.

Glacier National Park Centennial:

There have been some discussions regarding projects to be considered as part of this centennial. The North Fork Road is not in consideration as a celebration-related product.

Glacier National Park/U.S. Forest Service:

Committee members have had information discussions with Glacier National Park Polebridge District Ranger Scott Emmerich and Chas Cartwright, superintendent of the park, regarding GNP and the North Fork Road. The Road Committee proposes to meet with Scott and Chas in early April. The Road Committee will also have a separate meeting with the U.S. Forest Service.

Narrowing the North Fork Road:

Dave Prunty has inquired about landowners' interest in narrowing the section of gravel road from the end of the blacktop to Camas Creek Road. It is currently 40 plus feet wide and the proposal is to narrow it to a 24-foot width. The 24-foot width would reduce maintenance expenses from the grading aspect and probably plowing snow as well. The county thinks there is some good material that would be "reclaimed" to provide a better driving surface. The county is just beginning to talk about this idea and wanted community input. The committee looks forward to input from NFLA members.

Communication:

A summary of committee meeting minutes will be prepared and reviewed for accuracy by committee members as soon as possible following the meeting and then submitted to the Web site for posting.

North Fork Road as a county resource:

The committee agreed to investigate the value of the North Fork Road to citizens of Flathead County. Much of the discussion about the road focuses on the number of residents up the North Fork and the property taxes derived from that small population base. This ignores the fact that the North Fork Road is heavily traveled by nonresidents for rafting, hunting, and other activities. Steve Weber agreed to establish a file that documents these benefits. Input from committee members and landowners is encouraged.

Posting information on dust abatement on the Web site:

The committee intends to have a segment on the Web site dealing specifically with dust abatement. Margaret has done a lot of work on this and will soon be ready to post some of her

initial findings.

Next meeting:

1 p.m., March 10th