Attendees: Ron Cron, Dave Hadden, Mark Peterson, Don Truman, Scott Matheis, Edwin Fields, Gregg Johnson, Joe Purdy, Steve Curtiss, Brian Hobday, Michael Meador, Scott Baney, Josh Letcher, George Williams, Kurt West, Mike Cole, Wayne Finch, Jim Voyles, Greg Beardslee, Cameron Hall, Dawain Burgess, Jennifer Miller, Amy Robinson, Bob Jacobs, Pat Jacobs, Betty Holder, Ron Komac, Rae Lynn Hays (Facilitator)

Mike Cole is proxy for Traci McIntyre. Kurt West is proxy for Mike Cuffe. Josh Letcher is proxy for Buck Schermerhorn.

The group voted to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. No corrections, additions, or deletions noted.

Greg Beardslee of the Montana Mountain Bike Alliance was present for this meeting on the premise that Flathead Forest Supervisor Chip Weber would be present to provide information on trail development for mountain biking opportunities. Chip Weber was not able to attend the meeting and will not be available until the June 13 meeting. There was discussion by the group that many had come prepared to discuss recreation opportunities, specifically mountain biking and due to Chip’s absence it was suggested that the group move on to discussions on snowmobiling. The group agreed to discuss mountain biking for the first hour of the meeting and then move on to snowmobiling for the remainder of the meeting.

Betty Holder gave a brief presentation on the existing condition and Galton Proposed Action as it pertained to trail opportunities and an explanation of the rationale for why the various trail uses were somewhat segregated in the Proposed Action.

The group discussed mountain bike use in the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area and there was discussion about mountain biking occurring or not occurring in other wilderness areas. Greg Beardslee presented some examples of cooperative work that was occurring in the Gallatin valley between horsemen and mountain bikers on shared trails. There were a variety of experiences shared by group members regarding conflict or potential conflict on trails. Some of this discussion included conflicts that may occur between like user groups (horseback vs. horseback, horseback vs. hiker). Many in the group thought conflicts could largely be avoided through education and cooperative efforts where user groups worked with each other to gain greater knowledge about each other.

The group discussed the potential for the Birch Creek area to become an all-season hub for various user groups to work from. This included discussions about the potential for a trail using the Williams Creek road as a loop for horses, hikers, and mountain bikers. There seems to be good potential for this trail to open up other trail use opportunities. There would need to be work done on the Williams Creek road, especially at stream crossings for this to be a viable trail. Other opportunities suggested included trail 359 coming off of the Flathead National Forest; Forest road 7066 to Forest road 719 on to the Cat Creek trail; potential for the Therriault pass trail for mountain bikes; Mount Marston area as well.
The desired condition for mountain bikes was expressed as:

- Reduce segregation and increase education
- Keep trails outside of the Ten Lakes WSA open to mountain bikes
- Look for trail opportunities within the Ten Lakes WSA where mountain bikes could be allowed
- Opportunities for mountain bike trails to start out in the ‘front country’
- Maintain back country opportunities for mountain bikes

No consensus was asked for or reached on the desired condition and stands as the results of a brainstorming session at this time.

The discussion on mountain biking was closed at this point, to be revisited when Chip Weber was available.

Betty Holder gave a brief presentation on over snow use and the Galton Proposed Action. There was some background as to how the Proposed Action was developed.

Dave Hadden opened the discussion and expressed the desire to compromise and negotiate a solution. There were several perspectives offered regarding snowmobiling, wilderness, and multiple use. Discussions also took place regarding wilderness attributes, impacts to local economies, and past uses.

Kurt West offered his perspective on where snowmobile use was occurring and provided a delineation on a map of that area. He illustrated that use was occurring east of the highline trail throughout the Ten Lakes area, Williams and Blue Sky Creeks over to Lewis Creek. He did not feel much use occurred in the Lewis Creek area due to avalanche terrain and did not advocate use there due to the hazard.

Edwin Fields offered his perspective of what he thought could be wilderness area, which included the west face of Ksanka, Williams and Blue Sky Creeks and a portion of the Ten Lakes WSA. He advocates wildlife and wildlife habitat over snowmobiling.

Amy Robinson asked about the efforts from the 1990 era and a map that was developed at that time. The map resulted from an effort by the Tobacco Valley Economic Development Council and efforts made then to try and resolve this issue.

Discussions occurred regarding possible outcomes of legislative action and how that would or could relate to the Forest Planning effort and the Galton project. Dave Hadden felt there was great opportunity with the existing Montana delegation of Baucus, Tester, and Daines to get something before congress and resolve the issue.

The floor was opened for public comment. Loretta Stevens from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes spoke to the group and informed them that the Tribal Elders were interested in what this group was working on and wants to be involved. She then extended an invitation to the group to meet with the Tribal Elders in Pablo and listen to their perspectives about the area and project.

Next Meeting: May 16, 2013, Glacier Bank Community Room, Eureka, MT
Homework: Use the maps provided at the meeting or in the Galton Proposed Action to delineate areas for you or your group’s desired uses to occur.