

Concepts for Increasing IBMP Effectiveness



From IBMP facilitator Scott Bischke

At their April 6, 2017 meeting, the IBMP Partners undertook a self-assessment considering how they might be more effective, efficient, and, ultimately, more successful. The assessment was largely a brainstorming session, and is described in the report for that meeting (see <http://ibmp.info/Library/20170406/20170406.php>). The Partners gave the facilitator the task of synthesizing the Partner's brainstorming into ideas for increasing their efficiency. This is the third deliberative draft the facilitator has made toward that ends and includes input from Partners on previous drafts, as well as a report on a Partner teleconference held 5/25/17.

Summary of facilitator's proposed changes for Partner consideration

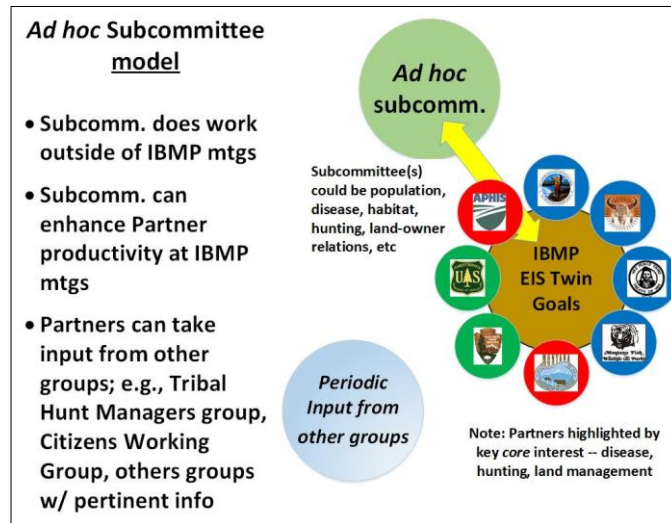
- A. Return to using the IBMP Adaptive Management Plan as i) the focal point for IBMP Partner activities, ii) the measure of IBMP Partner performance, and c) the tool for defining changes to the Winter Ops Plan.
- B. Re-institute a subcommittee structure, but in general use only a single, *ad hoc* subcommittee, with topic to be determined based on need.
- C. Partners, at the discretion of the lead agency, allow time on future agendas for interactions with any entity or organization with something relevant to the work of the Partners including, for example, the Tribal Hunt Managers Group or a self-driven Citizens' Working Group,

Observations from the Facilitator

- (1) *IBMP Partners use their Adaptive Management Plan less than in the past.*—In recent years, the IBMP Partners have moved away from centering their work around their Adaptive Management (AM) Plan. To a large degree, the Partners ...
 - ... no longer build their meetings, interactions, and decisions around their AM Plan;
 - ... no longer measure their performance against the metrics put forth in their AM Plan (including no longer building their Annual Report on measuring their performance against metrics set forth in the AM Plan);
 - ... no longer rigorously follow the Partner responsibility matrix declared under each Management Action described in the AM Plan (and also in the Partner Protocols); and
 - ... no longer use adaptive changes to their AM Plan to drive changes in their Winter Ops Plan.
- (2) *IBMP focus, though not EIS-driven goals, have changed since the addition of Tribal entities.*—While widely acknowledged as an important positive, the addition of the 3 tribal entities to the deliberative table has expanded the overall focus of the IBMP. Before the addition of the tribal groups, the IBMP primarily focused its discussion time on its twin goals of no brucellosis transmission and maintaining wild bison. Now, along with those two goals the IBMP Partners spend more and more time focusing on the bison hunt and on getting bison out of YNP (whether alive or dead). This change seems only likely to grow with more treaty hunting tribes poised to begin hunting on the edge of the Park.
- (3) *Opportunities exist with citizens.*—The Citizens' Working Group, assuming an open-to-all enrollment approach, provides the IBMP a unique opportunity for cross-boundary cooperation (public/private, tribal/federal/state/county/municipal/individual). Partners need to develop a method to engage the CWG that takes into account a way to focus CWG efforts *without* directing the CWG or committing to act on their recommendations, which federal agencies cannot do without following specific rules for engaging public advisory groups.

IBMP conceptual model

The figure below is a simple representation of IBMP interactions, showing the introduction of an *ad hoc* committee structure. This model can increase Partner effectiveness because subcommittee work, completed outside of IBMP meeting time, can be more tactically productive, thus allowing Partners to act more strategically.



- Data analysis by and recommendations from the *ad hoc* subcommittee could be Partner-mandated to address the IBMP Adaptive Management Plan
- This model likely decreases debate at IBMP meetings and instead focuses Partners' time more on decision-making that can better move the group forward
- Subcommittee / work groups would be required to make requests through the adaptive management process as appropriate and/or requested by the Partners

Record of Partner telecon on May 25th, 2017

The IBMP Partners met from noon–2 PM by teleconference to continue talking about increasing IBMP effectiveness, a discussion they initiated at their April 6th meeting. A brief summary of the telecon follows. All Partners were represented (attendee list available from facilitator). The Lead Partner noted that along with continuing the conversation on increasing effectiveness, she hoped the Partners might find 2 or 3 projects to begin making progress on, including actions to be taken before their August meeting.

Before delving into that core meeting topic, the CSKT, MFWP, and NPT provided short reviews on the annual hunt meeting held May 24th in Missoula. All described the meeting as frank and covering important topics, both from last year's hunt and considering the upcoming season. Topics included a) safety at Beattie Gulch and b) improving coordination of enforcement staff.

The Lead Partner then requested that each Partner describe up to 3 projects they thought progress could be made on soon. There was solid agreement on 3 as shown below, with agreed upon priority shown. Sub-bullets provide Partner thoughts on projects in this realm, either ongoing or possible to start soon. A fourth project area also received endorsement, though having a longer likely time frame for action.

1. **Create a bison quarantine facility**
 - In conjunction with creating the quarantine facility, the endpoint for bison translocation must be determined.
 - Work already happening with NPS, APHIS, MDOL. They will report at August meeting.
 - For this task Partners could modify the quarantine management action (2.2c) now in their AM Plan.
2. **Improve utilization of expanded bison habitat, especially in new West Side tolerance area**

- All agreed it would be possible to explore many actions (e.g., fire) for promoting bison movement.
 - Can we get together an ad hoc group to discuss bison distribution? This group could develop a list of possible methods of distribution, plus assess suitable bison habitat. The group might include Julie (MFWP), Rick (NPS), Steph (CSKT), Scott (CGNF), Neil (NPT), Carl (CTUIR), Leander (SBT). No commitment was made, other than that Julie Cunningham and Scott Barndt would meet.
 - Partners need to recognize that this issue is sensitive with land owners and that Partners are *only identifying possibilities*. Much more work needs to go into partnering with and understanding needs and concerns of landowners (some NGOs have started such work).
 - CGNF will lead a field trip at the Aug IBMP meeting, with central topic being bison distribution.
3. **Improving safety, quality of the north side hunt/improving boundary issues**
- Topic includes issues of bison population and distribution, plus tribal and state hunts and enforcement
 - Tribal hunt managers can make presentation on their ideas and progress at August meeting including at least a) law enforcement and safety, and b) how to reduce hunting pressure in Beattie Gulch
4. **Longer term focus item—Managing to a sustainable bison population**
- Consider moving away from a strict population goal number.
 - Balance the needs of hunters, availability of habitat to support bison, people wanting to witness sustainable migration, and so on.
 - Consider possible use of rolling averages to measure bison population
 - Some discussion that while most agreed this is a valuable topic, the idea might be more appropriate in new EIS

The Lead Partner concluded the discussion by asking for Partner input on the Citizens Working Group. Most comments said, effectively, yes we support the CWG, yes we welcome their work, but no the CWG should not have a reserved space on every IBMP meeting agenda. Instead, they should only provide presentation of concerns or ideas for progress when they reach out to the Partners that they have something specific to report. The Lead Partner noted that this approach might not inspire productive CWG action, and asked all Partners to please consider how to best engage them.