

# Whitefish Range Partnership

## Charter

January 3, 2013

The Whitefish Range Partnership (WRP) is a diverse group of citizens, landowners, entrepreneurs, recreational interests, businesses and natural resource professionals who have a shared and direct connection to the Flathead National Forest lands found in the Whitefish Range of Northwest Montana.

### PURPOSE

Over the course of the year 2013, the WRP will work together with the primary purpose of creating a shared vision and management recommendations for the public lands managed by the Flathead National Forest located in the area commonly referred to as the Whitefish Range, Glacier View Ranger District. This proposal will be presented to Flathead National Forest officials as the desired management direction for the Flathead National Forest lands found in the Whitefish Range for the upcoming forest plan revision.

### MEMBERSHIP

Initial members of the WRP represent the following constituencies:

Columbia Falls Area Realtor  
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes  
F.H. Stoltze Land and Lumber  
Flathead Backcountry Horsemen  
Flathead Fat Tires  
Flathead Snowmobile Association  
Forestation  
Headwaters Montana  
Montana Logging Association

Montana Wilderness Association  
National Parks Conservation Association  
North Fork Land Owners  
North Fork Compact  
North Fork Landowners Association  
North Fork Preservation Association  
Polebridge Mercantile  
The Sustainability Fund  
Winter Sports Inc.

The U.S.F.S. will be invited to attend in an advisory capacity only.

A new member may be nominated by a current member, approved by consensus, or with approval of the majority present, whether or not the nominee is in attendance. A new group or person that attends and wants to join may be nominated and decided upon at that meeting. If that potential member is not nominated at that time, he or she may attend two more meetings which indicates significant interest and may ask for another vote at that time.

## OBSERVERS

Members of the public may have observer status at any meeting. Observers may make or submit a comment to the WRP during the Public Comment Period at the end of each meeting.

## QUORUM

At any meeting of the WRP where significant decisions will be made, at least 50% plus one member of the total number of members eligible to cast votes, must be present to create a quorum. For the purposes of calculating a quorum, members who miss three consecutive meetings will not be included in the calculation of the quorum for that meeting. Voting members may assign proxies to other voting members by notifying the Chair prior to the meeting. A member who has assigned his/her proxy to another voting member will be considered present for the purposes of calculating a quorum.

Meetings may be held where a quorum is not present, but no decisions may be made in these low turnout meetings.

## LEADERSHIP

The WRP will elect one Chair and two vice-Chairs by consensus of a quorum of the full WRP. The Chair will be responsible for convening WRP meetings, setting meeting agendas, facilitating meetings, providing oversight, and serving as points of contact for communications. The Chair will supervise the preparation of WRP documents and strive to ensure that all relevant duties are accomplished. In the case of the Chair's absence the vice-chairs will perform the Chair's duties, and will rotate facilitating meetings and performing other duties required.

## DECISIONS

Decisions made by the WRP will be input that may or may not be adopted by the Forest Service. A formal decision process will be used to generate official WRP input.

The WRP will make official decisions by a consensus process that applies the "thumbs-up/thumbs-sideways/thumbs-down" signaling levels of agreement. When all voting members have shown full support for a proposal (thumbs-up), or moderate support (thumbs-sideways), or any combination of full or moderate support, then a decision is taken. When one or more voting members of the WRP disapprove of a proposed decision (thumbs-down), a decision has not been made and additional discussion will be necessary. Those who disapprove of a decision will be required to identify the specific reasons for disapproval so others may understand the reasons behind a negative vote. Any individual who expresses disapproval of a proposal or action must offer an alternate proposal or suggestions to the WRP at the earliest possible juncture. In this way it is the intent of the WRP that no one individual may block the group's intention of reaching a solution.

The WRP Chair will call for decisions. On some very straightforward, simple matters, the Chair may simply ask verbally for consensus, and if no objection is raised, a decision will be taken. Decisions of the WRP will be recorded in the meeting notes. Voting members may assign proxies to other voting members by notifying the chair prior to the meeting

The WRP always strives for consensus. However, if consensus cannot be reached on any given decision, the WRP may choose to bring in an impartial facilitator from outside of the group to help come to a solution. Should impasse not be resolved, the WRP will provide no management recommendation to the U.S.F.S. on that subject or area of conflict.

#### RECORD KEEPING

Official record keeping and communication functions will be the responsibility of the WRP Secretary, including taking minutes, attendance and other record-keeping functions. The Secretary shall be appointed by the chair. It is the intention of the WRP to make all its official proceedings openly accessible to all interested parties upon request. Records of attendance will be brought to each meeting of the WRP.

Official minutes of each meeting shall be compiled and circulated to members at the first practical date after a meeting. Notes from a prior WRP meeting will be approved at the following WRP meeting. All official WRP committees should provide a written summary of decisions made at each of their meetings to the WRP.

Minor revisions to notes prior to the next meeting may be made through independent contact with the Chair or their record-keeping designee, although any changes from original drafts may be subject to discussion from other WRP members during the subsequent meeting where notes are approved.

#### COMMITTEES

The WRP may form unofficial subcommittees or working groups to advance tasks necessary to fulfill its purpose. Subcommittees or working groups shall report activities and findings during agenda items placed on a full WRP membership meeting at the discretion of the Chair.

#### FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The WRP will strive to conclude its business by the end of 2013. The WRP will compile its decisions and recommendations in a "Whitefish Range Partnership Agreement" document signed by all members of the WRP. This document will be delivered to the Supervisor of the Flathead National Forest for inclusion in the forest plan revision record as the local community's expression of its thinking regarding future management of the Whitefish Range. Further, each member of the WRP agrees to support the entire Agreement and its recommendation without exception.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The WRP wishes to take comment from the public who are not elected members. Each meeting of the WRP will end with a designated public comment period. The public comment period will not exceed 10 minutes in length. Members of the public are encouraged to be concise with their comments and to not exceed 3 minutes in duration. The Chair has the authority to ask commentators to summarize their comments to stay within the 3 minutes period. The members of the WRP will refrain from questions and answers during the public comment period.

#### AMENDING THIS CHARTER

This charter may be amended according to the decision-making process outlined above.

#### DISSOLUTION

The WRP may at any time receive a call for dissolution from one of its voting members. The decision to dissolve the WRP will use the same consensus decision process as is used in all other decisions.

**Approved by unanimous consensus of the Whitefish Range Partnership 01/30/2013**