

Four Rivers Resilient Forest Collaborative

Monthly meeting



Date: November 17th, 2022

Time: 9:00-11:00 AM

Location: MSI offices (679 E. 2nd Ave) and Zoom

Attendance: Anthony Culpepper (MSI), Julia Ledford (MSI), Alex Handloff (MSI), Laura Hanna (MSI), Dana Guinn (MSI), Tim Leishman (San Juan National Forest), Lo Williams (San Juan National Forest), Andrew Richards (San Juan National Forest), Eric Herchmer (San Juan National Forest), Clay Kampf (San Juan National Forest), Andy Hawk (Phoenix Recycling), Alison Layman (La Plata County), Steve McClung, Mike Wight (San Juan Mountains Association), Alex Graf (Wildfire Adapted Partnership), Paulette Church (Falls Creek Ranch HOA), Ryan Cox (Colorado State Forest Service), Molly Pitts (Colorado Timber Industry Association), Kyle O’Neill (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Mary Monroe (Durango Trails), Mike Remke (Fort Lewis College)

Agenda:

- Welcome and introductions
- General stakeholder updates
- CFLRP updates
- Four Rivers engagement with CFLRP
- Goal setting for 2023
 - Needs for 2022 wrap-up and accomplishments reporting, aka the “annual report”
 - What are your major organizational/agency objectives and priorities for 2023?
 - How can Four Rivers support those objectives?
 - Beyond CFLRP what landscape level planning efforts should Four Rivers engage?
 - Tour and meeting topics/presentation ideas for 2023?
 - What are we missing?
 - Outreach
 - Diverse funding, i.e., non-federal dollars
 - Collaborative level science/monitoring/desired conditions
 - Key stakeholders

Meeting notes

General stakeholder updates

- Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) application deadline set for December 2nd
 - NRCS and the National Wild Turkey Federation are hiring two individuals who will be stationed in Pagosa and Cortez
 - Five-year term position
 - The position is essentially another NRCS Forester
- Falls Creek HOA
 - Final half workday on Saturday
 - The Shiprock Chapter House will be picking up firewood
 - 24 volunteers
 - Putting down grass seed and straw to prevent weeds from taking over where the soil has been disturbed
- San Juan National Forest
 - Junction-Falls Creek Integrated Resource Management EA (JFIRM)
 - The public comment period has ended and SJNF has started reviewing the comments
 - The response was mostly positive
 - Very few comments regarding vegetation management and prescribed fire
 - Some comments were in support of the proposed actions, others asked for more information.
 - This is typical for an EA like this one
 - A few comments regarding traffic
 - Chip sealing the road was not a popular topic
 - Many comments about trails
 - Some folks were highly supportive of the proposed actions
 - There were lots of proposals made by folks in the comments
 - Some responses indicated that people think Junction is already at its carrying capacity for recreational use and that there is too much planned
 - More robust public outreach and public meetings are needed to discuss the recreation components of the EA
 - Four Rivers has had several meetings and tours dedicated to the vegetation management components of the EA, but there wasn't much public outreach done for the recreation component
 - SJNF had posted about the public comment period in the Durango Herald but wasn't successful in grabbing the public's attention
 - Four Rivers would be a good messenger for opportunities like this
 - JFIRM will likely split into two phases so there is more time for outreach about recreation

- Phase I: vegetation management, prescribed fire, other activities on the western side of the analysis area
 - Phase II: recreation proposed actions, everything in Hidden Valley, Log Chutes and other recreation infrastructure
 - As vacancies are filled on the Forest there will be more clarity and direction regarding the trajectory of JFIRM.
 - Staffing updates
 - New district ranger for the Columbine will start on December 5th
 - Open positions for a wildlife biologist and recreation specialist
 - Hoping this person will champion the JFIRM EA
 - Clay Kampf accepted position as the Fish and Wildlife Program Manager
 - Jason Lawhon detailing as the Forest Supervisor behind Kara Chadwick
 - The Supervisor position will hopefully be filled by mid-January
 - Travis Bruch is detailing in behind Jason Lawhon
 - The Shared Stewardship Project Coordinator position and the Shared Stewardship Communications position were open for application for 5 days and have now closed
 - Pile burns happen at Electra Lake
 - Early snow and low temps have created good conditions for prescribed fire
- FRWRM grant application closed in October
 - Out of 121 total applications, 113 were eligible for funding
 - The total eligible funding requested was \$30 million for work on 17,000
 - Shows that people are interested in getting work done on state and private lands and how critical this funding was
- SJMA
 - Coordinating Christmas tree cutting event on Saturday at Junction Creek
 - Removing white fir
 - Still have [volunteer spots](#) open for the annual Christmas tree cutting and sale
- La Plata County
 - Received two workforce grants through COSWAP:
 - Southwest Conservation Corps did thinning and brushing mitigation in the Edgemont subdivision
 - A State Wildland Inmate Fire Team (SWIFT) did roadside thinning to make safer egress routes
 - Revising the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)
 - If you are interested in contributing to the goals and strategies and reviewing the draft, [contact Alison Layman](#)
 - The first meeting will be held on December 8th, from 9:00 am to noon at the EOC (221 Turner Drive, Durango)
 - The Wildfire Advisory Board is starting to build a comprehensive website focused on two user groups:
 - Landowners
 - Provide outreach to landowners to connect them with local initiatives, contractors, and property assessments
 - Us (land managers, coordinators, planners)
 - Feed the projects and initiatives into a central place so everyone can be aware of what's going on and what resources can be shared

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
 - Getting close to the end of third rifle, fourth rifle straddles Thanksgiving
 - Big game season structure will be reviewed next year with public input (for 2025-2029)
 - Reviewing trail grants
- Wildfire Adapted Partnership
 - Chipper rental rebate program is open
 - Site visits open for the WIIN grant specifically
 - Other site visits have closed and will reopen spring 2023
- [Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance](#) (WPIA) program
 - Made available by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
 - Accepting applications until 5:00pm on December 20, 2022
- San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership
 - Working with a similar EA to JFIRM on Jackson Mountain
 - Planned a pre-scoping tour on Jackson Mountain for 11/15 that was cancelled because of weather and road conditions
 - The Partnership will discuss the EA at their December monthly meeting
 - The Jackson Mountain EA shares similar recreation, wildlife and WUI components to the JFIRM EA
 - In place of the pre-scoping tour, Headwaters is creating a virtual tour to share community ideas and opinions associated with the project
- 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership
 - The 2-3-2 is the named collaborative for the adjacent CFLRP, the Rio Chama CFLRP
 - Currently developing their monitoring plan
 - Successful partnership meeting and tour on the Rio Grande National Forest
 - Building relationships with downstream water users and discussion different ways they can invest in upstream forest management to protect water quality and quantity
- Colorado State Forest Service
 - [Colorado Tree Coalition \(CTC\) grants](#) released last week
 - State and local governments, neighborhood organizations, schools
 - Urban community forestry, planting trees, pruning trees
- Mountain Studies Institute
 - Will be moving out of Meyer building in the new year to an office space in Bodo
 - Will have a bigger conference space

CFLRP updates

- The Science and Multiparty Monitoring Committee and the Projects and Places Committee are working jointly to develop broad, landscape-scale desired conditions.
 - These desired conditions will give the place-based collaboratives guidance on which projects fit into the CFLRP.
 - Small working groups were created to draft desired conditions within a set of 5 categories.
 - If you are interested in participating in this process, [contact Anthony](#).
- Projects will be developed through the three place-based collaboratives (Four Rivers, San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership and Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative)

- Those projects will get passed along to the Projects and Places Committee, who will then recommend the project to San Juan National Forest.
- Coordinating Council update
 - Gave direction for the Projects and Places and Science and Multiparty Monitoring Committees to jointly develop program-wide desired conditions
 - Annual report for year 1 is due on December 9th
 - Working on systems to improve communication and transparency
 - Shared Google drive
 - Website coming in 2023
- The CFLR is a 10-year project, and the first few years will be dominated by shovel-ready projects from SJNF
 - The collaboratives will have an important role in developing projects for 2024 and beyond
 - There is a general sense from all parties that year 1 is uncomfortable because of the timing that the project was funded
- Committees
 - Education and Outreach Committee
 - Developing a communications plan for the CFLRP
 - Forest Byproducts
 - Sharing ideas, diving into the data in January
 - Will be reaching out to the collaboratives
 - Trying to gauge if a sort yard feasibility study would be helpful
 - A sort yard is a place to take wood where it can be resold to its highest a best use
 - Question is always who will run it? County, city, private business?
 - Transportation becomes a big factor
 - Agreements and Funding
 - The Committee has only met twice
 - Starting to think about leveraging partner funds to hire a third-party facilitator for the Coordinating Council, the Projects and Places Committee, and the Science and Multiparty Monitoring Committee
 - CFLRP funds can be used for this, but collaboratives and partners have also said they are willing to offer funds that can be used as match, leaving more CFLRP funds for projects on the ground
 - Science and Multiparty Monitoring Plan
 - Will need to develop a monitoring plan in the future

Four Rivers engagement with CFLRP

- Four Rivers will be a developer of projects for the CFLRP (along with the other two collaboratives)
 - Potential projects:
 - Components of JFIRM
 - Grassy Mountain
 - Work along the 240 corridor, from Edgemont to Lemon Reservoir
 - Hand thinning

- Wood for Life
 - Southwest Conservation Corps
 - Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps
 - Covers priority community resiliency PODs (RMRI)
- This group should be empowered to think beyond projects that SJNF has already planned
 - Listen to what the community wants to see and make it happen
 - Begin the thinking now and think 2-3 years down the road
 - Four Rivers can help carry through little initiatives when the time is right
 - Sort yard
 - Wood for Life
 - The Columbine District is ripe to take advantage of some of these creative ideas
 - Other districts have a more classic timber management program
- There is good representation from Four Rivers on the Committees and the Coordinating Council
 - Maintain this level of representation throughout the life of the project

Goal setting for 2023

- Anthony is developing a 2023 workplan for MSI's coordination of Four Rivers
 - Alex Handloff will build a communications plan for the group
 - Julia can continue assisting with note taking and general support, as well as with mapping
 - Laura will help with science and monitoring through the CFLRP
- Develop a website for Four Rivers
 - Share examples of collaborative websites that you like with [Alex and Anthony](#)
- Websites
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 - [Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project](#)
 - [DWRP](#)
 - Will need to hire a subcontractor to develop the website
 - Will be transparent about associated costs
 - Can form a hiring panel if needed
 - Facebook page and Instagram page created by MSI intern last summer
 - Will be updated and maintained
- Host social hours a few times a year
 - "Four Rivers Happier Hour"
 - The group was established during the thick of COVID, so now is the opportunity to reach out further into the community
 - Build relationships from the seeds that have been planted
- Calendar of events for outreach opportunities
 - Animas River Days
 - Farmers markets (Durango, Bayfield)
 - Lo Williams is on the board of the Bayfield farmer's market
- Host meetings out in the community to get more public engagement
 - Keep doors open to stakeholders from San Juan County
 - Move meetings around to different locations
 - Public Lands Center
 - EOC

- Animas Valley Grange
 - La Plata County Fairgrounds
 - Pine River Library in Bayfield
- Track down some non-federal dollars for meeting spaces
- Consider planning a cross-collaborative gathering for the three collaboratives across SJNF
- Opportunities for Four Rivers to involve young people through Fort Lewis
 - Great tools available to provide training while also getting the work done
 - Fort Lewis is trying to improve their forestry program, classes and training opportunities
 - Fort Lewis can bring match for the CFLRP
 - Grant match
 - Abstract fees (course fees)