

Four Rivers Resilient Forest Collaborative

Monthly Meeting

Date: October 20, 2022

Time: 9:00-11:00 AM

Location: MSI Office (679 E. 2nd Ave, Suite 9) and Zoom

In attendance: Anthony Culpepper (MSI), Julia Ledford (MSI), Alex Handloff (MSI), Laura Hanna (MSI), Tim Leishman (SJNF), Lo Williams (SJNF), Jason Lawhon (SJNF), Paulette Church (Falls Creek HOA), Andy Hawk (formerly with Timber Age Systems), Molly Pitts (Colorado Timber Industry Association), Mary Monroe (Durango Trails), Ryan Cox (CSFS), John Radar (SJCA), James Savage (BLM), Steve McClung (CPW), Mike Remke (Fort Lewis College)

Agenda:

- Introductions
- General updates
- Jackson-Falls Integrated Resource Management project
- Future tours/meeting topics
- CFLRP updates

Notes

General updates

- Falls Creek HOA
 - Treated over 30 acres this year
- Timber Age System
 - Andy Hawk left the business to allow them to grow and develop even faster.
 - Timber Age will be sending a new representative to Four Rivers meetings
 - Rapidly developing a 900-sq ft CLT Ponderosa house in Ignacio
 - Could be completed by the end of the year
 - More houses to come after that to serve affordable housing
 - Will be a great case study for how to use local wood for local housing
 - Expected to use 80-85% less energy than a traditional house of equal size
- Durango Trails
 - Removed nearly 500 downed trees from trails this year
 - Improved hundreds of miles of trails
 - Heavily focused on trail use education this year
 - Contributed over 4,000 acres of volunteer hours on public lands

- Colorado State Forest Service
 - Hired a new forester
- BLM
 - Ongoing mechanical projects in the Durango area
 - Actively cutting in the Grandview area
 - Road damaged by contractor in Edgemont-Highlands area, working with that contractor to repair the road
 - Agreement with NFF for Grassy Mountain project
 - Animas City Mountain prescribed fire will be delayed until spring (around March)
 - BLM wasn't able to pull together the resources during the burn window this month
 - Future projects
 - Pile burning at Grandview next winter
 - Exploring ideas for Skyline Drive
- San Juan National Forest
 - Staffing updates
 - Kara Chadwick (formerly Forest Supervisor) accepted a position in Region 5
 - Kara will be with SJNF for a few more weeks
 - Will have an acting Forest Supervisor until the position is filled, hopefully around January
 - Two positions were created and filled by detailers as a trial run this summer. Now have been permanently added to the organizational structure of SJNF under Jason Lawhon:
 - Shared Stewardship Project Coordinator
 - Lo was detailing in for this position
 - Includes lots of reporting and supporting CFLRPs
 - Shared Stewardship Project Communications
 - SJNF just announced a new District Ranger for Columbine, to start on December 6
 - Coming from Dixie National Forest
 - Lots of recreation experience
 - Detailed down in Arizona this summer during the big fires, should be coming to us with good experience
 - Adam Tlachac is filling Matt Tuten's position on the Pagosa District
 - Prescribed fire
 - After the 90-day prescribed fire pause, it was required that all employees involved in prescribed fire attend a prescribed fire engagement session before they do any prescribed fire activities on the ground
 - SJNF staff completed that engagement last Thursday
 - Involved reviewing some of the fires that led to the prescribed fire pause
 - Spent a lot of time discussing how the SJNF operates and how improvements can be made

- Line and staff officers demonstrated their support for the burn boss' decision-making during prescribed fire planning and events
 - Decision-makers get caught between making the right decision on the ground, having the resources to plan and execute the burn, and having support from line officers behind their decision if they need to call off a prescribed burn.
 - There is a lot of pressure to get acres burned.
 - Candid conversations were valuable
 - Missed window for broadcast burning this fall
 - Pile burning planned for the winter
 - Fingers crossed for broadcast burn windows in the spring
- Other updates
 - Wrapping up hauling on Log Chutes service contract
 - Moving slower than expected
 - Intend to contract 4 loads with NFF to Chinley Chapter House
 - Baldy Mountain salvage sale in the Beaver Meadows landscape
 - 840 acres
 - Montrose Forest Products started the project 6 weeks ago, about ¼ way done, will work until there is too much snow
 - Andy McCoy still working on West Prong Road, Trout Creek salvage sale
 - Working with NFF, CSFS, BLM to start designing the Grassy Mountain project
 - Different than Good Neighbor Authority and any other cross-boundary project on the San Juan
 - There are good models of this type of project from other parts of the country
 - Starting to engage with Forest Lakes Metro District
 - Still fundraising, factoring in a high per-acre estimate right now because of diesel prices
 - Trying to complete field work this fall
 - Will send out RFP for potential bidders in May or June
 - NFF submitted FRWRM grant for Grassy Mountain project
 - BLM, CSFS, SJNF worked together to submit letters of support
 - Trying to find more funding for the State land because their parcel is the most dense and complex and has the most dry mixed-conifer
 - Secured \$4 million for Wood for Life
 - Haulers getting questions from the public about what they are doing with a log truck in the desert
 - New signs on trucks are helping to quell those questions
 - Have a few reliable contractors for hauling
- RMRI meeting in Durango went very well
- Dolores District
 - Ongoing manual hand thinning and timber work
 - Working with women-owned companies that employ folks with J-2

- These crews often work at a lower price-point and get work done quickly
 - Challenge: they are bidding on projects all over the country and arrive on short notice
 - Other folks from SJNF are engaging with these crews to establish connections, hoping to utilize the resource while they are already in the area
- Colorado State Forest Service
 - FRWRM grants were due yesterday
 - Looking to get a CAFA grant on the ground for the Rockwood area
- Mountain Studies Institute
 - Marcie Bidwell stepped out as Executive Director last summer
 - Melissa May is the new Executive Director
 - Dana Guinn has filled Aaron Kimple's position as Forest Program Director
 - Alex Handloff started this week as the Collaborative Communications Coordinator
 - Anthony working with Emily Hohman from TNC, discussing ideas about how to develop a Fire Learning Network for Southwest Colorado
 - A Fire Learning Network in Southwest Colorado could:
 - Bring practitioners together to share resources
 - Present the opportunity to learn about and implement projects across boundaries
 - Provide education and outreach surrounding prescribed fire
 - Continue the Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES)
 - Try not to duplicate efforts with Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FACNET)
- La Plata County, WWPF
 - Charging forward with WIIN funding
 - Focused on WUI work in Florida watershed
 - MSI engaged with water quality monitoring in the watershed
- City of Durango
 - Moving forward with work around town
- Beaver Creek Ranch
 - Prescribed burn plan nearly completed
- San Juan Mountains Association
 - Hosting Trails Roundtable next Thursday evening 5:30-7:00 PM at Supervisor's Office, social at Ska afterwards
 - RMRI and CFLRP on the agenda

Junction-Falls Creek Integrated Resource Management EA

- Scoping in official capacity is closed, [online comment](#) has been extended until next Friday
 - Durango Herald article created surge in comments, people understanding how they can participate in the Forest Service planning process
 - ID team will meet next week to begin discussing comments
- Things will move slowly without District Ranger or Recreation Program manager

- Need to discuss a trails coalition among the Forest and how Four Rivers could be involved
 - A trails coalition would involve all trail users, and the group would provide input on EAs and other proposed work
 - Pagosa has a new trails coalition, who is sitting at meetings for Jackson Mountain
 - Their voices are being heard!
 - Stephanie Weber, SJMA, has been floating the idea for the Southwest Colorado Recreation Association (CORA)
 - Osprey has also been involved
 - Not exclusive to trails, representative of all recreation communities
 - Could be an avenue to start a trails coalition
- Public engagement
 - Reach out to the Durango Herald to report about projects like this before they can happen, when the public can still get involved
 - SJNF partners should advertise through their networks and social media

Future tours/meeting topics

- Grassy Mountain tour in mid-April
- Next monthly meeting November 17th
 - Send ideas for meeting topics to Anthony

CFLRP updates

- Submitted work plan
 - Final work plan will be shared with the group
- Andy Hawk selected as Four Rivers representative to Coordinating Council
 - CC has met a few times to finalize the work plan and initial first tasks
 - Andy represents the overall opinion of Four Rivers
 - Four Rivers would like Andy to provide a short summary of CC meetings and decisions that were made, as they pertain to the collaborative
 - Four Rivers needs further discussion about how Andy can represent Four Rivers in the best possible way
- A “clearinghouse” for public engagement and updates with an interactive map and links to NEPA is strongly supported
 - Funding needed for website
 - Interactive map
 - Bidding process for who creates this resource
- Collaboratives written into the proposal as places for project ideas to come from
 - The Collaboratives have already identified priority areas in their respective geographies
 - Four Rivers should revisit prioritization within the next year