

Columbine Resilient Forest Partnership Meeting Notes

Location: The Durango Grange

Time: 9 – 12pm

Action Items/Highlights

Part I

Welcome & Introductions (9 – 9:30)

- Anthony Culpepper (MSI); Mike Remke (MSI); Emily Swindell (MSI); JimBo Buickerood (SJCA); Adam Hirshberg (Stud's Lumber); Amanda Kuenzi (MSI); Tom Ross (logging contractor); Steve McClung (CPW); Adrian Archuleta (CPW); Gigi Richard (FLC); John Miles (beef ranch by Bayfield); Bennett Arnold (firefighter, forest health); Cici (LPCD); Paulette Church (Falls Ck Ranch fire mitigation); Charlie Landsman (WAP); Charles Lanoue (CSFS); Chad Tidwell (HOA board member); Sherry Bowman (LP county district, board of noxious weed commission); Laura Trimboli (NRSC); Cody Robertson (NRCS); Anthony Madrid (Ranger); Aaron Kimple (MSI); Imogen Ainsworth (Durango sustainability coordinator); Ryan Cox (CSFS); Kyle O'Neil (CSFS); Ed Small (resident); Ed Zink (resident); Marcie Bidwell (MSI); Melissa Simmons (CSFS); Justin Chavez (BIA); Jesse Ramirez (BIA); Noah Daniels (Columbine Ranger District); Brad Pietruszka (southwest fire management-BLM?); Tim Leishman (Columbine/Pagosa districts); Jon Westrup (Fire Smart Durango); Ashley Downing (WAP); Luke Kline (NRCS, BHA); Butch Knowlton (Director Emergency Preparedness); Bo Pitman (resident); Dave Rekita (resident); Alexa Martin del Campo (SJNF); Kent Grant (LPCD); Travis Burch (San Juan timber program); Danny Margoles (DWRP); Mike French (MSI); Joe Reddon (WAP, La Plata conservation district); John Ott (Animas Water Company)

Part II

Overview of Collaboratives and Partners (9:30 – 10:45)

Aaron Kimple *could probably include more info below

- Background of existing collaborative efforts across San Juan National Forest
 - San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership (SJHFHP)
 - Important to work across multiple boundaries and landscapes
 - Think of West Fork Fire that crossed Continental Divide and the impacts of wildfire on water systems
 - 2-3-2 (2 watersheds, 3 Rivers, 2 States) Partnership
 - ~5 million acres (approximately the size of New Jersey)
 - Conglomerate of collaboratives is trickier than just local groups

- Hope to put in context potential of collaborative efforts in Columbine area
 - Would be important to communicate across all 3 collaboratives: SJHFHP, 2-3-2, and potential Columbine Collaborative
 - Would want to offer outreach and education across geography
 - Would need to know how to be successful without over-tapping agencies and group efforts

Danny Margoles

- Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest (DWRF) Collaborative established to address wildfire risk to Upper Dolores watershed
- Goals
 - Create resilient and adaptive watershed that maintains economic value and ecological health
 - Identify, assess, and create plans to reduce wildfire risk
 - Promote local timber industry and adaptive management practices
 - Share information and help to inform public of annual wildfire risks
 - Be involved with cooperative fire mitigation and prescribed burn efforts
 - Look at watershed holistically and approach projects on a landscape scale
 - Help with NEPA process
 - Beetle workshops
 - Coordinate individual efforts and address collective goals
- *Question:* How are collaboratives funded and formatted?
 - Structural format about how these groups work include monthly meetings, a coordinating committee, a finance committee, a science committee, a timber industry working group, a risk identification and reduction group, grants (Bureau of Reclamation, Fire Adapted Colorado, etc.)
 - For the SJHFHP: secure federal funding, work closely with CSFS; have a committed coordinator, and seek local contributors like the water sanitation district, conservation district, town of Pagosa and Archuleta County, ranch owners, etc.
 - These collaboratives are built address unique community needs
- *Question:* Relationship between DWRF and private contractors?
 - Have largely been in conversation with the Forest Service including what can be done with small diameter wood (with contractors), how can wood can be taken away in economically viable way, what's most economical uses of small diameter wood, and how can local industry be supported (eg: with beetle-kill wood)
 - Continuing to make connections and conversing with organizations like MSI
 - Cross-laminated timber (PIPO)
 - Important to remember that what's healthy for forests may not be what we want economically
 - Falls Creek contract to take 50 loads highlights importance of private landowners
- *Question:* Biomass facility in Montezuma County

- Chipping? Particle board is expensive, which is a shortfall to building such a facility in southwest

Anthony Madrid

- Have been talking about collaborative for Durango/Columbine area and Columbine Ranger District very interested
- Columbine Ranger District Projects
 - Faucet Gulch (2014)
 - ~14,000 acres
 - Some timber management but mostly prescribed burn
 - Some large landscape burns that have been effective
 - Almost all 14,000 acres have been treated and presently implementing reentry prescribed burns
 - Vallecito-Piedra Integrated Vegetation Management
 - ~80000 acres
- Forest Lakes working with WAP
 - Forest Service is very interested in this collaborative group; lot of public interest
- Agency interests: vegetation management, timber, and fuels
 - Looking to ramp up efforts in timber, fuels, and forest health by working on the landscape level while reducing fire potential
- After 416, Forest Service has heard a lot from the community
- Overall objectives: implement responsible management on landscape scale and prioritize areas to be effective on the ground
 - Collaborative efforts are important for making that happen
- High priority acres/projects are usually multi-jurisdictional and often in the WUI lots of public interest
- July 22nd: Incoming Ranger James Simino
- Commitment to this collaborative will continue
- *Questions and Responses*: The nature of being pro-active is important
 - The more time to plan and implement projects the better, however flooding is concern – this collaborative offers a networking opportunity for private landowners and important organizations, eg: NRCS
 - [1st workshop for Action Plan July 16th at Public Lands Center 9am – 1pm]
 - [Paragon and PG is cross-boundary being generated but could increase substantially]

Charlie Landsman

- Wildfire Adapted Partnership that addresses home and neighborhood scale fire mitigation, specifically Zones 1 and 2
- Driven to be a part of this collaborative because of disputes often heard between neighbors/landowners

- Would like to work with, for example, the Forest Service, BLM, and other landowners to get landscape-scale work completed to treat more contiguous areas

Laura Trimboli

- Past efforts were difficult across La Plata County for the NRCS until working collaboratively with Forest Service and other organizations

Ryan Cox

- 24.4 million acres of woodland forest in Colorado and 19 states that use water from our watersheds
- Community forestry
- Fort Lewis is Tree Campus USA School
- 83 forest agriculture landowners
- Plans and fuels mitigation with P&W
- Would like to connect work that's been done with Elektra Lake
- I&D Facts (beetle-kills stats) – if not treated, 25% of live stems will be negatively impacted/die in 15 years
- 2.9 million ppl living in Colorado WUI with much more that has yet to be developed
- *Response:* In regard to building permits, it's not a bright future unless people are proactive; House Bill 10-4-1 (county commissioners) set to address risks
 - This work is essential, particularly for public involvement and education, and we need to pull education and information together so that people can get together and see important bullet points

Adrian

- CPW has strategic goals whose 1st priority is to conserve forest and habitats to sustain ecosystems
- Works with landowners for habitat and water treatment
- Asks how wildlife is affected by migration corridors and how they respond to treatments
- Regarding developments and projects, it's important to see impact on wildlife populations
- Economy important to highlight
 - Currently struggling with elk recruitment
- Willing to be involved in research, treatments, and with private landowners

Gigi

- Facilitates water dialogues in Southwest Colorado and 4 corners region
- Could contribute collaborative by getting students involved in healthy forest initiatives
- Faculty also involved: Julie Korb, Heidi Steltzer, and others in geomorphology and GIS
- Can provide collaborative space for meetings

Jesse

- Reservations are split with Ponderosa Pine in the north and PJ in the west
- Work is done on both sides and strategy is important because it's a small program
- Work has been completed on Black Ridge fuel breaks, south on Bondad
- Looking into new projects, south of 318/310
- Substantial mechanical work and in-depth work with tribe a lot
- Using Pinon/Juniper as biomass removal for tribal membership (new treatment) and has worked well
- Small fuels crew come from tribe with lots of opportunities with NRCS
- Some interface around HDs
- *Question:* What are priorities?
 - Focused on WUI in area around Bondad, scattered homes and isolated parcels, on east side restoration landscape, and fuels program with fire mitigation

Part III

Areas of interest and *needs* for this collaborative (10:55 – 11:25)

- Education
 - This collaborative is a 1-stop-shop and fastest way to get information to public especially those worried about debris flows, fires, water conservation issues, etc.
 - Bridge connection between climate change, drought, forest health, wildfire, and watersheds across boundaries and the effects downstream to tribal farmers and other water users
 - Fire ecology
 - Public acceptance of smoke and risks associated with fire treatments
 - Emphasizing that fire is going to happen and it's better to have a say in it
 - Defensible spaces and fire-adapted building materials in architecture
 - Example: WAP: Home Ignitions Workshop (WAP) offers and continuing education credits as incentive some kind incentive
- Funding
 - Multi-year grants/funding
 - Need industry to take and make use of wood, especially small diameters and on private land
- Local product and local market
 - Local wood branding, eg: Colorado Proud
 - Encourage purchase of local wood and furniture
 - Capacity can be an issue
 - Need local people to do the work in a healthy, sustainable industry that offers living wage
 - Engage with private industry that helps collaborative to understand what needs are and what is/isn't working
 - Merchandize big wood to places like Home Depot
 - *Examples*

- Majestic Valley Pellets in San Luis Valley: concerns include having enough material because financial aspect is extremely important in our area and there must be financial assistance to offset industry
 - Blanca Forestry Products in San Luis Valley: stud industry is struggling to move material in financially smart manner vs Neiman that has financial backing
- Wildlife and Conservation
 - Corridors important to sustain industries, eg: hunting
 - Noxious weeds often follow disturbances, like forest treatments and timber collection, that can increase fire risk
- Public communication
 - Have multiple means of “getting” the word out
 - Use all media sources with appropriate timing
 - 1. Develop shared message
 - 2. Develop communications strategy to get this message out there
 - 3. Define/envision what success means and how do we incorporate that into our community
 - Make this kind of work popular
- Different forest zones
 - Beetles moving from LP to SJ County
 - Gunnison field office and SJ County; bring staff from Gunnison field office back to SJ County
- Recreation
 - 416 touched on everything in our community: natural setting, wildlife, water, recreation
- Utilities/Power
 - Transmission and power lines

Part IV

Proposed Concepts – everything here is malleable (11:25-12)

- Community involvement
 - Raise awareness in schools and younger kids (Charcoal Forest book)
- Local representatives are not here
 - County commissioners and city government officials invited but were unable to make it
 - Wanted to make sure our collaborative was grounded first before inviting reps from offices of Tipton, Bennet, and Gardner
- Asset Mapping/People Network

What makes this a successful effort?

- Public Involvement Communication
 - Acceptance and support of applications of management tools

- Economy
 - Awareness of ability to support our local economy, eg: lumber, while contributing to healthier forests
 - How to offset financial requirement to get the word out about how and why they sell local materials
 - Involvement with Be Local coupon book
 - Recreation
 - Industrial, ecological, economic, social - weather changes on the landscape
- Communication and Education
 - Broad-scale education tied to objectives of this collaborative
 - Robust communication across all groups and stakeholders that fosters awareness of collaborative needs to public, community, younger people, and elected officials who invest our time and money
- Visitors
 - Well informed and accepting of our local landscapes and needs
 - Demo sites that are tourist attraction
 - Eco-tourism to help restore healthy forests
 - Road signs that highlight our work and concerns, eg: prescribed burns, fire mitigation, etc.
- Internally
 - Implementation of cross-boundary projects and effective sharing of information across all boundaries and other collaboratives, eg: SJHFHP, 2-3-2
 - Ability to adapt to change and new science management
 - Well-coordinated responses to disturbances
- No more “catastrophic” fires

Next Steps

- Meeting in November