

Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest (DWaRF) Collaborative

Meeting 15

4-13-17, 1:30 - 3:30 at Dolores Water Conservancy District Office

In Attendance:

Paul Hollar, Anthony Culpepper, Eric Janes, Derek Padilla, Pam Wilson, Mike Znerold, Ian Barrett, Doug Roth, James Dietrich, Rich Landreth, Bruce Short, Mike Preston, Celene Hawkins, Tanner Hutt, Thurman Wilson, Bill Baker, Rebecca Samulski (facilitating)

Montezuma County Emergency Notification Capability

Paul Hollar, Montezuma County Emergency Services Manager gave a presentation and answered questions about the County's emergency notification capabilities, which they have been working to improve the last 4 ½ years. One of the key components is a system called Nixle, which allows community members to receive alerts and messages from local government agencies. More details can be found at nixle.com. They have also added IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert and Warning System), a system implemented by FEMA in the aftermath of notification problems during Hurricane Katrina. Dolores County and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe also use this system, which allows geographically targeted messages over cellular phone networks. More information on this system, which also adds increased weather alert capability, can be found on the [FEMA website](http://www.fema.gov). Law enforcement and fire protection districts can also alert community residents through these emergency alert services offered by the Cortez/Montezuma County Communications Center.

Problems associated with the Gold King Mine spill into the Anima River prompted people here to be better prepared should problems arise on the Dolores River. Tours and discussions have taken place in the Rico area and emergency notification procedures have been thought through. Montezuma County is working on a public information group and structure. Paul believes that La Plata County's response to the Gold King spill was slowed significantly by letting EPA take the lead and having to work through multiple levels of their bureaucracy. Montezuma County wants to be prepared to respond first in similar situations and let EPA and others sit at their table rather than the other way around.

Derek suggested people do a Google search on "Dixon Apple Orchard" and view those videos for a flood response situation in New Mexico that could also be a learning experience.

In response to a question on hazmat, Paul stated that the County doesn't have many resources and would look to Durango and Telluride for help in larger scale events.

There was some discussion of response to wildfires. Paul stated that it really depends on the details – time of year, other incidents happening, and competition for resources. There was also some discussion about managing natural ignitions on federal lands to achieve resource benefits. Policy doesn't allow that for human-caused fires but it is considered for natural ones, such as lightning-caused fires and can be very cost-effective. Last year about 3,000 acres were managed that way in the Dolores Ranger District. Derek quickly contacts Larry Don Suckla, the designated public lands representative for the Montezuma County Commissioners or James Dietrich to consult in those instances.

Paul said that he would be happy to answer additional questions if people contact him.

Updates:

Becca thanked the people who came to the County Commissioners' Meeting. She thought it went well. Larry Don had some tough questions about when more cutting would actually happen. Mike mentioned that the meeting may be recorded and available on YouTube, but the March 27th recording has not been posted.

Becca met with John Leibowitz, the Executive Director of the Montezuma Land Conservancy, about private lands near Groundhog Reservoir with conservation easements. He will put something about our interests in their newsletter.

MSI's climate change workshop is occurring this week. Becca and Eric went to the overview session.

The [Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative](#) is pulling a lot of information about the Four Corners region together. Kevin Johnson, US Fish and Wildlife Service, is the Coordinator. Check out their website to learn more.

The Southwest Basin Roundtable met yesterday. They mostly discussed a stream management pilot on the San Miguel River, working to integrate recreation with other uses.

Senator Bennet's staff will host a meeting here in the Water Conservancy District Office tomorrow morning to gather input on the Farm Bill.

Celene said that TNC is hosting a teacher in the Uncompahgre River area. She also mentioned that a lot of scientific studies are happening on the Dolores River this year. If you see what looks like scientific instruments in or near the river, please leave them alone.

Mike mentioned that they are looking forward to a really big release on the Lower Dolores. They will keep people notified because of concerns with boating, but it should have good ecological effects.

Aaron is at the first meeting of the new statewide forest health advisory group. Mike is missing due to having multiple meetings here but Becca thinks Norm Bircher is there as well.

Dereck mentioned that the Dolores Ranger District has two timber sales advertised now and they should have 1 to 3 more out later. They also have some burns planned.

Tanner is planning to put on a certified burner course this fall in the Cortez area. Becca will share a flyer on it with this group later.

Mitigation contractor workshops are planned for Pagosa Springs and Durango.

Becca has been working on outreach planning. She requested help from Ann Bond but hasn't heard back from her yet. Becca vetted the prospect of helping with messaging and outreach planning with a connection who has extensive marketing background. Becca would like to use \$1,000 of the \$2,500 we have earmarked for outreach in our budget to pay her (\$50/hour) for help. The group expressed support for this. Eric also requested that she continue trying to get Ann's help, especially her thoughts on local political context.

The Open Standards for Conservation Planning training session (to learn more about this concept, follow this link: <http://cmp-openstandards.org>) hosted by TNC is scheduled for May 17 and 18.

We may need volunteers to represent us at the Dolores River Festival on June 10.

Monitoring

Anthony Culpepper gave a presentation about forest resource monitoring. Anthony gave an overview of different types of monitoring approaches including implementation monitoring (did we do what we said we would?), effectiveness monitoring (did it work?), and validation monitoring (do the assumptions we made appear to be valid?).

Anthony also gave an overview of eight different monitoring projects that the Mountain Studies Institute has led on the Pagosa Ranger District and adjacent private lands. He explained several different monitoring techniques they have used and suggestions from the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) for the future. MSI has worked with US Forest Service research and field people, the National Forest Foundation, and CFRI on these projects. MSI has received some funding from the US Forest Service to help DWaRF with monitoring. There will be more discussion and perhaps a field exercise on this at the May 11 tour.

Becca will share Anthony's PowerPoint presentation on Google Drive.

Next Meeting: We will have a tour on May 11 – details to follow. Next meeting – June 7, from 1:30 to 3:30 at the Dolores Water Conservancy District Office in Cortez.

Notes by Thurman Wilson with Becca Samulski edits