

Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest (DWaRF) Collaborative

Meeting 11

10-2-16, 1:30 - 3:15 at Dolores Water Conservancy District Office

In Attendance:

Pam Wilson, Derek Padilla, Shauna Jensen, James Dietrich, Ryan Cox, Scott Clow, Rich Landreth, Bruce Short, Doug Pickering, Mike Preston, Ken Curtis, Celene Hawkins, Aaron Kimple, Thurman Wilson, Rebecca Samulski (facilitating)

Updates:

Celene noted that the Dolores River Restoration Project, which is focused on the lower portion of the River, has an annual meeting scheduled for November 16 in Grand Junction.

Becca did an update of last month's tour of Community Assistance Funding on Adjacent (CAFA) Lands project areas. FireWise received a \$249,000 grant for work in the Joe Moore area. These funds, which used to be referred to as Stevens Grants, are for treatments on adjacent non-federal lands to protect communities when hazard reduction treatments are planned on National Forest System lands. One of the stops was the Ute Mountain Ute's Adams Ranch, which has decade+ old machine built piles. When it was logged by the Raglands the Tribes intention was to make the piles of non-merchantable material available to tribal members for firewood but not much was removed. The group discussed ways to reduce the likelihood of this situation happening in the future. \$11,000 of the CAFA funding received is intended for burning these old piles.

The tour participants then looked at some State lands along the Chicken Creek Ditch for which we have some fuels reduction funding. The next stop was on USFS lands northwest of Joe Moore Reservoir that had been lightly harvested earlier. They had also been marked for another timber sale but the company defaulted before harvesting the area. The group talked about the US Forest Service's objectives there. The tour concluded at a piece of federal land overlooking Joe Moore Reservoir where people could see the intermix of private, state and federal lands. This stop included a discussion about how to incorporate wildlife needs into fuels reduction projects.

Derek said that having good partners and the collaborative environment is making the San Juan National Forest and the Dolores Ranger District more competitive for Regional Forester's supplemental funds. He said that about 15 of these projects were funded Region-wide last year. The San Juan submitted four proposals this year – one in coordination with Rio Grande and Carson National Forests, one Forest-wide, one on the Dolores District and one on the Pagosa District. Right now all four are ranked in the Region's top 15. It may be tough to get all proposals funded from one Forest but our collaborative efforts are really helping. Derek thanked the group.

Derek also let the group know that they were evaluating a lightning-caused fire in the Salter Y area for potential management vs. full suppression. This fire was subsequently named the Knolls Fire and had grown to 362 acres as of November 15.

Becca explained a handout on our current financials. As of the meeting, we had a balance of \$2,117.29 and should soon get a \$2,000 reimbursement from the Southern Rockies Fire Science Network. She noted the \$4,045 income entries and explained that we should have that amount coming in monthly as part of the Cohesive Strategy funding. The Protect Montezuma Water group is disbanding and has agreed to give the \$3,300 left in their budget to us to use for outreach on a per request basis. Based on the budget discussion in September, Becca will work with Celene on an outreach plan and present this to the Protect Montezuma Water stakeholders to invoice for their account balance. Becca will continue providing financial updates quarterly.

Becca made a funding request to the City of Cortez, as suggested at the previous meeting, but we received a letter that we weren't selected as one of the City fund recipients. Rich offered to visit with the City Council. The group thought that explaining ourselves to the Council would be useful even if they don't reconsider us for funding this year. Becca will coordinate with Rich on follow-up written and verbal presentations to the Cortez City Council.

Becca asked Montezuma County to include an item in their budget for DWaRF but hasn't heard if a decision had been made. James said they are still working on the budget.

We will not receive the BLM funds this year that had been supporting the Montezuma County FireWise Coordinator. They intend to put all of their funding into a source that supports treatments on the ground as opposed to their Community Assistance funds that could also support finding and supporting the work.

The Ponderosa Pine Connection went well but could have used more Montezuma and Dolores County participation. There were good presentations and discussions. Becca hopes to bring some of these presentations to the DWaRF collaborative at future meetings.

Shauna and Becca gave an update on risk assessment progress. The AGUA folks in Tucson, after a conference call with the risk assessment team, thought they could produce some additional things beyond what we were asking for. They promised to provide a demo within a few weeks for people to see. They gave us a cost estimate of \$17,579.17 but that includes doing more than we were thinking we needed. Shauna will get back to them with a counter offer for less detail and customization and less cost. We had hoped to get the work done for around \$5,000 but could probably go up to \$7,000 with our current budget. We could not pay them \$17,000 without finding another funding source.

There was some discussion of a different kind of analysis that the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) team is doing. It is more of a cost assessment – how to get the best bang for your buck. The risk assessment team had decided not to pursue this at this time.

Aaron and Pam did an update on the Colorado Forest Collaboratives meeting they attended in Keystone. There appears to be about 30 collaborative groups focused on forest management in Colorado; twenty were represented at the meeting. Aaron has been attending these meetings for the last five years. It is probably important for us to continue to participate to increase our visibility at the State level. Senator Roberts nominated Aaron and Mike to be part of a new State-level forest health advisory group.

Aaron attended the Colorado Watershed Assembly, which is focused on water quality, and talked about forest health and the connections between forests and rivers. It was a good chance for interaction with people that share our water quality concerns but haven't been as focused on the connections with surrounding forestlands. The Society for Ecological Restoration is planning to do a workshop on that topic next year.

The Nature Conservancy is going to host a Water Fund workshop on the connections between downstream water users and upstream forests – how to get funding help from downstream users to manage and protect the sources of their water. We want to send a team of Celene, Ann Oliver, Becca and Aaron. It will be a chance to learn from some people like Anne Bradley and Laura McCarthy that are having success with this. You can follow this link to a TNC webpage with more on what they are doing in the Santa Fe watershed:

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/newmexico/howwework/santa-fe-water-fund.xml>. We've submitted an application to attend the workshop so that we can try to bring back some ideas to implement here. We should hear in December if we are selected. Becca mentioned a creative opportunity to leverage the great volunteer work happening on private land to leverage funding for work on other lands in something like a "thin-a-thon", but she sincerely pledged not to pursue a "thin-a-thon" anytime soon!

Next Steps:

Becca and Rich will schedule a visit with the Cortez City Council.

Shauna and Becca will request a new budget proposal for about 3 weeks (as opposed to 6) of work from the AGUA team. (Received revised proposal for 3 weeks at \$5,039.59).

Becca will get the demo site team back together before the next DWaRF meeting to talk about opportunities within the CAFA project landscape.

Becca will set up a meeting about the CAFA work with Colorado Parks and Wildlife at Joe Moore Reservoir after hunting seasons end.

Becca will schedule a training session on Open Standards (January 24 &25).

Becca will visit with Dolores County about funding opportunities. She will also provide updates to the Montezuma and Dolores County Commissioners (Jan. 3 – 10:00 – 10:30 am).

The **Biomass Working Group** needs to meet. (Nov. 21)

Becca will try to work out a date with Brad so that he can make a presentation on modeling work for the assessment and get some feedback from us. (Jan. 4th will work for Brad)

Becca will work on setting up a contractor's tour for the CAFA project and more industry outreach. (Nov. 30)

Next Meeting: We will skip December and go back to our normal first Wednesday schedule in January – January 4, from 1:30 to 3:30 at the Dolores Water Conservancy District Office in Cortez.

Notes by Thurman Wilson with Becca Samulski edits