

Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest (DWRF) Collaborative

Meeting 22

2-7-18, 1:30 - 3:30 at Dolores Water Conservancy District Office

In Attendance:

Rachel Medina, James Dietrich, Ken Curtis, Mike Preston, Clay Tillia, Derek Padilla, Jerald Peabody, Amanda Brenner-Cannon, Steve Underwood, MB McAfee, Ashley Downing, Les Kole, Al Myatt, Jimbo Buickerood, Rich Landreth, Eric Janes, Sunny Williams, Steve Garcher, Floyd Cook, Liz Manus, David Sitton, Ryan Cox, Becca Samulski

Updates:

Becca worked with Mike P, Ken C., and Thurman W. to apply for a Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART grant for approximately \$50,000 of capacity building funds for each of two years. We will hopefully know if it is awarded to DWRF by the end of May. We requested strategic planning and outreach planning support as well as facilitation support the watershed wildfire protection plan and source water protection plans.

At the January meeting when Becca tried to get someone to take leadership on watershed scale wildfire protection plan, no one jumped on board. This showcased the need for additional paid coordination for the group and Becca worked with the DWRF Coordinating Team to contract with Misty Fowlds to help with outlining the watershed wildfire protection plan and selecting a website contractor. The request for logo, branding and website design proposals should be out by the end of the week.

Becca is working on getting piles burned at Butler Corner where the group toured in October. If anyone wants to come and burn piles, they can volunteer. Notice will be sent.

Mike Preston attended CWCB Water Congress last week. The forest health panel that he organized was very well received. The Colorado Water Conservation Board and many other water stakeholders are ready to be more engaged in forest health issues. The summer Water Congress will likely have some workshops and breakouts that include forest issues. Mike also attended a special meeting with the Montezuma County Commissioners and CSFS on Jan. 31st. Montrose Forest Products is proposing a \$20m investment to retool their mill to process ponderosa pine studs and they needed to be able to haul at state highway overweight limits on all roads to make this feasible. Montezuma County approved a request to allow hauling of overweight loads up to 97,000 lbs for transportation of wood products.

Clay Tillia has been working at Ken Stock's Mill and is looking into biomass electricity generation from the wood waste and the two pine mills on Hwy 184. He is happy to see action being taken and logs being released as commercial timber by the San Juan National Forest. He is motivated to help address the beetle infestation issue in the ponderosa.

Jerald Peabody has finally about gotten the go ahead with the Reserve Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) grant to carry out thinning on Ute Mountain Ute tribally owned ranches. State Forest Service has marked the units and they'll be dealing with the pine killed trees in Cherry Creek and doing some more thinning in Adams Ranch off highway 184. He is always looking for more opportunities to see this wood used.

Ryan Cox has everything marked for RTRL projects and they are just waiting for final environmental and cultural resource compliance approval. There are about 122 acres in Montezuma County and 68 acres of thinning in Cherry Creek.

Dave Sitton said he has markets for blue stain pine. They ship most of their paneling out of state. But there is still way more timber than they have a market for, but he is working on getting into some big box stores. Most of the current blue-stain is lodgepole pine coming from Canada. Ponderosa pine is more challenging to work with, but Aspen Wall Wood has been working on timber sales in the lake canyon area.

Jimbo Buickerood expressed some concerns and said he had a lot of questions about the Montrose Forest Products expansion.

More details are needed about their interests. They just want the larger dimensional sawlogs and as a collaborative, we still need to find ways to get the smaller diameter material that is critical to restoration thinnings used or removed. Who will pay for the road maintenance? Where will the crews come from and who will benefit from the sales taxes? He wants to make sure that the overall health of the watershed is maintained in the forefront as we get excited about the prospect of new demand for green pine. We need to be ahead with the science and think ahead before work gets set on the ground. Becca responded that this is exactly why we have the DWRF Collaborative and that making sure DWRF Goals are being met with larger scale timber sales will be in our groups utmost interest. Mike expressed that the science is well documented for the ponderosa pine. But Jimbo responded that we don't have the answers to the economics or how MFP practices and needs line up with the science. Derek responded that there will be max diameters on tree removal and that this logging will be based on forest health prescriptions. There is still a huge need to figure out what to do with the small material. The spruce-fir sale was a way to help keep montezuma loggers in business. The Dolores District is initiating another environmental analysis for a large area of ponderosa pine with hopes of a proposed action in March/April. The Environmental Assessment for Prescribed Fire in the pine zone should be out in the next 2-3 weeks.

Liz Manus mentioned research from Canada and West that is analyzing "super trees," the trees that are still standing after an infestation. If super trees can be identified, maybe there is a way to protect these trees in logging areas.

Becca said that people from the Gunnison Field Office who have been working with Montrose Mill and another forested watershed collaborative have been invited down for the March DWRF Stakeholder meeting. We hope to get incite from them on their collaborative. What's working? What's not? And on working with MFP. There is also a meeting scheduled in Mancos on Feb. 13 with Conservation Districts, NRCS, USFS, CSFS, and FireWise to look at opportunities to get more work done on private lands. We will look at what kind of treatments we want to see and how to reach those landowners. Cindy Dvergsten is on board to help out with market research and wood business support through the Small Business Development Center. She is a great resource for one on one support for timber folks. A couple of industry folks have already started working with her.

Vision:

At this point, participants split into two groups. One group got to review the base map and initial vision graphics. The group made some suggestions and additions which James will work on incorporating into the graphics.

Goals Language:

Liz Manus facilitated review of the past goals language process and presented revised goal language based on the January meeting. These goals were much closer. Additions were made to incorporate education into the goal language. Language about enabling "projects" was changed to suggest more long-term effectiveness. Liz should have a final of these before the end of February.

Next Steps:

- DWRF plans to have a booth again at the Dolores River Festival. If a sponsor has a space and does not want to use it, contact Becca. (DWCD will sponsor). We should consider if DWRF should also have a presence in the river parade. Additional requests for help for this event will be forthcoming.
- Everyone wants to see projects on a map to represent visually where everyone has been working. The San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Collaborative has a good GIS template for collecting this across ownerships and the WaterSMART grant could support this. In the meantime, Becca asked if she created a project spreadsheet, if appropriate participants would populate it. This is something we could draw from to solicit spatial layers. Jimbo confirmed that these don't all have to be forest projects, they could include diversion or water delivery improvements in the watershed.
- DWRF and FireWise will also have a booth and lessons at the CALF exhibits (youth learning program) at the Ag Expo, March 15-17. Assistance with the booth would be great and she will send more info.

Notes by Amanda Brenner-Cannon with Becca Edits and additions

Next meeting: March 7