

Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest (DWaRF) Collaborative

Meeting 14

3-1-2017, 1:30-3:30 at Dolores Water Conservancy District

Rebecca Samulski, Greg Kemp, Eric Janes, Richard Morris, Ian Barrett, Brad Pietruszka, Charles Linew, Pat Seekins, Dwayne Findley, Rich Landreth, Jimbo Buickerood, Celene Hawkins, Mike Preston, Ryan Cox, Shauna Jensen

Round Robin Updates

- Celene Hawkins, The Nature Conservancy
- Dwayne Findley, Findley Logging - Going to be logging some beetle killed pine near the Glad. Nothing has come through in Cherry Creek yet.
- Jimbo, San Juan Citizens Alliance, Met with Regional Forester, discussed collaborative work and San Juan Headwaters and DWaRF work.
- Ryan Cox, Colorado State Forest Service
- Rich Landreth, City of Cortez Water
 - The City of Cortez previously worked on source water protection planning, but no plan was finalized. The City may re-initiate funding and completion of source water protection planning. Discussion: DWaRF's forest health work may be an important piece of source water protection work, although there are other important pieces that may be outside of this group's work.
- Mike Preston, DWCD, Aaron Kimple and Mike Preston were appointed to the Forest Health Advisory Council (CO state). In an initial call with the coordinator for the Council, Mike highlighted DWaRF work, including industry participation, risk assessment, pilot projects, etc.
 - It is a good idea for this group to continue earmarking things that Mike and Aaron can bring to the Council's attention.
- Pat Seekins, USFS Dolores District, Prescribed fire plan—Dolores—funding for 4,000-5,000 acres (and plan to continue or increase that annually). They plan to burn three areas as conditions allow; an area on Haycamp, the area near where Dwayne Findley is logging, and an area adjacent to Lone Mesa State Park.
 - Looking for further opportunities moving forward
 - Working on landscape-scale NEPA to support burn work in new areas, 1-1.5 years. Focused on reducing oak understory in Ponderosa Pine forest.
 - Discussion: need for messaging on prescribed fire in the Ponderosa Pine forest (public perception of killing trees on burns that have improved stands)
 - Seasonal outlook: significant widespread moisture. Below average fire season anticipated west of divide in CO, but we will know more in April.
- Shauna Jensen, USFS SJNF
 - Forest Priorities: Hermosa area, Travel management, Ecosystem resiliency (spruce-fir), Priority watersheds for restoration (Chicken Creek is a priority watershed)
- Ian Barrett, SWCO BLM, Prescribed burn plans: 1,000 acres above Dolores River (west side)
 - Working on a risk assessment in the Tres Rios office, similar to the exercise with DWaRF. The BLM is also using this tool to guide treatments in the future.
 - Discussion: coordination of post-fire modeling work, DWaRF and Tres Rios office.
- Charles Linew, SW District BLM CO
- Greg Kemp, Interested Citizen

- Eric Janes, Interested Citizen
- Richard Morris, WQ Specialist, UMUT
- Rebecca Samulski, Firewise/DWaRF Coordinator
 - Rescheduling Open Standards for Conservation Training
 - Rescheduling presentation Jim Worrall on future modeled forest conditions
 - Paul Hollar will likely be able to provide an overview on Emergency Response capabilities at the April meeting and MSI will come present about monitoring protocols on forest health projects

The group was divided into three working groups to answer some questions and do planning on a “marking and monitoring tour”, “Better Fire Outcomes,” and “Water Fund”. Each group spent about 30 minutes discussing the issues and direction for DWaRF, then reported back to the whole group.

Marking and Monitoring Tour (Dwayne F., Ryan C., Mike P.)

Dwayne: concerned about actually marking trees for an exercise, better idea of going to his active logging operation in the bug pine or go to the state section by Joe Moore, or an active logging site by Cherry Creek. Opportunity to see an active logging operation is important and rare.

Dave Casey has 600 acres marked in Chicken Creek (freshly marked) where we might be able to visit some place that is already marked (can discuss why trees are marked and where).

May be able to look at a mechanical and prescribed fire sites.

Bring the DWaRF group, the Cortez Journal, Free Press, and County Commissioners to the field trip to highlight the work.

Date: to be determined. May 9, 11, 25. Dwayne thinks May is a good time, but specific work happening will depend on spring conditions.

Promoting Better Fire Outcomes in 2017 (Pat S., Ian B., Brad P., Greg K., Charles L., Jimbo B.)

Messaging from DWaRF and similar groups are important. Having a public-friendly meeting or source (including field trips) for the public to understand why we burn would be helpful for fire managers.

Discussed hunter education (adding piece for wildland fire)

Canned video, 1 pager

Dolores District of the San Juan has a one pager they plan to distribute during prescribed fires this year. It may be advantageous for DWaRF and BLM to use this same 1 pager to ensure consistent messaging.

Water Fund (Celene H., Shauna J., Richard M., Eric J., Rich L.) - Aaron Kimple, Celene Hawkins, Becca Samulski, and Anne Oliver are attending a water fund workshop in Santa Fe in the beginning of May to explore the feasibility of a San Juan/ Dolores Four Corners Water Fund.

Potential user funders: Cortez, MWC, Dolores, irrigation users, FRE, funding for biological aspect, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. San Juan involves different towns (Farmington, Bloomfield, etc), Navajo Nation, Lake Powell/interstate water users, but the group is concerned about the scale of a water fund. If we pull from a larger area, we don't want to risk our local water user support being siphoned to other projects.

Structure: Up in the air. It should be a collaborative group. Lots of questions of scale, Dolores versus regional Dolores/San Juan. Questions about other examples in intermountain west. Specific concerns about managing a regional water fund—will this cause competition within the region and ultimately not result in improvements in a particular watershed? Weather modification programs are funded and controlled by specific investors (water districts, ski areas), but receives funding by other states—explore this model here? Consider including sportspeople (hunters, fishers) in cities where interests coincide with water users.

Creative ideas: need to figure out how funds would be distributed. Some erosion control, bank stability. Questions about size of basin versus population base (Can a water fund work with smaller cities and a very large forested area?). There is no model out there for this. Most US water funds involve large populations and relatively small source water areas.

Finally, Becca asked for some input on **Marketing and Outreach Ideas** in the remaining minutes of the meeting.

Messaging is an important piece of the marketing work in the coming year. Eric asked if any of the stakeholders have access to an external affairs, marketing/communications person? DWCD mentioned that some messages on lake issues have gone through Ann Bond. Pat expressed that she has been a great person to help hone the message and get it out broadly.

Becca expressed that she would like to focus on private lands, private landowners' piece (based on risk assessment, HVRA analysis), especially Rico, Groundhog, and West Dolores for community efforts.

Involvement of Montezuma Land Conservancy (cross-walking public outreach to similar audiences) will be key.

The group felt that engaging youth as possible would be very beneficial, as they are the next stewards of these lands: school outreach, SWOS community service/field trips or work with students, other programs to get kids out into nature (Montezuma Inspire Coalition), Teacher in the Public Lands or similar programs

Next Steps

April meeting—Thursday, April 13th, 1:30-3:30 PM DWCD Office

Climate workshop—MSI hosted April 12th, 13th - *Eric and Becca looked into this. DWaRF will participate in the Climate Smart Planning overview on April 11th, but will not send a team to the 12-13th workshop.