

Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest (DWRF) Collaborative Stakeholders Meeting (23)
3-7-18, 1:30 - 3:30 at Dolores Water Conservancy District Office

In Attendance

Clay Tillia- West Fork Lumber

Mike Preston- DWCD

Eric Janes - Retired BLM

Todd Gardiner -GMUG USFS

Duncan Rose- Trout Unlimited

Sonny Frazier- Dove Creek Town Manager

Ashley Downing- FireWise

Rich Landreth- City of Cortez

David Casey –SJNF Dolores Timber

Misty Fowlds- DWRF

Doug Roth- GIS County

Rachel Medina- GIS County

Bruce Short- Consulting Forester

Becca Samulski - DWRF

Floyd Cook – Dolores County Commissioner

Bill Baker- Retired Ecologist

The group began with a round of introductions that involved paper airplanes.

Uncompahgre Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project Power Point Presentation-

Todd Gardiner from the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forest presented on the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP) out of the Norwood District of the Uncompahgre as the USFS coordinator for this CFLRP. He worked for Dolores Ranger District for years. The GMUG CFLRP is a collaborative grant that is a 10 year grant based around forest restoration. Key aspects of the CFLRP include multi-party monitoring and social economic goals. GMUG is in its 9th year now. The group took a look at a map of all CFLRPs in the United States.

History- GMUG CFLRP started in 2000, which was called Public Land Partnerships. They were awarded funding in 2010 - \$8.6 million over 10 years. The land in the CFLRP is Forest Service land but they have been collaborating with BLM, State, and Private. The grant covers a lot of activities including prescribed burning treatments. Even trail work is covered. Their group has a lot of partners including schools where students can participate and receive both paid and unpaid internships and assist in monitoring activities. Their umbrella group is called Western Colorado Landscape Collaborative.

Successes- Their Successes included getting good engagement with scientists and getting stakeholders out on ground. The big questions they were addressing were -What were forest like pre Euro-American settlement and how has the forest changed over time. Bill Baker was part of this scientific research on the Uncompahgre Plateau.

A large portion of the CFLRP model works with an adaptive NEPA process for the full management scope, rather than site specific project NEPA. This allows for lots of leeway and flexibility. It is more efficient because it does not force activities to have to go through NEPA process over and over, which can be time consuming. Also, implementation goes more smoothly making it a dream document to work under. One of the keys to their success was what they chose to focus on for an end goal- avoid undesirable conditions (instead of looking for perfect outcomes). With an adaptive management focus on how they could do it better than they had done it before and multi-party monitoring to guide projects, it was acceptable to the collaborative to not debate over finer details that would keep them from getting anything done.

They now propose what projects they want to do. That goes to executive committee who then decide if they will take that to stakeholders meeting. This is followed by project implementation and multi-party monitoring. A total of 10% of funds go to monitoring keep science engaged, keep transparency, and feed

into the adaptive management loop. Projects are varied, including stream enhancement working with Trout Unlimited doing work around barriers for trout.

In addition there are fieldtrips, summer campouts, and a fall monitoring “jam” session to let everyone talk through their monitoring questions and decide where they are going to send their funding the next year.

Timber Industry - The group discussion switched to the Timber Industry. Gardiner said that having Montrose Forest Products (MFP) in their backyard is huge benefit. Most of the 85,000ccf off the GMUG is going there. A lot of the small material goes to Colorado Wood Company and they figure out what to do with it, but with the decks piling up, it is clear that they have a similar issue with finding markets for products other than logs.

The group asked what is done with Aspen. There are currently no good outlets for this on the GMUG. Then folks asked about other biomass slash material. Gardiner said it is burned, hauled off to make into chips, or is scattered in the forest. MBP does not have stewardship contract. Most of the timber coming off the forest is beetle kill.

Challenges- GMUG CFLRP biggest challenges are dealing with biomass and small stuff. Aspen regenerates fast which gives flexibility to contracts. They want aspen contractors so they sell the timber for as little as they can (\$1 CCF). Someone asked about their prices for other wood. Spruce is \$45 CCF, doing stuff at lowest rate to sell timber (so they don't have to pay for beetle kill timber to be hauled off). Engleman Spruce \$25 CCF. Another person asked how many acres of treatment does GMUG get in a year? On average, 1-2,000 acres of stewardship work in the CFLRP. It has been challenging to get fire on ground because the elevation is lower (8-9,000 ft.) and in this area some terrain is moist while other areas are quite dry so the burn windows are off, or there may be a moratorium on all fire that year. So they are way behind where they want to be on prescribed burning. Someone asked how are you choosing areas? The environmental assessment directs this, good access is key, commercial timber, drier mixed conifers, but they do not have a lot of WUI in that area, which is quite different compared to the large units on the Dolores District. Another question came up around Doug Fir. The Montrose mill is not currently taking it. Would it be possible for loggers from here to get Doug Fir from GMUG? Clay Tillia connected with Todd Gardiner to luck at getting some of those decks.

Where they are now- The CFLRP funding runs out end of 2018 then their big question is what to do. Because there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. Balancing talk with action is critical and also look at before and after treatment. CFLRP's have been politicized and zeroed out by the President last year, but congress refunded it. It is zeroed out again in the President's budget, but it is hopeful that Congress will again fund it. GMUG now sees this as an opportunity to redefine what they want to do moving forward.

A question Gardiner asked the group was, “Is there a possibility to work across forest boundaries, other collaborative are doing this. We all face similar problems can we learn from each other and work together?” Ideas for issues to work on included: Spruce bud worm problem, business opportunities as we face similar challenges, sharing knowledge, organizing Colorado marketing plan and way commerce works around byproducts, sharing knowledge on multi-party monitoring (MCHS, and Conservation Corp for internships here), increasing prescribed fire capacity.

DWRF Updates-

Becca Samulski - Environmental Assessment came out yesterday for Dolores Prescribed Fire Pine Ecosystem Restoration Project. This is huge. It covers the whole pine zone on the Dolores District of the SJNF. Becca will share it out for comments and will draft a letter with comments and support from DWRF for group review.

Website updates- not very many responses to the RFP with proposals due today. Kudos to Rachel for passing this along to a web developer she knows. We did get one proposal that looks very good from Hello Zark in Mancos.

FireWise needs volunteers at Ag Expo to help with lessons on campfire safety, March 15, 16, 17.

The meeting on outreach and our collective wildfire preparedness messaging for this fire season should be ready next week. This will address consistent messaging around wildfire preparedness in the community. Look for a calendar invite. Beetle workshop dates set, April 17/18th. There will be a professional track and public track. The Colorado Water Conservation Board want to see more Beetle workshops and outreach through summer. In fact we got more funding for that than we asked for.

Dave Casey - Forest Service is advertising a 7,500 CCF 3 year contract- stewardship contract, just went out.

Mike Preston - There have been proposals brought about by the Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC) - Government Immunity, slash piles building up around state, and pushing for a fire funding fix. Federal debate got hung up on whether to use 4, 10, or 20 year funding authorization. There was progress that it looks like funding for other programs could be released earlier. The FHAC also specified not to us "fire borrowing" term anymore, as there has never been any intention that these funds will be paid back to other programs. FHAC will devote a half day meeting to look at prescribe fire non-profits getting involved to move much more aggressively to promote prescribed fire.

Misty Fowlds- Watershed Wildfire Protection Plan group is re-convening and the WWPP outline is currently being worked on. County is still needing data for WWPP. After data is captured they will work on breaking landscape up into management units. They are looking at what is needed to mitigate risk (broad risk) bridges, and values we have identified.

Sonny Frazier - Working with Dolores County to see how harvesting might impact their water quality at the town treatment plant from thinning and roads and how to address problem areas to protect source water. MFP came and talked to them. Project will run 25 years.

Bruce Short - Forester Chapter meeting happening March 19th, 20th 21st at Sky Ute Casino, talking about markets, tariffs-to export regulations and the effects of this on forest management. They will also look at contracts for mills. JR Ford will be there from Pagosa Springs. Ellen Roberts will speak there. Flyer will get sent out.

Eric Janes - Club 20 member policy meeting in Grand Junction- few of commissioners from Cortez, covered public lands and forest health, Ellen Roberts was there. DOI re-organization, drought was overarching.

Mike Preston -There is currently carryover storage at McPhee, meet our allocations but lake will get pulled down quickly. Dolores Project could be shorted 10-15%. Look conservatively at soil moisture, keep water from running off into river. Ken will be working at the board meeting to get information out to group, public meeting March 12th 1:30. All monitoring information done last year will be in this meeting.

Duncan Rose - Trout Unlimited has been doing some stream temperature monitoring. They are also working with Forest on see results from last DNA analysis on cut throat of which species are where. Authority for CPW to raise fees at risk in the budget. Waiting for this bill to come out of house.

Becca Samulski - There will be a spreadsheet project tracking sent out soon. There is an Environmental Assessment on prescribed fire will go out as well with a focus on protecting values in watershed.

Rebecca posed a question to the group- Should we open up to public meeting to share all the work everyone has been doing? Interested public might already be coming. Do we have the products to share such as present on 3 key areas: timber, WWPP, Larger group? Someone suggested it might be better to invite the public to meet outdoors and put it off until May. With that the group adjourned.

Next Meeting:

April 4th 2018, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at DWCD