Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest (DWARF) Collaborative
Meeting 5
3-9-16, 10:00 -12:00 at Dolores Water Conservancy District Office

In Attendance:
Ken Curtis, Mike Zion, Mike Preston, Derek Padilla, Eric Janes, Bruce Short, Ryan Cox, Jimbo Buickerood, Dave Harper, Shauna Jensen, James Dietrich, Doug Roth, Rex Robichaux, Rich Landreth, Norm Bircher, Duncan Rose, Brad Kemp, Doug Pickering, Selene Hawkins, Harold Raglan, Dewayne Findley, David Casey, Thurman Wilson, Rebecca Samulski (facilitating)

Announcements:
Rick Cooksey, Regional Director for USFS State and Private Forestry, toured projects near Pagosa Springs on Tuesday and is visiting ones near Bayfield today. Aaron, Becca, Pam, Mike P. and Jimbo have all had a chance to visit with him on this trip and discuss what we are doing in Dolores. This is part of our on-going effort to increase awareness of what we are doing in Southwest Colorado with people working at the state, regional and national levels.

Tony Cheng (Colorado Forest Restoration Institute), Mike Battaglia (USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station), and Jason Sibold (Colorado State University) will be conducting a spruce-fir workshop on March 21.

Jim Furnish, retired Deputy Chief of the USFS and former San Juan NF planner, will be part of a panel discussion (along with Kara Chadwick, Jimbo Buickerood, and Aaron Kimple) about the role of collaborative groups in forest management at 6:30, Wednesday, March 23 at the Fort Lewis College Student Union Building Ballroom.

Group Name
Becca reviewed the names that had previously been suggested for the group and asked for a decision. Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest (DWARF) Collaborative was adopted by consensus.

Assessment Boundary
We reviewed a map of the area to include in the assessment of wildfire risk to watersheds. The group agreed to add a polygon to the west of the area we had agreed to in the previous meeting to add the area that feeds the Dove Creek Pump Station in addition to the area that drains into McPhee Reservoir. There was some discussion about whether the Disappointment drainage should also be added because of its importance for wildlife habitat but the group decided not to because it didn't fit as well with the primary concern, water supplies.

Risk Assessment Working Group
Shauna gave an update. Brad Pietruszka (Tres Rios BLM Fuels Specialist) can support the fire-risk modeling using FlamMap (http://www.firelab.org/project/flammap). It is less complicated than the HVRA system discussed at the previous meeting but should provide the outputs needed, including burn probability, flame length, fire size by vegetation type, and burn perimeter. We can then crosswalk this with the values at risk. Model variables include, slope, aspect, and vegetation condition class (a classification of how well current vegetation conditions match historical fire regimes).

Rex and Doug (Montezuma County GIS Department) gave a presentation on the GIS data they have been compiling on values for the assessment. So far they have mostly worked on aquiring and buffering infrastructure. They have data layers for: the assessment area; county boundaries; facilities – roads, bridges (Montezuma County only so far), culverts, parcels and address points (best measure of where buildings are and can cluster to show development density); NHD hydrology – streams, water bodies, and watersheds; vegetation types; land use; planimetric data – power plants, transmission lines, pipelines, pump stations, and trails; viewsheds (areas visible from high people-use areas), habitat for deer, elk, and sage grouse; and mines. They will get more water data such as headgates and other diversions from the Colorado Department of Water Resources.

There was a suggestion to talk more with the Town of Rico to see if they have any GIS data that would be helpful. Ken volunteered to visit with Mike English about this. Derek mentioned that the San Juan Forest Plan designated a Rico Special Management Area that has special watershed protection provisions. There was a question about whether there is any coal seam data that would be helpful. The wildlife data might need more clarification (critical winter range versus summer habitat). There is an assumption that the Forest Service would take a hard look at critical wildlife concerns, threatened and endangered species, etc. related to any project proposal and bring that data in. There were suggestions to add existing conservation easements, instream flow reaches, wetlands, outstanding

waters (State designation), and abandoned minelands (Brent Lewis with the BLM in Denver might be able to help with this).

Values at Risk
Becca showed the group the current version of a "values at risk" worksheet. Some of the items so far identified include water, residences, power lines, producing agricultural lands, and high value recreation sites. The group agreed that water and private land improvements were very high priority (10 on a 1-10 scale). There was a question about whether timber industry should try to identify specific areas they think are most important or if the suitable timberlands mapping in the forest plan is specific enough for our needs. (Suitable timberlands are areas where the Forest Service expects commercial timber sales to occur sometime in the [long-term] future.) The Risk Assessment Team will review how this was done on the Pagosa District. The group decided that the matrix needs some more work and the group should resume the values ranking at the April meeting.

Becca is working with MSI on a grant proposal that includes funding the collaborative efforts here (DWARF) and in Pagosa (San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership).

The **Biomass Working Group** met in February and will continue to pursue projects that promote the forest product industry in the region.

The **Demo Site Working Group** had a conference call and talked about objectives for demonstration sites. The purpose of demo sites was identified as to:
- Further the Science
- Showcase work to bring community along with us
- Define how we work together

And should demonstrate:
- BMPs in multiple forest ecosystems and/or on multiple land ownerships
- Values at risk are being protected
- Treatments are meeting the best scientific standards for forest restoration - In order to do this, we need to understand and apply the most up to date research
- Demonstrate diversity in the treated project – a story can be built around forest health
  - Pre and Post treatment monitoring to evaluate whether goals of the project are being met (examples: change in fire hazard, tree and ground moisture, Economic viability of treatment, soil compaction)
- Prescribed burn opportunities
- Provide public observation opportunities

Next Steps:
Jimbo suggested tying in with **Tony Cheng** (CFRI) on work the Institute is doing on managing Gambel oak in pine cover types.

Celene Hawkins and Mike Zion volunteered to help Becca with a communications plan.

Mike Preston asked **everyone** to be looking for ways to help fund the facilitator, both until we get grants and to provide matching funds once we do.

Montezuma County will continue compiling value layers.

Becca will edit the values matrix with the input of the **Risk Assessment Team**.

Next Meeting: April 6 from 1:30 to 3:30. The group picked **the afternoon of the first Wednesday of each month** as a regular meeting date. Please put those on you calendars. Try to hold the entire afternoon open if possible. We may add some field trips as the roads open up.

Notes by Thurman Wilson w/ Becca Samulski edits.