

Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest (DWaRF) Collaborative

Meeting 9

8-10-16, 1:30 - 3:30 at Dolores Water Conservancy District Office

In Attendance:

Ken Curtis, Mike Preston, Derek Padilla, Eric Janes, Ryan Cox, Rich Landreth, Doug Roth, Shauna Jensen, Thurman Wilson, Rebecca Samulski (facilitating)

Updates:

Becca attended the Colorado Wildfire Watershed Protection Group (WWPG) meeting and field trip in Fort Collins two weeks ago. It was a good chance to visit with people from other parts of the State and share ideas. There is a new group focused on the Poudre Watershed that is developing funding with a user fee for watershed protection. Becca connected with Eric Skeie from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), who may have been the right person at the right time to think about a larger Payment for Ecosystem service model for the entire Colorado Watershed. He seemed very excited about the possibility. Becca made a presentation on DWaRF and Aaron Kimple made one on the San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership (Archuleta County). They were also able to connect with some other hydrologists and talk through the opportunities for the post-fire risk assessment.

The Mancos River resiliency project seems to be reviving. Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) is facilitating with grant funding from CWCB. Esme Caliente had been the facilitator but is leaving for a job in Santa Fe. Becca has signed up to attend their first steering group meeting. That will allow her to see how we overlap and find opportunities to not duplicate efforts. Derek said that Paul Morey (Mesa Verde National Park wildlife biologist), had invited the USFS Dolores District to attend the last meeting but they didn't have enough lead time to make it. Their main focus seems to be the impact of climate change on the Mancos River.

A FEMA discovery analysis is starting in the Animas drainage. It seems to be primarily concerned with flooding. Becca thinks it aligns with the All Hazards Risk Assessments. Some of the tools might be helpful for modeling post-fire watershed effects.

Becca's roles with FireWise are changing due to that organization's increased funding and workload. She is moving into a newly established Assistant Director position for the five-County area and they will hire a replacement for her as Montezuma/Dolores County Neighborhood Ambassador Coordinator. Becca will also continue in her role as coordinator for DWaRF.

Derek reported that Jim Hubbard, National Director for State and Private Forestry for the US Forest Service will be in the area August 18 and 19.

Rich suggested that the group should ask the City of Cortez for funding help. Becca said that she would follow up.

Mike, Rich, and Becca were recently on a tour of the Rico area. They were encouraged by the strides the EPA has taken in mine-reclamation and a "water emergency notification" network has also been set up for the Dolores River. Mike and Becca also thought it would be worth visiting with the Town of Rico about fire mitigation.

Ken had been having some conversations with a water forecasting service out of Salt Lake City that the District uses, plus some with people at the Silverton Avalanche Center about cloud seeding. Working with CWCB, the Dolores Water Conservation District bought a cloud-seeder. Ken has been talking to some of the same people about weather stations and they are considering purchasing some equipment. It is important to stay connected and informed to technological advances and resources that have overlapping applications.

Doug mentioned that southwest Colorado is currently a priority area for LIDAR (light detection and ranging) mapping. It is being used for floodplains and other applications. With multiple rates of return, one flight can get tree heights in addition to the ground elevation. Ken suggested that we touch base with Empire Electric, Tri-State, and other potential partners that may be interested in mapping assets, to help fund the processing of LIDAR data.

Draft Financials and Budget:

Becca presented a financial statement for the last four months and a draft budget for the remainder of 2016 and 2017. The financials made sense to those in attendance. Everyone in attendance was OK with the financial statement. Ken and Thurman suggested that Becca go over the financial information with the group quarterly. There were a few questions on the budget. The fiscal agent fee to SJMA (San Juan Mountains Association) is because FireWise uses them as their fiscal agent for grants (the source of most of the funding in our budget). So some of the administrative work is done by FireWise personnel and some by SJMA.

There was a lot of discussion about whether we would be ready to do a video in 2016 (\$2,000 for that was in the draft budget). Concerns included the amount of time it might take and whether we had enough material for a video yet.

There was a suggestion to replace the video and website development line items with a more general publicity and public outreach item that could include those and additional things. We also need a logo and probably a Facebook page. Some thought should be given to prioritizing the order of developing those things. For example, it is good to have a logo early in the process to help brand the other items. Becca changed the budget to reflect a marketing line item, with the emphasis for the remainder of this year being on developing a communications and outreach plan that may or may not identify a video as a good use of early marketing dollars.

Post-Wildfire Risk Assessment:

The full assessment team hasn't met since the last DWaRF meeting but Becca and Shauna met a couple of weeks ago to keep things moving. In meeting with Shauna and discussions with Aaron Kimple, we would like to pursue using the Automated Geospatial Watershed Assessment (AGWA) Tool for the entire San Juan National Forest landscape included in the High Valued Resources and Assets Assessment. Shauna is familiar with this model from her Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) work. More info on AGWA can be found on the Agricultural Research Service's Tucson website (<http://www.tucson.ars.ag.gov/agwa/>).

Basically this modeling will show relative changes in pre- and post-fire peak flow and sediment delivery. It will let us identify areas that are likely to have greater impacts than other areas. Then we can look at those areas in greater detail. It should help us identify where treatments will be most helpful. It doesn't show debris flow, but that should be a close correlation with the areas that show up with the greatest change in erosion; areas with the highest water and sediment flows will probably also have the highest debris flows. The inputs needed for the model can either be found in existing databases or generated as outputs in the values at risk modeling.

The San Juan National Forest hydrologists met and decided not to use Forests to Faucets data as was discussed at the last assessment team meeting. They came up with an alternative they prefer and will either share more about it in an email or at the next assessment meeting.

Public-Private Lands Tour:

Becca will send out a Doodle poll to help pick a field trip date in late-September to mid-October. We will look at some of the land around Joe Moore Reservoir and the Adams Ranch where we have a CAFA grant for thinning, mastication, and pile burning on state and private lands near National Forest boundaries. We may also look at some National Forest thinning and pile burning from recent years in Chicken Creek.

Next Steps:

Everyone spread the word on the upcoming Bridging the Divide (September 9-10) and Ponderosa Pine (October 5-6) Workshops.

Shauna will work with the AGWA support group in Tucson to get a price quote on work we need. She will also work on inputs for water quality for the fire risk analysis.

Becca will work on the Go Fund Me launch and requests that we all use our networks as appropriate to spread the word about DWaRF.

Becca will send out doodle poll for the CAFA tour and work on the tour stops.

Next Meeting: September 7th, 1:30-3:30 at DWCD. We will probably do the CAFA tour rather than have a meeting in October.

Notes by Thurman Wilson with Becca Samulski edits