

Date:

August 16, 2023

RE:

Case No. 23-cv-150
United States District Court for the District of Colorado

To:

John Rader, San Juan Citizens Alliance

Ted Zukoski, Center for Biological Diversity

Dave Neely, San Juan National Forest

The Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative (DWRF), through the undersigned, strongly recommends the plaintiffs, San Juan Citizen Alliance (SJCA) and Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), and defendant, the San Juan National Forest (SJNF), in Case No. 23-cv-150 regarding the Salter Vegetation Management Project (Salter Project), actively pursue settlement discussions that seek a satisfactory solution. DWRF states as follows:

1. DWRF is a diverse collaborative that supports management actions to meet social, economic, and ecological conditions across all lands.

DWRF has been an active forest collaborative working throughout Montezuma and Dolores Counties in Southwest Colorado since 2015. DWRF's mission is to promote forest, community, and watershed resilience through collaboration. DWRF's vision articulates resilient and adaptive forests and watersheds that provide ecosystem services, maintain ecological integrity, and sustain community values in the face of environmental change, supported by a diverse and active collaborative group. DWRF has broad partner/stakeholder engagement, including federal agencies, state agencies, local government, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, fire protection and mitigation, colleges/universities, forest products industry, conservation organizations, water managers, private citizens, and more.

DWRF has five program areas: (1) Collaborating with land management agencies; (2) Resilient forests and communities; (3) Community education; (4) Forest products industry development; and (5) Collaborative effectiveness. Most salient for the Salter Project, the goals for Collaborating with Land Management Agencies program area are to collaboratively implement forest management activities, including active forest treatments, mapping and analyses, policy recommendations, and adaptive management. In doing so, priority areas will be public and private lands that enhance ecosystem resilience and adaptive capacity, and reduce risks to homes, water supplies, infrastructure, and community assets.

DWRF activities are preceded by other important collaborative efforts within Montezuma and Dolores Counties - particularly the Ponderosa Pine Forest Partnership - that developed early approaches to collaborative forest management in SW Colorado (including active participation from the SJCA and SJNF). DWRF looks to continue building on these collaborative roots and working across interests to meet ecological and community goals going forward.

2. DWRF has been substantially engaged in the Salter Project

DWRF has convened and engaged in Salter Project discussions since January 2020, prior to the formal NEPA Scoping process. Since then, DWRF has supported collaborative dialogue regarding project goals, locations, monitoring and adaptive management, and local priorities. DWRF led two field tours focused on Salter Project activities and has collaboratively reviewed formal NEPA documents, providing considerations to SJNF staff. Diverse DWRF partners (including SJCA and the SJNF) co-developed Ponderosa Pine Ecosystem Resilience Metrics & Desired Conditions in 2020, which were intended to support DWRF engagement with projects across all lands, including the Salter Project. During this engagement process, DWRF developed written agreements with the SJNF outlining expectations and commitments for the collaboration and the agency. DWRF conducted an internal review of engagement/collaborative processes in 2022 and, most recently, DWRF partners have invested substantial time in co-developing a monitoring plan in 2023.

[A timeline and links to associated documents for DWRF engagement can be found here.](#)

3. DWRF strongly recommends that parties engage in timely settlement discussions towards a satisfactory solution for the Salter Project.

From recent collaborative meetings (July 2023), DWRF articulated that it is not in the collaborative's interest for the Salter Project to be stalled in court proceedings. DWRF prioritizes moving forward with proactive forest management that enhances forest resilience and supports local community needs and goals. Delaying management activities in the Salter Project area can have real and undesirable effects on our forests and communities. Accordingly, DWRF recommends that all parties immediately begin engaging in good-faith settlement discussions and continue in an expedited and focused manner until a mutually acceptable resolution is found. DWRF takes no formal position about specific Alternatives for the Salter Project. DWRF strongly supports management activities that respond to the issues brought out through the formal NEPA process and through DWRF dialogues, while also being compliant with the SJNF Forest Plan direction and in alignment with DWRF's Ponderosa Pine Ecosystem Resilience Metrics and Desired Conditions. The different entities and interests represented within DWRF are lending valuable trust to what we expect is a timely and principled settlement process focused on promoting forest, community, and watershed resilience.

DWRF is interested and available to further support Salter Project discussions.

Signed:

Danny Margoles
Danny Margoles (Aug 7, 2023 15:42 MDT)
Signature
Danny Margoles
Printed name

Aug 7, 2023
Date
Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative Coordinator
Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Leigh Reeves
Leigh Reeves (Aug 15, 2023 10:21 MDT)
Signature
Leigh Reeves
Printed name

Aug 15, 2023
Date
Mayor, Town of Dolores
Organization/Entity/Interest represented

James Dietrich
James Dietrich (Jul 31, 2023 09:18 MDT)
Signature
James Dietrich
Printed name

Jul 31, 2023
Date
Montezuma County
Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Steve Garchar
Steve Garchar (Aug 10, 2023 13:26 MDT)
Signature
Steve Garchar
Printed name

Aug 10, 2023
Date
Dolores County Commissioners
Organization/Entity/Interest represented

KW Curtis III
Kenneth W Curtis III (Jul 31, 2023 11:56 MDT)
Signature
Kenneth W. Curtis III
Printed name

Jul 31, 2023
Date
Dolores Water Conservancy District
Organization/Entity/Interest represented

michael Preston
michael Preston (Jul 31, 2023 11:03 MDT)
Signature
Michael Preston
Printed name

Jul 31, 2023
Date
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Dani Gregory
Dani Gregory (Jul 31, 2023 17:38 MDT)

Signature

Dani Gregory

Printed name

Jul 31, 2023

Date

SW Colorado Cycling Assoc. (SWCCA)

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Anthony Culpepper
Anthony Culpepper (Jul 31, 2023 09:24 MDT)

Signature

Anthony Culpepper

Printed name

Jul 31, 2023

Date

Mountain Studies Institute

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

David Sitton
David Sitton (Aug 7, 2023 13:12 MDT)

Signature

David Sitton

Printed name

Aug 7, 2023

Date

Aspen Wall Wood, Inc

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Ashley Downing
Ashley Downing (Aug 8, 2023 09:45 MDT)

Signature

Ashley Downing

Printed name

Aug 8, 2023

Date

Wildfire Adapted Partnership

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Josh Dellinger
Josh Dellinger (Aug 3, 2023 07:21 MDT)

Signature

Josh Dellinger

Printed name

Aug 3, 2023

Date

Empire Electric Association

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

T. Duncan Rose III
T. Duncan Rose III (Aug 2, 2023 09:06 GMT+2)

Signature

T. Duncan Rose III

Printed name

Aug 2, 2023

Date

Dolores River Anglers (TU)

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Bruce F. Short

Bruce F Short (Aug 7, 2023 15:11 MDT)

Signature

Bruce F. Short

Printed name

Aug 7, 2023

Date

Short Forestry LLC

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Andrew Hawk

Andrew Hawk (Aug 8, 2023 10:06 MDT)

Signature

Andrew Hawk

Printed name

Aug 8, 2023

Date

Phoenix Biomass Solutions

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Doug Muscanell

Doug Muscanell (Jul 31, 2023 17:51 MDT)

Signature

Doug Muscanell

Printed name

Jul 31, 2023

Date

DWRF Stakeholder

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Paulette Church

Paulette Church (Jul 31, 2023 08:16 MDT)

Signature

Paulette Church

Printed name

Jul 31, 2023

Date

Falls Creek Ranch HOA

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Robert L Meyer

Robert L Meyer (Aug 9, 2023 13:01 MDT)

Signature

Robert L Meyer

Printed name

Aug 9, 2023

Date

Concerned Citizen

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Justin Shoopman

Justin Shoopman (Aug 9, 2023 06:57 MDT)

Signature

Justin Shoopman

Printed name

Aug 9, 2023

Date

08/09/2023

Organization/Entity/Interest represented

Tara Harris

Tara Harris (Aug 15, 2023 09:00 MDT)

Signature

Tara Harris

Printed name

Aug 15, 2023

Date

DWRF Collaborative Member

Organization/Entity/Interest represented