



DWC Stakeholder Meeting Wednesday, June 5, 2024, 1:30-3:30pm

MEETING NOTES

In person: Dolores Water Conservancy District – [60 Cactus St., Cortez, CO 81321](#)

Virtual: Zoom login info at the end of agenda

Agenda - ZOOM link below

Time Topic

1:30-1:40 **Introductions, check-ins, meeting agreements**

Jon Rader (SJCA) , Duncan Rose (TU) Megan Maxwell (CTIA), Josh Braun (CSFS), Josh Braun (CSFS) Matt Sturtevant (CPW), Andy Brown (CPW), Mike Remke (NMHU), Andy Hawk (Phoenix Recycling), Chauncey McCarthy (Town of Rico), Celeste Moore (WAP), Tara Harris (MCD), Danny Margoles (MCD), Justin Pitts (MCD Americorps), Nick Mustoe (SJNF), Tom Rice (SJNF), Caleb Shutz (SJNF), Pat Seekins (SJNF), Steve Garchar (Dolores County) , Emma Reinemann (SJNF), Jimbo Buickerood, Carolyn Dunmire (RMRI, SWWCD), Bruce Short (Short Forestry), Nick Olson (NFF), Bill Baker (UWyo, Retired), Nina Williams (DWC)

1:40-1:45 **Approve/amend agenda**

Approved, no amendments

1:45-2:00 **CFLRP Coordinating Council Voting Member Appointment and Webmap sharing**

Danny's term is up and we get to re-appoint him or appoint someone new to serve as our voting rep on the SWCO CFLRP Coordinating Council

- Danny is willing to stay in position, but happy to open it up to others interested
- Danny will stay in position, all in agreement w no reservations

Sharing Blob Webmap?

2:00-2:45 **Mixed Conifer EA - Pre-Scoping Discussion**

Review Collab Agreements

- Nina added recommendations made in Salter AAR: expectation to communicate what you can and cannot live with, communicate openly, and proactively communicate with coordinator to make sure agendas includes your topics
- Danny: How do our collaborative agreements work in Practice? It's a good list in theory, but how do we implement it in a clear and streamlined way?
- Carolyn: How has the process worked in the past? Does the Collaborative submit formal comments? What does the USFS prefer?
- The Collaborative did not submit comments as a group, individual stakeholders submitted comments
- Nick Mustoe: Interested in the voice of the Collaborative
- Could we get the discussion winnowed down to something that is clear and submit that as a collaborative?
- We've reflected a lot on how the process has happened. Don't need a prescribed

- way of doing things, but a goal
- Bruce: Purpose of Collaborative is to assist the managing agencies of the land around us. Work with those agencies to help them accomplish good land management and inform management decisions. It does not prevent individuals from commenting but the hope is that we can work together as a Collaborative
- It's not good enough to just submit comments
- Input during meetings is important and taken into consideration. It's good to have these conversations early.

Mixed Conifer EA - Pre-Scoping Discussion

- Review SJNF Mgmt. goals and approach
- Stakeholder questions, thoughts and concerns
- Agree on next steps
- Pat Seekins: Looking at the big picture right now, but wanting input to develop a more specific scope.
- Historically fires have not burned 9500ft+ frequently, every 60+ years
- Taylor Mesa, Aspen burns
- 320,000 acres are proposed in the initial planning
- Interest is in watershed management aspect of it
- Prescribed fire would be first entry, very little fire history and Rx fire history
- First entry? Very first entry of planned ignition - Where there has been no Rx fire historically, a lot of duff and ladder fuel build up
- This is a prescribed fire focused treatment process, there has been some mechanical treatment already in some areas (ie. Taylor Mesa)
- Jimbo: How can we talk about mixed con as one forest type? (Cool-moist vs dry-warm. Management objectives layout different goals for the variations of mixed-con. Cool-moist fire return interval 144 years. Dry-warm 18-20 years.) If fire is put on the ground, what are we shooting for? Mixed con also has more consistent rough terrain, steeper slopes.
- Nick Mustoe: These are the things we need help thinking through. My interest is that whatever it looks like in the end, it's implementable.
- Pat: Burro fire mimics what they want to do in the landscape. Do we exclude the cool-moist and only Rx in the warm-dry? We are looking for feedback on these things?
- Jimbo: Identify polygons where treatment is possible - USFS has done this
- Bruce: What is the objective of putting fire on the ground for each forest type? Fire in Doug Fir-Ponderosa would look different than Engleman spruce-subalpine. Is a portion of this to regenerate aspen stands with stand-replacing fire?
- That is one goal and what happened with the Burro fire.
- Concerns: Implementing stand replacing fire adverse effects on the Dolores River
- The plans that build off of NEPA get more specific into treatments in different forest types
- There are very few examples of these Rx fires in these forest and fuel types. Based on wildfire management experience, this fuel type is complex
- Mike: Research came out with 6 different mixed-con forest types, with significant variability within them; warm-dry and cool-moist can be especially variable. We need to adopt a more complex view than just a forest-scape perspective and start looking at fuel-scape diversity as well. Emphasizing FEMOs monitoring during and post burning. Pre and post monitoring. Are we burning trees or dead and down at mixed-severity? Think about soil response and soil impacts as well as forest.
- Any request/recommendations from Rico - Chauncey: concern around Silver Ck drainage (backup water source - hopefully in the next 3-5 years it will be considered main source). Alum Gulch avalanche path and beetle kill are concerns for wildfire.
- Mike: Seek and destroy burning - use pulaski to punch a hole and start fire in the inside of a downed log where fuel is dry. The wet exterior mostly remains.
- No concerns from CPW, aligned with burning in mixed-con
- Jimbo: Is it worth it? Seems like a heavy lift in NEPA. There is so much diversity

- and complexity.
- Nick: That's a fair question. When it comes to putting fire on the ground, I struggle with the possibility of passing up something that could be good long term
- Pat: We wanted to start broad because it gives us more flexibility to cover a large landscape in one NEPA.
- Jimbo: If you don't have the specificity, do people have the confidence they really know what is going to happen? It comes to what the objectives are? What are you trying to help out? Aspen doesn't seem like it needs help.
- Pat: Rx fire to reduce overall fuels and provide fuel breaks along POD boundaries to open opportunities to help slow down/direct wildfire away from values at risk. We want to be strategic, focusing on where we could slow a fire down.
- Nina: What is the timeline for EA? Nick: No set timeline, we want to work through this with the collaborative
- **Tour of Burro Fire? Loading Pen Fire? Nina will work w Pat and Caleb on this**
- **Could FS share some examples of perspective polygons? Yes, Pat and Caleb will pull together some polygons of where they would treat first**
- Could you do a Categorical Exclusion around RICO? Emma: 3,000 acres is the maximum footprint and must be in a WUI area. Maybe Rico would qualify?
- The Mixed Con Knowledge Synthesis is a good start for Lit - **Mike Remke will make a shared folder**
- Mike: The use of Rx Burn Associations (PBAs) to increase capacity for burning on private land. Some of these ideas can get played out on private land a lot easier. This could be an effective learning space if there is the burn window and support. West Fork landowners interested? Dunton?
- Celeste: WAP works with private landowners, hoping to expand into Dolores County - could do site assessments for landowners to get the ball rolling?
- **Nina will summarize Collaborative comments from this discussion and forward to Nick**

2:45-3:00

Dozer Control Lines Pine Rx Fire Supplemental EA - Discussion

- Review SJNF Mgmt. goals and approach
- Stakeholder questions, thoughts and concerns
- Agree on next steps
- What does USFS need from the Collaborative? What is the timeline?
- Nick: Wanted to check in with Collaborative on where we are at with this particular project?
- Do we have location ideas? There are smaller units layed out within the broad boundaries
- Bruce: Suggestion to burn off the cap rock where possible
- Slope limitation? 20% or less, not looking at burning much over 20%
- What about brush raking, instead of full blade? (Type 2 dozer or smaller, 12ft width would be the max)
- Jimbo: Thought POD delineations were designed around existing features? That is correct, but POD boundaries are broad, there are smaller units within those boundaries that need control lines
- Jimbo: Concerned about mechanical activity around canyon edges, impacts on wildlife. All edges are important to wildlife. Could blacklines from cap rock be used instead?
- With or without equipment, the work is still being done. It's still visible. We put focus on rehabilitation. **We could tour Hope Fire line put in and rehabed along Salter rim?**
- A lot of boundaries are along private. Protecting firefighters, quicker access to slow fire, and knowing you can get the right equipment impacts planning
- Do you have priority units identified? Units are laid out in 5 year plan. The units layed out for 2025 will be the next priority.
- Steve: Dozer lines are another tool for the toolbox. Supports the use of dozer lines.
- Nick: Want to specify when and where this would be necessary, but laying down specific areas is not the priority

- **Tour Hope Fire, look at rehabed line**
- Can you stack uses of these linear features? This would have 2 different scopes and impacts.
- Matt: CPW has a lot of concerns with the amount of trails. Dozer lines on the landscape create new trails. When it's there, people will use it. We have a lot of trails and we are trying to map trail densities within the Dolores RD. Recent research shows that wildlife do not like trails. Not against dozer lines being created, but they need to be returned to the way they were.
- Nick: It would be good to have CPW at the table for the spring and fall Rx discussion. Matt said yes, please invite me.
- Nina: Is the trail mapping happening? It is being talked about within the Montelores Coalition. USFS has some of that data. Not a lot of capacity within CPW for this.
Nina, Montelores and other collabs discussing ways to support system and non system trail mapping.
- The hard part to capture is the Glade area (ie. high intensity hunter use)
- **Is anyone not in agreement with the USFS moving forward with scoping? Everyone is in agreement. No reservations expressed.**

3:00-3:25 **Updates and Field Trips**

- July 12/14 Stakeholder Meeting and Forest Health Workshop and Tour
- Additional Field Trips?
- DWC Program Assistant - job posting up, please circulate
- **Spruce Creek Fire:** Used pre identified control line - where can we hold this for the duration of the fire season? Ideal weather conditions, ignited when winds were favorable, held what they had when winds were not. Positive ecological impacts, minimal amount of line, excellent fire effects. There was some isolated, single tree torching.
- COSWAP grant submitted
- National Forest Foundation Collaborative Capacity Funding - due 7/11
- 5/21 Collab Mtg with SJNF, **next meeting June 13 9:30AM**
- next Forest Water Meeting **June 24**

3:30 **Next steps and adjourn**

PARKING LOT (Future agenda items)

Review stakeholder survey

WRAP Scope of Work