



DWC Stakeholder Meeting Wednesday, Jan 8, 2025, 1:30-3:30 PM MTG NOTES

In person: Dolores Water Conservancy District – [60 Cactus St., Cortez, CO 81321](https://www.dwc.org/60-Cactus-St-Cortez-CO-81321)

Virtual: Zoom info at the end of agenda

Agenda - ZOOM link below

Time Topic

1:30-1:40 Introductions

Amorina Lee-Martinez , Abe Proffitt, Brad Pietruszka, Rowan Henke, James Dietrich, Gerrish Willis, Andy Hawk, Farley Ketchum, Adrian Bishop, Audrey, Sensa Wolcott, Shauna Jensen, Marley Saunders, Robert Stump, Josh Braun, Robert Meyer, Bruce Short, David Casey, Tara Harris, Logan Davis, Laurel Smerch, Danny Margoles, Chauncey McCarthy, Emily Lockard, Joe (TNC), Eric Stiasny (Dolores County Commissioner), Duncan Rose, Colleen Trout, Tim Fry, Cameryn Cass, Megan Maxwell, Celeste Moore, Andrea Hartman-Manahan, Alex Handloff (34)

WRAP HVRA Review - Brad Pietruszka

1330-1335 - Intro & Purpose of meeting

Brad - the purpose is to revalidate HVRA's. Things may have changed since 2017. I want to paint it from a framework of strategy and risk.

1335-1345 - What is risk? What is strategy?

Strategy

- *Book recommendation Good Strategy/Bad Strategy*
- What is the challenge we are actually facing?
- Strategy is how you are going to address your goals
- If you are trying to do everything with a small amount of money, not much gets accomplished. You have to be strategic about your goals.
- Objectives need to be tiered to your strategies
- Good Strategy ex. Nvidia. They diagnosed a problem really well and overcame challenges
- Bad Strategy ex. Kodak, Blockbuster, Yahoo!, Nokia, McDonald's
- Bad strategy = Mistaking goals for strategy, conflicting strategic objectives, saying yes to everything

Risk: Wildfire risk is the intersection of likelihood, intensity, and susceptibility

- or value, hazard, and probability

- If there is no likelihood (eg. a lake) there is no risk
- If there is no hazard (eg. gravel pit) there is no risk
- If there is no susceptibility (eg. road) there is no risk
- Risk example: the intensity of fire is a low risk to areas surrounded by rocks or water sources

HVRAs

- HVRA is a thing on the landscape we care about, influenced positively or negatively by wildfire
- HV stands for highly valued - HVRAs are not an inventory of every single thing on a landscape
- RA - Resources - natural features, Assets - human-made things
- Try to limit HVRAs to 3-5 bins
- 10 current DWC HVRAs
- 59 sub HVRAs
- Our goal is to get this down to 5 or fewer big buckets, 20 maximum for subHVRAs
- Weird things happen when there are too many categories
- On current list, old growth, settling ponds, etc. are more highly valued than infrastructure

Brad - We have way too many categories, we need to whittle them down. Can we get it down to 4 or at least 5?

Shauna - The WRAP is a post-fire risk assessment. When we are talking about a home - we are looking at the effects post-fire not at the home burning.

Tim - Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment - when we analyze this, we are looking at post-fire impacts, not just what the fire burns. What are your values at risk? What are things we can do to pre-mitigate? What are the priority areas for post-fire mitigation?

Tim - we have a group that will look at potential burn severities so we can analyze what this looks like post-fire. The WRAP is looking at how to respond to post-fire effects.

Brad - things have different risk profiles for hazards. Shift lens from susceptibility to post-fire effects (eg. flooding)

Andy - What mental framework are we coming at this from?

Both. Risks from susceptibility to fire and post-fire (flood, sedimentation, erosion).

Robert - There are some things that could be dropped because they are less relevant for post-fire susceptibility.

Bishop - When was the last time there was a fire in the watershed and how big was it?

Brad - The biggest one this year was 6,000 acres. 2018 - 25,000 acres burned in the watershed. Out of 700,000 acres, I don't think more than 50,000 acres have burned in the last ten years.

David - When you are identifying wildlife risk and cutting timber out, should we be looking at wintering habitat and how trees impact this?

Brad - The value is gone once the fire has happened

We are focusing on post-fire effects on the forest.

Megan - Your point is taken in terms of cutting out wildlife, timber, etc. But we are eventually moving back in time so those values like wildlife, habitat, etc. do still matter. We are trying to prevent risk to these things.

Brad - Looking at post-fire effects only, wildlife, habitat, trees, etc. are not affected post-fire. These are impacted by fire.

David - This planning will help us figure out where to park money in the best spot

Gerrish - The value of a WRAP is identifying where the risks are and what we can do to mitigate those risks. What I hear you are saying is that identifying these values will help us know where to mitigate.

Brad - You can decide to live with the risk, transfer it to another group, mitigate to reduce the likelihood or intensity or work to reduce susceptibility. There are ways to deal with a risk, but not get rid of it entirely. Your areas that are at the highest sedimentation risk are going to be the most expensive to mitigate.

David - What category would a bridge fall into?

That is a huge value at risk and important to understand post-fire risks. If a bridge or culvert is impacted and prevents people from evacuating or leaving their homes, that is a highly valued asset.

Robert - Some of the conversations we have had in this group revolve around infrastructure such as irrigation.

Are we looking at value monetarily or as in "that is a nice view"?

Brad - We are looking at assets as human-made structures at risk. Resources are anything natural.

Developed rec areas are really broad. Does it help to say something more specific?

Yes. If it is a specific soil type that is highly erosive, name it. If it is a specific bridge or culvert, ditch, etc., name it

Shauna - Don't just remove developed rec areas without considering how highly valued they are. There could be a congregation of people there. Life and property are always the number one concern and this could fall within that.

Brad - Remember that we can't do everything.

1345-1350 - Thinking about susceptibility - fire vs. water

1350-1400 - Overview of WRAP funding potential and treatment costs - Framing the actions

1400-1430 - **HIGHLY** valuable resources and assets (HVRA overview) & small group network mapping

Tara's Group:

What is the most important consideration post-fire - Water (potable)

What are the highly valued water resources? Do we focus on water sources for the largest municipalities because those impact the most people?

Everything in the wildlife category can be set aside except for riparian. Also eliminating commercial timber, range, cultural, recreation/dev rec.

Addressing water intake would also include riparian.

Life safety and infrastructure can fall into bigger buckets - Water and Where People Live

Landed on Water, Where People Live, and Wildlife (specifically riparian areas)

1430-1440 - break

1440-1530 - **HVRA** network mapping & inventory - full group

Zoom Group:

- Had strong feelings of not whittling down on the front end. May lose the justification for multi-benefit work. There is no detriment to having a comprehensive list within the watershed/a complete list of potential projects.
 - You will have multiple stakeholders. Projects have to be identified in a plan to receive state funding.
 - The final task in the WRAP will be a list of potential projects
 - Brad - Downside - you will not be able to focus your efforts when the time comes. With a large list, it will be even more combative.
 - We don't want to prioritize yet. We just want a comprehensive list at this stage.
 - Brad - If you leave everything in with no priorities, how do you make decisions?
 - It depends on the stakeholders. They will have different priorities.
 - We want to see where the overlap is. Look at susceptibility and risk and prioritize from there. Prioritization now seems premature. We want to see where all of these values are.
 - Brad - You can't know risks without identifying values
 - Shauna to Tim: When you are running a post-fire scenario, are you taking the HVRAs and modeling to those points, or are you modeling on a general scale?
 - We look at models on pre and post-fire in the watershed. The susceptibility analysis weighs assets. Look at where the most highly-valued assets are. It's okay to have a comprehensive list. We don't currently know which are most at risk. Looking comprehensively at HVRAs is a good thing.
 - Brad - Tim, your work includes probability? There is the probability of different storms, etc. Rainfall drives everything post-fire. All of the hydraulic impacts factor into susceptibility.
 - Duncan: how can you prioritize until you overlay the likelihood of impact to a specific area?

- If we are left with 7 areas of focus, post-fire, then we will focus on the top priorities of those 7.
- Tim - Infrastructure tends to be what folks decide is most important.

In Person groups:

- Water infrastructure and where people live was the top priority for both. See list of narrowed down HVRAs in order of importance identified by the two in-person groups:
 - Group 1: Water infrastructure, where people live, aquatic wildlife
 - Group 2: Infrastructure, life safety, water, where people live
- Amorina: We can devote our February meeting to more discussion of this.
- Shauna: You are picking a point downstream, modeling to that point, and getting information about post-fire runoff to that point. That's why you can put everything out there spatially and then do your intersection of values that are most at risk.
- Brad: A lot of this is doing the groundwork to make decisions easier post-fire - laying the groundwork for how we will engage with each other, to make those negotiations.
- It's hard to narrow down values at risk. You don't know when or where the fire is going to come from because the Dolores Watershed is huge.
- Bishop: The number one thing post-fire, is getting water out to the people. Shouldn't that be the main focus?
- Shauna: There are contingency plans. You don't have to go to the watershed to have clean water. It can be shipped in.
- Brad: There are sidebars with what you can and can't do with this money. It's important to work that out. What can you use this funding for?
- Danny: Brad, you are hitting it on the head of understanding where the guardrails are. Some people are seeing different guardrails. There are perspectives on narrowing down highly valued resources vs. thinking broadly. I see where not narrowing down too fast makes sense, but having a direction is valuable.
- David: Aquatic restoration is expensive. You aren't going to get very far. Versus having water infrastructure broken down into subcategories and prioritizing those.
- If you can work through identifying priorities, it could serve you more in a post-fire setting.

Final Thoughts

- Sounds like the WRAP analysis is funded, and there is funding to do mitigation work, but does WRAP also offer funding for future post-fire mitigation?
- Amo: This funding is for the analysis and identification of projects. Mitigation funding would come separately.
- The goal of the plan is to have a list of actionable projects we could fund right away. 50/50 match.
- Mancos Conservation District is also getting started on a WRAP.
- There are example applications on the WRAP website.

3:10-3:30

Updates

Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) WRAP application update