



## DWC Stakeholder Meeting Wednesday, Feb 5, 2025, 1:30-3:30 PM MEETING NOTES

*In person:* Dolores Water Conservancy District – [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**

**Present:** Nina, Amorina, **40 attendees:** zoom - Andy Hawk (SJMA), Abe Proffitt (SJNF), Ken Curtis (DWCD), Claire Rapp, Karissa (Colorado Forest Restoration Institute), Anthony Culpepper (MSI), Alex Handloff (MSI), Robert Meyer (WAP), John Rader (SJCA), Becca Samulski (FACO), Josh Braun (CSFS), Russ Anderson (interested citizen - watershed/river restoration), Jonathan Ott (BLM), Tyler Corbin (BLM), Logan Davis (DFPC), Emily Lockard (CSU Extension), Steve Garcher (Dolores County at large), Eric Stiasny (Dolores County), Ryan Cox (CSFS), Shauna Jensen (USFS), Brooke Laughter (UMUT water resources), Chauncey McCarthey (Town of Rico), Cameryn Cass (Cortez Journal), Celeste Moore (WAP), Jim Spratlan, Sheryl (USFS); **in person** - Al Heaton (range) James Dietrich (Montezuma County nat resources), Jimbo Buickerwood, Kyler Personett (SJNF), Emma Reinemann (NEPA USFS), Duncan Rose (TU), Bishop (UMUT water quality), Bruce Short, Nick Mustoe (SJNF), Pat Seekins, Caleb Schutes, Marley Saunders (NFF) Tara (MCD), Rowan (MCD)

#### 1:40-1:45     **Update on Funding, SJNF Agreement for FY'25**

- All existing agreements are on hold, projected funding for upcoming agreement is 30% less than current budget. Current agreement ends June 1, 2025
- Have submitted a request for reimbursement in January, we will see where that goes

**1:45-2:00     Claire Rapp and Karissa Courtney, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute** - consider invitation to convene focus group around collaborative processes and support tools used to decide on a fuels treatment location and/or strategy

- Is this something DWC wants to participate in?
- If so, which project? and who wants to participate in focus group?
  - Social scientists at CFRI - focused on how collabs use decision support tools - what tools collabs get to, when and how. Decision support tools - have been studies of tools, but tools like GIS, data sources, technical tools - groups need to use them through a multi-step process. Have limited understanding of decision support tools and how used
  - Want to hold a one-time focus group 1.5 hours - focused on particular fuels project - 3-8 people, how came to decision and what tools used on way.
    - VARs, choose between alternatives
  - Framework/structure - to compare across groups - decision process and tools used along the way
  - Bruce - what short of end result are you looking for and will we have access to that?
  - Claire - we want to talk to several collabs
    - what decision support tools are being used actively?
    - Want perspective of decision-makers



- Project 1 - House Ck forest thinning and fuels reduction Tx implementation
  - Funded by DNR, SJNF
- Project 2 - Applied Snowtopography Modeling of House and Chicken Ck data and experimental Tx implementation - pending additional funding
  - hiring and training a post-doc to take chk crk/hs crk measurements, and model snow and soil moisture/hydrology
  - two funded experimental treatments and monitoring of those sites for snow retention, soil moisture
- Jimbo - is this predicated on finding a post-doc?
- Nina - Yes, the snowtopography project is; we will go to CWCB for match -
- Robert - 30% reduction of funding June1 - put something in the parking lot about **ways to augment our funding**
- Nina - if freeze on new agreements doesn't get lifted, we want to know what we have to work with
- Jimbo - last coordinating team meeting we talked about this, welcome all your good ideas with dollar signs attached
- Duncan - any fed funding associated with COSWAP?
- Nina - 100% state funding. All WRAP funds are private, local gov and state
- Nick - match for house creek implementation is all federal. unknown status.
- Nina - if we raise match for snowtopography piece from other sources we can swap that out

**2:10-2:30 Pine Rx fire Supplemental EA - bladed line capability - SCOPING**

- SJNF update on project and scoping process
- Collaborative review of topics raised to date - complete?
- Who submits comments raised by stakeholders into the public record?
  - Emma - NEPA process review
  - 2018 - signed decision on RX fire throughout pondo forest in SJNF. The decision allowed construction of control lines, but not with heavy equipment. Need more heavy equipment to make more robust control lines. Emphasizes using existing features for control lines. We've done most of things easy to do with existing control lines and hand tools.
  - Supplemental enviro assessment to use medium weight dozers - up to 12' blade line
  - Tribal partners are welcome to give input at any time, distinct from public input
  - **To get updates on any NEPA project on SJNF:**  
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/sanjuan/landmanagement/projects>
  - Nick - Spruce Creek fire - field trip to demonstrate those dozer lines is a good opportunity
  - Emma showed photos of reclaimed dozer lines
  - Emma - updates to watershed and endangered species provisions
  - Nick - it is not our goal to dozer every line. it is another tool in the box
  - Jimbo - to Pat/Caleb - do you have a sense of when these lines are used
  - Pat - we stay out of drainages, along rim edge where we can't connect drag line and hand line - Edges - private boundary lines most often - and if there is more rock.

- Caleb - this helps us connect dots and be more successful fighting fire. Eventually we want to get along private boundary lines to allow an engine and to get people in and out more easily - better access for our folks on the ground
- Emma - regarding streams concerns - we have a 2018 design feature - do not drag machinery in riparian areas, 100' no treatment zone around riparian areas
- John Rader - what criteria for deciding dozer widths? edge habitat is really important along canyon rims - what extent do canyon rims function as an edge?
- Pat - natural barriers - along rim edge overstory and understory, dead and down can all not act as a barrier - Can blackline depending on vegetation, flexible
- Caleb - using a blade, 80-90% of stuff only 4' blade. We would only use full blade along private land to get equipment in
- Pat - Spruce Creek - variability in fuel type dictates blade width
- Nick - want to get input early in this process
- Jimbo - would use blade for private property infrastructure?
- Caleb - major roadway or trail system - we would cut line 100' off road, less visible and less utilization
- Robert - Get line maps to group to give feedback around higher use areas
  - Boggy area - mapping would be priority for rec community to get idea of where heavy duty activity would be - where there are existing trails/public use
  - Timber removal - what is plan for that? left in place?
  - Mastication - regrowth is pretty fast, need burn window or mastication again - what is plan for re-entry?
  - propose - once we get an idea of canyon rims that need heavy equipment - field trip and visual on the ground to see what will actually happen in rim areas
    - in particular - want to know dozer lines in boggy and chicken creek areas where this is existing high public use
    - Caleb - boggy units have been burned, don't need lines
      - chicken creek - private land boundaries would be best dozer lines
      - Would be intermix of line going through - would carry out to get machinery in
- Nina - dozer lines relate to POD boundaries?
- Nick - not one to one - a lot of POD boundaries are roads and don't need dozer lines there
- Nina - unauthorized red control - putting in control lines but leaving end points unopened until needed
- Archaeological resources - Pat/Nick - already have clearance for all planned dozer lines
- Emma - any other sites beyond boggy and chicken?
- Robert - that's the two heaviest used areas in pine on dolores ranger district. Muleshoe area. I think we need to be mindful where there will be

- overlap/proximity to existing trails/public use
- Nick - what is definition of extent of chicken and boggy areas? mapping some areas and not others
- Nina - i am hearing interest/concern about increased trail density
- Nick - they are not trails and will not become trails
- Robert - part of it is need to be mindful that a lot of recreation in these areas does not take place on just the trails. When people come across a dozer line, they might use it as a trail, or wonder why there is a dozer line. As a rep of user groups, we need to be able to answer questions (be ambassador/communicator for rx fire initiative) and direct people away.
- Nick - will take this back to USFS folks and go from there
- Kyle - NEPA - focus comments on design criteria to address resource concern- that is most beneficial
- Emma - if you have a specific concern, that is more helpful than just a vague/big picture concern
- Collab comment as a body? Or individual stakeholders comment? Have not commented as a body before.
- Bruce - I think part of concern prior was, if there is disagreement/questions, individuals need to bring that to collaborative to work out, or collab needs to know your position if not in alignment with
- Andy - that was my memory too. The hope was to avoid conflict of last time, where certain parties were not forthcoming with potential lack of alignment with group. We want to avoid that in future.
- Nina - so we don't as a collaborative need to submit something in this scoping period?
- Jimbo - agree - better to have an array of different comments, than one head mashing comment process
- Robert - I think it would be a good opp for collab to assess internally that we are more or less on board with this project. This seems in alignment with DWC - have a vote to take a temp on where people are with this.
- Andy - we went through this and we did this last time around with Salter. Many parties did vote, but in the end there were individual groups that felt more strongly one way or the other that ended up with litigation. FS benefits better if rec group wants to comment themselves. If there are individual comments from DWC stakeholders, then this doesn't put the collab in a potential vice because of conflict.
- Robert - I'm not gonna ask us to vote on it.
- John Rader - I don't want the collab to supplant the NEPA process. Individual comments are better
- Robert - might be a good way for collab to lead
- Bruce - if we don't comment as a collab, we will forego standing.
- Emma - this is scoping, there will be another comment period
- **No general objections from stakeholders in the room to this proposed project. We will go through process, Emma has notes from DWC conversations. Nick happy to share contact info to talk about this.**

**discuss, prioritize and choose 2025 trips. Field trips ranked as follows:**

- 1) 145 to Dunton loop cultural sites- Farley, Bishop
- 2) Rico: Rico well, mine sites/hazards, Silver Creek drainage - Gerrish
- 3) Spruce Creek/Burro Fire dozer lines/control feature
- 4) McPhee/water info - Tunnel for Cortez and Towaoc Highline Canal - Amo
  - Tour with Robert Stump?
- 5) Haycamp CSE/Large Trees/OG - TBD by working group
- 6) Forest Products - Visit an active logging site - David Sitton
- 7) Mixed Conifer RX EA - next steps - goals and objectives? DWC and SJNF
- 8) House Creek applied snowtopography project -
- 9) Insect/disease tour in Salter area

**2:50-3:15 WRAP**

- HVRA debrief
- Duncan's ppt
- Review/agree on Vision, Goals and Objectives
  - Becca - notes that some slopes are so erosive that mitigation for fire is not possible - have to find those places that have the biggest pre- and post-fire in their erosion potentials
- **Will go through this in more detail at our next meeting**

**3:15-3:30 Updates/Upcoming events**

- PJ Symposium Date and Location - April 12 at Mesa Verde NP
- Rx Fire Day - set planning meeting date?
  - first annual - give a context of rx fire besides smoke
  - Nick, Pat, Anthony, Celeste happy to plan and promote, Tara and Rowan, Andy will help plan

**PARKING LOT**

Wood Bank Idea