



DWC Stakeholder Meeting Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 1:30-3:30 PM Notes

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

Virtual: Zoom info at the end of agenda

Present:

Nina and Amorina - DWC facilitators

On zoom: Bruce Short - Short Forestry, Jimbo Buickerood - collab rep based in Hermosa, Celeste Moore - Montezuma County Coordinator WAP, Marley Saunders - NFF, Sheryl - SJNF, Eric Stiasny - Dolores County Commissioner, Aly Tarrant - High Desert Conservation District, John Radar - SJCA, Megan Maxwell - Colorado Timber Industry Assoc, Andrea Harbin-Monahan - CWCB, Brooke Laughter - UMUT water resources dept., Russ Anderson - public person and river and watershed restoration/engineering, Ryan Cox - CSFS, Jim Spratlen - Emergency Manager Montezuma County, David Casey - Forestry Supervisor SJNF, Anthony Culpepper - MSI (16)

In Person: James Dietrich - Montezuma County natural resources, Andy Hawk-SJMA, Gerrish Willis-Town of Rico, Farley Ketchum Sr. - UMUT traditional ecological knowledge steward, A. Bishop - UMUT water quality specialist, Logan Davis - Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, Robert Meyer - Recreation/WAP ambassador, Nick Mustoe - SJNF, Danny Margoles - Executive Director MCD, Emma Reinemann - SJNF NEPA, Rowan Henke - MCD, Tara Harris - MCD. (12)

Agenda - ZOOM link below

Time Topic

1:30-2:00 Introductions, round-robin, funding updates

- Jimbo - concern about funding cuts, been communicating with elected reps
- WAP - 35% cut in employee hours across the board, lost BLM funding
- Marley Saunders - most projects on hold at the moment
- Sheryl - new Secretary of Ag - waiting on info for how things will progress under secretary. New FS Chief also - internal call intro tomorrow with FS. Waiting to see about funds
- Eric Stiasny - Dolores county in holding pattern
- SJCA - budget not directly affected
- Montezuma County - 10% cuts - loss of revenue from lower property taxes and Kinder Morgan revenue decline
 - Andy Hawk - reduced scope, reduced hiring
 - Tribe - bracing itself for another storm
 - MCD - one Fed grant terminated. had to cut a position. have cut most staff by 10%. One other grant currently frozen (BOR Watersmart) - 650 acres of forest mgmt. B2E awarded but not contracted
 - Changes to NEPA regulations - Accepting comments until March 27 on rescinded regulations. things are in flux.
 - DWC renewal process for agreement is paused, current agreement ends in June. Waiting to see if there will be an opp to renew fed partnership agreement with SJNF. This majority of our budget. WRAP (through early 2026) and COSWAP (through Feb 2028) grants are currently secure - state funding sources. As far as we know Fed funds are still flowing.
 - Emergency mgmt - managing many grants, working to mitigate power lines

2:00-2:15

Jimbo - thoughts on a Collaborative letter

- Concern about changes in our orgs
- Drafted a letter - we wouldn't get far if it wasn't for each other
- Our collaborative is a model of how we work together and use money efficiently, and our Fed partners are critical to that. If Feds go missing, we won't meet our goal of building a resilient watershed and forest
- "Here's who we are, our successes, how we work together, please pay attention to our funding needs"
- Target audience - send to elected officials and congressional delegation and state level folks
- Megan Maxwell - what do you hope for them to be able to accomplish, especially with democratic reps. Seems with Trump admin, they'll view some kind of a stink as a positive. What would this do in a perfect world?
- Jimbo - Inform elected folks that we are working together to take care of econ development, water supply, fire protection etc. We are not partisan, but working on things that are important to us. We're people doing things together. I'm not sure Congressman Hurd understands what a group like us does and how beneficial it is across the board as local common folks. We need support so feds can continue to be our partners
- Megan - I want to read the actual letter before commenting further
- Andrea Harbin Monahan - I support the letter and would be willing to bring it to CWCB leadership
- Jimbo - some things have been turned around when people provided input. Maybe if we stand up people will listen to us. We are a pretty good snapshot of what our community is
- Nina - presented the draft letter put forth by Jimbo
- Robert - I hear Megan being concerned about downsides to this letter, esp. if letter comes from Dem side of aisle. What do we have to lose?
- Jimbo - we're not partisan, we would send it out to elected officials to people that are in position to represent us
- Gerrish - who is the audience? Hurd? Or entire congressional delegation?
- Jimbo - talked to Senator's office reps, county commissioners, etc. and if you look at these budget cuts and desire for efficient use of funds - I think we are a good example of how to use funds efficiently - I want to reach the whole spectrum of elected officials.
- Gerrish - would county commissioners send this letter if we draft for them?
- James - you can always ask the commissioners
- Nina - we are collaborative and we make decisions that are supported by everybody at the table - we need to hear from folks that might have reservations about this. No one can be opposed to something before we move forward as a collaborative
- Stiasny - if I have full support of collaborative, I'd be happy to take a letter my board. Meeting on 3/10, if you want a draft to present to them.
- James - I think that's a good suggestion and that we should make the ask
- Robert can look at the draft if people want more eyes on it
- Bruce - I think wide distribution to local, state, federal reps is a good idea. We're

a collection of folks who care about what happens out there economically, environmentally. We want to support counties and the existing pop cares about what's going on. We would like to have continued fed participation in relationships and in finances. We want industry, recreation, good water, healthy forests and support all of the pop of the four or five county area. Would be willing to work with Robert and Jimbo on letter. Don't need to point fingers, what's happening is of great concern

- Celeste - reaching out to reps regardless of party as a collective, explain our accomplishments and how that has happened with aid of fed funds. Want to see content of letter before agreeing
- Bishop - how could Tribe contribute to your letter?
- Jimbo - If Tribal Council could provide a letter on a nation to nation basis, that could be beneficial. If by any means that tribal council would be interested in contributing a letter, that would be extremely helpful.
- Bishop - timeframe?
- Jimbo - will draft a letter for commissioner mtg on March 10th. Tribe could work on a different letter effort on a different timeline
- Robert - want to make sure that nobody is opposed to the letter idea
- Andy - SJMA has no opposition to a letter. "The broader the voice the better"
- Megan - I don't have any reservations on the face of sending a letter. I have to see a final draft letter. There are political sensitivities I can't discuss. I can add thoughts on a draft letter.
- Gerrish - to make letter more effective, have county commissioners write the letter. Rep Hurd may listen more than a letter coming from collaborative
- Bruce - I think it is not timely to try to work with everybody and get a letter out. I think we need to help our reps understand where we're sitting at
- Eric Stiasny - Monday is a joint meeting of Dolores and Montezuma County Commissioners - that would be an efficient approach to do a letter of support focused on Hurd, Hick and Bennett.
- James - we normally need a week in advance notice at county for letters of support
- Robert/Eric - letter of support to commissioners, tribe. Ask those officials to forward a similar letter to elected officials
- No one spoke out as opposed to drafting of letter. Will work to draft a letter to bring to the Dolores/Montezuma County commissioner meeting on March 10th.
- Aly at High Desert Conservation can bring a draft letter to her board meeting for review on 3/11
- John Rader - SJCA supports a letter from DWC to electeds and tribal councils
- **Nina will facilitate Robert, Bruce, Megan, Jimbo and Bishop finalizing letter requesting our County Commissioners and UMUT to send to our Federal Delegation: Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper and Congressman Hurd. No one expressed opposition**

2:15-2:45 WRAP

- Brief presentation of post-fire hydrologic hazards - put together by Duncan Rose
- Goals and Objectives - review and agree

- **Vision:** A resilient and adaptive Dolores River watershed that provides ecosystem services, maintains ecological integrity, and sustains community values in the face of post-fire hazards and environmental change, supported by a diverse and active collaborative group.
- Gerrish - change ecosystem services to function or benefits
- discussion of ecosystem services definition and Gerrish is ok with leaving that language
- Bishop - add **cultural values - we want to add this to the broader collab vision**
- **Goal 1:** Define and identify post-wildfire hazards that threaten life safety, property infrastructure and resources (HVRAs).
 - Bishop - add cultural values in here
 - Danny - different scales of what “highly valued” means. Distinguish between life safety and risks at scale different from life safety.
 - Jim - timeframe for this?
 - Nina - right now we are collecting data on cultural and natural resources and HVRAs and getting that list complete. Then consultants will move into post-fire hazard analysis
- **Goal 2:** Advance a watershed approach to planning, resilience and recovery of our watershed, wetlands, and stream corridors as a strategy to reduce susceptibility to hazard following wildfires
- **Goal 3:** Develop a post-fire playbook identifying recovery organizational structure, responsibilities, communication, and implementation actions to improve wildfire emergency preparedness - Jim Spratlen wants to work together on this. Looks good at this point.
 - Jim - ID funding mechanisms - in our hazard mitigation plan we have a lot of mitigation efforts and planning grants
 - would town of Dolores or Cortez Fire be willing to be a fiscal agent.
 - New plan is to get more partners in hazard mitigation
 - FEMA grants - 75/25 split. Can get a 25% match. Sometimes you get a 90/10 split that’s nice. **To become a partner requires a letter of intent - Jim can share a template**
 - Life safety is key, then property conservation, then stabilize the incident
 - Aly Tarrant - reach out to MEVE Civil Air Patrol - potential funding/partnering with emergency services. Want them as a partner - would be good for all constituents.
 - Nick - post-fire burned area emergency response, we are only allowed to spend BAER \$ on forest post-fire
- **Goal 4:** Create a collaborative learning culture that increases understanding of upper Dolores watershed conditions and risks to water resources posed by wildfire
- Data Collection update - in process

2:45-3:10 Field Trip Scheduling - Amo - will finalize via email

- #1 - Hwy 145 to Dunton loop WRAP landscape and cultural sites, wed **July 17?**
- #2 - Rico Field Trip - St Louis Tunnel acid mine drainage site, then to Silver Ck fuels

condition w option for a hike - after snow melts, **August 6 or 27**

- **#3 - Dozer Line/Canyon** rim fuel breaks - Hope Fire Footprint **May 30?**
- **#4 - McPhee** water infrastructure tour with BOR/DWCD- **Weds March 26? April 1?**

June or July better?

- Town of Dolores - dike, ponds
- Tunnel outlet Rd T
- McPhee Overlook
- Great Cut Dike

3:10-3:20 **Fix The Forest Act Update** - Bruce Short provided a two page synopsis. **Nina will send out to stakeholders**

3:20-3:30 **Updates**

- **House Ck COSWAP** - contract signed and CWCB meeting
- **Spring Rx** Fire plans
- **TREX Mtg** - 3/12
- **PJ Symposium Date and Location** - April 11/12 at Mancos Community Center and Mesa Verde NP
- **Rx Fire Day** - May 17 Boggy Draw Parking Lot
- **Landowner Fire Mitigation Bootcamp** May 3
- **Walt Dabney History of Public Lands Presentation** Date and location

PARKING LOT

Wood Bank Idea