

**Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group
Meeting 13, November 18, 2011
Pagosa Community Center
Meeting Notes**

The thirteenth meeting of the Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group consisted mostly of a debriefing of the October community meeting.

Attendees: Bob Frye, Ron Halverson, Bev Warburton, J. R. Ford, Lindsey Bright, John Nelson, Jimbo Buickerood, Thurman Wilson, Sam Burns, Marsha Porter-Norton, and Steve Hartvigsen.

The Working Group gave their observations about October's community meeting:

It was great to have people that cared enough to be there, listened, and expressed themselves.

There was good interaction.

The lack of attendance from local government and economic development people was disappointing. Maryjo Coulehan from the Chamber of Commerce did attend.

It is interesting that people see the bugs more than the fuels or HRV problems. The bug problems are a potential hook to get people's interest.

There is an overlap with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) process. The October mixed-conifer presentation was helpful for people working on CWPPs.

Firewise of Southwest Colorado is advertizing for an Archuleta County Coordinator (part time, around 10 hours per week). That person could help with community learning on mixed-conifer issues (some mission overlap).

Steve did a very good job with the presentation. Thanks to him and the folks that helped develop it.

It helped that the participants in the October meeting had some background coming in to the meeting.

When Marsha asked at the October meeting if anyone had big problems with what the USFS is currently doing, the answer was no (things to work on but no big complaints).

Public education is important for the next phase. The more hands-on, the better. Demo sites are very helpful.

Trail users are interested because of concerns about the potential impacts of falling trees blocking trails and making it hard to get through the woods.

There is a lack of education. Most people don't understand differences between forest types or different types of fire.

There is a lot of community interest in learning, including ecology. We need to continue looking at ways to provide it.

It would be good to invite Ed Collins, the District Ranger for the Lakeside District of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, up to talk about the Blue Ridge Demonstration Area near Show Low and the evolution of their Natural Resources Working Group.

There are several demo sites near Pagosa already, including Turkey Springs Unit 1 and some of JR's recent work, plus some older treatments.

The Arizona fires are still in peoples' minds. It might be good to have a speaker from the Wallow Fire/Show Low area.

Butch Knowlton could be a potential speaker on aftereffects of fire.

Businesses are concerned about losing business during and after fires.

There is agreement on a continued need for public education.

A multi-phase approach is needed:

- short presentations
- video
- schools
- self-guided tours
- county fair
- speaker series
- maps, videos, etc. for trail users

Run the idea list by Kevin and the USFS staff to see where they can fit in.

Marsha asked if there was interest in forming a working group on education efforts. Several people volunteered – Bev, Ron, J.R., Bob (but he will be gone for the winter), and someone from the USFS (maybe Ros).

There is a need for different messengers beyond the USFS.

John mentioned an idea of "citizen forests."

Maybe the educational effort doesn't have to be a big deal – many people have some level of understanding already.

Firewise has been very effective but could hit more people. Maybe we could find a little money to help the Firewise coordinator do more here.

Is there a role for the San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) in education about mixed conifer? Is the climate right for more involvement from them?

We need more surveys completed to round out information for report. There is a new deadline of December 9 to respond.

We need to think more about marketing. We have this incredible product – how can you get it in the hands of people.

Do we understand the local demographics?

We need to recognize the political situation. It will take real money to fix the problem (the work on the ground). If the USFS can't fund the long-term stewardship contract, education won't help.

We should consider trying to establish a watershed fee – such as \$1.00 a month for Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation users to fund work. Up-front watershed protection is cheaper than dealing with after-effects of severe fires.

The business community needs to step up. Consider a forest health coupon book or a hotel surcharge. Use the funds for forest health/watershed protection.

Funds are needed beyond the long-term stewardship contract for small-scale projects – smaller areas than someone like J.R. can do.

Remember that any time you treat a piece of ground for any one thing, it causes problems with something else. Working in WUI just for fire protection is an example.

We need to build stronger support across different groups.

.....
We discussed the report briefly. Sam will structure it and Thurman will help him fill in details. Then they will send to Steve and others for review. We will try to have a draft to discuss at the next meeting.

More background on existing timber industry would be helpful.

Mention in the report that we need to look at higher and lower elevations (spruce-fir and pine) as well as the mixed conifer.

Sam and Thurman gave a brief update about how the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council appears to be on the verge of being replaced with a new structure that is a loose association of place-based forest collaborative groups. The Mixed Conifer Working Group has been asked to join the association. It was agreed that Thurman would sign the proposed MOU for the new association for our Working Group because he has been handling most administrative aspects. The MOU as currently proposed is basically just a statement of interest in working together. There were some concerns about our capacity to participate. There was a general feeling that various people will need to work on it, depending on the circumstances.

The next meeting will be December 18, unless we are not ready to review a draft by then.

As always, more info can be found on the Mixed Conifer Working Group website:
<http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/mixedconifer/>.