

Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group
Meeting 10, June 17, 2011
Pagosa Community Center
Meeting Notes

This tenth meeting of the Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group focused on what we have learned and what we need to do next.

Attendees: Rob Lindner, Doug Purcell, Bob Frye, Dan Wand, J. R. Ford, Thurman Wilson, Sam Burns, Marsha Porter-Norton, Brandy Richardson, and Steve Hartvigsen.

The May meeting notes were approved. Marsha and Thurman's notes of the brainstorming session in bullet form are combined below:

- Need to develop a direction for group
- Maps need to show where fire is likely to occur
- What do the maps need in order to go public (Small Group will think on this...); shouldn't have them be too busy
- Maps need to display the differences between areas – in terms of both effects and options
- The real focus needs to be on options
- Current polygon maps are a “bit too overwhelming” for the public
- Need 3 maps: (use these in public presentation)
 - Current status
 - Constraints (such as roadless)
 - Management potential (what can we do and where and to what benefit and within our budget?)
- What was once fairly uniform ponderosa pine has changed in the last 100 years or so - warm-dry mixed conifer has crept down into the pine and juniper has crept up
- One of the group's goals = sell public on need for prescribed fire and other treatments
- Message: fire is good under certain circumstances
- Education need: people have trouble distinguishing between “good fire” and “bad fire” because they don't distinguish between vegetation types
- There is a need for social input as well as biological on this
- Need to talk about relative magnitude (scale) of work (i.e. continue to do about 2,000 acres per year of prescribed fire and thinning)
- Need more firewise education
- Need to consider both short-term and long-term perspective
- Need a monitoring and feedback loop
- Message: where is the money going and what problems does it solve?
- Another message: we work in some areas to protect neighborhoods
- Need to educate on what the natural condition is; where the USFS wants to work and why....explain what needs done based on science
- What values does the public hold dear that could be a help or a hindrance?
- Do a set of public meetings but do a dry run first (see plan below that emerged)
- Use “key informant” approach - invite some specific people (County government, etc.) but also open to the public
- Perhaps use Key Pads asking questions:
- Use before and after pictures

- Can we do more field trips? Those work.
- Do more things like J.R. is doing with small groups to learn; then do the key informant approach
- J.R. wants to do more public work, including a bigger meeting this fall. He would like to “smoke out” groups that might have concerns so that discussion can take place up front. That provides cover to congressmen that might be willing to help the project.
- Field trips draw out more people and are good because people are looking at the same thing rather than having a lot of different images in their heads
- USFS is willing to do field trips and to time them for when people can attend
- J.R. is getting calls every week from people that want to come out. He would like to do one in July after finishing a few more units and cleaning up
- Some identified misperceptions creating more open habitat (through thinning or burning) is bad for wildlife; catastrophic wildfire is good (like AZ); people don’t know the forest
- Need to do presentations to key groups (see below)....brainstormed: Outdoor Club, ATV group, Audubon, Tourism Council, Volunteers at Chamber, 4CBH..use as focus groups...these folks are probably more in the know and thus, it isn’t just a “101” meeting
- Maybe Jimbo or Ryan (or his replacement at Colorado Wild) could organize a meeting to include more of the Durango-based “environmental” groups
- Sequence:
 - 1st: What we would do (map)....”rule set” (Core group figures this out)
 - 2nd: Go to grassroots groups with presentation; get feedback, input
 - 3rd: Got to larger audiences...like a public meeting
- Need to nail down the project: What are we doing where and why? What are the opportunities? Where are the linkages? What is an integrated approach we can present? Where do we get the biggest bang for the buck? Sam: Dial in on linkages and benefits. Are there areas were we do not work? Is the “public” ok with that?
- Theme: You and Your Forests
- We need to start talking to people we know - outside this room
- **Sooooooooooooooooo, what we need:**
 - Issues by polygon, summary (who is doing this?)
 - Linkages
 - Constraints
 - Easy to understand maps
 - Field Trip
 - Grassroots
 - Presentation for the public (do dry run with Work Group first)
 - List of say 15 potential “To Dos” Projects/Actions
 - Get input from publics
 - Look at Sara’s work on desired vision for pine
 - Thurman, Steve, Bob, Davedeveloping 30 minute presentation; do dry run at next Work Group meeting
 - Then....do series of outreach meetings ...do 4 of them
 - Do a test drive with 4CBCH, Trails, PLPA (HOA) (maybe too late for this)...
 - Format: talk about who this group is; do presentation - 30 minutes; ask a series of questions, gather up input
 - Need a better lead statement (topic of meeting); not come to a meeting of the Mixed Conifer Working Group – protecting watersheds, protecting wildlife, reducing danger from fires
 - Need to get FLC – Julie Korb involved

- Can we get scientists (CSU- CFRI [Bill Romme or new person in his role] along with Julie) here in the fall?
- Sectors: Environmental Groups; Business (Tourism Council); Ag/Forestry; Recreation Group (how trails will be affected); HOAs; Government: Other/ Civic
- Potential new invitees: Ed Winston (new PAWS head), Morgan Murray (trails group)