

# San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Education and Outreach Plan



## Summary

The San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership has identified in its mission the need to “Strengthen regional communities through a landscape-scale, adaptive approach to addressing forest and watershed health.” The work the group proposes require support from local communities and elected officials. Community buy-in allows for work across boundaries and jurisdictions. Through education and outreach efforts, the group can inform communities about historic forest conditions, the threats to forest health and community resources, and the need for implementing forest treatments that help restore and maintain healthy forests within and around a community. Working with our partners, we advance knowledge and promote educated decision making. We work to communicate with homeowners, citizens, elected leaders, municipalities, counties, land managers, and elected officials.

### Group Messaging

The San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership is committed to facilitating conversations around 1) Resilient Communities, 2) Healthy Forests, 3) Healthy Watersheds; and 4) how these components help secure Clean Water.

### Goals

- Convey partnership efforts
- Advance understanding of forest conditions
- Increase participation in planning efforts
- Advance knowledge of treatment goals
- Advance community support for treatments
- Increase private landowner participation in implementation of treatment
- Advance acceptance of fire and wildfire as treatment
- Develop active community involvement
- Increase financial support for organizational efforts

### Outputs

- A community awareness of the challenges of living with wildfire in the southwest
- An established process for vetting the needs and concerns of the community
- An open dialogue of issues with treatment and wildfire and water quality
- An established process for continued collaboration
- Cross boundary participation in forest management
- Inclusion of current science in decision making processes
- Increased funding for group efforts

## **Mechanisms for Education**

### Tours

**Audience** – Audiences for tours range from landowners, land managers, citizens, to decision makers and regional/ state leaders.

#### *Objectives*

1. Demonstrate current conditions on the ground
2. Demonstrate impact of work
3. Demonstrate impacts of wildfire

*Opportunities* – Tours are largely popular, particularly when they involve regional leaders to help explain and interpret decision making processes and impacts. They have the opportunity to demonstrate threats to the landscape and the efficacy of treatment opportunities.

### Presentations/ Discussions

*Audience* – The audience can include regional land managers, decision makers, and interested citizens.

#### *Objectives*

1. Offer most current science
2. Build an information base
3. Solicit community input
4. Include local knowledge

*Opportunities* – Opportunities for presentations can be adapted according to the audiences.

Hosting **Public presentations** at hours that are accessible to potential attendees offer community education opportunities. Goals will be to inform communities and public about current science, management practices, and group efforts.

**The classroom** offers the ability to reach students and allow them to understand the dynamics of native systems. You can offer students the opportunity to apply sampling methodology, play with data, develop hypotheses, and contribute to the public discussion.

**Homeowners associations and organizations** offer the opportunity to reach out to homeowners concerned with the property that they own. They are open to discussing private management, funding opportunities, and situating their property on the larger landscape.

**Participation in public meetings** (i.e. town and county meetings) offers opportunities to help inform management practices and efforts.

### Citizen Activities

*Audience* – Incorporating citizens in the application of science and treatment methodology can help support education of the community through informed constituents.

### *Objectives*

1. Demonstrate the science behind decision making
2. Inform public about decision making processes
3. Involve the public to inform management decisions

*Opportunities* – Involving the public in field discussions helps to bring the reality of the on the ground situation into the discussion.

**Monitoring** of forest health conditions can help people understand what measurements are involved in assessing current conditions and, when followed up with post treatment monitoring, what the impacts of the treatment are.

**Marking stands** can help the public to look closely at the forest stand and make decisions about treatment needs.

### Outreach Materials

*Audience* – Materials such as pamphlets and video can target a broad audience from land managers to private citizens and homeowners. They offer a way to inform on group efforts and specific projects.

### *Objectives*

1. Increase community understanding of group efforts
2. Increase community participation in group discussion
3. Increase financial support from community members
4. Improve understanding of specific projects

*Opportunities* – Materials offer community members materials that they can peruse at their leisure. They serve as a reminder of the organization the discussions that they recently attended.

Materials can be developed that cater to organizational and individual interests.

Materials can be distributed at events, presentations, mailings, and through public service organizations or at regional businesses (i.e. Chamber of Commerce).

Supporting businesses can include materials in regular mailings and/or billing cycles.

## **Evaluation**

### *Community Attitude*

San Juan Headwaters is working to develop an assessment tool that will assess community acceptance of smoke, wildfire, sense of preparedness, and concern. The group actively solicits input on events from attendees, however this evaluates the opinions of a group of citizens that have a clear interest in the subject matter. The group is looking to identify mechanisms for assessing the awareness of the broader community. We do track the number of articles written about the partnership and wildfire.

### *Work on the Ground*

By mapping and assessing the amount of work that is occurring on public and private lands, the San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership will be able to determine if there is an increase in private land participation in forest treatment.

### *Increase in Funding and Diversification of Funding Sources*

San Juan Headwaters will be able to measure the amount of financial support and where that support comes from. This will help to determine how much support comes from the community, if that support is growing or shrinking, and how much support is coming from external sources, as well as what the moneys are helping to fund.

### *Forest Health*

Through pre and post monitoring of project areas, San Juan Headwaters should be able to assess the overall impact of its work, the impact of the treatments, and how that is influencing forest characteristics and wildlife.