



San Juan Headwaters

FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Virtual Meeting Notes for Friday, June 19, 2020

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Regular Meeting: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

*Action Items

VIRTUAL MEETING NOTES

9:00 – 9:10 Welcome and Introductions

Aaron Kimple (MSI), Dana Hayward (MSI), Mike Remke (MSI), Emily Swindell (MSI), Ann McCoy-Harold (Senator Gardner's office), Roger Johnson (retired Silviculturist), Matt Ford (Clean Forest Energy), JR Ford (Forest Health Company), Emily Hohman (The Nature Conservancy), Herb Grover (Weminuche Audubon), Bill Trimarco (WAP), Matt Tuten (USFS – Pagosa Ranger District), Rita Daniels (USFS – Pagosa Ranger District)

9:10 – 9:30 Updates (Specific to SJHFHP planning and work and/or COVID-19)

- Fires and Fire Conditions
 - Fires in CO
 - East Canyon – Pinon Juniper, BLM Land ~2900 acres, 17% contained with hopes of full containment by end of next week
 - Prepared residents made evacuations easy and helped protect structures
 - Six Shooter – Pinon Juniper, ~224 acres, 60% contained
 - Loading Pen – Mixed Conifer and Aspen near Dolores, ~42 acres, 65% containment, San Juan Hotshots on this fire
 - Plumtaw – 10mi NW of Pagosa, ~5acres, heavy resource response
 - Sand Creek Fire – 21mi NW of Pagosa, steep terrain
 - Within the Little Sand Fire (managed in 2012)
 - ¼ mile away from a timber sale contract about to be advertised on Sand Bench
 - Fires in AZ
 - Mangum fire ~60,000 acres
 - Not far south from Pagosa in latitude with similar forest types
 - Has been burned frequently over the last 20 years
 - We can learn from this, if we do nothing to our fuels and forests, we could be in a similar situation, a motivator for our work!
 - Fire hit areas of thin and burn treatments so managers could drop the fire to the ground and back burn around Jacob Lake to save the community. Treatments allowed for fire management
 - Treatments can help us control fire and support fire managers during incidents

- ERC across AZ is in 97th percentile at this time
 - Fuels (in Pinon-Juniper, Montane)
 - ERC is amount of energy that could be released from a fuel if ignited
 - Energy release component determined by on the ground fuel measurement and fuel moisture
 - Most big fires in the area occur in the 90th percentile ERC
 - Warming and drying trend expected
- Smoke Map Resource and updates
 - Generally updated twice daily with accompanying information, map updates automatically
 - CO prescribed fire council map also shows more information including pile burns, Rx fire plans and more
 - Additional resources: Purple Air for air quality
- Wildfire Adapted Partnership
 - CAFA low income mitigation is the main project now
 - CSFS grant awarded to SJHFHP, 3rd year
 - 40 acres by the end of last year, at 25 acres this year so far
 - Word of mouth is powerful marketing in Pagosa
 - Site visits continuing
 - No more grant funds to offer homeowners, running at ~10% of visits compared to when we do have
 - Chipper rebate program open to all Archuleta County residents, funding through LPEA, Opened May 1
 - Budget likely depleted
 - Education and Outreach
 - WAP banner is on Hot Springs Blvd
- TREX Update
 - Officially suspended planning for 2020 San Juan TREX
 - Waiting on new master agreement between SJH and TNC, but the real hang up is COVID-19 for this year
 - There is support and interest in another TREX in the area, financial planning and agreements will move forward and Spring or Fall 2021 will be explored
- Tour Opportunities
 - Get people active and out in the forest, looking at it through the lens of our work
 - **Downloadable tour map available as a link**
 - Small in-person walk/drive through the forest to showcase work

9:30 – 10:15 Jackson Mountain (time adjusted from original agenda)

- Work Updates
 - 2 different types of forestry operations going on
 - Harvesting, forwarding and pile chipping
 - Ironwood contractor working from top to bottom doing a more traditional logging and skidding
 - Large slash piles
 - Rotten white fir
 - Forest health Co to chip and catch up with Ironwood next week, landings next to the road will clear
 - Important for SJHFHP to be familiar

- Walk throughs are important for our group
 - 1:1 communication
 - Ensure we are informed and comfortable among the group that outcomes will be positive
 - The public will rely on the partnership to explain how it is different than typical forestry work, that its being tracked and that there is buy in
 - They have to hear from us!
 - This will allow the 2-5 years of time for recovery from a social license standpoint
- The story of Jackson Mountain and interfacing with the public
 - What information is out there?
 - Mostly positive, some concerns
 - Letter on behalf of partnership in The Pagosa Sun published yesterday
 - Group needs to show that we're aware of the forest types
 - 2-5 years needed to see full breadth of recovery so its important to communicate timelines
 - Show before, during, after and 2-3 years after. Giving a little time is important for public perception
 - Tell the story of the work and the reasoning behind the work
 - MSI currently working on an agreement with RMRS to do work on Jackson on Oak understory combined with some citizen science programming, coordination and outreach
 - Connectivity with the biking community
 - What other groups should be outreach to?
 - Many stakeholders: Audubon also
 - Video footage
 - Of operations and process, good for social media and public information
 - Signage
 - In design and messaging process
 - Relate work to research being done nationally
 - High profile and highly visible work is important to address
 - Visible concerns from the road
- Tour
 - Start with a SJH group tour
 - Will help our group know and be able to explain the work so we all know the storyline
 - A 1 pager
 - Look at maps and walk on the landscape
 - A couple of different small groups? Staggered?
 - Dana to start organizing a SJHFHP tour of Jackson Mountain
 - Looking at end of July
 - Safety precautions, check in with Forest Health Co.
 - To look at 2 different types of forestry operations
 - Aspen groves and pine to take off
 - Ability for stakeholders to get out and see the landscape
 - Safety considerations with active logging and COVID
 - More public tour in late August/September

- Long term geography to explain where, what and why for forestry work
 - Continued community engagement and education opportunities
 - Disturbing the ecosystem significantly, but then it will bounce back and look good
 - What we'll see this season won't be what it looks like next year
 - San Juan River Village subdivision boundary is close to Jackson Mountain work, important for community protection and WUI
 - A fire hitting the Tx areas would lose steam before getting to the neighborhood
 - WEP collaborative also has identified the SJRV area as a priority
- Res Hill and Mill Creek Work challenges
 - Jackson Mountain is attracting attention and we've got to focus on it!
 - Project Scope, ASCC sites
 - Long term approach
 - A good story to get out there
- Photo Points and Survey123
 - The public is curious about what is going on up on Jackson
 - What kind of monitoring do we have in addition to built-in ASCC monitoring?
 - Before and after photos
 - Lack of repeat photography information
 - Start with photos from the roads
 - Build in more photo points to tell a story
 - Contractors are moving quickly, so we're trying to stay ahead of them to get "before" pictures taken care of
 - A great tool to enhance understanding
 - Before, during, after, later after
 - Jackson Mountain Map
 - 3 task orders awarded between 2014 and 2016 as part of the long-term stewardship contract
 - 1st task order = Little Jackson
 - Photos being taken
 - 2nd task order = ASCC (Little Jackson 2)
 - 3 different types of treatments: Resistance, Resilience and Transition that RMRS and CSU researchers will study over time. Photos part of study
 - Each of these treatments are replicated 4x and has an associated untreated control
 - 3rd task order = Laughlan (2016)
 - Photos being taken
 - Map is georeferenced and can be shared
 - Photo points and technology (Survey123, ArcGIS online)
 - Seems simple, but hard to organize, especially if a bunch of people are contributing photos
 - Survey123 use for the Partnership and Public
 - Web interface that creates a WebApp that collects photos and information that automatically upload to a server
 - Helps avoid management of large amounts of information and

- file names
 - References info to a point on the ground informed by smartphone or tablet GPS
 - Access in browser or App
 - App makes information accuracy easier because it matches a photo to a waypoint automatically
 - Could be adapted to other locations
- Map, Instructions, collect data, photos
 - Reference tree helps find data collection point in the future (rebar)
 - Collect photos using Survey123 App of reference tree and cardinal directions, then add notes
 - Info uploads when back in service
 - All info reference and available online so it's easier to share
- Including the public in the photo points effort
 - Fairly easy to organize and involve people
 - Steps for the public
 - Need an ArcGIS online account and a smartphone
 - Survey can be shared with that account
 - USFS has some sharable accounts that could allow for public data collection
 - Need some additional equipment/devices also
 - Pair up newbies with someone who is more experienced
 - Point reference liability with rebar, must be underground
 - Possibility of exploring use of aluminum attached to rebar as survey markers
 - Road photo points may be more accessible and easier
 - Timing
 - **Get ahead of current contact areas, then move forward with SJHFHP and/or the public in August**
 - **Play with this App when SJH group is out on the ground at the end of July/early August**
- MSI support with hosting surveys/account platform
 - Can MSI create a username that is more easily accessed by the public and host the survey on its ArcOnline account?
 - Likely a better solution in the long run
 - Info to be shared with MSI after info is collected
 - **Then a map with linked before and after photos could be hosted on the MSI/Headwaters site**
 - QR code or website out at Jackson would provide info for people to navigate to the website, or could link signs to Survey123 entry point to get involved
 - **Make it interactive!**
 - Messaging
 - Everything being done at Jackson is publicly available and we are explaining what is being done and why

- Field work completed
 - 2019 Rx burn in monitoring units that had data from prior mastication tx
 - Burn unit objective: reduce shrub cover, retain lower shrub cover over time and increase CBH to reduce vertical fuel height
 - Protecting WUI
- Results
 - Shrub Cover
 - Mastication reduced shrub cover (mostly Gamble Oak) from 70 → 50%
 - Taller shrubs significantly reduced
 - After Rx Fire, even more of a decrease bringing shrub cover close to 20%
 - Larger shrubs (ladder fuels) were consumed, some lower shrubs maintained
 - Clumps of larger diameter, tall oak (>4.5ft) preserved in the landscape for habitat complexity, observed, but not in plots
 - Raising CBH to remove ladder fuels
 - CBH is lowest point on the tree of green canopy
 - Lower CBH = higher likelihood of crown fire under lower wind conditions
 - Increasing CBH is important for reducing risk of higher severity fires
 - CBH was raised following Rx fire
 - Scorch height up to 30ft+
 - Much of canopy remained green (trees not killed or stressed)
 - Forest floor fuels
 - 1, 10 and 100-hour fuels (time it takes a fuel to reach equilibrium with atmospheric moisture content)
 - Rx fire consumed a lot of fuel
 - 69% ground cover burned
 - 78% litter cover and 12% bare soil after Rx fire
 - Good conditions because litter cover retains moisture and bare soil is important for pine regeneration
 - Desirable fire effect observed
 - Regeneration
 - ~13 trees/acres
 - In openings there were dense clumps of regeneration with only minimal mortality
 - Good new cohort of trees
 - Observer notes were valuable
 - Short report turn around
 - Digital data collection used
 - Shows follow through with monitoring
 - Confirms what was expected to happen on the landscape following Rx fire
 - Shows that we're paying attention and tailoring Tx to specific landscapes
 - Following and documenting Tx impacts
 - Layered information (pre, post thinning, post fire)

- Use of varied tools on the landscape to achieve resource management objectives
 - **Sharing this information, accessibility**
- Publication of reports generated by collaboratives
 - What resources and connections could help with this?
 - **Creation of archivable, public information that exists outside of just our websites**
 - Weminuche Audubon FB presence and active website
 - **Reports to be sent to Herb G./Keith for website posting**
- Video opportunities
 - Simplified/summarized version for social media
 - What we monitored, what we found
 - Navigation between binary results and nuance (what do we mean the Rx worked? Resource objectives were clearly outlined and were met, lots of ways to interpret whether or not something worked)
 - Binary viewpoint as an entry into the conversation
 - **Video as an addition to a report**
 - Focus more on content than video production
 - Is this worth it?

10:45 – 10:50 BoCC Presentation

- Overview
 - Headwaters coordinates and does work on the ground, WAP does defensible space work on the ground
 - Presented on Tuesday 6/16, including financial ask
 - Have approached BoCC for funding in the past
 - Board was more receptive this time
 - Going to see if they can find money in the budget to support our groups
 - Demonstrated how much work has been done and protection has been provided to the community by WAP and Headwaters
 - Cost Savings
 - \$330,000M, 7-14M worth of suppression costs
 - \$8M has remained local with workers
- Follow up and continued strategy for WAP and SJHFHP
 - **Contact your commissioners! Ask about pre-planning for fire**
 - Any support you are willing and comfortable to provide would be great
- Each group asked for \$15,000 (\$30,000 total ask)
 - Any amount of local support would be valuable

10:50 – 10:55 Strategic Plan Task Force (time adjusted from original agenda)

- **Currently being adjusted and drafted**
 - **Goal is to have it ready by end of August**
- **Formation of a task force for continued edits and updates prior to full partnership review**
 - **Targeted meetings and review of plan**
- **September meeting goal for presentation and review of new plan**

10:55 – 11:00 Closing, Next Steps, Other Business

- Agreement with MSI Finalized and filed

- Updated version to be put on SJH website
 - Federal rate adjustment to be available later in the summer
- 2020 Bird Monitoring underway, 2021 planning
 - Bird monitoring effort on Jackson Mountain for ASCC sites in planning stages for 2021
 - Monitoring started 1 week earlier than last year, 24 volunteers, ensuring teams have support with sound and sight identification
 - ~1/3 of team is new this year, some awesome birders are also involved
 - Sampling season to end July 11
 - Working to balance data across sites
 - Put in over 700 hours of volunteer time so far!
 - A credit to SJH as part of outreach efforts
 - Seeing a lot more birds
 - Brockover is more active than it was last year, possibly seeing a response to Tx from last year
 - More impressive data set than last year
 - This team of volunteers is important!
 - Contributing to our understanding of the forest
 - A resource to communicate what Headwaters is doing
- Timeline in progress
 - Digital format
- Updated map of completed and planned work on SJHFHP Website
- CLTL SA review available on Website soon
- Website calendar under construction

