

Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group

Meeting Announcement

Friday, July 13th 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: Pagosa Springs Community Center

Lunch

FIELD TRIP at 1PM (see PSA below) (Please RSVP)

Agenda

- I. Introductions
- II. Celebrations!
 - Unveiling of the Working Group's report
 - Stewardship Contract awarded to the Pagosa Cattle Company (J.R. Ford)
- III. Discussion of Phase II:
 - Monitoring and what that means
 - Funding
 - Other roles for the Working Group and meeting schedule
- IV. Name of the group
- V. Update on Education/Outreach Plans and Progress
- VI. Other/Announcements
- VII. Next Meeting

LUNCH (Please bring your own brown bag!)

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

Mixed Conifer Working Group Offers Turkey Springs Field Trip

Mary Jo Coulehan

On Friday, July 13 at 1 p.m. the Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group will be offering to the public a field trip out in the Turkey Springs area. The purpose is to view various treated and untreated mixed conifer forested areas and demonstrate to the public the need to improve our forest health. An area that was sanctioned by the Forest Service and treated by Renewable Forest Energy, LLC will be the first stop on the tour. Renewable Forest Energy, LLC, owned and managed by local businessman JR Ford, has been working to thin designated areas. The wood chips left over from the thinned area will then be used to create energy and yield additional water both in the forest and created from the power plant through a "gasification" process. Through this example, viewers can see the future improved forest health conditions such as increased water to the water table and increased hydration, improved wildlife habitat, reduced threat of catastrophic wildfire and disease and less air pollution and stream contamination.

A second example is to show the participants the difference in the various mixed conifer vegetation combinations including warm-dry and cool-moist conifer. Various participants of the group will demonstrate to the attendees myriad treatment options highlighting the many ecological, social and economic trade-offs within the forest where planning and implementing a range of high-quality projects can contribute to improvement in forest conditions in the San Juan National Forest. Key guidelines for management of improvement projects include watershed protection, forest resilience and diversity, wildlife improvement, insect and disease control, and wildfire mitigation. In the late 1990's the Forest Service requested help from the scientific community to gain a better understanding of the ecological conditions on the San Juan National Forest to better inform the anticipated revision of the San Juan Public Lands Forest Plan.

The Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group was then established in 2009 when the Forest Service identified mixed conifer forests as a priority for assistance from the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute. Since that time a core group of dedicated volunteers from organizations including the US Forest Service/Pagosa Ranger District, Mountain Studies Institute, Renewable Forest Energy LLC, Firewise Council of SW Colorado, San Juan Public Lands, and many other property owner and state organizations have been working to find viable ways to improve the health of the million-plus mixed conifer acres that Pagosa Springs calls its back-yard.

To attend the free field trip, interested persons should call the Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce at 264-2360 to reserve a spot. Participants are to meet at the large parking area on the east side of Piedra Road near the Turkey Springs trail head area (after the cattle guard) at 1 p.m. Attendees are reminded to dress appropriately as field conditions exist and to bring plenty of drinking water.

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