



# San Juan Headwaters

FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

## San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Virtual Meeting NOTES: Friday, February 19, 2021

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Regular Meeting:** 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

**In attendance:** Dana Hayward (MSI), Emily Swindell (MSI), Mike Remke (MSI), Herb Grover (Weminuche Audubon), Keith Bruno (Audubon Rockies), Bill Trimarco (WAP), Al Myatt (WAP neighborhood ambassador), Tim Haarmann (Banded Peak Ranch), Larry Lynch (PLPOA), Becca Smith (USFS, Acting Pagosa District Ranger), Caleb Stotts (CPLA), Emily Hohman (TNC), Mercedes Siegle-Gaither (CSFS), Matt Tuten (SJNF), Matt Ford (Clean Forest Energy), Ed Millard (SW Basin Roundtable), Marin Chambers (CFRI)

### VIRTUAL MEETING NOTES

#### **9:00 – 9:10 Welcome and Introductions**

#### **9:10 – 9:45 Updates**

- Collaboration and Public Participation SJNF Training upcoming March 2-3
  - Led by Jessica Western: Hobbes School of Environment and Natural Resources at the University of Wyoming
  - Purpose
    - Think through and train together about what it means to collaborate as partners with the Forest Service
    - Thinking through how we work together and form expectations and understand partner limitations in the CFLR space
  - Open to anyone who would like to attend
    - Interested in broad participant involvement
      - Recruitment of recreations community
    - If interested, email Dana so that your information can be sent to Lo Williams who will send you an invite
- Legislative engagement
  - SJHFHP provided feedback on Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act that continues to be drafted by Senator Bennet's team (formerly the Outdoor Forest Restoration Act)
    - Outlines how to provide funding for natural infrastructure in the West
    - Currently behind COVID Relief bill and impeachment trial, but forthcoming
  - Joint Chiefs bill
    - Different from Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act, but will play off of each other if codified in law
    - Bennet's team is drafting the Joint Chiefs bill and it will be available in the coming a few weeks for stakeholder review
- Newsletter coming out soon

- send updates and info for our first bimonthly newsletter (being drafted)
- Send Dana any information you'd like to share with partners
  - Add Dana as press release contact
- Partner Updates
  - CSFS
    - Dana received recognition as a nominee for Partner of the Year
    - Looking optimistic for FRWRM funding
      - Will know beginning of April
      - 66 applications and minimal funding
      - Not as much funding for NRCS this year
    - Adding 2 Research Associates to Durango/Pagosa area, positions currently open
      - Kyle O'Neill as POC for Durango area in supervisory role
        - Estevan Vega to return this season to fill 1 position
        - Searching for qualified candidate to fill other position
      - Research assistantship gives opportunity to work ~3 years
      - Application is available through CSFS/CSU Open Pool
        - RA positions
        - <https://jobs.colostate.edu/postings/83660>
      - SCC brining on a forester through AFF also
  - TNC
    - Still dealing with travel restrictions until July 5<sup>th</sup>
    - Some places moving Forward with local cooperative burning events
    - Talking with Brad Pietruszka on SJNF about possible TREX event for Fall 2021
      - Drafting SPA to be flexible, would be good for 3-4 years attached to new Master Agreement with FS
      - Lots of variables, stand by!
    - Fire Management Program of Forest Stewards Guild (FSG) is spinning off into new 501c3 → Ember Alliance
      - Will still work closely with FSG
      - Long process of separating these organizations
      - Interest in engaging BLM and private lands with many pieces coming together to support cooperative burning efforts in Southwestern Colorado
  - Audubon
    - Weminuche Meeting Wed 17th
    - American Dipper Survey starting on the San Juan River this Spring
      - Steve Monroe has spearheaded this effort on the Animas River and has agreed to get a similar program started here
      - Will get orientation on Sat March 13
        - How to survey American Dipper nests
        - If interested reach out to Keith
  - WAP
    - Chipper Rebate Program starting in Spring

- Cost-sharing in Pagosa Lakes
- Free site visits
- Online summit held yesterday with Senator Bennet, Congressman Neguse, Senator Hickenlooper, Governor Polis, and head of Dept Public Safety
  - Concerns about forest and watershed health in our region with forest and watershed are shared by representatives
  - Senator Bennet and team working on issues on different levels and listening to SJHFHP feedback
  - Understand the difficulty of funding for education and coordination
  - Focusing on forest lands, watersheds, and WUI for future work
- PLPOA
  - Cost-sharing with WAP
    - Expecting good participation with forest health and defensible space projects
  - Will continue to run brush collection area
    - 200 hp horizontal drum grinder acquired from DNR grant
    - In 2020 almost 1000 sign ins at that area doing fire mitigation
      - Issues with some lakes in drought year
      - Water district likely to put drought management plan into effect
        - Water restrictions may come earlier than what folks are used to in 2021
  - Working on trail project that includes a foot bridge
    - Possibility of waterfowl interpretive signage
    - Working with Weminuche Audubon
  - Forests
    - Monitoring some pine budworm outbreak in Twin Creek subdivision
- Banded Peak Ranch
  - Will continue forest work on ranches being funded through RGWF
  - Scheduled to pull out ~2M board feet in 2021
    - Dead spruce and white fir
- CPLA
  - Summer 2021
    - Planning work in Navajo and Blanco Basins
      - Looking for cross-boundary opportunities with National Forest
      - ~150 acres treatment
  - LSR (Landscape Scale Restoration) grant proposal
    - Through FS to be used on private lands
    - Applied for grant in Colorado and New Mexico
      - Reached out to SJHFHP for some match
      - Proposal not successful

- Consider again in 2021
  - SJCWP (San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership)
    - Hosting Rio Chama Congresso as 4 virtual sessions
    - Theme: Our United Watershed
    - <https://www.sanjuanchama.org/>
- SJNF
  - Turkey Springs Project
    - Scoping period ended beginning of Feb
    - ~dozen comments
    - Draft EA to be ready for comment mid-March
  - Jackson Mountain
    - Vegetation management, finishing up other projects, recreation planning including a trail system
- SW Basin Roundtable, Colorado Inter-basin Compact Committee
  - CO Water Conservation Board
    - Brian Caldwell working on a forest and water chapter for water plan over next few years
    - Get SJHFHP in touch with him, benefit to water plan and potential for funding
  - Club 20 West Slope lobbying organization
    - Working on forest and water policy document
    - Chris Treese of the SW Water Conservation District leading this effort
    - Once ready, will solicit feedback from SJHFHP
    - Local collaborative work is appreciated, also want overarching organization on West Slope without duplicating efforts
- MSI
  - Listening session beginning of March for Forest Health Advisory Council
  - Forest & Fire Learning Series
    - Every Thursday in April 6-7pm (April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29)
    - Livestream via MSI's Facebook page and YouTube channel
    - Reach out to Emily Swindell if you have ideas, speakers or topics for 2022
  - New “watersheds” tab under “Resources” on San Juan Headwaters website
    - Resources covering forest-watershed nexus topics
  - MSI and Walton Family Foundation conducting a Bridging Mountains Environmental Education Assessment
    - Dana on advisory board for project
    - A work in progress, figuring out how to distribute survey
    - Goals
      - Identify opportunities that exist for environmental education inside and outside of formal school settings
        - CAEE working to examine this in more

structured school settings and highlighting environmental education at the state-level

- How to enable and empower outreach to K-12 students
- Pagosa area west to state line and down into Aztec area
- San Luis Valley area
  - Major “sub-flyway” for migratory birds
  - Keith Bruno would like to build relationships with natural resources and education contacts here
  - Sue Swift-Miller Wildlife Biologist and Diversity Change Agent at BLM, San Luis Valley Field Office

#### 9:45 – 10:15 Committees and Planning

- How can committees and leads help us accomplish our goals in 2021?
  - Action list presented in Jan meeting
  - Sci seminar, cross-collab participation with CFLRs, communications updates and reporting, education & outreach objectives (ASCC project opportunities, rec planning)
  - Do we have the right teams of folks to effectively bring forward what is important to this group?
  - New Pagosa District Ranger to be involved to appropriate level
- Review of 5 current committees and leads (active, inactive, needs, committee vs. task team)
  - Planning, Treatments, & Proposal Evaluation
    - No committee lead
      - Members: Jerry Archuleta, Matt Tuten, Fred Ellis, Bill Trimarco, ~~Herb Grover~~, Doug Secrist, ~~Anthony Culpepper~~
      - Update members
      - Dana to reach out to see who is willing to be a committee lead. Might be an easier sell once we have specific projects, and/or different members can take the lead for different projects
    - A group that would focus on reading through planning treatments, proposals (e.g., Turkey Springs EA)
    - An important committee to maintain
      - Res Hill cemented the fact that we can take on on-the-ground projects, and this gives us a way to consider and develop project proposals
  - Events & Outreach → “Education & Outreach”
    - Committee Lead: Dana Hayward, but if another member wants to take this on please do!
      - Members: Herb Grover, Keith Bruno, Robin Young, JR Ford?, ~~Tim Leishman~~, ~~Aaron Kimple~~, Al Myatt (for photos), ~~Becky Herman~~,
    - Important committee to maintain
  - Finance
    - Committee Lead: Matt Ford
      - Members: Steve Hartvigsen, Aaron Kimple, Doug Secrist, Matt Tuten

- Important to have a FS member engaged as we move into CFLR
  - Specific administrative tasks
    - Signs annual agreement with MSI
    - Budget planning
  - Potential blending with Ed/Outreach for fundraising, grant writing
    - When finance committee or others identify needs, coordinate
    - **Plan to have a joint meeting in spring outside of regular SJHFHP meeting to discuss fundraising**
    - MSI brings grant funding opportunities
- Legislation & Permitting
  - No committee lead
    - Members: JR Ford, Tim Haarmann, Al Pfister, Jimbo Buickerood, Aaron Kimple
  - Have been communicating with legislators and working to take advantage of these opportunities as they continue to come
    - A goal for 2021
    - Building relationships with local, state, and federal legislators
    - Consistent communication and reliability
  - Original committee purpose driven by permitting issues (with Pagosa Fire Protection District involving burn permits for pile burning – with MOUs built, permitting is easier for Rx Burns, may come down the line)
    - Still relevant for Rx fire on private lands
- Next steps to re-invigorate committees and move forward
  - Committees a tool we can use to move initiatives forward between meetings
  - Facilitation, coordination

### **10:15 – 10:30 Science Forum**

- 2020 Review
  - Presentations: CFRI partners + Dr. Peter Brown + Dr. Michael Remke in a Virtual workshop format
  - Feedback
    - Great networking opportunity
    - Good to have town and county government in attendance
    - Report-outs valuable
      - Valuable to have report-outs and science information that isn't as publicly displayed
      - Balance public engagement and information with internal needs
- 2021
  - Intention is to offer increased engagement and conversation amongst the SJHFHP group rather than presentation/Q&A
  - Blocked into 2 days (TBD Thursday, March 11 and Tuesday, March 16)
    - Feedback
      - 2 days, 2 hours each is better than one long block day
      - Should be in the same week, or if 2 different weeks should be on the same day

- More engagement, conversation in a workshop model vs. just presentations and Q&A
    - Time to reflect and process between day 1 and day 2
    - Empowered participation, engagement with small group discussion
    - Recordings will be available
    - Set up a digital forum for partners to express questions and concerns about the landscape
  - Expected attendees?
    - Partners, CFRI participants, extend invite to 4 Rivers and DWRP
    - Keep questions locally focused, then consider how we can share our local investigations and values as part of larger landscape-scale projects
      - Connect with science conversations happening outside our group
  - Science forum is an opportunity to invite outside experts
    - Use questions and outcomes from the forum to attract guest speaker(s) for later in the year
    - Infusion of the latest science (short presentation, “mini lesson”)
  - Review work on the ground expected over the next 1-5 years to generate relevant questions
    - Give an overview of CFLR and what to expect with roll-out, how will Headwaters integrate with this
      - Identify questions specific to treatment areas or objectives associated with this project
    - Generate questions about impacts, cost-benefit etc.
    - Land manager mapping and planning meeting with outyear plans can be used to prompt questions
    - Questions aren’t often well defined, so the more clarity we can provide the better.
      - Figure out the concerns and develop questions based on them
      - Consider how we can use science to answer questions
  - SJH group empowered to think about questions that are specific and answerable that can inform what’s happening in other geographies across the San Juan and 2-3-2
    - Headwaters on leading edge of dialogue of what’s happening in this geography
- Topic(s)
  - Monitoring protocols performance at Pagosa and Huerto Creek, ASCC
    - Pre-treatment data available at these sites
    - Want to get at the “why” behind monitoring
    - Monitoring protocol capabilities and limitations
  - Based on the tools we have, what questions do we want to investigate?
    - Are there questions we have that would require more or different

- resources?
    - What are the questions this group is most interested in investigating using a data-driven approach and why (values reflected in investigation)?
  - Starting the conversation about desired CFLRP outcomes and monitoring
    - Thinking about what our values are within our footprint and how we communicate those values will be important to regional initiatives
  - See what information we have, get at the why of collecting it, consider what we want to know about our landscape and what concerns there are doing work in this area
    - What questions do we have and what tools do we have and need to answer those questions?
- Mixed Conifer Knowledge Synthesis to be ready this summer (Mike Remke + CFRI)
  - Webinar in Fall
- Explore opportunities to features outside scientists and speakers relevant to our geography and across the landscape throughout the year

### **10:30 – 10:45 SJNF Communications Training**

- Becca Smith and Matt Tuten attended workshop hosted by Jessica Western with U. of WY
  - Understanding of processes, successes, and failures of other CFLR efforts
  - Attend advanced collaboration training in March if you want to know more
- What does collaboration mean and what are different ways collaboration can take place with the FS and stakeholders
  - Informing decisions, making decisions
  - Processes
- CFLR era
  - Groups new and old working together across the forest and with the FS
  - Broad CFLR project on San Juan and Headwaters is also part of Rio Chama CFLR into NM and over the divide to the Rio Grande
  - How can we all work together to get better projects done on the ground
  - All figuring out what it means to collaborate together in this space
- Headwaters group has a history and way of doing things that is open and informal
  - Don't pin down specific outcomes for federal projects, processes
  - Collaborative styles, learning and structure sometimes adds more formal processes as more stakeholders get involved
  - For Headwaters to benefit from CFLR effort, think though how we fit into a more formal process on the rest of the forest so we can negotiate outcomes and funding for what we want to get done over here
  - Learn so we stand to gain in the long term

### **10:45 – 11:00 Closing, Next Steps, Other Business**

- MSI agreement and IDC to be updated
- 2021 Earth Day in Pagosa celebrated Sat 24<sup>th</sup>
  - Bill Trimarco and Dana to have a shared booth
  - Pursue the opportunity
- Website updates including water resource page
  - Send additional resources as you find them



- Strategic plan update continues
- Forest Ecology biking tours being planned
  - Work with DUST2 and Ed and Outreach committee
  - Turkey Springs, Cloman
  - Also a walking tour to balance
- Pagosa Wetlands Partners
  - A new group, getting to know their purpose and considering opportunity and overlap
  - Res Hill connectivity