



San Juan Headwaters

FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Virtual Meeting NOTES for Friday, October 16, 2020

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Regular Meeting: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

In attendance: Steve Hartvigsen (retired USFS), Emily Hohman (TNC), Mercedes Siegle-Gaither (NRCS/CSFS), Jared Daniels (CPLA AmeriCorps), Doug Secrist (SJ Water Conservancy District), Jimbo Buickerood (SJCA), Bill Trimarco (WAP), Herb Grover (WAS, Lower Blanco POA), Matt Tuten (USFS), Robin Young (CSU), Ed Millard (SW Basin Roundtable), John Whitney (Senator Bennet's office), Mike Remke (MSI), Dana Hayward (MSI), Aaron Kimple (MSI)

VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA

9:00 – 9:10 Welcome and Introductions

9:10 – 9:45 Updates

- Dana has taken over coordinating this group after Aaron's great work and the year-end review will feature how we've pivoted and adapted to these changing circumstances as well as ways we can improve
- CFLRPs
 - Week of Oct 12
 - Official word that Sonny Purdue has signed the recommendation from FACA committee
 - Official that San Juan and Rio Chama CFLRPs have been approved and are moving forward
 - both are being considered for funding FY 2022 (Arriving Oct 2021)
 - Funding
 - Will go to federal budgeting process
 - Requested Funds
 - \$4mil/year for 10 years
 - *Not guaranteed*
 - Will come out of federal appropriations
 - Sen. Bennet trying to increase funding from \$40M/yr to \$80M/yr for the program
 - Federal funds to be applied to federal lands
 - "C" is for collaboration and the conversation with Sen. Bennet included his willingness to address funding for collaboration in a farm bill (serves on the Ag, Nutrition and Forestry committee)

- Reflections
 - 2009
 - We asked the question, “*Can we be a CFLRP?*” and recognized, at that time, we didn’t have the right relationships in place or the capacity
 - 2019
 - We’ve inspired the right relationships and coordination to secure 2 CFLRPs – hats off to this incredible group!
- Important to Remember
 - We have 180 days from approval to be a CFLRP to create infrastructure, but getting a jump on that will be helpful
 - So far there’s been quite a bit of uncertainty
 - Current news is good and positive, but funding hasn’t been allocated yet, and needs to get through federal appropriations
- Forest Health Advisory Council
 - State-wide collaborative listening session
 - Will sunset this year: been in operation for 5 years and needs new legislation to move forward
 - Desire to restructure the council to have a stronger voice with the governor’s office and legislators and to foster better communication between the governor and localized forest health initiatives
 - Build hub where different programs can have conversations about how they work across CO
 - New Mexico
 - NM State forest action plan completed in a collaborative manner with Laura McCarthy
 - Integrating local collaborative voice with shared stewardship
 - How do we structure input of local groups in shared stewardship agreements and actions?
 - A group is trying to pull together a “Collaboratory” that will have a representative on the Forest Health Advisory Council
 - Working to secure state support for collaborative coordination
 - DNR support and interface
 - Interesting dynamic in CO in terms of who manages our forests and where those institutions are housed.
 - Shared Stewardship comes through DNR, so there is discussion about disconnects and how to improve communication
 - Discussion about brining CSFS under state management (currently housed at CSU)
- Senator Bennet’s visit to Pagosa Monday 10.12 and next steps
 - Reservoir Hill
 - Great opportunity to present a local, multifaceted project made possible with support from ASD, PAWSD, ToPS, USFS and other partners on a highly used and highly visible landscape
 - Joint Chiefs Funding for cross-boundary work

- Bennet and staff interested in perpetual support of Joint Chiefs funding
 - Encouraging to legislate and solidify for work going forward
 - Bennet’s team is asking for support on language for legislation
 - Ongoing conversations between MSI and the collaborative about Joint Chiefs
 - CFLRP
 - Building support for collaborative efforts and working towards securing more funding through this avenue
 - Headwaters is an example of what collaboration can offer and produce
 - Key Points from the tour
 - It’s important to have place-based groups to adjust projects and policies in ways that work for local communities
 - Regional scientists and policymakers should be involved
 - Collaboratives should be involved in the decision-making process early, especially with NEPA and project development
 - Great input from partners:
 - Ryan Cox spoke up about private lands
 - Ronny Maez: from the County supported Bill’s proposal to work on private lands
 - JR contributed valuable information about small diameter timber, outcomes vs outputs on the landscape, and how to address local wildfire risks using biomass in our area
 - Mike Remke emphasized a science-driven approach, and working to incorporate monitoring for those projects was very well received
 - Thank you to all committed Headwaters partners for making this tour a success!

9:45 – 10:00 CLFRP Cross Collaborative Working Group

- Some uncertainty around the timing and amount of funding arriving in FY2021. Although we’ve been approved, the federal appropriations process still has to go to work. What we do know is know there are specific obligations associated with the CFLRP
 - *180 days from project selection to develop a work plan (implementation work plan and budget for proposal implementation), including multiparty monitoring*
 - Why now?
 - Better to do pre-planning and be prepared for when funding is released so we can hit the ground running
 - Need upfront collaborative involvement because the work is happening at the place-based collaborative level
 - We can get more work done, mitigate conflict, and move forward in a productive way

- Program to extend across entire forest, so we want to work in tandem with other collaboratives to best identify priorities and address needs across the landscape
- Opportunities
 - Participation in pre-planning and defining a successful program
 - Help inform where and how our public lands are managed
- What is our commitment & why is it critical that we're involved?
 - Committed to creating a work plan within 180 days
 - We've been approved, but funding won't come until FY2022
 - Follow federal guidelines, but we need everyone's perspective
 - Collaborative Groups = operational watershed collaboratives + forest collaboratives
- Your voice and experiences are valuable and important – you *are* Headwaters!
 - Would be great to have voices that represent low-income homeowners (WAP) and water infrastructure (SJWCD)
 - Will be important that the Forest Service is a partner/a piece of the collaborative not a counterweight/focus
 - Emphasis on common interests and bringing ideas together
 - Participation doesn't mean a year-long commitment, but trying to get people together before Thanksgiving
 - Doodle Poll: 1st two weeks of November to meet
- CFLRP = federal lands work
 - Would be great to work with private landowners too

10:00 – 10:30 Headwaters Check In

- Opportunity to partner with WEP (Water Enhancement Project) for education and outreach
 - Background
 - Mandy Eskelson (MSI): mentioned opportunities to consider an education/outreach deliverable that helps explain the connection between forest and watershed health
 - WEP and the Integrated Watershed Management Plan
 - Started out as stream management plan, but wanted to think more about upslope areas and streams
 - Take initial look at forest health and watersheds
 - Great time to think about pulling our efforts together
 - Are members in support of helping to develop an education/outreach deliverable for the CWCB Grant, working more closely with WEP, offering what we know about forest health, and having funds written into the grant for that?

- NOTE: before WEP started, Headwaters talked about bridging the upslope areas and streams, including carrying forward a stream management plan
 - Consensus was that we wanted to keep focus on the upslope and implementation of treatments
 - WEP was created with more of a stream focus, but the two are of course connected
 - Does *not* mean a merger, but an opportunity to inform one another when appropriate
 - There is support for work between SJHFHP & WEP
 - Ed/Outreach should include a clearer/more direct connection between forests and watersheds than just healthy waters = healthy forests
- Where are we, what have we done, & what do we need? (EOY eval prep)
 - Jackson Mountain Tour
 - Should make an annual tour to see results on the ground?
 - CFLRP
 - Getting 2nd & 3rd ranking on the San Juan National Forest in entire nation is impressive – speaks to the momentum of our group and work we’ve accomplished over the last 5 or 10 years!
 - TREX didn’t happen in 2020 but would like to have happen in 2021
 - This group is key to the success of collaborative burning in the future
 - Bridging the Divide
 - Bringing together land management professionals and the public
 - Look at doing this again on a bigger scale with bigger outreach moving forward
 - Reservoir Hill
 - Continued public education opportunities to be explored
 - Science Forum Feb 2020
 - 50+ people – collaborative participants – successful start to learning and talking about science and monitoring efforts annually
 - Strategic Plan
 - Updates still need to move forward
- 2020 and 2021 budget
 - Fundraising ideas and actions
 - Cohesive Strategy funds will be spent by June 2021
 - Ultimately, we must think through what we want to do and how we’re going to pay for it – out of the box ideas welcome!
 - Our group does a great job building relationships with local partners and entities
 - Presentation to SJWCD this month and PAWSD next week
 - Banded Peak Ranch supports our group and has provided a donation to our group Fall 2020
 - Opportunities

- WEP and other grant-writing partnerships
 - County engagement 2021
 - We're playing the long game with the County that has other competing priorities
 - No specific plan of attack for 2021 yet, but want to make one
- What's next?

10:30 – 10:55 Partner Updates

- John Whitney
 - Senator Bennet was impressed with our work and the stories shared during his visit
 - Follow-Ups
 - Continues to be in touch with the Forest Service about when funding will arrive for the CFLRP, but they want to wait until the Final Appropriations Bill is done for the year
 - Might extend into next year (Feb or March 2021)
 - May be able to work with other senators about other CFLRPs stuck in limbo and provide a letter for those funds to be released earlier (continued resolution)
 - Congress rarely/never finishes Appropriations Bills on time
 - Excited about legislation to authorize Joint Chiefs
 - Want to hear feedback from SJHFHP
 - Having conversations with those at CSU in forestry
 - Excited to move forward with that bill
 - The goal is to make Joint Chiefs permanent under law and Senator Bennet wants SJHFHPs feedback on legislation
 - When should we introduce a bill?
 - Benefits of introducing during lame duck session:
 - Put down a “marker” to let administration know that we want to have this conversation and that we're going to push it in congress in 2021
 - Can change the text when we introduce it to a new congress, fine-tuning possible before reintroduction next year
 - Bennet may become the chairman of Ag, Nutrition and Forestry Committee
 - More feedback from national groups
 - Could spark other conversations across the landscape and attract more feedback
 - Results of election will matter
 - Undersecretary Jim Hubbard likes this idea
 - Would be nice for Senator Bennet's team to get on the ground before the change of season to look at areas treated under Joint Chiefs (Turkey Springs or Four Mile)

- Mercedes and Matt T. – reach out if you have interest in joining this event when it occurs
 - Partner news and updates
 - Weminuche Audubon Society
 - Keith has submitted abstract to Rocky Mountain Community Science Conference – December 4 2020
 - <http://www.wyobiodiversity.org/index.php/community-science/rocky-mountain-community-science-conference>
 - Focus is on how we organize and do bird monitoring; results will be embedded in presentation
 - Primary interest of conference: how to resolve issue of community/citizen science + COVID19
 - Brief of 2019 vs 2020
 - Bird monitoring data is robust this year
 - Difference in number of bird species identified and recorded for sites
 - CSU Extension
 - Information on website about food preservation and food certification November 9th – get in touch with Robin
 - Turkey Springs
 - 1st project JR cut was demonstration contract nationwide (price and organization was the best proposal)
 - Fall 2010
 - Impressed by aspen response and lack of windthrow in conifers that were left
 - Will resend photos to Dana to have full file of photos
 - Present
 - Great to see how well an area like that has responded 10 years post treatment
 - Tells a great story about planning and how a project went through, which tells a good story as well begin work on Jackson Mountain
 - It's amazing how much Steve had anticipated 10 years ago is happening – props!
 - Note: dramatic changes, main thing is that they're holding up well
 - Jackson mountain will probably look similar in 10 years or so
 - Encouraging: young cohort of PIPO where a ton of WF was taken out
 - Hope JR has chance to look at these
 - Opportunity to tour in 2021
 - Forest Service
 - Leadership changes
 - Kevin Kung accepted job in WY and leaving beginning of 2021

- *Big* shift in local leadership – Kevin has been here longer than any other in Pagosa District history!
 - Forest Service looking for new district ranger
 - Acting ranger to start Jan 2021
 - For SJHFHP
 - Think about how to welcome interim and permanent rangers
 - Think about how we want to introduce ourselves and our collaborative culture
- SJHFHP and 232 group
 - Collaboration results = pile burning in the Navajo drainage with Forest Stewards Guild as a partner
 - Huge piles on ~2000 acres
 - Set up with fire plan to get mechanical work done
 - Currently up to edge of Porcupine Creek where JR is working
 - Looking at a way to set up the ranch to have prescribed fire in the future
 - **Nothing* hard and fast but looking like it's going to come together
- CAFA
 - Goal: 20-30 acres/year – getting 60 acres done!
 - \$73,000 worth of work on the ground
- SWCD: Seed for Weed program
 - Rebates for people who take care of invasive species
 - Ranches rebated for use of dry pasture and native grass mixture
 - Huge success!
- WAP
 - Secured more funding
 - FSA WUI Grant
 - Rebate for mitigation work and work on Pagosa Lakes is a go for 2021
 - Opened chipper rebate program until end of this month (October)
 - Collaboration with Pagosa Fire District
 - Submission for FEMA Grant to fund cost-sharing within district for next 3 years
 - Should know results next week
- SJHFHP
 - 2020 has worked well!
 - Dana commendation on Water District presentation and increased support for headwaters group; all the private work got done.
 - Thanks to CPLA and Jared for joining us today

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

- PAWSD fundraising ask to be made Wednesday Oct 21 – Dana
- Headwaters to present at WAS meeting Wednesday, Oct 21 – Dana + Matt
- Annual review is forthcoming → Be thinking of feedback

- Strategic plan updates
 - Hasn't happened on timeline yet
- Finance committee to be contacted for FY 2021 planning, Q3 report forthcoming
- Planning for partner changes and transitions at the USFS