



## San Juan Headwaters FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

### **San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Virtual Meeting NOTES for Friday, August 20, 2021**

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

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

**In Attendance:** Dana Guinn (MSI), Mike Remke (MSI), Emily Swindell (MSI), Herb Grover (Weminuche Audubon, Lower Blanco Property Owners Association), Jimbo Buickerood (SJCA), Bill Trimarco (WAP), Josh Peck (SJNF Pagosa District Ranger), Matt Tuten (SJNF Pagosa Ranger District Silviculture), Emily Hohman (TNC), Ronnie Maez (Archuleta County), Doug Secrist (San Juan Water Conservancy District), Kyle O’Neill (NRCS), Matt Ford (Clean Forest Energy, Pagosa Forest Products), Shaan Bliss (NRCS)

#### VIRTUAL MEETING NOTES

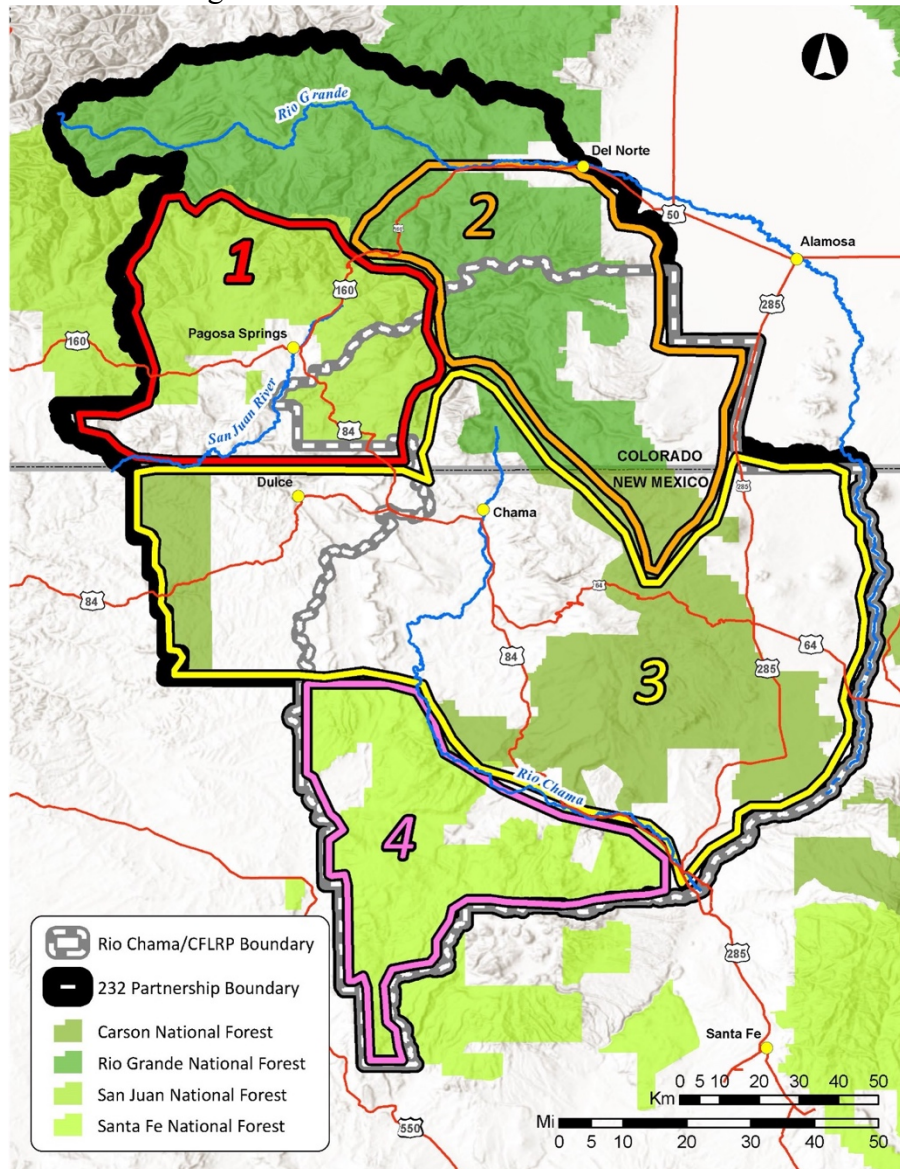
#### **9:00 – 9:15 Welcome and Introductions**

#### **9:15 – 10:00 Sub Region 1 Focal Area Planning**

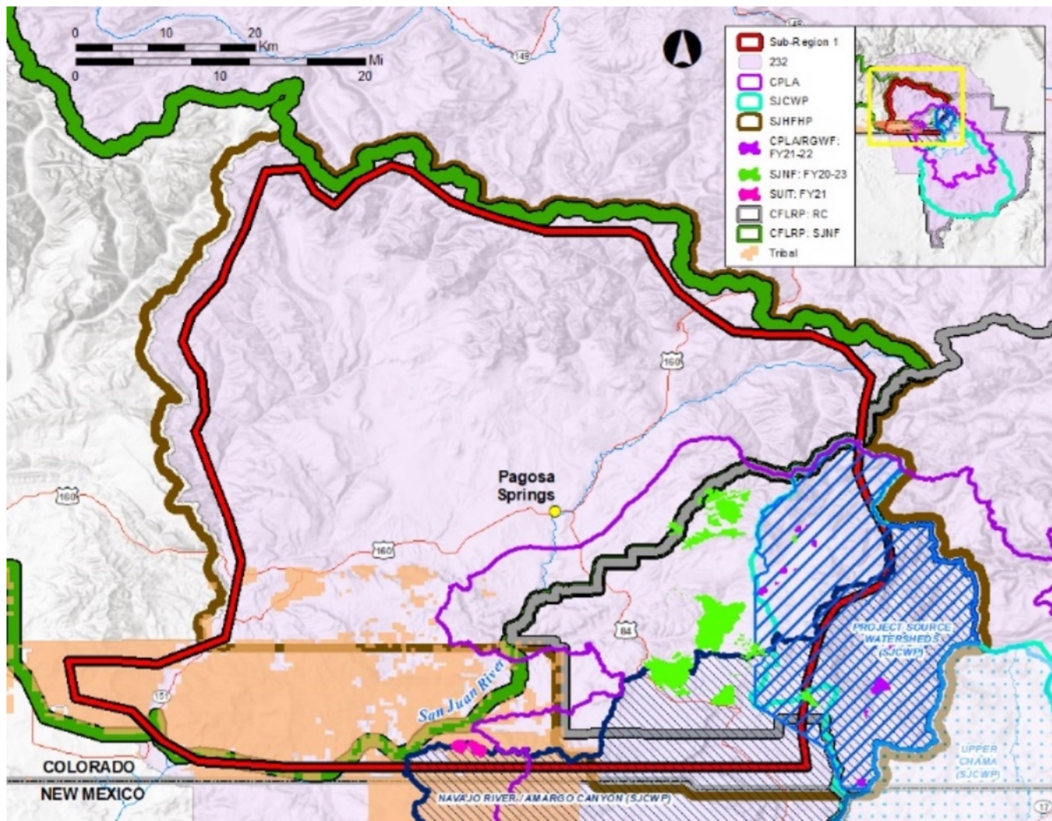
- Engagement with Focal Areas in the broader 2-3-2 Landscape
  - Thank You to SJHFHP partners for working across boundaries with other partners for many years
    - Headwaters is a place-based collaborative
    - 2-3-2 an umbrella collaborative and conduit for bringing local values and needs forward to empower cross boundary work on a landscape scale
  - Starting in 2020, the 232 began a coordinated planning process to build on existing place-based knowledge, integrate it with FS planning and new CO and NM State Forest Action Plans (FAPs), and create shared language for planning and bridging priorities on numerous scales
  - Today we want to discuss potential focal areas and community “broad-brush” projects
    - Capture past, ongoing, and future partner work
- Introduction to Focal Area process
  - 2-3-2 landscape is ~ 5million acres
    - Thinking at the appropriate scale matters
  - Priority landscape
    - RC CFLRP is example of a priority landscape
    - Part of district and SJHFHP included in this area



- o 232 Sub-Regions frame conversations around local needs



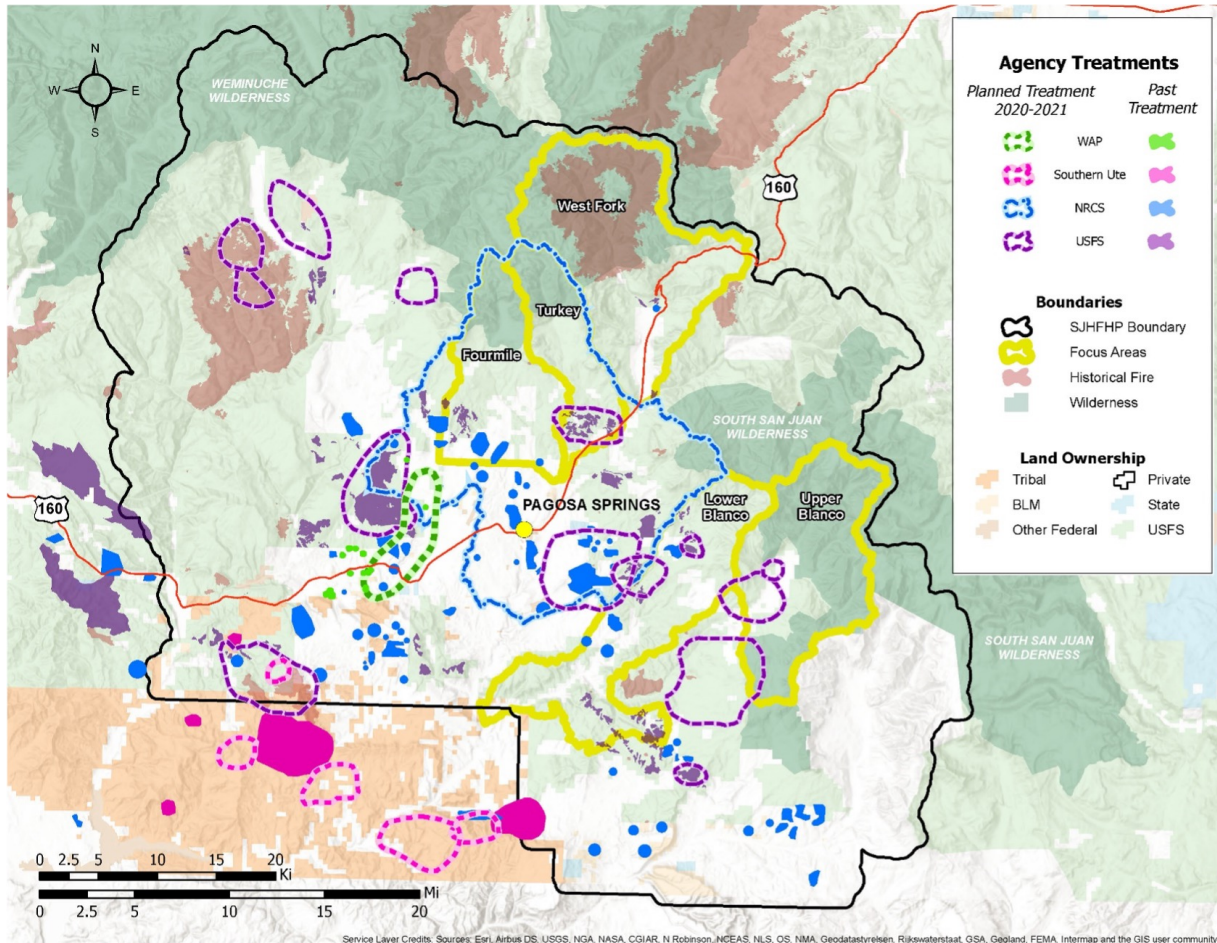
- Sub-region 1



- Sub-region 1 is slightly larger than SJHFHP boundary, but aligns
- SJHFHP input:
  - Identify key information or focal areas: who’s working there, leveraging opportunities, how to distribute resources for the best overall positive impact on the landscape
  - Enter information into [THIS EXCEL FILE](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1brBqqnVXSvQwchQNvjWvekmP8LiM3Own/edit#gid=1260724169) (link → <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1brBqqnVXSvQwchQNvjWvekmP8LiM3Own/edit#gid=1260724169>)
  - Contextualize place-based priorities on landscape scale without losing granular information
  - Identity where work is happening and why it’s important
- Just because we have interest working in Sub-Region 1 doesn’t mean we can’t mention projects/goals in other sub-regions that border Sub-Region 1 or cross these fluid boundaries
  - E.g., Wolf Creek Pass
  - Each sub-region has 1-2 leads
- San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership (SJCWP)
  - Have identified 3 focal areas that overlap Sub-region 1 (Upper Chama, Project Source Watersheds, Navajo River/Amargo canyon)
  - SJCWP have used grant funds to develop these focal areas
  - Identify information, who is working there, leveraging opportunities



- SJHFHP Planning Map 2021
  - Project areas, treatments, activities (scale)
  - Need to communicate more broad-brush information at landscape scale without making assumptions about what SJHFHP wants to communicate



- Focal Area development and discussion
  - A focal area is ~100-200,000 ac
    - Used to discuss general landscape focus, areas of interest, and where different partners are working or interested in working
    - Project areas are more specific (30-40,000 ac of treatment area)
    - Treatments and activities are where specific work is occurring on the ground
  - What matters to you on this landscape?
    - Partners have the landscape knowledge, experience and expertise
  - Example(s) of what we put on this map:
    - Four Mile
      - ~100,000 acres
      - Defined via the watershed risk assessment and worked on through this collaborative
      - Pagosa Water Sanitation District, CSFS, and other interested parties
    - Aspen Springs

- Wolf Creek Pass
  - Southern areas that have resources and values that may be at risk
- Utility in using this kind of cross-boundary planning? Concerns and questions about engaging in this larger-scale process.
  - USFS forest planning together with partner information
    - Thankful to the 232 for this exercise because the district would be tasked with breaking the landscape into chunks and prioritizing them based on work with RMRI and DWRP (like PODS)
    - Divides the landscape into manageable chunks and helps us talk about where we can leverage work on the Forest Service side, couple with partners, and ensure we're investing money and resources in the highest priority areas.
    - Puts some context around current work and allows data to flow to larger landscape and tell a story about ongoing and completed work to regional and higher-up offices
    - Put money where we'll have the right impact and the most impact
    - Important for SJHFHP to participate in this effort
- Are we reinventing the wheel in communication strategies we're using (PODS/Focal Areas)? Is this sub-region an effort to translate work that's already been done to a different language so it's cross-boundary focused, or something that needs new development?
  - Both, as the goal is to have many partners communicate across a very large landscape regardless of smaller-scale process
    - The Pagosa area has a place-based collaborative that's been functioning for ~10yrs so we can translate work that we're already doing to a larger scale
    - The Rio Grande National Forest does not have operational place-based collaborative, so processes are different (Sub Region 2)
  - Some mechanisms for doing work on ground are new and long-term, like the 10-year CFLR time horizon
    - If we can translate processes that are happening here using new language it allows us to plan into the future and explain needs in our area, putting us in a position to leverage resources
  - Concern that we do the same thing over and over, can we arrive at a vocabulary and/or evaluation strategy for long-term use?
    - Ensure what we're doing as a collaborative is of value to the collaborative
    - Is this the best use of resources?
  - If it feels we're doing this constantly, it's because we are. The boulder never gets to top of hill, but we get closer to it by getting better.
    - Current effort is because there are significant funds coming forward and we can inform where funds go and why.
    - When we prioritize at the landscape scale, we focus on portions of the landscape we're going to manage, but not all

important things are geographically explicit

- E.g., are we offering contracts that allow contractors to reinvest in their business and build capacity over time? This is a priority that isn't tied to the landscape specifically, but affects large scale capacity and management
- When we focus on certain portions of the landscape, it's important to ask why other parts aren't as important
  - We manage the whole landscape, and want to build our capacity to manage more ground over time
  - Efficiency
- Not every focus has to be geographically explicit
  - It's nice if we can communicate geographically and attach meta data and values.
  - Not just about work on federal lands
  - This group is interested in working across boundaries, so we can look for leverage opportunities to fund work
  - Cultural values, industry development
- Is this new language going to translate across initiatives (RMRI and CFLRP) for the duration of those programs, or do we have to do this every few years?
  - Might have to revisit focal areas to ensure they still make sense every year or two, but not reinvent to process
    - We are working to tell a story about why work in these areas is important and should get funded.
    - Focal areas package project and Tx area information. and make it comparable across forests and/or districts.
    - Enables FS leadership to compare like areas and allocate funds effectively
  - Terminology coming out of 232 won't match RMRI or work from DWRF.
    - Hasn't been done on Pagosa District yet, so different terminology. Will be different across the forest because of how processes played out
    - RMRI is using PODS to define focal areas
      - PODS are used as wildfire suppression response strategies by the Forest Service.
      - Delineation circles on a map defined by potential control lines for active ignitions
      - Not prioritization, but a tool a fire manager can look at and hand off to an incident commander when there's a fire.
    - FS created a social survey of values based on community, water, recreation, and wildlife values (the 4 core RMRI values) to rank each POD based on those priorities.
    - Headwater's process is different because partners draw circles on a map based on shared priorities
  - PODs are 20,000 – 40,000 acres, so DWRF and Four Rivers partnerships are looking to further articulate landscape values

through an HVRA process (Thompson and Scott wildfire risk modeling (GTR 315)).

- PODS then rank
- Stakeholders define mappable values/assets then use FlamMap to understand wildfire risk(s), terrain, etc. to create a wildfire risk map
- Then further refine to identify where work can be done to reduce the risk of wildfire most efficiently
- This is a rigorous and different process than what we're doing here.
- Context matters
  - What Headwaters has done in the past has produced lots of valuable work (e.g., CAFA)
  - How rigorous do Headwaters partners want to be in terms of using some modeling tools vs. putting circles on a map based on stakeholder knowledge
- Criteria for focal area development (same/similar forest type, other)?
  - No explicit criteria
    - What areas are important and what attributes do they have
    - E.g., forest types deemed important to manage, important recreational or economic resources, elk winter range, WUI, looking for multiple values
  - PRD has PODS, but many are small so if they were used as Focal Areas many would be combined
  - Division of landscape from recreational perspective. How are people dispersed across the landscape?
    - If we draw focal area boundaries based on this, it would be helpful for the FS in prioritizing focal areas.
    - Traditionally landscape division has been done through PODS and watershed boundaries, rather than recreation
    - Important to have delineations on a map so districts and smaller entities can speak to different focal areas when making the case for fund allocation to higher-up offices.
  - PODs are a useful way to split up the landscape
    - Often focus on “potential” rather than “operational” and end up with boundaries on the landscape with no real strategy to make more than potential.
      - Benefits to identifying key areas
      - Doesn't tell us what to do or how to implement beneficial activities over time
      - E.g. A focal area like Chris Mountain to Turkey Springs trailhead
        - Don't want to treat entire landscape over the next 7 years because it would create new problems.
    - More involved than just picking out areas, like strategy development based on location
      - E.g., North Fork of the Piedra Area will a different

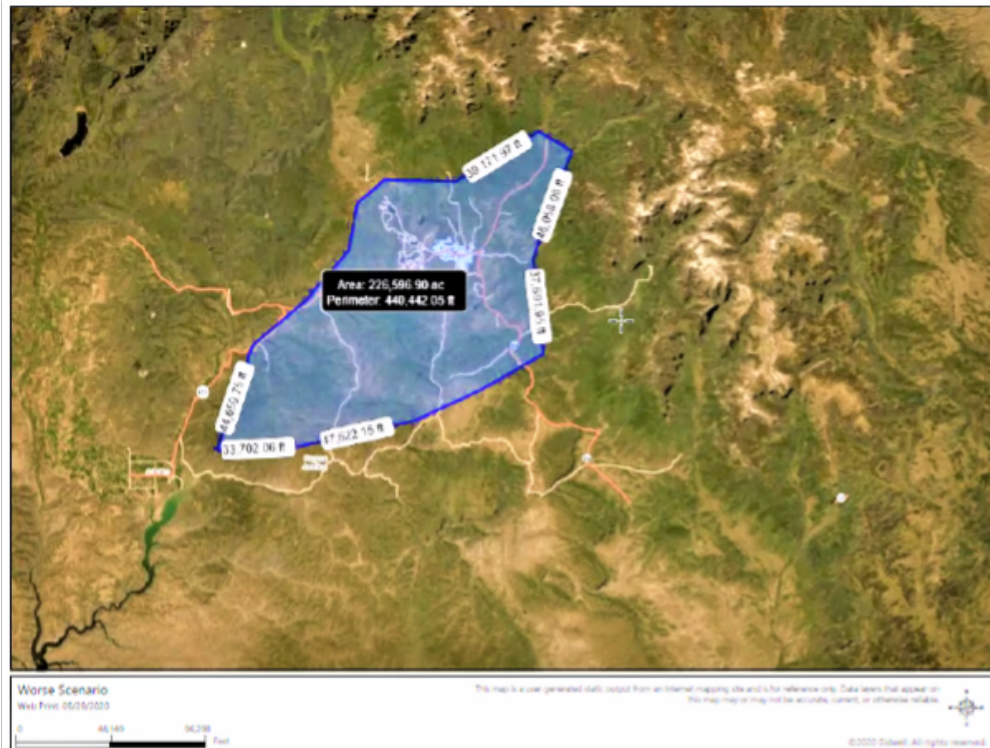
long-term approach than Turkey Springs

- Specific Focal Areas for SJHFHP landscape
  - Wildlife values in focal areas
  - Should one focal area be the WUI, because of our well-defined community center?
    - Protect our east/west access routes
    - Medium and high density WUI development
    - Would pieces of the WUI be incorporated into other focal areas, or would all the WUI be a focal area
    - Not one way to do it, if focus area is dispersed all over it could be hard for planning, but on the other hand the WUI is arguably one of the most important parts of the landscape
  - WUI project areas overlap with water protection areas, priority areas, and other planned work (tapestry of work)
  - Maps created using CSFS Burn Probability factors (like fire intensity) and Bill T.'s landscape knowledge and identify areas most “out of whack” and highly probable locations of fire starts



- CSFS identified most likely fire start **NE of Navajo Reservoir, SUIT, Cabazon Canyon, Chimney Rock area**, especially considering prevailing winds, fuels.
- Likely fire scenario is a 105,000ac fire in this area (above map)
- **Martinez Canyon** runs into WUI. If a fire jumped 160, a big concern for Pagosa. If this occurred, a fire could grow to a couple hundred thousand acres and even cross highway 84 with prevailing winds (map below)





- A fire that gets in Martinez canyon could easily run into unmanaged greenbelt areas of Pagosa Lakes and compromise 850 acres. Impact to 8,000 – 10,000 residents in the PLPOA. **Martinez Canyon** is a big WUI threat
    - Already established as priorities are right in this area.
    - Protect resources, watersheds, WUI
      - Main concentrations of WUI are threatened here
      - Most structures in Archuleta County are within 1-2 miles of where wildland fire could occur
  - Potential Focal Areas:
    - SW Focal area the encompasses ~100,000ac of modeled fire
    - Chris Mtn., Brockover Mesa, Martinez Canyon and up to Middle Mountain (could also go over into the upper Piedra)
      - 2 potential focal areas that line up with fire modeling and WUI
    - Jackson Mountain
      - Draw a larger area around this? If we do, how do we define and describe it as a project occurring within a focal area
      - Project with interest and momentum
    - Martinez Canyon
      - Below Martinez canyon is delineated as high fire probability.
      - We're doing work here, and fire probability is one of the reasons for focusing mitigation work in Aspen Springs.
    - Wolf Creek Pass

- RGNF and Sub Region 2 have discussed the importance of WC Pass as a transportation route, location of economic value and recreational use area
      - Not a lot of operable on WC
      - Still important to define as a focal area and describe values to prepare for future opportunities?
    - Too big of an area means a shotgun approach, but this is a big area of concern for WUI/resource protection.
  - Avoid random acts of restoration
    - Develop focal areas, and add descriptions within them that include who is working there, what concerns are, veg type, CO FAP information, potential projects, and resource needs
    - Many prioritization efforts, including RMRI, emphasize wildfire risk reduction, which makes sense in the WUI
      - Other things to consider: climate change, watershed enhancement
      - Resilience vs. resistance define strategies
      - What do we want when the goal is resilient watersheds and how does that inform prioritization of forest treatments?
    - When we describe focal areas, it doesn't take away from the granular partnership process, but rather allows us to communicate values at a larger landscape scale.
    - Focal Areas are both geographic areas and concepts
      - E.g., SJWCD watersheds
      - We could emphasize the connection between watersheds, water flow, and healthy forests.
      - A valid focal area, but like WUI, can be difficult to define because it's woven across the landscape, making it hard to pitch for the value of work in any one area
      - Make pitch for getting and using resources in each area because of the values that exist there and the opportunities to leverage cross boundary work
      - Also recognize that a suggested area this isn't the only important area.
    - CFRI data on effects of Tx on landscape scale wind dominated fire (Cameron Peak)
      - Tx did very little to mitigate fire behavior and spread
      - BUT in fuel dominated fire systems, they have some effect
      - Ingress, egress, building code, structure prep all present creative opportunities to influence how prepared communities are for wildfire
- Is there benefit superimposing watershed boundaries as we map to see overlapping values?
  - Tie watersheds in this process more explicitly

- We talk about improving watersheds and forest health, but not much info about what happens with improvement.
        - Include method of assessing how treatments improve streams? for example, would that mean we install a stream gauge so that we have data to tell the story of the impact of projects and treatments?
        - No specific information on our area about the impact of forest treatments on watershed function and value
        - Monitor 1<sup>st</sup> to know needs OR do work then monitor and adapt based on results? Easier to monitor impacts of action than to attract resources to get information to justify action
      - This partnership has placed emphasis on watersheds, and we should overlap watersheds with other map layers to see how forest treatments might influence watersheds.
        - Watershed enhancement Tx can also improve forest health (e.g., artificial beaver dams), goes both ways
        - Not everything is a forest problem
- Larger scale conversations are moving forward, and it would behoove our group to have a starting point for some set of focal areas
  - **Southwest area of our boundary** sounds like a functional starting point
    - Values at risk
  - Farther north including **Chris Mountain, Martinez Canyon, Brockover Mesa**, up to **Middle Mountain** could also be a starting point
  - Draft these two focal areas, then pitch back to group for feedback and additional information
  - We can adjust these draft focal areas based on what we care about and what makes sense – there will be opportunities to revisit these.
    - They are OUR focal areas that we can adjust
    - Any values south of town? In Fourmile drainage? East of town? Up on the pass?
- **Sub-region 1 working call THURSDAY August 26 11am-2pm**
  - Please join or let Dana know if you want to participate and can't.
  - Translate prioritization to be functional on a larger scale.
- Other areas to consider and draft?
  - **Four Mile drainage**
    - Want to include **all upper Piedra recreational areas connected by Plumtaw Rd.**? 4 mile drainage around Pagosa Creek, Divide, Williams Creek and William's Reservoir
    - Is this too large of an area with different management strategies or can this work as a focus area?
      - Viable, will do work in this area over time but likely at a different scale and in a different time frame than some other areas
    - A reasonable geographic polygon to start with for discussion
    - Not yet prioritizing focal areas, just identifying

- **Jackson Mountain**
  - want to include together with four-mile drainage given high volume of access and recreation use, make it its own focal area, or include it in the east/west fork area?
- ***Echo Creek/Mill Creek into the Blanco***
  - Fire behavior that could lead a fire start in the echo WUI over into the upper Blanco
  - Highway 84 corridor
- Like the idea of having regions in which we can then consider and target projects and work
  - Do we want to look at human use across boundary and divide up and focus on other values later OR do geographic lumping, describe values at risk and then move forward that way? → Latter strategy.
    - E.g., **Jackson Mountain, East/West Fork focal area to have several recreational values in it, same with Piedra and William's Reservoir**, but these aren't the only values in these areas
  - Feeling comfortable with this preliminary process
    - Consider how this matches up with some of the work and processes we've done in the past
    - SJHFHP identified "focus areas" in 2013-14, consider the overlap. These are about the size of project areas in the 2-3-2 context
  - Remember: this is NOT a long-term commitment to specific focal areas or geographies, it's a commitment to a process
  - More opportunities to engage in Focal Area process via email

#### **10:00 – 10:30 SJHFHP News and Needs**

- SJHFHP representation for regional efforts
  - 2-3-2 + 2 CFLRP's
    - Dana representing this group at those meetings
    - if/when people can engage in larger landscape conversations, please let your voice be heard so we can better communicate our needs
  - SW CO CFLRP
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitator to help develop governance structures
    - After they're hired it will be important to have some voices from this group in that "room" → opportunities to come
  - September 15<sup>th</sup> 9a-12pm
    - 232 meeting
    - Presentations from each focal subregion area. Please get involved if possible!
- October tour planning for SJHFHP
  - Pagosa Creek
    - Planning a **tour in October** at Pagosa Creek.
    - Partners toured this area in 2019 before work was done. Work has been completed and now we will be able to see impacts of the treatment and learn more.



- Public Education and Outreach
  - TS Bike and Hike tours about Rx burn and management in Turkey Springs
    - October?
    - Funds from Southern Rocky Mountain Fire Science Network
    - Brockover Mesa good place for this activity
      - One bike tour, one hiking tour
    - Would like to work with PATC and DUST2 to help plan and advertise.
      - Who can help plan? → Route, what to look for and point out regarding prescribed fire
      - Reach out to Fred Ellis, others with knowledge about treatments and impacts including Matt Tuten who can also recommend more people
  - Ed Material updates and local storage
    -
- Meetings and events overview
  - Blanco/Navajo Forestry Tour
    - Exploration of forestry treatments, ways to prioritize lands/projects, and monitor work
    - Opportunities to work across boundaries south of town
  - Outstanding Waters information session (OW)
    - Coalition to bring forward petition for OW designation of Quartz, Fall, and Wolf Creeks
    - If want to learn more, reach out
  - Jackson Mountain Trails
    - Meeting with IMBA who is doing an initial trail mockup Monday evening Aug 16 2021
    - ~30 people in attendance
    - Community values and opinions expressed
    - Process is moving forward but not yet time for action. Likely that SJHFHP will have an opportunity to engage with trail planning next spring
- Legislative
  - CFLRP
    - Still waiting to hear about CFLRP appropriations
  - Joint Chiefs
    - Joint Chiefs bill was worked on by Senator Bennet with cosponsors got through the senate with the infrastructure bill

### **10:30 – 10:45 Partner Updates**

- Relevant partner updates
  - Gratitude
    - Thank you to everyone and especially Ronnie for showing up to meeting, County participation is important
    - Matt: don't take any more details! 😊
  - SJCA
    - Salter pine project (~20,000 ac): Pine thinning/harvesting
      - Several objections on final EA and draft decision

- Will be interesting to see what comes from these discussions and relevance to may be relevant to Ponderosa management in Pagosa area
  - Main concern(s) with proposal at Salter
    - NEPA process and available information
      - CSE data not initially released or released when EA in draft form, tables speak to CSE in final
      - Important because if the goal is to go from a current condition to a desired condition, need to know current condition
      - Old Tree retention based on size, morphology, could be important when look at that the future through a restoration and resilience lens
    - Other Objections
      - Industry: not wanting to take on things that would include additional expense and/or responsibility
      - Town of Dolores: traffic and logging trucks through town
      - SW CO Cycling Association: heavily invested in recreational bike trails in the area, concerned about damage
        - Relevant to Jackson Mountain
        - Trail closures, scenic integrity
      - Bill Baker: not all relevant science considered in scoping and beyond
    - A way forward with the FS ecological, economic, social stool but we aren't there with this project due to recreation economy concerns related to logging
      - Lots of unknowns, not enough safeguards against unwanted damage
      - It's a management 5 area with a suitable timber base, but multiple use hasn't been looked at in a balanced way (hunting, recreation, grazing, fuelwood cutting)
  - Headwaters landscape applications
    - Jackson Mountain
      - Overlap of many interests, Trail system development, vegetation management and multiple use management
      - Mixed Conifer, rather than Ponderosa
    - Ponderosa Pine Management
    - Headwaters does a good job with considerations of multiple use in the past, but there is always room to keep learning and improve
- WAP
  - Low Income Wildfire Mitigation Program (CAFA) a great success after 4 years
    - Free wildfire mitigation to 43 different properties in Archuleta County (mostly Aspen Springs)
      - 108 total acres treated
    - One of 1<sup>st</sup> in the country to start a low-income program for

- wildfire mitigation
      - A way to address fuel mitigation needs for those that can't afford it
    - Thank You Bill!
  - SJNF
    - Matt Tuten to be on detail Sept 1 - early Dec
      - Hope to stay engaged in Headwaters, can give ~2 hr/mo
      - Brandy Richardson to participate while Matt is away
    - Regional position, forest stewardship program manager

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

- Q2 Finance team meeting forthcoming
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter finance team working on getting together.
  - No longer cohesive strategy dollars
  - Working with SJNF for SJH coordination and other agreements through Forest Stewards Guild for 232 work
  - SJHFHP work
    - Number of funding sources: SJNF, ToPS, cash and a few others tied to specific tasks (Southern Rockies Fire Science funds for fire education, FRWRM grant for private lands)
  - Finance team to meet in next week or so, more info in September
- Cross-collaborative 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitator for governance and communication for SW CO CFLR
  - Nothing explicit has occurred yet
- Mixed Conifer Synthesis to be ready for Partners early fall
  - Mike Remke and CFRI
  - Ready for presentation as grant deliverable in the Fall
- Forest Water Nexus panel or symposium in the works
  - Remke and Dana to continue talking about this (from may 2021 meeting)
  - Made some connections, working on connecting to right people and make it happen in a reasonable timeline
- Watershed Enhancement Partnership public meeting 9/21
  - General involvement
    - If interested in planning, working on creating management plan
- Meeting feedback and last thoughts
  - Monitoring
    - SJHFHP is a strange nexus of 2 CFLRPs that might get funded.
    - 232 and SJHFHP will have to interact at some point regarding merging monitoring conversations
      - How will the SJHFHP and 232 interface?
      - Can we get 232 partners to join our meetings, share ideas, and move forward together
    - Our partnership boundary and our work is involved in broader landscape scale initiatives that overlap. It's important for us to engage and speak up.

## **Zoom Information**

Topic: SJHFHP Meeting Friday, August 20, 2021

Time: Aug 20, 2021 09:00 AM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81593250878?pwd=YzRtWVZlcUJMcDg0clNldUhxQjZnUT09>

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