



San Juan Headwaters

FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Virtual Meeting NOTES for Friday, September 24, 2021

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Regular Meeting: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

In attendance: Dana Guinn (MSI), Aaron Kimple (MSI), Mike Remke (MSI), Robin Young (CSU Extension), Josh Peck (SJNF), Bill Trimarco (WAP), Bob Milford (PATC), Cody Robertson (NRCS), Emily Hohman (TNC), Helen Katich (Senator Hickenlooper), Kyle O'Neill (NRCS)

VIRTUAL MEETING NOTES

9:00 – 9:15 Welcome and Introductions

9:15 – 9:45 Partner Updates

- CSU Extension
 - Oct 26, all day: Cattlewomen College
 - Opportunity for women to learn more about ranching in our area
 - Oct 2: Cottage Foods class
 - Oct 19: Shred Day TBK parking lot; supports 4H
 - Oct 12: 4H Open House Day
 - Nov 3: ServSafe class for restaurant workers
- NRCS
 - San Juan Conservation District
 - WEP: finishing up inventory on ditches in Pagosa Springs
 - Working to finish RCPP forestry work in southern part of County
 - Closing fiscal year
- WAP
 - Closing everything for 2021; have grants lined up and getting ready for spring
 - Crost-share programs for fire mitigation in PLPOA and in all communities accessed off HWY 184 from Pagosa Springs to NM border
 - PLPOA will assess green belts in 2022
 - 850 acres of green belt create an extreme fire hazard
 - Owned by Wyndom, but PLPOA trying to get control to do mitigation work
 - Work will tie into work happening on Brockover Mesa
 - CAFA Program finished
 - 3 more properties in this year
 - All grant funds utilized
 - State gave 2 extensions
 - A story to spread far and wide

- Monitoring
 - TRAM Committee: Technology Research Assessment and Monitoring for 2-3-2 Partnership
 - Having initial monitoring planning development meeting for Rio Chama CFLRP next Monday
 - Forest Stewards guild (FSG) and MSI are working on monitoring plan
 - Will be a long road with lots to discuss
 - Relevance to SJHFHP work and vice versa
 - ASCC
 - Interest in developing snow and moisture monitoring at ASCC site using snowtopography (wildlife cameras, snow stakes, soil moisture gauges)
 - Currently setting up snowtopography on DWRF landscape as part of a beta test to guide methodology
 - Stakeholder and partner involvement required for this effort including set up and site maintenance, analysis also critical
 - Straightforward set: one full planning day in field with small group of people that are informed decision makers (like PIs) and a second day to climb ladders, setup wildlife cameras, and pound in stakes in ground
 - Maintenance done 1x/week when snow is on the ground
 - Check SD cards, batteries, and measure snow depth
 - Would help look at how treatments influence water and snow dynamics
 - Potential partnerships with FLC, 4 Corners Water, RMRS
 - Mike Battaglia and RMRS have some budget for ASCC site and may be willing to spend on equipment and supplies
 - Want to install post-treatment, probably Fall 2022
 - Time to plan, seek partners and grant funds
- SJNF
 - Turkey Springs vegetation management EA complete
 - press release to come out today
 - Robust fuels treatments
 - Implementation to begin Spring 2022

9:45 – 10:00 Pagosa Creek Tour Friday, October 15th 8am-noon

- Pagosa Creek IRTC Contract
 - CRS Timber finished timber treatment last month
 - Treatments in Mixed-Conifer aimed to retain fire adapted species, use and promote Aspen
 - Experimental treatment and unique timber sale in Mixed-Conifer, unusual in Colorado and lots of learning opportunities

- While many collaborative conversations around wildfire risk reduction this Tx is far from the community, so the primary objective was not risk reduction
 - why would we treat so far away from communities and what are we trying to achieve?
 - Reasons beyond community protection to manage resources
 - High diversity on pre-treatment landscape and treatment aimed to promote variability and diversity
 - E.g., stands that are ponderosa pine or white fir dominated
 - Imagine more economic goals of forest management and management of complex forest types
 - Mimic ecological processes and disturbance while also aiming to support forest products economy
 - Recreation
 - Black Mountain Road through treatment areas accesses Pagosa Peak
 - During pre-treatment monitoring, was surprising how many people walk through this area
 - Josh to report back if PRD starts hearing from public about treatment impacts on rec use
 - Tour
 - SJHFHP toured Pagosa Creek in 2019 so Oct 15th tour will be a follow-up with the intention of touring again in a few years to look at Tx impacts
 - Topics of interest
 - Tour in morning, logistical information will be sent in the coming weeks
 - Huerto Creek
 - Has work started at Huerto Creek (close to William's Reservoir)?
 - Yes, work has started
 - Not much input from rec users, but hearing a lot about trucks on Piedra Rd

10:00 – 10:15 SJHFHP Finances

- Funding
 - Sources have shifted since July
 - Cohesive dollars spent down, working on different and new agreements with Forest Service in addition to other sources and also using cash account
 - Cash reserve in healthy spot
 - Dana to meet with MSI finance director Jeff Connors next Tuesday
 - New sources of funding from agreements and small amount of money from ToPS and other sources
 - Setting up trackers that will be used to inform SJH budget
 - Finance committee to meet soon to discuss Q3 numbers
 - Changing some line items mid-year in budget to accommodate changes in funding
- Finance team meeting
 - Call for an additional finance team member

- Four meetings per year and time at end of year planning for following year
- Budget season and fiscal asks: PAWSD, SJWCD, BPR, Alpine Cascade Ranch
 - Asks of agencies and groups that have supported SJH in the past
 - SJWCD
 - Presentation October 18th to highlight work we're doing and value of partnership
 - Donated \$1,500 last year and would like to increase to \$2,500 this year
 - Budget not yet approved but \$2,500 is in budget and will likely be approved in December
 - PAWSD
 - Presentation Tuesday October 17th to ask for ongoing support
 - Dana to reach out to Tim Haarman with Banded Peak and JR Ford
 - Other ideas of groups or entities to approach for funding?
 - Fundraising with Mike Remke
 - Landscape photography calendar co-sponsored by SJHFHP to raise funds
 - Use of SJH email list for marketing
 - SJH's support and maintain creative freedom of creating/designing calendar with forest ecology theme; will include SJH logo and donate 50% of the profits to the collaborative
 - All in support!

10:15 – 10:45 SJHFHP News

- Pagosa Area Trails Council (PATC)
 - Letter of support requested
 - Need letter by October 4
 - SJHFHP partners support writing a letter for the PATC
 - History:
 - Goal to clear trees from trails
 - Raised ~\$70-80,000 from various sources to accomplish this goal and working with trails manager of Pagosa District
 - CPW grant, put down \$20,000 and got another \$13,000
 - Applied for and received \$106,000 grant originally planned for 2020 and 2021
 - Rocky Mountain Region gave another \$60,000 the PATC can carry into 2022
 - Applying for \$150,000 to cover 2022 to 2024
 - Accomplishments:
 - 2018: cleared ~4,600 trees representing ~50% trails with backlog on ~485 trails
 - 2019: cleared ~6,000 trees; ~80% of trails
 - 2020: 6,500 trees cleared; 100% of trails cleared and no more backlog

- 2021: ~5,100 trees cleared; 100% of trails cleared
 - Must clear ~5000 trees/year to keep trails safe
 - Cost:
 - ~50\$ per tree to clear as trails are in wilderness areas and crosscut saws are required
 - Grant money to SWCC
 - Over 3,000 volunteer hours (Backcountry Horseman, retired foresters, Great Old Broads)
 - Updates:
 - Article in paper yesterday with updates and success story
 - Trail clearing and maintenance is long-term problem
 - Dana will write letter of support and communicate with SJH email list about the LOS, contact Dana with any feedback and/or concerns
- Regional
 - SW CO CFLRP
 - Small group working to hire 3rd party facilitator
 - At Nov 2020 CFLRO intro meeting Courtney Schultz presented her research about CFLR's and a primary indicator of success was a 3rd party facilitator involved in governance setup and communications structures
 - Identification of needs and funding
 - LPEA gave \$5,000
 - CFRI gave \$5,000
 - SJNF gave \$5,000
 - These funds are separate from CFLR funds that have yet to be appropriated
 - RFQ drafted and distributed in June
 - Interview of qualified applicants ended last week and working group is in the process of offering the position the top candidate, no contract signed yet
 - Important for SJHFHP to get involved in communication channels and governance structure drafting so we can be sure those processes work for the Partnership
 - Work to start Nov/Dec and last 3-4 months; time limited commitment to being involved in setting up governance and communication structures
 - Clarification on hiring processes and funding procedures
 - A committee formed with representatives from across SJNF did the fundraising and is working to hire the facilitator
 - Money will be managed by Onward
 - MSI just one stakeholder in the conversation
 - Hiring Committee: Dana Guinn (MSI), Danny Margoles (DWRP), Anthony Culpepper (MSI), Aaron Kimple (MSI), Lo Williams (SJNF), Bill Baker, Melissa Simmons (CSFS), and Jason Lawhon (USFS)
 - Why hire before CFLRP funding allocation?

- Once funding for CFLRP is appropriated we have 6 months to develop a prioritization scheme and 3rd party monitoring program for the next 10 years
 - If we're set up with clear communications channels and know how we will deal with recommendations and decisions, we'll be much more efficient
 - What if CFLRP funding doesn't come through?
 - Value in developing communication channels and to that outside of CFLRP
- 2-3-2 Focal Area development
 - Last month SJH spent time developing draft focal areas
 - Focal Areas: Larger areas within our geography (100-200k acres) and identifying opportunities to complete work on the ground in specific jurisdictions and in specific regions
 - Rio Chama CFLRP driving this process (SE portion of SJH geography)
 - Focal Areas: SJH created *Focus Areas* in 2014; *Focus Areas* of the SJH are smaller than *Focal Areas* that the 232 is utilizing
 - SJH can make focal areas any size we like
 - Focal areas will help SJH describe what's important on landscape, why, and the opportunities for working there
 - Important to tell these stories as both CFLRP's get rolling
 - Describe values, potential for work, concepts that we care about (e.g., improving industry capacity to reinvest in work on our landscape)
 - Opportunities to leverage money and work with various partners
 - Identification of focal areas helps align and secure funding and/or capacity in the future (e.g., NRCS hiring, Joint chiefs funding)
 - Draft focal areas at 232 Full Partnership Meeting Sept 15
 - **Please review DRAFT map and contribute to spreadsheet. Reach out to Dana with any questions, concerns, feedback**
 - Metadata Spreadsheet:
 - <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1brBqqnVXSvQwchQNVjWvekmP8IiM3Own/edit#gid=1260724169>
 - Draft Map:
 - <https://232partnership.org/sub-region-1-2/>
 - Look for a follow-up email about opportunities to engage with drafting of Focal Areas
- Legislative
 - Senator Hickenlooper's Office
 - Budget Reconciliation Bill
 - Forestry-specific strategic investments

- Pending/potential forestry funding allocated for private and public forested lands
 - Highlights
 - ~\$20 billion to address wildfire crisis via fire mitigation, controlled burns, thinning, etc.
 - ~\$1 billion to USFS for landscape restoration
 - Private landowner fund access with a focus on disadvantaged landowners and building public-private relationships
 - \$4.5 billion to new Civilian Climate Corps
 - House Ag Committee has an opportunity to allocate an additional \$20 billion for wildfire adaptation
 - Will look different once it gets through Senate; will know what it entails in mid-December
 - Senator Bennet is on both the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and Ag Committee, where most funding for forestry will come from
 - Other Information
 - Funding for sedimentation ponds, emergency/evacuation routes also of interest
 - Advancing the use of small-diameter wood
 - Table to farm wood chips in compost
 - CLT, TimberAge
 - JR Ford in Archuleta County and his vision to generate and distribute energy locally
 - 4FRI innovating ways to utilize small-diameter timber by exporting internationally
 - Not an option in CO due to geography and trucking
 - Place-based collaboratives are able to come up with place-based solutions
 - Thank You to Senator Bennet and Senator Hickenlooper
- SJNF
 - V Rock land acquisition proposal
 - Approached by potential purchasers of an in-holding regarding road maintenance, which spurred discussion about wildlife impacts
 - Elk migration corridors (through Valle Seco onto SUIT lands) and winter range
 - Landowner and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation interested in sale to USFS
 - Proposal supported by RMEF submitted to Land and Water Conservation Fund submitted today
 - 2 proposals from SJNF:
 - V Rock on PRD
 - Dunton Meadows on Dolores Ranger District

- If accepted, funds to purchase likely allocated in Spring 2023
- Acres and cost
 - ~160 acres; cost based on listed price ~\$1,000,000 (~\$6,000/acre)
 - RMEF worked with landowner to secure option on property while SJNF works to secure funding for purchase
- Chimney Rock Fee Schedule
 - 1-pager forthcoming
 - Background:
 - Have requested to start collecting fees at Chimney Rock and Forest Service process includes a public comment phase
 - Public comment period ends at end of September
 - FS will analyze public comments and based on comments and public support will issue a legal notice in spring 2022 to move forward with the fee proposal with the goal of implementation in May 2022
 - FS wants to charge a standardized fee per vehicle that aligns with national monuments and parks across county and better honors discount passes
 - The FS wants to pursue this because Chimney Rock has seen visitor use double in last 10 years and staff expects visitor use to increase more
 - Constructed new Visitor Center that will likely draw more visitors
 - Don't have facilities/maintenance capacity to cope with increased visitation
 - Fee will help provide funding for operations
 - In the past Chimney Rock Interpretive Association (CRIA) has been in charge of day-to-day operations and the FS provided oversight
 - Will change so that FS is in charge day-to-day operations
 - CRIA will continue interpretation work, events, and gift shop/visitor services
 - Some volunteers doing tours have expressed unhappiness with the changes, has the FS communicated with them?
 - In steady communication with CRIA, interested in learning more about specific concerns

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

- Strategic Plan updates
 - During peak of public health challenge in 2020, our group worked to update Strategic Plan
 - Important to develop and walk-the-walk of our mission especially with upcoming CFLRP's
 - Coming down the pipeline
- EOY review upcoming, 2022 planning and goals

- Please be ready to share thoughts, feedback, concerns, new ideas, etc.
- Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership
 - Continued involvement to understand how group is thinking through landscape-scale initiatives
 - Where do forest initiatives overlap with water quality/quantity conversations and projects
- Education and community outreach
 - Public events have been difficult since 2020
 - Online presence needs improvement
 - May be something SJH offers extra support with; MSI discussing additional support here
 - Look to ways to cross-pollinate with partner organizations
 - Want events to advertise, EG: biking/hiking Tour at Turkey Springs
 - Would need ed/outreach help/support with this
- Annual mapping and planning
 - Has happened in April last several years
 - Think about changing to earlier in year because of landscape-scale initiatives, would like to have information to share with partners earlier in the year

Meeting End 11:00am