



San Juan Headwaters

FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Virtual Meeting NOTES for Friday, November 19, 2021

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Regular Meeting: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

In Attendance: Dana Guinn (MSI), Aaron Kimple (MSI), Emily Swindell (MSI), Kyle O’Neill (NRCS), Herb Grover (Weminuche Audubon), Jean Zirnhelt (Weminuche Audubon), Noah Daniels (SJNF Fuels), Kevin Emde (SJNF PRD), Tim Leishman (SJNF Timber), Mark Loveall (CSFS), Nick Olson (Southwest Conservatoin Corps), Matt Ford (Clean Forest Energy),

VIRTUAL MEETING NOTES

Regional news

- Legislative and Funding
 - Senator Bennet on KSUT
 - Acknowledged SJHFHP and other collaboratives for the role they played in the development of the Build Back Better bill and Infrastructure bill
 - Large federal spending bill
 - Lots of funding could come into the system (in the \$5b range through USFS)
 - Unknown how/where money will move
 - Will be a lot of oversight
 - Likely directed through existing channels first to organizations with good track records and to shovel-ready projects
 - FRWRM, Joint Chiefs, Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR), NRCS EQIP, CSFS, State and Private Forestry etc.
 - Forest Service to lean heavily on partners to help put that money to work because of their limited capacity and WO direction
 - SJHFHP needs to work with Forest Service partners to prepare for this strategically
 - Think through how we expand capabilities, establish reasonable expectations, strategies for tracking how money will flow through the system
 - State of CO preparing to move funding
 - \$30M to department of natural resources
 - Some of this funding will come to SW CO, collaborative work has brought attention and interest to investing in this area
 - CFLRP

- \$100 million committed to CFLRPs
 - SWCO project likely to be funded
 - RMRI (Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative)
 - Also of interest
 - FHAC (Colorado Forest Health Advisory Council)
 - 1st meeting for State of Colorado
 - Aaron Kimple on the Forest Health Advisory Council
 - Currently thinking through the development of a 30-year forest plan
 - SWIF (Southwest Wildfire Impact Fund)
 - La Plata County (LPC) venturing into inter-governmental agreement between LPC, City of Durango and Durango Fire Prevention Control
 - To hire coordinator, developed shared treatment plan, and securing funds through EPA WIN act for work on the ground
 - Investment form local communities into private lands for collective impact
 - Funding for research?
 - Is there a mechanism to allocate funds for novel research relating to forest restoration, water, and maybe also automated/aerial photography monitoring and/or opportunities for experimental work?
 - May have to get creative with funding sources we know are coming down the pike including RMRI, CFLRP
 - MSI interested in pursuing on-the-ground monitoring if we can build it into CFLRP.
 - Much of the funding will go to shovel-ready work
 - Opportunities with ASCC
 - Also a mechanism to partner with organizations/people getting those funds, EG: CFRI, RMRS, FLC
 - The fact that new sources of funding are coming could free up other funds for these purposes
 - Regional science team to inform how we monitor, what we monitor, data analysis and reporting
- CSFS
 - New CO State Forester Matt McCombs
 - Currently DR on Gunnison RD (USFS), looking forward to increasing ties between CSFS and USFS
 - Familiar with SW area issues
 - Looking to get going beginning of 2022
 - Reach out to invite him to a SJHFHP meeting
 - Estevan Vega
 - Worked with AFF program
 - New Forester replacing Luke Dietrich
 - Currently working in Forest Ag
- Cross-collaborative (SW CO CFLRP)
 - Fall 2020

- Courtney Shultz presented her CFLRP research
 - Results indicated that successful CFLRPs hired 3rd party facilitator to assist in creating governance and communication structures
 - 3rd Party facilitator
 - \$15,000 fundraised from SJNF, CFRI, and LPEA
 - Heather Bergman with Peak Facilitation hired to help take 1st steps for cross-collaborative governance structure for SWCO CFLRP
 - November 5th
 - Fundraising committee met with Heather Bergman to begin to identify persons interested in developing governance structure
 - Expect an all-call email from Peak Facilitation with background information and opt-in opportunities to participate in governance structure development
 - Governance structure development group to have ~15 people
 - ASKS:
 - Please attend initial governance meeting in January if interested in helping with this process
 - If you want to be involved but not with governance structures, contact Dana and/or respond to survey in all call email from Peak
- Focal Area development
 - Coming out of Rio Chama CFLRP and 232 Partnership landscape and is moving along slowly
 - 2016
 - SJHFHP developed Focus Areas which are smaller scale than proposed Focal Areas in the 2-3-2 concept
 - Focus Areas developed in 2016 a good place to start, provide opportunity for feedback and refinement so they are up to date and we're communicating the right information about the needs of our community
 - Identifying Focal Areas is becoming more important as SJHFHP is involved with regional initiatives
 - Communicate assets/values on landscape and why funds should be allocated to management in those areas
 - Should meet the needs of SJHFHP and the community

Partner Updates and Announcements

- CSFS
 - EQIP
 - Application deadline Dec 3
 - Called all folks currently working with and those interested in deferring application to next FY if didn't get funded in 2021
 - Lots of interest in EQIP. Many ranches sold in SW CO over last 18 months, folks purchasing and wanting to do restoration
 - FRWRM (Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation)
 - Similar to EQIP application process

- CSFS anticipates funding projects from a larger pot of funding (\$6-7M, vs previously ~\$1M from severance state wide)
 - Other new and old funding opportunities from the state side: DNR, CWCBC, Outdoor Recreation, Conservation Corps
 - Continuing projects and looking forward to more funds for 2022
 - Money being targeted for collaboration, facilitation
 - 2021 FRWRM success
 - Dana Guinn and Mercedes Siegle-Gaither wrote successful application
 - Funds to be used before April 2024
 - Additional funds were offered, but Dana would like to 1st demonstrate that we can use current FRWRM funds in 2022
 - Once demonstrated, another application will be submitted to apply for and attract additional funds
 - Can match state with federal funds
 - Important to think about Focal Areas and putting those in our future applications
 - CO Legislature
 - Reimbursement bill being proposed for homeowners doing defensible space work
 - Funding for FRWRM
 - Post fire response, stream sedimentation catchment
- USFS
 - Kevin Emde started last week as PRD forester
 - Working on contracts including Upper Rito, Upper Blanco, and Mariposa
 - New forester Jake Dahlin starting next week on Bayfield district
 - Matt Tuten interested in remaining involved in SJHFHP if he's working with R2
- Southwest Conservation Corps
 - Thank you all who helped with tour and lessons with seasonal crew
 - Both landed great jobs
 - Mid December to Mid-January
 - Putting out call for applicants for next group of applicants
 - Looking to increase team size
 - Please send interested people to Nick
 - Dana will share applications with group
 - Will reach out to partners in next few months to ensure positions are relevant
- Weminuche Audubon
 - Showed video at virtual National Meeting of Audubon Society showing basis of bird monitoring program last 3 years
 - In process digging into robust dataset and preparing report
 - December 18: Annual Christmas Bird Count
 - 17-mile radius in Pagosa Springs area broken into 7-8 zones
 - Usually 50-60 volunteers conducting survey

- December 19: Potluck and data gathering party
- CPLA
 - Asking for letter of support for BOR WaterSmart grant
 - No match or other financial commitment
 - Proposing 1,500-2,000 acres of ecological forestry thinning projects in SJ Chama Project and Rio Chama Headwaters
 - stakeholders supportive, Dana to prepare letter
- NFF MAP Grant fund use
 - NFF matching awards grant is now active in partnership with SJNF
 - 2 smaller projects funded in Pagosa area (~\$800 each)
 - Use of funds to purchase forest equipment for students to continue monitoring efforts on Reservoir Hill and tools for trail work on Treasure Mountain
- WEP Public meeting and survey

UPPER SAN JUAN WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT PARTNERSHIP (WEP)

Every Drop Counts

The WEP is a local watershed group, based in Pagosa Springs and working in the upper San Juan, Blanco, and Navajo watersheds.

With a potentially hotter and drier future for our region, we need your input to develop a water plan with projects and actions that support the unique needs of our communities and rivers. All types of project ideas are encouraged!

Visit our website to learn more about the WEP and for links to surveys, sign up sheets, and meeting info on our website!

3 WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

Surveys
Each survey = less than 10 min

San Juan River Blanco River Navajo River

Scan the QR codes or find links on our website

Sign Up Sheet
Choose a date/time to meet with us via phone, Zoom, or in person to discuss your ideas & priorities.

Public Meeting
(in-person or virtual, TBD)
December 8, 2021
5:30 - 7:30 pm
Help collectively review, discuss, and start prioritizing project ideas

WWW.MOUNTAINSTUDIES.ORG/SANJUAN/SMP
Contact Al Pfister (westernwildscapes@gmail.com) or Mandy Eskelson (mandy@mountainstudies.org)

- Virtual public meeting December 8, 530-730pm
- 3 Surveys about the Blanco, Navajo, and San Juan Rivers
 - Use QR codes on original flyer to access survey
 - Please share your insights on or information about projects/values associated with these rivers/drainages
- ASD Partnerships
 - Josh Kurz PSHS Global Science Class Rez Hill monitoring
 - High school students completed Reservoir Hill monitoring

- Treatments completed several years ago, and monitoring helps to determine if reentry is needed
- Monitoring Results:
 - Found that some plots have ~600 stems/acre and will likely advocate for aggressive hand thinning in some areas
- December 2021 or January 2022
 - Class to present findings to Town Council
- SJHFHP would like to invite students to present for SJHFHP Science Forum 2022
- Share recording of Mixed Conifer Knowledge Synthesis with his class
 - Keep SJHFHP updated on Town Council meeting, including NFF grant info
 - Make a plan to work with other teachers in ASD
- Julie Shehata
 - Seeking speaker for freshman-level class to speak about fire ecology, role of prescribed fire, and forest management
 - Any day the **week of December 6th**
 - Contact Dana about it if you're interested in presenting or know someone who is, ideally someone to present in-person but open to Zoom presentation as well
- Partner Opportunity:
 - Plug SWCC interns back into PSHS to highlight opportunities and paths forward

Mixed Conifer Projects and Events

- Pagosa Creek tour debrief
 - Thank you to Tim Leishman and Mike Remke helping with planning
 - Tour brief format
 - Hard to have a full set of notes from the field
 - Want to have a document that presents highlights from tours
 - Tour brief format feedback:
 - Partners like this format, especially to use as a, “Hey, we missed you!” message to partners we’re working to engage with
 - Should keep using these handouts for field debriefs
 - Good copy to have and give to local and regional decision makers
 - Create a location on the SJHFHP website for tour photos, briefs, info
 - Field debrief handouts are valuable and distill conversations into useable information

- Mixed Conifer Knowledge Synthesis presentation

**VIRTUAL MIXED CONIFER
KNOWLEDGE SYNTHESIS**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8 | 1-3 PM

Join the San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership for the presentation of *The Mixed Conifer Forests in the San Juan Mountain Region of Colorado, USA: The Status of Our Knowledge and Management Implications*.

WHY

- Mixed Conifer forests occupy ~900,000ac in the San Juan Mountain region and have unique relationships to disturbances and ecological processes
- Recent advances in ecological research provide insights into how to manage these forests for long-term resiliency

WHAT

- A new paper that updates and improves upon the 2010 CFRI [mixed conifer knowledge synthesis](#)
- Insights about species compositions, environmental characteristics, and disturbance patterns
- Ecologically based management implications

- Wednesday December 8, 1-3pm
- Part of CFRI deliverable that Dr. Mike Remke helped support
- Invitation distributed to full partnership list but unsure how many people to expect
 - Please share with professional networks
- Original flyer hyperlinked to CFRI website
- Recording will be posted to YouTube

SJHFHP News and Needs

- 2022 planning and goals
 - Finance Committee
 - Bob Milford from Pagosa Area Trails Council to join Finance Committee
 - December: will fill in spreadsheet with different objectives and goals to help guide budget
 - January 2022: goal to have full goals and objectives for year and budget
 - Host at least 2 tours in 2022
 - Southern Rocky Fire Science Network (SRFSN) funds donated for use in Rx fire learning for local decision makers

- Tour at Upper Rito or Upper Blanco where Kevin Emde is currently working on timber sales
 - Upper Blanco: could consider WUI adjacent to properties; CPLA has some cross-collaboration happening across the fence that could a good one to look at
- Price Lakes cross boundary opportunities
- Jackson Mountain because there's so much going on there
- Bike tour and/or series tours looking at effects of Rx fire in Turkey Springs
- New Turkey Springs EA
- What should the partnership continue working on, put more energy towards in 2022, or something new we should dive into?
 - Event and coordination with Audubon, improve upon SJHFHP representation
 - Present at Audubon and/or work to put together an event with the local chapter
 - Herb Grover available to talk more – will schedule time to talk early December about potential joint event
 - Can we expand the bird program, or what specific things should we be working on regarding monitoring?
 - Use the expertise of volunteers
 - Volunteer fatigue vs. enthusiasm, many projects (BPR, HDs, TS/FG/Jxn, ASCC, American Dipper)
 - Backing off Turkey Springs and focusing more on Jackson Mountain but need input from volunteers
 - Had also talked about designing social science survey to determine impact of participating in bird program and volunteers' understanding of forest ecology.
 - Need resources, support, and social science expertise
 - Consider writing a grant
 - Opportunity to publish in cit sci publication
 - Rocky Mountain Audubon very supportive, also potential contact at Fort Lewis College
 - Pollinator study opportunities?
 - Bridging the Divide 2022
 - Overlook, state of the science/forest style conversation
 - Could also be a bridging the forest
 - More important right now to focus on SJNF especially with other collaborative groups
 - Covered by Science Forum?
 - Make connections across the forest.
 - Coordinate with Danny Margoles in Dolores area and Anthony Culpepper in Bayfield
 - follow-up to Mixed Conifer separately

- 232 Partnership looking at hosting a cross-boundary tour with a focus on watershed connectivity
 - Annual Science Forum in Spring, may be an extension of Mixed Conifer Knowledge Synthesis
 - Discussion about the social and economic impacts from that paper worth diving into in 2022
 - Connect with Marin Chambers about Mixed Conifer Workshops
 - Work with MSI's new Associate Director of the Water program Jake Kurzweil and Gigi Richard at Four Corners Water Center to put together a larger water panel associated with water quality/quantity and forest management
 - How can we ask more informed and specific questions in this arena
- SJHFHP County Representation
 - Steve Hartvigsen resigning as SJHFHP representative to Archuleta County and now looking for new designated liaison
 - Duties: send Archuleta County tour briefs and other partnership materials, track potential grants from county, provide report on how we're using County funds if/when we get their annual fiscal support
 - Bill might be a good point person, conflict with WAP?
 - JR always in contact with the County
 - Dana and/or Matt to run the idea past him
 - Benefits to a designee that isn't partnership coordinator
- Strategic planning task force
 - Started revision of Strategic Plan last year and would like to update that in 2022
 - Not a complete overhaul but some work needs to be done
 - Small group to support
- EOY Report and Assessment
 - Please fill out our survey!
 - Report will be ready January 2022 and is a powerful way for us to present data and our accomplishments to funders as well as new and existing partners
- Finances
 - Q3 financial review moved to December
 - Fundraising opportunities, donations
 - PAWSD board presentation in December
 - Banded Peak Ranch contribution in process
 - JR Ford will be approached for annual funding through Alpine Cascade
 - SJWCD increased funding this year to \$2500
 - You can donate to SJHFHP anytime by clicking DONATE on SJHFHP website

- Dana sent email about Mike Remke’s landscape calendar – currently on pre-order on his website (<https://www.mycoremke.com/shop>) with SJHFHP logo. Half of the proceeds will go towards SJHFHP
- Project Opportunities
 - Snowtopography
 - “How do forest treatments impact water infiltration and snowpack?” is a complicated and nuanced question
 - Snowtopography is one way for us to provide some data to understand to how treatments affect water filtration and/or help ourselves ask better questions
 - Chicken Creek beta test
 - Soil moisture probes and wildlife cameras installed; required that someone hike/ski to site ~1x/week to check equipment and data
 - Would like to have 1-2 on Jackson Mountain to look at treated and untreated sites; Dana thinking about how to get funds for that
 - Community Wood Innovation opportunity, wood yard
 - Applications due every January
 - Small diameter materials coming from all jurisdictions and hard to coordinate and understand all sources and markets
 - Not unique to our area
 - Challenging to figure out how to get wood to people who want it
 - Grant could help create aggregation yard for these kinds of materials
 - Innovate ways to utilize small diameter wood
 - Is the SJHFHP interested in pursuing this?
 - Grant ask would include a situation assessment
 - Engage with those cutting, selling, using firewood and understanding community needs
 - If results in not providing correct solution for the community will still have learned something to share
 - Property, management
 - Who is willing to help craft a grant and move an application forward?
 - If we want to put concept forward, we need a team to do it
 - Discussion
 - Wood materials and innovation is big focus of incoming funding
 - being able to explore utilization will be of interest to community
 - Local, more targeted sort yards, 50 mi radius with access for local people, tribal communities where applicable and for those who sell firewood

- Wood for Life Tribal Fuelwood effort
 - Tim Leishman looking at launching this across the SJNF
 - Between FRWRM and RTRL projects CSFS struggling to remove small diameter material. Mark L. wants to learn more about opportunities to work together
 - Connect in early 2022
 - Allow admin free use categories to give wood away and make money available to haul wood from fuels projects
 - Pagosa local sort yard could fit into this, service to low-income communities
 - Taking time to make sure effort is done properly
 - Jake Dahlin led efforts on Coconino and Kaibab to get Wood for Life program up and running
- Wood for Life program demo
 - Dolores district partnering with Chinle Chapter house
 - Some funds seeded to NFF to get started and hire truckers from Dove Creek area.
- Southern Ute has a sort yard between Ignacio and Bayfield and has been doing similar work
 - If we decide to move forward with grant, Dana will give Brian a call
 - Involved with Northern NM Fuelwood Initiative (grown out of 232 Partnership)
 - Loren Anthony at Chizh for Cheii
 - Sasha Stortz with Wood for Life
 - Dana to make connections if there are any learning exchange opportunities
 - Big obstacle: transportation. Piles of logs offered to firewood processors for free, aren't retrieved
 - Grant funds won't last long, so we should focus on building a self-sustaining industry
 - Idea sound, execution is unknown
 - Central clearing house is good, getting logs to it may be a larger obstacle

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

- Look for Partnership opportunities in December!