



## San Juan Headwaters FOREST HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

### Meeting notes for 4/6/2023

**Location:** Pagosa Springs

**Regular meeting:** Map Meeting

**Attendance:** Adam Tlachac, Julia Ledford, Alex Handloff, Dana Guinn, Bob Milford, Doug Purcell, Allan Pfister, Bill Trimarco, Nate Martinez, Caleb Stotts

#### MEETING NOTES:

**Objectives:** Annual meeting to understand what's happening in the SJHFHP geography. How can work connect, be prioritized? What are values on the landscape, where do they exist and how can we get the best bang for the buck and serve the community's needs?

**Outcomes:** Increased info on maps. Collecting metadata with polygons on map.

**Missing voices:** NRCS, Southern Ute, Pagosa Area Water, Town of Pagosa

**Pagosa Ranger District Updates and Notes, Adam Tlachac and others:** Adam in 5-year plan is looking to vary tree species, fir, mixed conifer, aspen. To meet a variety of market needs. Restrictions for operations are usually informed by NEPA. More restrictions = higher cost per acre. What's the situation with spruce beetles? Even with cold winters, it's too little too late. Insect regimes are out of historic norms and likely to change with climate change.

NW Section:

- Sand bench (Sand Creek), under contract haven't mobilized. Gonna be out there this year. Spruce salvage (has a little longer window for salvage).
  - o Been under contract for a number of years. Couple of years left on the contract.
  - o Lot of suitable ground on the road up there but road is tough.
  - o More suitable spots up Mosca but what is the potential with the crappy road? The salvage window may be past the economically viable part.
  - o There's a planted stand of Lodgepole up Mosca. How do we manage? Do critters like it?
  - o Monitoring potentially going to happen for all of Huerto and Pogasa creeks once done. Next year or 2025.
- By poison park, part of Huerto, Cheesman had that. Mixed conifer. A good chunk was logged last year. Gonna be back in. Not yet complete.
  - o Issue: log trucker availability
- Williams Divide South, in long-term contract. Just south of Huerto. 300-400 acres. Planned. Hasn't been put out for bid yet. Revisiting that this spring. Try to do a straight timber contract.

Was a stewardship contract. Had existing NEPA. Similar composition to Heurto so easier to entice contractor and more work. Idea is to capture the volume. Shorter rotations of White Fir. White Fir will always be part of this area.

- Primary objectives:
  - Suitable land base. Long-term sustainable fiber production. Suitable timber base. Is timber a goal or a tool to get what we want.
  - Meet habitat objectives.
- Pagosa Creek. Complete. All the cleanup is done on that. SJHFHP got out there a year ago. Finished in 2021.

#### NE:

- Wolfy. Some units are complete. Some yet to be cut. Spruce salvage. Contractor may get volume cut but contract will expire. Won't be able to reoffer if expires without being cut.
  - Possibility to close roads off of the Wolf Creek Pass area. Proposal for 2024.
- West fork/East Fork. More of a timber/fuels treatment. Service contract to remove understory fuels. Long-term contract task item to reoffer.
  - Tight timing restriction windows with summer and winter recreation. Will pay heavily per acre given restrictions.

#### CENTRAL:

- Jackson Mountain. Long-term contract turned back, to reoffer. Gonna be a service contract. Not enough volume. Some of the ASCC plots. Unsure how to handle the ASCC contract. Also current NEPA effort to analyze more areas, aspen and white fir. Previous NEPA was mixed-conifer and pine. Also meadow enhancement. Also rerouting the Snowball Connector.
  - 60-70 acres currently under contract. In 2024, Little Jackson 2, a three year contract that will start in 2025.
  - New stuff through NEPA. Put it out in a couple years to offer. Somewhere under 1000 acres.
  - Monitoring will be happening here for new baseline for ASCC. Old data. Field crews out this summer.
  - Bird monitoring continuing as well. This year going to continue with newer spots that overlap with ASCC.
  - San Juan WEP has 2.5 mile of river restoration starting at Bob's Propane and going up 2.5. Also in South Yamaguchi.
- Nipple Mountain Road and .
  - Mariposa and Rito Dos. Timber contracts with service work on them. IRTC. Previous piles need to be torn apart. Aspen management a component as well. A little spruce salvage. And Mixed conifer.
    - Possible starting this year.
    - Off of Nipple Mountain and Aspen Spur rd.
  - Rio Chama money 600k into the road. Another 400k into the road. Roads enable other management and recreation access.
- Fourmile Crk. Potential future NEPA. 2-3 years out. Has been identified for vegetation management.

#### SOUTH:

- Big Branch. Mastication along road. Done last fall. It's complete.

- Kenney Flats. Western side, a sale just put out, Halfway Kenney. To East, Boon Crick. Both planned sale. 95% pure pine stands. Commercial timber sale. Pine thinning. Have more of an uneven aged pine stand.
- Coyote Creek. Nearly complete. Few acres left. Bill Moore is operator. Bidding on Halfway Kenney. Has some niche market to handle small diameter pine. Making vigas and latillas.
- Price Lakes. In 2024 fiscal year plan to do NEPA. Interested in working with adjacent landowners. Very limited commercial opportunities. More in fuels reduction space. Lots of white fir. Limited opportunities economically. More fire and restoration goals.
  - o Big deal for 232. It's above the transbasin diversion. That's why there's interest in including more partners. Is associated with water quality and quantity values at risk for downstream users.
  - o Bureau of Reclamation got 1.5 million for water infrastructure to support the 100,000 acre feet of water that goes over there.
  - o Discussing with downstream folks and Bureau of Rec about have downstream users support upstream infrastructure, including natural.
  - o Couple of landowners are in conversation on planning processes that would occur in Price Lakes.
- Mesa Cortado
  - o Has been listed in 5 year plan. Struggles with access. Would require substantial road building.
  - o Backs up to Alpine Lakes Subdivision. They have been wanting egress routes for forever. May have public support for some roads, but wildlife may be issue. Some of the biggest, oldest ponderosa is there.
  - o Goals: suitable ground for timber management. Mostly ponderosa pine.
  - o Is this somewhere where there is support?
  - o Is a refuge for elk for thermal coverage. Concerns about road development with the elk. They like it quite a bit.
  - o BLM abuts the area as well. What do they think? WAP deals with them a little. They don't seem to have a lot of interest here.
  - o What about if fire hits? Is there a fire progression map? Would it go to upper Blanco?

#### SOUTHEAST:

- Opal Lakes trail work. Water quality issue.

#### **Chama Peak Land Alliance, Caleb Stotts**

- Funding since 2015 through Rio Grande Water Fund (through TNC). Money from conservancy district in Albuquerque.
- Have been working in upper Navajo and Blanco.
- Finished 5 year deal where 1000 acres was treated.
- Got new funding for another 3 years from Water Fund.
- Small amount compared what needs to happen. Thinking about prioritizing and there's a lot more treatments needed.
- Applying to many grants.
- EWRP program to see about 3 million from Bureau of Reclamation.
- Chance to get funding from USFWS.

- Challenges: Prescribed fire burn ban on private lands. Can we address this?
- Working with San Juan Chama contractors. Very interested in working in upper Blanco and Navajo. Understand treatment opportunities may be limited. But any management outside of those areas that has to do with wildfire transmission into those watersheds, there's a high level of public support.

### **WEP, Allan Pfister**

- San Juan WEP has 2.5 mile of river restoration starting at Bob's Propane and going up 2.5 miles. Also in South Yamaguchi.
- 2 projects have funding.
- Have been talking to downstream use funding opportunities.
- CWCB has a lot of money to help with water infrastructure and watersheds.
- New coordinator being hired that can engage and partner with SJHFHP.

### **Wildfire Adapted Partnership, Bill Trimarco**

- San Juan River Village. Some road clearing in the past. Not very much in total. Bill plans to do a lot more there with scholarships.
- CWPP was updated through large effort by SJHFHP. WAP got a CWDG grant through USFS (only one in CO). CWDG was only available to places with CWPP.
- Have funding for all programs for Archuleta County and more for the next 5 years. Would love help from Archuleta County.
- Town of Pagosa has contributed some money as well.
- Coalitions and Collaboratives has helped as well.
- WAP will be doing an awful lot more work in the area. Massive push. Potentially more people.
- Got funding to help Pagosa Lakes with green belts. Not the CWDG grant.
- Has stuff happening near Price Lakes.
- Working of FRWRM grant.
- Got Navajo Peaks Ranch and Navajo River Ranch work happening. With state money.
- In Blanco basin right near intake, a couple of projects there. Folks are excited for projects to happen in the area. Been discrepancy of where work could happen given grant stipulations that limit area for work through RCPP grant.
  - o Maybe partner with Ian from Wild Turkey Federation and NRCS.
  - o RCPP grant that was given to East Rio Arriba Conservation District has been extended for a year. It could be great. Paul Montoya is contact at NRCS. Originally 3.25 million.
  - o Binkley and Bramwell ranch near Chromo will get done. Will get done this year with RCPP.
- In touch with Klamath something in Klamath Falls. May be offering workforce help through Pueblo Community college to increase workforce.

### **FUELS TREATMENT BRIEF UPDATE:**

- Turkey Springs. Has had some work that was completed and more planned. Lot of recreation use. Wildlife use has changed. Martinez Canyon is of concern. Ongoing conversations to be had.

- Cloman Park. Private landowners are doing things nearby. Ongoing management is possible.
- Reservoir Hill. Looking to contact with Town of Pagosa about more work. Need to revisit this location. Has a long history of work and engagement from SJHFHP. Goal is community wildfire protection and ecosystem health (dense Ponderosa). Good demonstration site for well planned and community supported site.
  - o James from Town of Pagosa Spgs. indicated that there will be 1 acre treated each year. Ongoing program. Had 40 planned.

## **FOLLOW UPS**

- Southern Ute update.
- Contacting Town of Pagosa.
- Contacting Archuleta County.
- Ongoing opportunities in Fourmile area.
- More shapefiles from CPLA, USFS, others.