



Meeting notes for April 21st, 2023

Location: PLPOA Meeting Room, 230 Port Ave. Pagosa Springs, CO

Regular meeting: 9:00-11:00 am

Attendance: Dana Guinn (MSI), Julia Ledford (MSI), Alex Handloff (MSI), Melissa May (MSI), Josh Peck (SJNF), Adam Tlachac (SJNF), Matt Tuten (USFS), Bob Milford (Pagosa Area Trails Council), Jimbo Buickerood (San Juan Citizens Alliance), Estevan Vega (Colorado State Forest Service), Steve Hartvigsen (retired forester), Adam Hirshberg (Studs Lumber Company), Bill Trimarco (Wildfire Adapted Partnership), Al Pfister (Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership, San Juan Water Conservancy District), Robin Young (CSU Extension), Todd Weaver (Archuleta County Attorney), Larry Lynch (PLPOA), Doug Secrist (San Juan Water Conservancy District), Caleb Stotts (Chama Peak Land Alliance), Keith Bruno (Audubon Rockies, Weminuche Audubon Society), Matt Ford (Pagosa Forest Products), Veronica Medina (Archuleta County Commissioner), Ian Hopkins (NRCS/NWTF), Kyle O'Neill (NRCS), Mike Remke (Fort Lewis College)

MEETING NOTES

News and updates

- MSI staffing updates
 - Dana Guinn has accepted a new position with the Forest Stewards Guild
 - Starts May 1, 2023
 - The job is based out of Santa Fe, but Dana will be staying in Pagosa. She will be responsible for coordinating the 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership along with managing other projects.
 - Dana will not be coordinating this Partnership, but will continue to attend meetings as a stakeholder.
 - The Finance Committee has been working hard to come up with a transition plan.
 - MSI is hiring a [Science and Monitoring Manager](#)
 - Extending offers to seasonal field crews
- SJHFHP Finance Committee
 - SJHFHP doesn't have a formal governing body.
 - The Finance Committee is the proxy for discussions around financial matters.
 - The Committee doesn't have any authority but involves several long-time participants in the Partnership.
 - Anyone can participate in the Finance Committee.
 - MSI is the fiscal sponsor of the Partnership, allowing the group to remain nimble.
 - Dana informed the Finance Committee of her departure from MSI in early April.

- This kicked off conversations within the Committee about the existing relationship with MSI, the future of that relationship, and the desired qualifications of a Coordinator for the Partnership.
 - Without enough time to convene a full meeting of the Partnership, the Committee gathered more folks who have been involved for a long time to participate in these conversations.
 - The Committee also met with Melissa May, the Executive Director
 - The informal structure of the Partnership is a feature, not a flaw.
 - Because MSI is the fiscal sponsor, the Partnership doesn't have to focus on administrative tasks.
 - The Partnership has two pots of money:
 - Agreement between MSI and SJNF to support coordination
 - Cash fund (held by MSI) that donors contribute to
 - The Finance Committee discussed the following qualifications/characteristics of a new Coordinator:
 - This person needs to be in a position where they can do local advocacy.
 - They need to have a presence in the local community.
 - They need to be an effective facilitator, not just to facilitate meetings but to continue the forward momentum of the group.
 - Ideally, this person would live in Pagosa.
 - They need to have strong local fundraising skills.
 - MSI has been a very strong partner over the years, and this is a good time to reevaluate the relationship so each organization is in the best position to continue meeting their own goals and objectives.
 - MSI is willing to take a different role in the Partnership.
 - MSI is invested in seeing these collaborative groups succeed and is happy to continue as a partner and participate in thoughtful discussions.
 - In the short term (~6 months), Alex Handloff and Julia Ledford (of MSI) will take over Coordination duties for the Partnership.
 - Next steps:
 - The Finance Committee will meet with the SJNF to discuss the existing agreement between MSI and SJNF that supports coordination of the group.
 - This agreement currently is up for annual modification.
 - In the short term (~6 months, until the end of the federal fiscal year), MSI will continue providing coordination services to the Partnership.
 - It is important for this group to have consistency throughout the field season.
 - The Finance Committee, the Partnership, MSI and SJNF will continue conversations about the role of a new Coordinator.
 - By about November 1 (start of next fiscal year), the Partnership should have identified a clear path forward.
 - Hasty action is not warranted, need to be very thoughtful.
 - Input from all partners is extremely important.
 - Big thanks and appreciation to Dana for her hard work over the last 3 years. Dana demonstrated how valuable it is to have a local presence as the Coordinator.
- SJNF Pagosa Ranger District
 - Recon at West Fork and East Fork

- The original silviculture plan was developed 10 years ago.
 - Since then, there have been significant changes in stand dynamics and forest health.
 - Decline in white fir
 - Procedural issues from a timber sale prep perspective:
 - The fence line doesn't follow the property line, survey needs to be done
 - Need to reassess timber marking that was done 10 years ago
 - Hit pause on this project until these changes are addressed
 - Need to look at other approaches
 - Need more feedback
 - Could the Partnership potentially get out on a tour with Adam in this area?
 - This is a good idea for the future, but it might be a while.
 - Need to do more immediate analysis.
 - This will be a good opportunity for engagement with the Partnership because the stand is emblematic of conditions elsewhere on the District.
- Looking at prepping service acres in the Turkey Springs area in lieu of East Fork/West Fork.
 - 175-200 acres
- CWDG awarded to WAP, kudos from SJNF
 - Getting national interest from the USFS
 - The Secretary of Agriculture might be interested in seeing this project
- Jackson Mountain EA
 - The [Jackson Mountain EA](#) scoping included veg and fuels work, a mountain bike trail system and a gravel pit.
 - SJNF decided not to include the gravel pit or the mountain bike trail system.
 - While the SJNF felt that they could mitigate the public's concerns about a gravel pit on Jackson Mountain, they acknowledged that other locations for a potential gravel pit haven't been thoroughly evaluated.
 - There were substantial concerns about the interference of expanded non-motorized recreation with an elk migration corridor on the west side of Jackson Mountain.
 - Public comments presented USFS research outlining the impacts of non-motorized trail use on elk populations.
 - Research is showing that non-motorized trail use isn't that different from motorized trail use in terms of wildlife impacts.
 - CPW is re-mapping migration corridors, which will cover much of Jackson Mountain.
 - The migration corridor is already very narrow because of the terrain on one side and private lands on the other side.
 - SJNF understands the public's desire for mountain bike trails, so they will continue looking across the Pagosa area to develop recreation opportunities like the ones proposed on Jackson Mountain.
 - Will continue conversations about how to handle illegal trail building on Jackson Mountain.
 - Continuing with the veg component of the EA

- This was a revision to the proposal
 - There was significant investment from the USFS and Partners in this project (specifically on the recreation side), and these efforts will not be forgotten.
 - Partners shared appreciation for how this process was carried out and for the level of communication from the SJNF.
 - The County is disappointed about the exclusion of the gravel pit from the Jackson Mountain landscape.
 - Observation from across the Forest: SJNF is experiencing slow-down when recreation is mixed in with vegetation/WUI components of large planning efforts.
 - The Columbine Ranger District had to split out the recreation component of an EA in Junction Creek.
 - It's easy to want to combine these things when planning on a single landscape, but it seems to be complicating the process.
- CFLRP
 - SW CO
 - SJNF has completed Work Fair (cyclical planning cycle for the program of work) for FY 2024
 - All kinds of projects have been proposed, some of which are funded by the CFLR
 - SJNF wants to share this information with the Partnership – what is the best format?
 - Would share the entire suite of projects, and highlight the projects funded by SWCO and Rio Chama
 - Headwaters would like to see the following attributes:
 - Project objective
 - Polygon/location
 - Treatments
 - Context (is this project contributing to long-term goals of the Partnership?)
 - Something similar to the cutsheets that WEP developed
 - SJNF will prepare this list of materials by June or July, when they will present it to the Partnership for discussion.
 - Working through the process of how projects are collaboratively developed in the context of the CFLR.
 - The Partnership will look at all projects planned for FY 24, especially in priority areas, but need to have focused discussions about CFLR-funded projects.
 - The annual full-stakeholder meeting will be held in Durango on June 13th.
 - The Coordinating Council meets every month. Those meetings are open to public observation.
 - In June, 3 new at-large members will be elected to the Coordinating Council.
 - SJHFHP will elect a new representative to the Coordinating Council.
 - The Coordinating Council will also review the Governance Charter.
 - Rio Chama
 - Moving forward on a slightly different path than the SWCO CFLRP.

- Different governance structure and project-vetting process.
 - Squarely within Dana's new job duties, [reach out](#) if you have any questions.
 - Additional Partner updates
 - WAP
 - Congress has initiated a Wildfire Commission
 - Watershed, wildfire and forestry issues will be very well represented.
 - What Congress does with this information is unknown.
 - SB-005 is still being discussed
 - Would provide funding to increase education for forestry and wildfire mitigation work
 - Capacity is a major challenge nationwide
 - East Rio Arriba County RCPP grant
 - Received 3 years ago, got a 1-year extension
 - Will get mitigation work done on two ranches near Chromo
 - Other smaller properties might have been misled by what NRCS grants can do are now being steered toward WAP
 - FRWRM grant
 - Need to find out exactly how much money can be used for mitigation
 - Money will be used for one property
 - Will ask Pagosa Forest Products to bid on the contract
 - WAP
 - WAP has been operating on a shoe-string budget in Archuleta County because the County has not provided funding
 - Town of Pagosa Springs contributed funding to keep Bill's work in action
 - State Fire Assistance WUI grants – haven't seen the paperwork yet but ranked #3 in the region so it's likely that PLPOA greenbelts work will be funded
 - CWDG
 - Funding from Infrastructure Bill
 - The CWDG is directly reflective of the material that this group handed to Senator Bennet on Reservoir Hill
 - 4 projects funded in Region 2, WAP was the only one awarded in CO
 - Haven't seen the paperwork yet, but hoping that funding will arrive in June or July
 - This proposal was likely successful for four reasons:
 - Archuleta County has an updated CWPP
 - Met social vulnerability criteria
 - Had been declared a disaster area in 2013
 - High risk area
 - Huge thanks to many people in this group for their work on updating the CWPP and volunteering to write sections
 - Upper San Juan WEP
 - Kathy Rall hired as the new Coordinator, starting next week

- She will further the efforts of the group and help them become a 501(C)(3)
- NRCS
 - Cody Robertson transitioning into a new position in easements at the state level
 - A detailer will take over Cody's duties on resource team 7
 - The detailer is local
 - 120-day minimum
 - Pre-approved one EQUIP project for the Pagosa area up Fourmile
 - Patchwork in this area, trying to extend footprint
 - Potential for opportunities for RCPP application with the Inflation Reduction Act
 - Can be for any land use that the NRCS handles
 - Kyle O'Neill is a good person to talk to if you are interested in applying for RCPP for forestry.
 - The application deadline will be some time at the end of summer.
- CSFS
 - CSFS has hired a new supervisory forester in the Durango office, Mercedes Siegle-Gather
 - Used to work in Pagosa, moving to Durango
- PATC
 - Joint meeting with the USFS on Wednesday, May 3rd at 4:00 at the PLPOA meeting room.
 - Crosscut training for volunteers on May 17th
 - If interested in volunteering, attend the meeting on Wednesday or [contact Bob Milford](#)
- Upcoming workshops
 - Monday night: panel dialogue Wolves on the Horizon
 - 6:00 pm at the CSU extension in Durango
 - July: viticulture workshop at Foxfire Farms
- [Build Pagosa Charity Auction](#) on May 12th, 5:30 pm
 - Pagosa High School students
 - Local businesses donating, dinner, drinks
 - Eventbrite online

Monitoring activities and opportunities

- 2023 bird monitoring
 - 5th year of bird monitoring in treatment areas
 - Training Saturday, May 20th
 - Anyone interested is welcome!
 - Jackson Mountain or Fawn Gulch
 - Volunteers needed
 - Will host a birding by ear training sometime the week of May 17th

Upcoming events and strategic initiatives

- Plumtaw film event May 17, 6pm, Pagosa Center for the Arts
 - Panel
 - Auction
 - Need items donated
 - [Contact Alex Handloff](#) if you have items to donate
 - Donations
 - Will make sure that the donations page is branded with the Headwaters logo
 - Marketing
- 2023 Mapping and Planning effort ongoing