



Meeting notes for July 21, 2023

Location: PLPOA Clubhouse and Zoom

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 am

Attendance: Alex Handloff (MSI), Julia Ledford (MSI), Bob Milford (Pagosa Area Trails Council), Bill Trimarco (WAP), Doug Secrist (San Juan Water Conservancy District), Dana Guinn (Forest Stewards Guild), Brett Wolk (Colorado Forest Restoration Institute), Andrew Slack (Colorado Forest Restoration Institute), Matt Ford (Pagosa Forest Products), Kyle O’Neill (NRCS), Ian Hopkins (NRCS/NWTF), Matt Tuten (USFS), Adam Tlachac (SJNF), Josh Peck (SJNF), Kevin Emde (SJNF), Rita Daniels (SJNF)

MEETING NOTES

Welcome and introductions

- At a hypothetical Headwaters BBQ, Partners would like a spread of beer brats, pulled pork, grilled pineapple, grilled peaches (with cinnamon and brown sugar, served over ice cream, of course), beef brisket (lot’s of it), ribs, corn on the cob, watermelon, hot dogs (with sweet relish) and grilled asparagus.

Partner updates

- Wildfire Adapted Partnership
 - Incredibly busy with (free) site assessments and treatments ranging from defensible space up to 15 acres.
 - Unofficial PSA that they have grant money through the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG).
 - The agreement is signed but they can’t release an official PSA yet.
 - WAP is sending in the first invoices for reimbursement this week.
 - Updating a community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) for one subdivision and have four community assessments in process.
 - Forest and Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) grant
 - WAP had plans to use this money to complete 50 acres of work, but the landowner is backing out of the project.
 - WAP is looking for another landowner to use the money, or to fund several smaller projects.
 - Can probably get an extension on the grant if needed (end date July 2024)
 - The County Weed and Pest manager, Ethan Proud, has been working with a Weed Warrior program, similar to WAP’s neighborhood ambassador program.
 - Ethan wants to be involved with Headwaters.

- We need to see more collaboration between forestry work and what comes in behind forestry work (weeds).
 - CFLRP dollars are being invested in weed management!
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
 - Two active projects in Archuleta County: Fourmile and Chimney Rock
 - Headwaters has an opportunity to tour the Chimney Rock property.
 - This property is very visible and is looking really good!
 - Avenue through the San Juan Conservation District called Helping Hand offers a \$4,000 reimbursement for work (not only forestry).
- Pagosa Area Trails Council (PATC)
 - Expect to clear nearly 100% of trees this year.
 - Big thanks to everyone that has been helping out!
 - SJNF received a grant through Hinsdale County's Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) to put a restroom at the Piedra River Trailhead.
 - PATC and SJNF received a grant for a mini-excavator to work on trails.
- San Juan National Forest (SJNF)
 - Starting mastication work at Turkey Springs.
 - Funded out of the Southwest Colorado CFLRP.
 - The contractor is from Michigan.
 - 1,300 acres near Hatcher
 - It's funding season!
 - Opportunities to request funds through the Infrastructure Bill and Joint Chiefs.
 - SJNF doesn't need any more money right now but there are opportunities for partner organizations to grab money.
 - Annual proposal process to RAC.
 - Jackson Mountain
 - The draft analysis is expected to be complete in September, then will be out for comment.
 - The project now includes only timber and fuels work.
- Mountain Studies Institute (MSI)
 - Hiring a [Forest Program Director](#), application closes on July 31st.
 - Monitoring crews are hard at work on Jackson Mountain, collecting pre-treatment data on the ASCC units.
- Forest Stewards Guild
 - Funding available from the BIL specifically targeted to a variety of collaborative activities.
 - Headwaters could think about going after this funding based on the specific needs we have.
 - Dana was contacted by John Whitney, a staffer for Senator Bennet, who was inquiring about the reintroduction of Joint Chiefs legislation with the inclusion of wildfire recovery and enhancing soil, water and related natural resource benefit.
 - Joint Chiefs funds are intended to be used on cross-boundary projects between USFS-managed lands and private lands.
 - Dana should talk to John about the possibility of using work on USFS lands to leverage work on private lands while just requesting money for private lands.

- There was a successful Joint Chiefs project in the Headwaters landscape in 2015-2016.
 - Dana helped write a GOCO grant for additional hand thinning on Reservoir Hill next year through the Town of Pagosa Springs (ToPS).
 - Amanda, from the ToPS is a good person to contact for showcasing work on Reservoir Hill.
 - The 2-3-2 Partnership is hosting a quarterly meeting in Chama on August 9th.
 - Headwaters is part of the 2-3-2.
 - Dr. Ellis Margolis and George Ducker will talk about fire history and fire regimes in northern New Mexico and how it dovetails with human history.
 - Kyle Tator will talk about elk migration corridors.
 - Field tour in the afternoon will include stops on the Edward Sargent Wildlife Area.
 - [Contact Dana](#) if you are interested in attending.
 - Aspen Workshop
 - July 31st - August 2nd
 - Day of presentations around aspen management and research.
 - Field tours including stops on private lands in northern New Mexico and work in the Upper Rito watershed.
 - Focused on folks with an interest in active management.
 - SJNF probably does more aspen management than any other forest.
 - [Registration link](#)

Partnership updates

- Southwest Colorado CFLRP
 - Representation on the Coordinating Council
 - The Partnership voted in support of Matt Ford serving as the representative with Alex as a substitute.
 - The latest revision of the charter included the establishment of a Planning Team, which helps move the Coordinating Council forward between meetings.
 - The Planning Team is made up of the Coordinators of the three-place based collaboratives (Alex, Anthony Culpepper and Danny Margoles), a representative from the SJNF (typically Jason Lawhon) and Stacy Beagh, the facilitator.
 - Litigation on the Salter EA and how the Partnership will move forward.
 - San Juan Citizens Alliance (SJCA) and the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) filed a lawsuit against the SJNF for decisions made in the Salter EA on the Dolores Ranger District.
 - *The SJNF's legal team have advised them to pause engagement in collaborative conversations regarding CFLRP until further notice, so all USFS partners left the room for this conversation.*
 - SJCA, specifically Jimbo Buickerood, has been involved in Headwaters for years, and they should continue to be involved.
 - Jimbo resigned from his role at SJCA following the announcement of this litigation.

- There are frustrations among partners about how SJCA has been working with the Center for Biological Diversity and suing over what some view as frivolous ecological cases.
 - This is a learning opportunity for the Partnership to continue moving forward in a collaborative way.
 - The policy among Headwaters has always been to give people the space to speak their mind if there is tension in the room, and that policy holds true.
 - There is a strong sense of community in this Partnership and folks are welcomed to ask hard questions.
 - The Coordinating Council of the CFLRP is in the process of doing some self-reflection and figuring out how they can make space for the hard questions to be asked.
 - The place-based collaboratives of the CFLRP play the role of helping new partners see their value and feel welcome in the space.
 - Be cautious about national groups or organizations operating at a smaller scale in the community.
 - Headwaters should make sure that we take up the space and advocate for what we know is best for this place and community.
 - Gig-picture concepts can impact the resources and conversations we have at the local level.
 - It's important to know and understand what's happening in the national dialogue that is impacting our projects and processes, but to also keep our values local.
 - Review the email list and think about who else needs to be involved.
 - Categorize the email list so we can easily contact certain interest groups in preparation for meetings with specific agenda items.
 - We are always lacking representation from local government.
 - Depending on the outcome of this process, there could be different expectations or management implications on this District because the SJNF is held to their objectives.
 - Headwaters should be aware of those objectives and also stay true to our values and hold the SJNF accountable to being a good partner to us.
 - The Partnership can push back against some of these objectives if we need to, which could expand the decision space.
- Chris and Coalmine fires
 - Chris Mountain Fire
 - Reached 100% containment on July 20th.
 - Initially, Josh Peck expected this fire to blow up, so they ordered tons of resources (8 hotshot crews and an incident management team).
 - There aren't a lot of control features to the west and north and they didn't want it to move toward Middle Mountain and sit with the community for a long time.
 - Expected the IMT to manage both the Chris and Coalmine Fire.

- Josh made this decision to provide support for partners, knowing that the County resources (responding to the Coalmine Fire) would quickly get tapped.
 - In the first days of the fire, when deciding how to manage the response, the SJNF explored the option of managing the fire for resource benefit.
 - They would have used the POD boundaries as control features and the weather and fuel conditions were perfect.
 - It was evident that communicating this kind of objective to the hotshot crews would be difficult because they are most often focused on direct suppression.
 - Managing the fire would have required putting more fire on the ground.
 - This was over the 4th of July holiday, which might not have been a good time to keep fire on the landscape.
 - By the time they were at a point where they had everything prepared to think about managing the fire, the fire had made the decision itself, requiring direct suppression.
 - The fire slowed down because of the extension suppression effort.
 - Spent quite a bit of money on retardant and used a pond on Snow Angel Ranch for water.
 - The management of this fire has certainly brought up important questions about the management of natural ignitions and PODs.
 - Is the community ready to have the conversation about letting fires burn?
 - We shouldn't naively overestimate public acceptance.
 - How can we work together to invest in road improvements that benefit timber access and fire response?
 - Hardening POD boundaries.
 - Are those POD boundaries in the appropriate location?
 - Is there room to have conversations about POD boundaries being on private lands?
 - Lessons learned:
 - Need to streamline communication with responders.
 - Think about the various options for managing fire early on.
 - Coalmine Fire
 - Containment at 98%, will probably stay there until the monsoons come.
 - Fire conditions
 - The fuel conditions are not good, but we haven't been getting a lot of ignitions.
 - A fire right now would have a greater impact than we'd hope for.
- Snowtopography update
 - Next Thursday, July 27th, Headwaters partners are invited to join experts on Jackson Mountain to select a location for the snowtopography site.
 - We are looking at the control units of the Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change (ASCC) project.
 - Adds depth to the ASCC study.

- Could add another snowtopography site in a treatment area after the treatment occurs.
 - Each site includes three transects.
 - The site will be installed before the snow flies.
 - [Reach out to Alex](#) if you would like to join.
- Plumtaw movie makes the rounds
 - Playing on TV stations through October.
 - Showing before movies at the Liberty Theater through September.
 - Considering showings and events in other locations like Durango and the Front Range.
 - The film is getting recognition on the Front Range!
 - Alex, Dana and Christi Bode presented the Plumtaw Film to the Rotary Club last week,
 - Rotary was very excited about the film and started talking about building a HEPA filter loan program.
 - They were very interested in WAP.
 - The success of the Plumtaw Film has inspired ideas for additional films:
 - A funny one about all of the work it takes to install a bathroom.
 - The collaboration and coordination of clearing trails.
 - Active mechanized harvest of forests for restoration that also produces wood products.
 - Everyone wants to avoid this topic because it can be controversial, but people come up with nefarious stories in the absence of information/narrative.

Recommendation for West Fork

- Overview of tour and options
 - Check out the [tour brief](#)!
 - There is some flexibility with prescriptions within the existing units, however, the SJNF would need to do new NEPA if we want to go outside of the original footprint.
 - Do we want to work within the existing NEPA or move the treatment to have more cross-boundary impact with the Bruce Spruce Ranch?
 - Bruce Spruce has already done work on their side of the fence.
 - How many acres would we be looking at adding? Is it worth it to go through another NEPA process?
- Discussion of path forward and decision on SJHFHP recommendation
 - We don't just want to go for the low-hanging fruit. We want to make sure that we are also treating the important acres.
 - Headwaters is in favor of changing the plan for the campground area.
 - Adam and Josh will do a cost-benefit analysis and present their findings at the next meeting.