



Meeting notes for September 15, 2023

Location: Pagosa Ranger District office

Time: 9:00 – 11:00 am

Attendance: Alex Handloff (Coordinator, Mountain Studies Institute), Julia Ledford (Mountain Studies Institute), Veronica Medina (Archuleta County), Dana Guinn (Forest Stewards Guild), Bob Milford (Pagosa Area Trails Council), Matt Ford (Pagosa Forest Products), Bill Trimarco (Wildfire Adapted Partnership), Adam Hershberg (Studs Lumber Company), Justin Ramsey (Pagosa Area Water Sanitation District), Adam Tlachac (San Juan National Forest), Josh Peck (San Juan National Forest)

Virtual: Doug Secrist (San Juan Water Conservancy District), Melissa May (Mountain Studies Institute), Clyde Church (La Plata County), Estevan Vega (Colorado State Forest Service), Caleb Stotts (Chama Peak Land Alliance), Ian Hopkins (National Wild Turkey Federation), Abe Proffitt (San Juan National Forest), Sheryl Gunn (San Juan National Forest)

MEETING NOTES

Introductions

Priority landscapes discussion (see [fact sheets](#) developed from this conversation)

- Historic/legacy priorities
- Current priorities
- Future priorities

Updates

- Arborglyph tour and management implications at Buckles Lake, September 22
 - Rita Daniels and other SJNF staff will discuss the management of these aging aspen stands and previous management in the area.
 - Local arborglyph expert, Peggy Bergon, will discuss the history of sheep grazing in the region and the carvings that the shepherds left behind.
 - The Buckles Lake area is part of the ancestral homelands of the Jicarilla Apache Nation. Jicarilla Apache continues to collect medicinal species and aspen poles in this area.
 - They are concerned about continued access to the Buckles Lake area and forest health in general.
 - There are multiple layers of human history surrounding Buckles Lake.
- Update: the snowtopography site installation, originally scheduled for September 25-28, has been postponed because materials are delayed in shipping. Alex will follow up with more information when the installation has been rescheduled.

- We will still need plenty of help from volunteers!

Finance Committee presentation on future of SJHFHP coordination, partnerships, agreements, budgets

- Headwaters funds 15-20% of the Partnership, and SJNF funds the rest through an agreement with MSI.
- Headwaters has a separate agreement with MSI, but it is expired. The Oversight Committee (formerly known as the Finance Committee) is in the process of updating the agreement.
 - This will be a three-year agreement, but the work plan and budget will be updated annually. MSI and Headwaters will both have the option to terminate the contract in an orderly fashion at any point, and MSI has the ability to allocate funds to a contractor.]
 - The Oversight Committee is in the process of formalizing the agreement and developing a list of deliverables and a budget for MSI.
 - When the revision of this agreement is complete, the Oversight Committee will meet on a quarterly basis.
- The Oversight Committee needs at least one more person.
 - Matt Ford, Bob Milford and Doug Secrist currently sit on the Committee.
 - The Committee is responsible for being good stewards of the funds, making sure that the agreement with MSI is authorized and traceable, and reviewing grants that are applied for on behalf of Headwaters.
 - If you are willing to volunteer your time, please reach out to [Alex](#).
- Working in partnership with MSI is the most valuable for the group going forward, but Headwaters would like to see some flexibility with hiring a local contractor.
 - The ideal outcome would be to utilize MSI's deep bench of resources and to have someone local to do outreach and coordination while MSI continues as the fiscal sponsor and provides technical support for science and monitoring.
 - The SJNF is committed to funding collaboration in the long-term, regardless of what that looks like to Headwaters.

Updates

- SJNF
 - It looks like there will be a burn window for prescribed fire next week for the ponderosa pine/gambel oak cover type in Mill Creek, Echo Canyon and Brockover.
 - The SJNF is very aware of the impression that it gives when we put fire on the landscape while there are wildfires burning on the same district.
 - They will continue messaging about why we use prescribed fire and how it is only used in the right place at the right time.
 - The Columbine District is also looking at prescribed burning in the southern HDs this weekend.
 - Smoke impacts are possible.
- Wildfire Adapted Partnership
 - FRWRM grant
 - Several projects have fallen apart, but there is one that looks like it might happen.
 - 50-60 acres to be partially reimbursed to the landowner by the grant.
 - We will probably need to file an extension because the work might not be complete by the grant deadline next spring.

- It is very likely that we will be given the extension due to the circumstances of previous projects falling through.
- WAP has done 75 site assessments this summer and almost 40 are becoming projects.
 - 150-200 acres of defensible space/shaded fuel break treatments.
 - This will equate to saving tons of money if there is a big wildfire.
- There will be greater capacity to do work with added contractors and an expanded workforce.
- WAP will be doing a landowner workshop series through CSU extension around Earth Day in April and would love input from Headwaters.
 - Want more interactive presentations/events to get landowners involved.
 - Need to educate the landscaping companies.
- The land use development code for the Town of Pagosa Springs is in its final iteration.
 - You can provide input if you are a resident of the Town.
- Pagosa Forest Products had a new operator start yesterday (9/14).