

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2013; 0900-1500; US Forest Service Regional Office Auditorium

1.) Introductions

2.) Revisit 21 Goals of the WWPG Mission from the Restart Meeting on 26 Oct 2012.

- Watershed Management: CSFS High Priority(#5; 2-way tie)
- State Action Plan-Watershed Driven(#3)
- Key State Forestry Legislation (Biomass Watershed and Wildfire Related)
- Existing Watershed Assessments
- Connect Implementers with Funders (#2)
- Leverage Funding Between Cooperators(#4)
- Increase Treatment on Non-Federal Land(#5; 2-way tie)
- Increase Outreach Awareness Throughout the State(#1)
- 3 Buckets of Activity: Implementing, New, Future
- Implementing 15 Watershed Assessments
- Engage CWPP Regarding Water Assessments
- Integrate CWPP's into Watershed Assessments
- Soil and Water Processes - Consider Road Sediment
- Collaborative "Marquis" Project
- Pre and Post Activities - Proactive vs. Reactive
- Identify Obstacles and Barriers and How We Overcome Them(#6;3-way tie)
- Merge "Green Trees" and "Dirt in River"
- Community Based Prioritization of Treatments(#6; 3-way tie)
- Create a Mission and Vision for the Group. How Are We Going to Lead, Empower, and Be Good Stewards?(#7)
- Develop a Template to Identifying the Various Players and Their Roles to Implement-Funding and Permitting(#6;3-way tie)
- What Audiences Are We Targeting?

- = Top Ten Focus Areas/Goals (#rank) - from survey

- 3.) Scott Woods, CSFS: In reference to the "Mission Prioritized List" - It would be an interesting exercise from all of the various stakeholders in the room. Once we have this prioritized list as a group, we can get a sense of where each of the entities are at in regards to these target items so we can figure out how to share status and share capacity as a group. I think some of the ability to cooperate and interact towards each organization depends on what their approach is to these things. The quicker that we can get to an understanding on a base level what each of the entities piece of the pie is, the better we can interact. Which leads to the funding, the implementers, and getting stuff done on the ground. I think that's a big first step.
- 4.) Rich Edwards, CSFS - "Restart Meeting" Two Main Points:
- WWPG decided the focus should switch from a Front Range focus to a statewide focus.
 - WWPG should strengthen relationships between water providers and the agencies.
- 5.) Rich Edwards, CSFS - Recent MOU signed between the Northern Colorado Water Conservation District, the USFS, the Bureau of Reclamation, and CSFS regarding management of watersheds and forest health.
- 6.) Jerry Gibbens, NCWCD - Brief overview of Northern Water and the Big Thompson Project:
- MOU initiated by Secretary Harris Sherman
 - MOU completely signed by December 2012
 - MOU - "Restore forest and watershed health and replan post wildfire response to protect CBT facilities and water supplies."
 - Northern Colorado Water Conservation District was established in 1937 under the Water Conservancy Act in the State of Colorado. Established to contract with the Bureau of Reclamation in building the Colorado Big Thompson Project.

- CBT was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation in 1938 - 1957. The project was completed in 1957.
- CBT Project provides *supplemental water* to Northern Colorado.
- Approximately 640,000 acres of irrigated farm land within our district; 850,000 people live within the district.
- To agricultural communities we provide 5-30% of the water supply; to municipalities we provide 30-60% of the water supply.
- CBT Project: Diverts water from the Western Slope of Colorado (Granby) → To the Eastern Slope of Colorado. District runs from north of Fort Collins up to Wyoming, to Broomfield and even to Nebraska. District includes 8 counties.
- Lake Granby is the second largest storage reservoir in the state of Colorado. Holds 500,000 ac/ft.
- West Slope Watershed: Collection starts from the headwaters of the Colorado River → Grand Lake → Shadow Mountain Reservoir → Lake Granby → pumped from Lake Granby back into Shadow Mountain Reservoir → through Grand Lake → Adams Tunnel. *Anything above Lake Granby is our key water supply. 70% of our water is collected from here.* Willow Creek Drainage is also pumped into Lake Granby. Windy Gap Reservoir diverts water from the Colorado River/ Frasier River and is pumped into Lake Granby as well.
- Lake Granby is surrounded by poor health lodgepole pine, beetle kill trees.
- East Slope Watershed: Adams Tunnel → Mary's Lake → Lake Estes. *Another key water supply is anything above Lake Estes (primarily in RMNP).* Lake Estes → Hydropower Plants → 1.) Delivered South: Carter Lake 2.) Delivered North: Horsetooth Reservoir (FC, Greeley).
- CBT generates power for 58,000 homes
- CBT Deliveries: 66% Agricultural; 34% Municipalities and Industrial
- CBT Ownership: 67% by Municipalities and Industrial; 33% Agricultural
- RMNP sits in the middle of our watershed. Their management objectives aren't tied to water supply necessarily.

- Key MOU Goals: 1.) Protect Infrastructure (Dams, Power Lines, Power Plants/ Pump Stations, Canals/ Pipelines) and 2.) Protect Water Quality (Sediment, Ash, Organic Carbon)
- Jerry Gibbens – Northern Water; 970.622.2299; jgibbens@northernwater.org

7.) Lady From the Crowd Q to Hal Gibbs, USFS: – I know the Frasier Experimental Forest has done some work on timber harvesting patterns that actually can increase water yield. Option? A: There's a misconception about what the work in the Experimental Forest showed. If you harvest 25% of watershed, in that sub- watershed there is a measurable increase in water yield from doing that. But once you move down to the next watershed it gets lost in the year to year fluctuation. Not obvious that timber harvest could have a substantial increase. More large openings would be a good thing not only from a water stand point, but from a forest health sustainability approach. The challenge is how to accomplish those large openings. We could use prescribed fire as a tool on a broad basis. Some of the adverse effects you're trying to avoid may actually come to be because of the prescribed fire so you have to be very careful. Doing it in lodgepole pine forest is relatively a risky thing.

8.) Lucy Maldonado, BOR – Infrastructure Protection a Critical Concern

- Electrical power to water operations is critical. A lot of our facilities are operated remotely.
- If during a wildfire the power lines are damaged, that can impact our ability to operate the system. The other concern is if we can't access it remotely then we have to be able to access the system manually. A wildfire could close the road due to it being in a high burn severity area. Access to get to the facilities to operate them manually is important as well as protecting the electrical system.
- BOR – “Water and Power for the Western United States”
- CBT provides 1 billion recreational user days on our facility.
- NEPA Regulation – Debris Management
- Mandate: Required to have a fire management plan for each of our facilities by 2018.

- 9.) Hal Gibbs, USFS – This is a unique MOU because it includes the CSFS. There's a lot of private land around the reservoirs. We're looking at NW and BOR providing funding to the CSFS to do treatments on private land. It's a bit of a change from the past.
- 10.) Ron Cousineau, CSFS – Granby District will be implementing these plans on non – federal lands. It's a great opportunity as a forester; I can now look past the last 15 years of beetle mitigation and fuel projects and start focusing on watershed projects once again.
- 11.) Scott Woods, CSFS – CSFS Mission Statement is about outreach education, fuels mitigation, and forest health. Even though a private land base within a particular MOU area is fairly small, it would still be great for us to be involved because of what we bring to the table.
- 12.) Shawna Crocker, CSFS – Outreach Upcoming Events:
- Fairplay High School Hosting an Energy Workshop
 - "Watershed: Exploring a New Water Ethic for the New West" – showing a free screening at REI January 28, 2013
- 13.) Lucy Maldonado, BOR – One of the things we've learned from the Hayman Restoration Project Model that we have been applying to Waldo Canyon, is sediment catchment basins. We've been putting them on national forest lands to protect facility infrastructure. We did it under the emergency declaration so we didn't need NEPA.
- 14.) Hal Gibbs, USFS – If you can get an emergency permit from the Army Corps of Engineers after a fire that's really what you should do. If we have NEPA dealt with upfront, than we don't have to worry about if it's an emergency or not. Our approach is where and what will work. I'm not confident that the sediment traps will work everywhere.
- 15.) Unknown Speaker – Even with the condition of the Hayman Fire that was ten years ago we're still one cloud bust in any one drainage away from a catastrophe again. We're lucky there was no decomposed granite on the High Park Fire because that really creates issues for drainage.

16.) Unknown Speaker - Does it help to have an MOU document in creating collaboration between agencies? The process leading to the signing and other ideas that develop lead you on your path. To CSFS it really is valuable in helping us kick start the project and get the work done. It's a vehicle. We're still working towards an interagency agreement in transferring of funds. Having a MOU hopefully will help the approval process.

17.) Rich Homann, CSFS - "CO WRAP" Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal

- The Colorado Risk Assessment is the foundation for the data layers of CO WRAP.
- CO WRAP is a web based mapping tool that uses data in the risk assessment and makes it available to anybody who has internet access.
- Its purpose is to inform decision makers or landowners of various risks and what you can do to mitigate it.
- Various assessments: surface fuels, canopy fuel characteristics, vegetation, topography, values at risk, fire occurrence, WUI drinking water, forest and riparian assessments and their resource response to a wildfire, fire suppression difficulty rating, wildfire threats, wildfire risks, and wildfire intensity scale.
- Maps will generate a summary report with all of the data you requested.
- You can import/export GIS layers from these maps.
- To access this risk assessment tool go to:
<http://coloradowildfirerisk.com/>
- This will be available to the public the first week of March, 2013.

18.) John Bustos - WWPG Draft Mission Statement

- Vision - Protect Colorado water supplies from catastrophic wildfire threats.
- Mission - To reduce wildfire damages to critical infrastructure and water supplies.

19.) Topics of Discussion for Next Meeting:

- Actions 3-5
- Partnering Agencies – Defining What We Can Do
- Matrix of Organizations – Roles and Responsibilities Under Tasks

Meeting Attendance List

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Alan Ward	Pueblo Board of Water Works
Anne Beierle	City of Golden
Berten Weaver	Clear Creek County
Brad Piehl	JW Associates
Chris Sturm	Colorado Water Conservation Board
Chuck Dennis	West Range Reclamation
Claire Harper	USFS R2 Regional Office S&PF
Craig Jones	CDJ Forestry Services
Dave Hard	Colorado Emergency Management
Dave Lighthart	Evergreen Metro District
Don Kennedy	Denver Water
Greg Dewey	City of Loveland
Hal Gibbs	USFS Arapahoe Roosevelt NF
Jerry Gibbens	Northern Water Conservancy District
Jill Ozarski	Senator Mark Udall
Jim Shelley	City of Boulder
John Duggan	Colorado Dept. Public Health & Environment
Jonathan Bruno	Coalition for the Upper South Platte
Justin Pipe	Colorado Dept. of Transportation
Kristy Muskopf	Colorado State Forest Service
Kyle Hamilton	CH2M Hill & South Platte Enhancement Board
Lucia Machado	Colorado Dept. Public Health & Environment
Lucy Maldonado	Bureau of Reclamation
Mark Martin	US Forest Service
Mike McHugh	Aurora Water
Paul Langowski	USFS R2 Regional Office
Rich Edwards	Colorado State Forest Service
Rich Homann	Colorado State Forest Service
Rodney Hansen	Soldier Canyon Filter Plant
Ron Cousineau	Colorado State Forest Service
Russell Clayshulte	Bear Creek Association

Sally Edwards	Xcel Energy
Sara Mayben	USFS Pike San Isabel NF
Scott Ellis	Colorado Dept. of Transportation
Scott Woods	Colorado State Forest Service
Shawna Crocker	Colorado State Forest Service
Travis Warziniack	USFS Rocky Mtn. Research Station
Trent Hyatt	Clear Creek County

Total Number of Participants = 38; 26 organizations