

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group Meeting Minutes

24 January 2014; 0900-1500 MST; Colorado Parks & Wildlife Administrative Office; Bighorn Room; Denver, CO

Introductions

Meeting Attendance List

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Brad Piehl	JW Associates
Brenda Wilmore	US Forest Service
Chuck Dennis	West Range Reclamation
Don Kennedy	Denver Water
George Bigger	Construks
Jerry Gibbens	Northern Water Conservancy District
Jill Oropeza (via phone)	City of Fort Collins Utilities
Jill Ozarski	Senator Mark Udall's Office
John Duggan	Colorado Dept. Public Health & Environment
Kristy Muskopf	Colorado State Forest Service
Larry Long (via phone)	Colorado State Forest Service
Matt Schulz	Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Mike McHugh	Aurora Water
Rich Edwards	Colorado State Forest Service
Sarah Marshall	Oregon State University/University of Oregon
Shawna Crocker	Colorado State Forest Service
Shelley Stanley	City of Northglenn
Tina Little	Colorado State Forest Service
Tony Cheng	Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
Trent Hyatt	Clear Creek County

Total Number of Participants = 20; 16 organizations

General Update

Brad Piehl – Update

- Starting next week on Upper Cucharas watershed, assessment work. Partly funded by grant from Colorado Water Conservation Board.
- High Park Fire Restoration group got extension and more money from the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Fund, working with USFS on national forest.
- EWP funding not funded in legislature this year.

Rich Edwards – Update

- Trying to engage west slope groups with this working group. Rich and Brad went in September to meet with the San Juan Headwaters group. They are in the middle of preparing a wildfire watershed assessment for their Upper San Juan River area.
- Would like some type of outreach meeting in SW Colorado and NW Colorado at least once a year.
- Made contact with Northwestern Colorado Council of Governments. There is a water quality group called the QQ Group (quality and quantity) already meeting on a lot of similar issues so it would be a good group to leverage our working group with. Trying to get on their agenda for June meeting, would like some of the core group to go to that meeting in Eagle.
- Would like to make contact also with the San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership Group in SW Colorado again to keep that relationship going.
- Torie Jarvis with the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments lives in Montrose and would be a good contact for us for engaging the NW portion of Colorado.

Legislative Update – Jill Ozarski

Omnibus Appropriations Bill:

- Congress passed Omnibus Appropriations Bill so government is fully funded for FY14 so no government shutdown.
- Wildfire funding stays the same but hazardous fuels reduction funding goes up moderately.
- Good Neighbor Authority extended for next 5 years, expanded to all western states.
- Stewardship contracting extended for 1 more year.
- Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) piece not funded – has been very important post wildfire (or flood) for restoration of private land. Will try to attach EWP to something moving on the hill to get it passed.
- Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) not included in Omnibus Appropriations, Farm Bill may fund PILT.

SB 1875:

- Changes how wildfire is funded for Dept. of Interior and USFS, takes funding for large wildfires out of an emergency fund like Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sets up.
- Wouldn't have to do fire borrowing.
- Letters of support from large organizations are helpful.

SB 1396:

- Help fund wildfire mitigation on private land thru FEMA.

- When state gets money from FEMA for wildfire costs a percentage of that, over and above the wildfire fighting, cost comes back to the state for fire mitigation. This is a priority bill for senator to keep moving this year.

Other:

- State is currently opting to spend the 15% of money back from the FEMA flood dollars on wildfire mitigation thru the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Letters of intent need to be sent before Jan. 31, there is a link on CO OEM website. 25% match, get creative with federal dollars. Research shows for every \$1 spent on mitigation saves \$4 later in disaster cost.
- Grants director at Senator Udall's office can provide links for educational grants and write letter of support for any federal grant.
- Pres. budget for FY15 coming out in March, let Jill know if you have key things for her to watch out for.

Group Update

- Rich Edwards – Lisa Dale asked me to update the group on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildfire Risk Reduction, Request for Proposal (RFP) out on 6 January 2014. \$5.2 M available for use in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Created under SB 13-269 for non-federal lands only. 50/50 cost share grant can include cost share and in-kind resources. Have to have a plan for use of wood products, biomass etc. Colorado State Forest Service's CO Wood program will provide utilization and marketing assistance for grant applicants. Deadline for proposal is 13 March 2014 at 11:59pm; award date 5 May 2014 and project must be completed within 18 months of award date.
- John Duggan – 120 Source Water Protection Plans across the state. Coalition for Upper South Platte has website with meeting dates. Trying to set up a template of how large water systems take on source water protections.
- Don Kennedy - Working with the USFS to reduce risk of catastrophic fire on federal lands, 33 million over 5 years. Trying to develop private lands program for matching and to be proactive in watershed. Analysis of treatment plants, post fire, to determine treatment costs.
- Brenda Wilmore – Acting for Paul Langowski thru end of April. Adjacent land grants letter to come out next week. Considering suppression and hazardous fuels budget going to risk assessment.
- Jerry Gibbens – Northern water, BOR, and CSFS partnership planning activities in Big Thompson head waters. Looking at where to put sediment in next big fire. 250K for DNR private lands grants for wildfire mitigation.
- Shelly Stanley – Coal creek suffered damage from flood, working with JEFECO on septic which washed out and is being replaced. Have financial resources for partnering.
- Shawna Crocker– Trying to get teacher workshops planned. Fire Ecology Institute, 25 teachers participated. Looking for funding for more teachers workshops. Found orange fungus in Black Fire area never seen in this area. Fungus is for restoring balance after a fire.

- Trent Hyatt – summer is fire season and winter is grant season, working on grants. Focusing treatment in areas where emergency access roads cut off by floods.
- Tony Cheng – Colorado Forest Restoration Institute involved with ecological restoration landscapes. Work with US Forest Service on Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration project and active with forestry collaboratives around the state. Working on effectiveness monitoring for the DNR Wildfire Risk Reduction Program, measure change in hazard levels pre and post. I am the PI for Southern Rockies Fire Science Network, research money pooled by all the main federal land management agencies. Produce science that helps inform fire managers, fuel managers etc. New center in department called the WUI Center, Managing Wildland Urban Interface Fire Risk, creating atlas of the WUI.
- George Bigger – Developing an erosion and control device. Looking for places to partner for prototype testing.
- Chuck Dennis – Working with Black Forest post-fire owners to achieve total utilization of materials coming off the property. Would like to partner with water organizations for wood utilization.
- Rich Edwards – Colorado State Forest Service’s 2014 Forest Restoration Grant Program thru 2018 up to \$1 M/year from state tax severance funds. 60/40 match; cost share can be in-kind or hard dollars. RFP out on 14 January 2014; due by 20 March 2014; award date summer of 2014. CSFS’ online searchable natural resources database is now up on our website as of 21 January 2014. I sent out a link for the database to the group earlier this week.

Socio-economic benefits of forest collaboratives: Tony Cheng

- See power point: <http://www.jw-associates.org/wwpgmeetings.html>

Wrap up

- Make a draft version of an organizational role chart at next meeting (topography of group).
- Core group has a short conference call coming up.
- Rich will look for funding for multiple speaker system and possible video capability for statewide outreach.
- WWPG web page should be up and running on the CSFS website by our next meeting. Some information may need to be vetted through the working group.
- Suggested next meeting 9 May 2014; CPW Administration Building; 6060 Broadway; Denver. Will check with Matt Schulz for availability.