

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group Meeting Minutes

23 January 2015; 0900-1500 MDT;

Colorado Parks & Wildlife Administrative Office; Bighorn Room; Denver, CO

Introductions

Meeting Attendance List

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Aaron Kimple (via phone)	San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership
Aaron Ortega	US Forest Service; Pike & San Isabel NF
Boyd Lebeda	Colorado State Forest Service
Brad Piehl	JW Associates
Brett Wolk	Colorado Forest Restoration Institute
Chuck Rhoades (via phone)	US Forest Service; Rocky Mountain Research Station
Don Kennedy	Denver Water
Jared Heath	City of Fort Collins
Jerry Gibbens	Northern Water
John M. Duggan	Colorado Dept. of Public Health & Environment
Kent Grant (via phone)	Colorado State Forest Service
Kristin Garrison	Colorado State Forest Service
Madeleine West	Colorado Dept. of Natural Resources
Marcella Hutchinson	US Environmental Protection Agency, R8
Mark Martin	US Forest Service; Arapaho & Roosevelt NF
Matt Schulz	Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Mike Lester	Colorado State Forest Service
Mike McHugh	Aurora Water
Rich Edwards	Colorado State Forest Service
Rich Homann (via phone)	Colorado State Forest Service
Russell Clayshulte	Bear Creek Watershed Association
Sally Edwards	Xcel Energy
Shawna Crocker	Colorado State Forest Service
Shelley Stanley	City of Northglenn
Thurman Wilson (via phone)	San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership
Tina Little	Colorado State Forest Service
Trent Hyatt	Clear Creek County

Total Number of Participants = 27; 17 organizations

Rich & Brad – Update:

- Brad – Basin plan projects starting to be proposed for potential funding, is group well connected to that process? Colorado Water Conservation Board is looking to fund on the ground projects i.e. CUSP. Look for grant cycle information on the CWCB website.
- Rich – American Water Resources Association requested a 90 minute panel from this group for their national convention coming to Denver in November. Mike McHugh will put panel together, contact him if you are interested. Mike is also trying to put together a floods and beer tour before the convention starts.
- Don Kennedy – There is excess money left over from the Forest to Faucets program, \$1.65 M. There is a new contract in place with the Colorado State Forest Service to use this money, Paige Lewis of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is heading that project up.

Madeleine West – Legislative update:

- Most grants are wrapping up from the first round of the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant (WRRG) program, some projects are extending through the summer. The future of the WRRG program is unknown right now but there is a senate bill (SB 22) that would reauthorize \$9.8 M over the next 5 years. There is a change under this bill that would support pile burning. If bill passes senate and goes to the house there will be another opportunity for testimony. If it is reauthorized there won't be a transfer of funds until 1 July of this year so the Request For Applications would come out in early May. Capacity building will still be a part of this grant; capacity is defined as equipment.
- SB15-009 authorizes \$1 M grant programs for facilities to use biomass in public entities – postponed indefinitely.
- HB 1008 allows for forested agricultural lands to qualify for federal grant programs the year a natural disaster occurs – calendared for Monday.
- SJR 15-004 similar to fire borrowing, this encourages federal agencies to invest in wild land fire suppression to end the cycle of fire borrowing.
- Another bill came out of the wildfire matters review committee that would grant immunity to state employees who conduct prescribed burns.
- SB 15-39 transfers control of federal lands to the state. Not really considered; DOA.
- HB 15-1129 requires DPS/OEM to work with a TBD non-profit organization to develop decision support system to predict wildfires and flooding.

Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program Monitoring and Effectiveness Assessment with Brett Wolk, Research Associate; CFRI

- See PowerPoint on WWPG webpage:
<http://csfs.colostate.edu/forest-management/watershed-management/>

Group Updates:

- Rich Homann – CO-WRAP portal makes available data to lay person and decision makers about wildfire risk. Added HUC 12 watershed layer allows you to identify watersheds, Forest Management treatment layers added where, what, # acres. Updated user's manual coming this spring will add 2013-2014 large wildfires. CWPP and Firewise communities don't have a utility infrastructure layer yet, but would be happy to add one.
- Chuck Roades – collaborative research on the High Park fire with Colorado State University and USFS Rocky Mountain Research scientists, looking at hydrology and sediment delivery in areas that were burned by the High Park. Another project down south, resampling the water quality affected by the 2002 Hayman fire.
- Aaron Kimple – Watershed assessments going on. Last year built citizen scientist program had 30+ volunteers during the summer and worked with local school district to get students monitoring.
- Aaron Ortega – Prescribed fire anticipating another 5,000 acres tied to large scale partnerships. Working on a wildfire response guide, will look for input from stakeholders in future.
- Sally Edwards – 2014 close out with Xcel vegetation management crews spent \$6.2 M in bark beetle theatre, 982 structures cleared on private property. USFS Arapahoe & Roosevelt NF working by Empire, Pike & San Isabel NF has launched into their environmental impact statement. Went on a field trip tour of the White River NF.
- Rich Edwards – New website will launch 1st of February, WWPG webpage will be on there. State and private forestry grants; 2 of 3 submitted for 2015 ranked in top 18 to be funded by USFS but can't talk about funding until the letter arrives. One of the grants is watershed related; has to do with invasive plants. The other grant is riparian collaboration. Working on CSFS strategic plan and Colorado State Forest Action Plan update.
- Russ Clayshulte – Bear Creek Watershed Assn. working on developing an electronic watershed plan that has new policies and fact sheets. The plan will have hyperlinks to specific policies.
- Matt Schultz – Pile burning on state lands going on. 2015 and 2016 should get most piles burned. Colorado Parks and Wildlife waiting for smoke fee to get recalculated.
- Trent Hyatt – Moving forward with RFP's for contractors for the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant that was awarded to open space commission. Working with new fuels reduction task force looking at older subdivisions to see what can be done.
- Mike Lester – Broadcast burning not happening any time soon for state employees. Testified at a hearing about needing all the tools for forestry, science takes a back seat to emotion. 2 new employees in key roles, Forest Management Division Supervisor Susan Matthews and Outreach Division Supervisor Kim Mueller.
- Shawna Crocker – 2 fire ecology institutes happening this summer, Florissant and Durango. Go to PLT.org for more info. Emerald Ash Borer workshops with CO Dept. of Ag for teachers in urban areas. Free trees for teachers to PLT.org for information. Working on Colorado Environmental Film Festival go to CEFF.net. Involved with Colorado Environmental Literacy Plan, partnership of Dept. of Education and Dept. of Natural Resources to prepare students for environmental education.

- Shelly Stanley – Stanley Lake Cities working with water research foundation on a treatability study.
- Mark Martin – collaborative projects going on to promote restoration projects. Last year Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program treated 6,500 acres in the Wildland Urban Interface. Northern water treated 160 acres in Zone Of Concern on west side of Grand County. Arapahoe/Roosevelt Xcel towers have 27 towers under contract. Burned 35,608 piles last year of 100,000. Purchased new smoke monitors to help show impact of pile burning.
- Jared Heath – working on research endeavors with Colorado State University and the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed focusing on post fire in High Park and restoration work going on. City of Fort Collins working with CO Rural Water Assn. to do source water protection plan. TNC teamed with Anheuser-Busch to do treatment on ground for source water.
- Marcella Hutchinson – Source water protection coordinator; new to group.
- Jerry Gibbens – 2 WRRG programs finishing up; first one west of Carter Lake. Developing a 5 year plan for the Colorado Big Thompson Headwaters Partnership. Moraine Park, Fern Lake wildfire monitoring report on website northernwater.org.
- Don Kennedy – recent private lands grant contract with CSFS, Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP), CFRI, and Jefferson County CD. Also doing source water protection plan with CUSP.
- John Duggan – source water protection planning across the state, \$820,000 given out for source water protection. Working with BLM on oil and gas leasing plan, focus is to protect drinking water intake but trying to get added protection up stream. Coordinating with American Planning Assoc. in planning land use to protect water resources.
- Brett Wolk – Updating website, reports regarding monitoring on website. Ecological restoration conference in Fort Collins on 10-12 March.
- Mike McHugh – funded a Tennessee Pass Project around Turquoise Lake. Working on watershed protection management plan with Brad. Healthy Headwaters doing a survey on effectiveness of goals that they have set. If you have a chance, go on to Carpe Diem website to do survey. Going through compliance process of SB 1285.
- Brad Piehl – Rio Cucharas Wildfire Watershed Assessment nearing completion. The Wildfire Watershed Assessments are completed through local stakeholder groups.

WWPG Panel: Forest Management Treatments Adjacent to Reservoirs and Within Watershed Zones of Concern with Aaron Kimple, Boyd Lebeda, Kent Grant, Kristin Garrison, and Thurman Wilson

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