

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group Meeting Minutes

29 May 2015; 0900-1500 MDT;

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

Introductions

Meeting Attendance List

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Aaron Ortega	US Forest Service; Pike & San Isabel NF
Brad Piehl	JW Associates
Brenda Wilmore	US Forest Service Regional Office
Chuck Dennis	West Range Reclamation
Eric Howell	Colorado Springs Utilities
Gaylene Rossiter	Colorado State Forest Service
Gloria Edwards	Southern Rockies Fire Science Network
Kurt Mackes	Colorado State University
Mark Martin	US Forest Service; Arapaho & Roosevelt NF
Mark Shea	Colorado Springs Utilities
Mike Lester	Colorado State Forest Service
Noah Koerper	US Senator Bennet's Office
Rich Edwards	Colorado State Forest Service
Sally Edwards (via phone)	Xcel Energy
Sam Sherwood	Aurora Water
Sheryl Page (via phone)	US Forest Service; Pike & San Isabel NF
Steve Belz	Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team

Total Number of Participants = 17; 11 organizations

Group Updates:

- Brad Piehl – Colorado Big Thompson Headwaters Partnership trying to incorporate some resilience parameters. Looking at vegetation types and how diverse they are. Working on a 5 year plan.
- Mark Martin - Working with Northern water as a lead, using the MOU as a guide with other partners. Agreement with BLM, doing work on their lands because they don't have the capacity. Getting ready to treat some acres around Grand Lake, using a hot shot crew to do it. Large WUI project being planned for Boulder and Clear Creek area, trying to get folks to do D-space treatments around their homes. Pile burning has shut down for the year but will pick up in the fall.

- Mark Shea – first time with group, works with Eric and source water protection. Home watershed is Fountain Creek. Focusing on watershed health issues in southern Colorado, working with many local groups.
- Eric Howell - Pre bid on contract with Colorado State Forest Service. Working with city parks in Colo. Spgs. for restoration on Ponderosa pines and riparian areas. Tennessee Creek project by Leadville ready for implementation but on hold right now due to legal issues.
- Aaron Ortega – Fire shop completing decision support guide for wildland fires response. The guides will be available to help decision makers develop a course of action. Should be completed mid-June. The difference between this guide and the WFDSS guide is the fire business side, WFDSS will pull from one weather station and this guide will pull from a group of weather stations.
- Steve Belz – Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordinating Team (RWEACT), coalition of 3 counties affected by West Fork fire. Works with the US Forest Service to get jobs done on the ground. Set up a Doppler radar on Wolf Creek Pass for weather monitoring. Meeting with senators Bennett and Gardner on some projects.
- Chuck Dennis – Weather related issues, mud is affecting things and not able to do much on product removal projects. Getting back into the woods this week, but markets affected by weather as well. Mastication work being done on the Pike & San Isabel, and work being done in Gypsum. Issue with markets right now is a very soft volatile market for green Products Other than Logs (POL).
- Sheryl Page – Colorado Fire Conference is Sept 24 – 26 in Snowmass Village. Conference is to give communities a framework to become fire adapted.
- Sally Edwards – Met with White River NF and BLM last week in Colorado. Has pictures of mastication under high voltage lines around Leadville area.
- Rich Edwards – CSFS update; just completed forestry Best Management Practices monitoring field session on Northern Front Range, field audit report due out in the fall. Have put in for community assistance (CAFA) grants for 2015 (old Stevens Grants) 9 grants on 7 districts with a total of \$3M in requests. Recently formed another partnership; Upper South Platte Partnership. Denver Water is the lead on it. CSFS, CUSP, Jefferson Conservation District, TNC, & USFS all involved. The new partnership allows for work on non-federal lands (as opposed to Forests to Faucet federal lands program).

Legislative Update - Noah Koerper

- Fire Summit in Colorado Springs on May 9th, follow-up to a meeting about a year ago when forestry folks from around the state gathered. The topic of the summit was ‘how can the federal government do a better job of supporting everybody’s forest health and fire mitigation on the ground’. This was an attempt to take the voices from on the ground and apply it at the DC level. Next step is to implement what was learned. Will be using this information as a guiding document for forestry policy going forward. Working on putting a cover letter on this and getting it to Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack. Next step is to send to top level folks at USDA to get

things done. Also would like to work with other legislative offices to incorporate this language into legislative fixes.

- Reforming NEPA; Farm bill last year did reform NEPA, still waiting to see that come to fruition on the ground.
- Support and formation of collaborative groups; had a bill that didn't target the right things and didn't pass, have to work on stronger language. There is a broad diversity in how the groups are working.

Presentations:

See PowerPoints on WWPG webpage:

<http://csfs.colostate.edu/forest-management/watershed-management/>

- US Forest Service Wildland Fire Decision Support System: Brenda Wilmore, Fire Use Specialist
- Southern Rockies Fire Science Network: Gloria Edwards, Coordinator
- CSFS Natural Resources Grants & Assistance Database/WWPG Webpage: Gaylene Rossiter, Web Manager
- Avoided Cost Studies on Hayman and Black Forest Wildfires: Dr. Kurt Mackes, Associate Professor, FRS, CSU

- **Reminder:** Our next meeting will be an outreach effort with the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable/RWEACT and will occur 8 September 2015 in Alamosa, CO. Agenda and details to follow as more information becomes available.