

**Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC)
June 27, 2018, 9:30 am – 4:00pm
Glenwood Springs Recreation Center
Meeting Summary**

Attendance: Norm Birtcher, Carol Ekarius, Cindy Farny, Dan Gibbs, Scott Jones, Doug Lempke, Mike Lester, Mark Morgan, Michael Preston, Chuck Rhoades, John Ring, Tom Spezze, and Ben Tisdell

Guests: Jeremy Bailey, Vaughn Jones, Mike McHugh, Mike Morgan, Amy Moyer, Brad Piehl, and Kirk Willchris

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Dan Myers

ACTION ITEMS

| <i>Actor(s)</i> | <i>Action</i> |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Scott Jones | Send Heather information from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Commission on the Future Generations Bill and the study on funding mechanisms |
| Aaron Kimple | Prepare to discuss a landscape approach to management at the September meeting |
| Mike Lester | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to Carolyn Aspelin about getting on the agenda with the Wildfire Matters Review Committee. • Provide an update on governmental immunity efforts at September meeting • Explore options for creating a hub for planning and implementation of burning treatments. (With Mike Morgan) |
| Mike McHugh | Call Kimery Wiltshire and Belinda Griswold of Carpe Diem West to help with narratives, information, and marketing effort (With Heather) |
| Mark Morgan | Send Heather the written statement on the "Case for \$100 million" (from two meetings ago) |
| Peak Facilitation Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Dan Gibbs to work on finding a venue for the FHAC meeting in Summit County in September • Create an internal FHAC website for document sharing, photos, etc. • Send a Doodle to find a September meeting time (as soon after Labor Day as possible) • Reach out to Ryan Ludlow about making a short film for narratives, information, and marketing effort • Send the notes and link from the Ellen Roberts' webinar to the group • Convene the narrative and marketing task group to begin discussion of educational materials (The group includes Norm Birtcher, Doug Lempke, Mike Preston, Chuck Rhoades, and Ben Tisdell, as well as the PIOs from the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control and the Colorado State Forest Service.) • Invite Marilyn Gally from the Colorado Department of Labor to join the narrative and marketing task group. |

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Facilitator Heather Bergman provided a brief update on the current status of FHAC membership.

- US Forest Service (USFS) staff were not present at this meeting. However, Jason Lawhon, formerly of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), has taken a new position within the USFS Regional Office in Golden. The USFS hopes that he will become an adjunct delegate to the FHAC at future meetings. Mike Lester is working with the Colorado General Assembly to expedite the process of filling Lawhon's vacated seat on the FHAC.
- Craig Grother has been appointed to the FHAC. Grother represents Backcountry Hunters and Anglers of Colorado and will be present at future meetings. He was unable to join the FHAC meeting today due to a previously scheduled commitment.

PRESCRIBED FIRE: WHAT IS BEING DONE AROUND THE STATE?

Representatives of the Colorado Prescribed Fire Council (CPFC), the Advisory Committee on Wildland Fire and Prescribed Fire Matters (the Wildfire Advisory Committee), and the Watershed Wildfire Protection Group (WWPG) provided updates on their respective missions, directions, and current efforts related to prescribed fire.

Colorado Prescribed Fire Council

Kirk Will, Unit Chief for Prescribed Fire and Fuels with the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (CDFPC), provided an update on the CPFC's prescribed fire activities.

- The CPFC was created in 2007 following several years of severe wildfires in Colorado. State fire leaders recognized a need to restore forests to healthy conditions and identified prescribed fire as a useful tool for doing so.
- The initial group had seats for a non-governmental organization (NGO) representative; a State of Colorado representative; a Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) representative; private, county, and federal land manager representatives; a representative of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs organization; and a representative from a state research university.
- There is currently a vacancy for a Colorado State Fire Chiefs representative. The CPFC is making progress in filling this vacancy.
- The CPFC is the body that provides the Colorado General Assembly with information on prescribed fire work. The CPFC focuses on:
 - Conducting safe and effective prescribed burns all over the state
 - Helping landowners with liability issues related to conducting controlled burns on their properties
 - Working to improve smoke management and air quality
 - Providing input on state regulations surrounding prescribed fire
 - Providing a forum to address confusion around prescribed burns
 - Building relationships, creating agreements, and sharing capacity and staffing with other agencies to help CDFPC and its partners conduct prescribed burns
 - Offering private landowners prescribed fire training as part of the CDFPC's Colorado Certified Burner program
- The Certified Burner program was created by the General Assembly in 2014 to offer landowners limited liability under state law when conducting prescribed burns on their property. The program has two levels. The "B" level provides certification in pile burning. Approximately 30-35 landowners, contractors, and consultants have achieved "B" level certification. Four or five former fire fighters have attained an "A" level certification to conduct broadcast burns.

- The CDFPC conducted its first prescribed burn last fall. Partnerships with other agencies provided CDFPC with enough staff and resources to conduct that burn.
- The CPFC has a statewide agreement to share resources with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Council is working on completing a similar agreement with the USFS this summer. Similar agreements are in the works with counties and local jurisdictions, as well.
- The CPFC is working on a large project with BLM and the USFS concerning air quality and the National Weather Service's (NWS) air quality rating system. The project team determined that the NWS air quality models are inaccurate. The NWS system does not take terrain or ventilation indices into account when developing its rating models. Legally, agencies have to use NWS forecasts and ratings when determining if they can burn without creating serious negative impacts on air quality. The project team has launched weather balloons to collect air quality data. The NWS is beginning to review its models. If the NWS updates its models, it will increase the number of days on which burning can occur and therefore increase the number of acres that can be burned in Colorado.
- The CPFC is working to identify insurance providers who will cover private landowners and consultants when they are conducting prescribed burns. There are currently few providers willing to insure prescribed fires, and the options that do exist are expensive.
- The CPFC is engaging in ongoing public education and outreach efforts. Members are trying to attend as many outreach and education meetings as possible, in addition to the workshops and trainings that the CPFC itself is holding for landowners. The CPFC has also created a new website (coprescribedfire.org) that features a calendar of trainings, research and education links, and a map of prescribed fire projects.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC members asked several clarifying questions about the CPFC's prescribed fire activities. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding responses below in plain text.

How long does the Certified Burner program last?

The program lasts two and a half days if the participant has no prior experience with fire. The first day of the program covers fire behavior and weather. Participants who have taken other fire courses do not need to attend the first half day of the program. The remaining two days of classes are specific to controlled burning and culminate with a test on the final day. Participants receive a task book that includes three training burns and a template for writing a burn plan. If participants do those tasks correctly, they become certified for five years. Certified Burners need to complete one pile burn during those five years to retain their certification.

What form does the program's liability protection take?

The program's liability protection has not been tested in court yet. However, participants have been offered limited liability protection under state law. The protection is similar to that available to state employees. Participants are free from civil (but not criminal) liability when conducting prescribed burns if they do the burns properly and follow their burn plans.

Does the liability protection extend to a certain dollar amount?

Traditionally, burners' liability has been capped at \$600,000. The CPFC is working on a bill to extend this protection. However, the program does not provide insurance coverage for damages.

How many acres did the CDFPC broadcast burn in 2017?

CDFPC burned about 600 acres in 2017. Certified Burners burned another 200 acres or so. CDFPC does not currently collect data on the total number of acres burned.

Could the Certified Burner program be used to conduct large-scale prescribed burns?

It has taken several years to re-introduce broadcast burns to Colorado. Colorado only resumed prescribed burning in 2017. The program will grow over time.

What is the cost of participation in the Certified Burner program?

The program costs \$40 for books and materials. The five-year certification costs \$35.

Is the CPFC's air quality project part of its efforts to monitor smoke impacts?

Yes. The project uses traditional, portable smoke monitors and will soon use \$150 "do-it-yourself" smoke monitors developed by students from Colorado State University (CSU). CPFC is also working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE's) Air Pollution Control Division (APCD). The APCD has hired several new meteorologists as part of its smoke monitoring efforts. APCD personnel attend CPFC meetings, and a staff representative helps teach the Certified Burner class. The CPFC and the APCD have worked to put many non-attainment areas under attainment so that agencies can conduct prescribed burns in more places. It is now legal to burn 50 piles in some areas where the limit was once five.

Will the CPFC and APCD's work lead to legislative changes that make the smoke permitting process easier?

Right now, it is relatively easy to obtain a smoke permit. The longest it has taken CPFC members is three days. The APCD has made it much easier to obtain permits by keeping staff levels high.

What are the current restrictions on the size of piles that Coloradans can burn? Are those restrictions based on air quality concerns?

There are a couple of relevant permits. Burners can get a free, general smoke permit from the APCD to burn 50 piles that are eight cubic-feet each year. Burners who want to burn more or larger piles must pay a fee and complete a longer application.

Are there physical limitations on the size of piles for reasons other than air quality concerns?

APCD does not want people to burn large log piles for air quality purposes.

Do sheriffs issue pile burning restrictions?

It depends on whether the APCD has delegated that power to sheriffs. Some sheriffs and counties have regulations that are more restrictive than the state's baseline 50-pile burn limits. Sheriffs are the fire marshals in their counties under state law.

Has the APCD considered not regulating air curtain burners in the same way as power plants? Air curtain burners burn hotter and cleaner than open piles.

APCD is working on creating a separate permitting system for air curtain burners.

Is the CPFC discussing policy options that the FHAC should be aware of when speaking with state legislators or US senators so that the FHAC and CPFC are on the same page?

The CPFC is not doing much policy work right now. The group's main policy focus has been on changing the NWS forecasting system.

Has the CPFC offered Certified Burner classes to entire homeowners associations (HOAs)?

The CPFC has not done this yet, but it probably could.

Group Discussion

FHAC members discussed the CPFC's activities.

- Large logs burn cleanly within piles, so burning them should not be restricted. The CPFC will provide this feedback to the APCD.
- The FHAC aims to reduce fuels on a landscape scale. Burning 50 piles a year is an artificial limitation on landowners' ability to reduce fuels. It is not clear why landowners should only be able to burn 50 piles if they are burning properly and the burns are well-ventilated.
- This is an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule, not a Colorado rule. At a previous FHAC meeting, a CDPHE representative noted that the State could not change the EPA's pile burning restrictions. However, some areas that were previously designated as non-attainment areas are now under attainment, so these restrictions may no longer be applicable in some places.
- The APCD can only pump a certain amount of the pollutant known as PM10 into the air under EPA air quality regulations. This restriction accounts for many of the limits placed on pile burning. PM10 refers to particulate matter that is 10 micrometers or less in diameter.
- The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests are burning hundreds of acres that are newly under attainment, especially near Red Feather Lakes.
- FHAC members are welcome to invite APCD personnel out to pile burning projects to discuss air quality concerns and examine the smoke output of the piles themselves. The APCD has hired a new meteorologist, Amber Ortega, to work on the smoke permitting rule.
- The most significant factors limiting pile burns in recent years have been the weather (there has not been enough snow for broadcast burns to be safe) and staffing. There is not much to be done about the weather, but the CPFC's cooperation agreements with other agencies will help alleviate staffing problems. Additionally, the CDFPC is planning cross-boundary broadcast burns with the USFS and BLM. The Colorado State Land Board and Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) are also involved. Under a new cooperative arrangement cross-boundary burns can be stopped in safe and reasonable locations rather than at jurisdictional boundaries. One of these burns is being planned by BLM to run from its land at Radium onto CPW property.
- The APCD's program for "significant users" of prescribed fire could solve some of the pile burning restriction issues. Program participants can bypass many of the non-weather-related restrictions that the APCD applies to pile burning. However, a "significant user" permit is more expensive general prescribed fire permit (it costs about \$100) than, and it is more difficult to secure. Landowners who can burn 10,000 acres of land per year and who are managers of that land are eligible to apply. That application needs to be submitted to CDPHE's Air Quality Control Commission rather than the APCD. The applicant then attends a Commission hearing to determine if their application will be approved.
- The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) and the Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP) have been conducting cooperative burns in the Upper South Platte watershed. Fire personnel have used the opportunity to gain fire management experience. In a similar manner to the BLM and CPW collaboration at Radium, CFRI and USPP are burning across jurisdictional boundaries. So far, the partners have conducted one broadcast burn and many pile burns. CFRI is hoping to expand the program into other areas to connect it with the fire adapted communities leg of the National Wildland Fire Management Cohesive Strategy.
- The FHAC could focus more on education and outreach to landowners and sheriffs rather than policy. The tools exist to conduct prescribed burns, but Colorado needs a more effective way to disseminate information to potentially interested parties.

- County, state, and federal agencies often provide different and/or contradictory information about smoke and burn permitting. It would be helpful if there were more harmonization among these agencies on existing regulations. The CPFC and the APCD are discussing this.
- Permitting large-scale burn projects can be a challenge, but the weather is also a large part of the problem. Annual burn windows are often small because weather is usually too wet or too dry. Even when weather conditions are favorable for controlled burns, it is sometimes only permissible to burn 5 to 10 piles a day. This is related to ventilation rules, and CDFPC is working on that issue with the NWS.
- There is also a legal aspect to the permitting issue. The Colorado Attorney General's office has stated that pile burning might be legally part of broadcast burning, and therefore people might not be able to be sued for damages related to pile burning. There is a strong need for an official checklist from all the relevant agencies to provide the public with a more condensed resource to consult when pile burning. The CPFC is acting as a convener for these discussions.
- The CPFC will explore the option of holding HOA-level Certified Burner trainings in wild-urban interface (WUI) areas.

Wildfire Advisory Committee

- An executive order from the Governor of Colorado established the Wildfire Advisory Committee to advise the CDFPC on wildfire issues. The Committee includes representatives from the Colorado Fire Chiefs Association, Colorado Professional Firefighters, the Colorado Municipal League, Colorado Counties, Inc., and the Special District Association of Colorado.
- The Committee presented to the General Assembly's Wildfire Matters Review Committee (WMRC) in October when severe wildfires were burning in California's Napa Valley. The WMRC and the Joint Budget Committee asked the Wildfire Advisory Committee if Colorado was prepared to deal with fires on that scale. It replied that Colorado was not prepared to do so.
- The Wildfire Advisory Committee identified gaps in fire-response capacity around the state. The most significant change in Colorado's fire landscape in recent years has been that fires are now less likely to be isolated on USFS land and more likely to be near subdivisions in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- Public safety protocols around fire are too traditional and not collaborative enough. Specifically, there is a major gap between the point in the firefighting process when local firefighters and neighboring resources have been exhausted and when outside groups arrive to reinforce the locals. This gap can stretch from 24 to 48 hours.
- Wildfire agencies are still staffed as if fire season is confined to the summer. That is no longer the case. Agencies need to have enough staff to deal with severe wildfires outside of the summer months.
- During wildfires, local 911 systems (which often only have one or two dispatchers) are often overwhelmed by calls from panicked residents. Currently, interagency dispatchers work on wildland fires but do not focus on public safety or threats to structures in the WUI. That is one example of a fire response need that regional aid could address.
- Additionally, agencies are expanding regional aviation cooperation for longer portions of the year. Historically, fires in October were wind-driven and did not require aerial support. Today, multi-mission aircraft, single-engine air tankers, and helicopters are being made available for regional aid.
- The CDFPC recently received unexpected additional funding that it is using, in part, to provide year-round staffing on its engines. When weather conditions are suitable for prescribed fires, the CDFPC now has more adequate resources to conduct prescribed burns.

- The Wildfire Advisory Committee is also exploring ways to expand training opportunities for firefighters, especially in rural parts of the state. The group is also pursuing greater coordination of strike teams, task forces, and engines across jurisdictional boundaries.
- The CDFPC has created a Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting. The Center focuses on using technology to help firefighters "work smarter." CDFPC personnel have reached out to people all over the state from all impacted disciplines to identify technological solutions to firefighting challenges. The CDFPC set up a 40-member working group that has met five or six times in Denver so far. The CDFPC has presented its technical findings to groups in Alamosa, La Junta, Fort Morgan, Durango, and Steamboat Springs, and at a Colorado Fire Chiefs meeting.

Group Discussion

FHAC members discussed the Wildfire Advisory Committee's activities.

- It would be useful to identify someone to represent the Wildfire Advisory Committee when FHAC members testify before the WMRC.
- There is a challenge posed by the common practice of local fire districts sending equipment and personnel to fight fires out of state, which advances their skillsets and can also result in substantial financial remuneration. This practice means that many firefighters often are not present when fires break out in Colorado. The problem is made worse by the fact that local fire districts receive significant funding from taxpayer-funded grants from the State of Colorado but then their staffs are not available in Colorado to assist tax-payers.
- While the State of Colorado does not have authority over where local districts send their resources, the CDFPC is assessing the preparedness of each of four identified quadrants within the state. As part of this effort, the CDFPC is creating "draw-down" models that consider the pre-positions of fire-fighters and local weather to help officials decide how best to distribute firefighting resources within the state.
- Firefighters leaving the state for assignments benefit from training and experience, but perhaps state grants should stipulate a minimum number of days that firefighters must remain in Colorado each year.
- There is a grant that provides staffing to local fire districts called the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant. The CDFPC has discussed designating some fire trucks to coordinate the operations of "strike teams" in certain regions. However, the issue may be one of staffing more than equipment.
- The CDFPC is having preliminary discussions with local fire districts about the need for joint staffing. The CDFPC is aware that firefighters will sometimes leave the state to fight fires, but the priority should be the protection of Colorado. Conversely, many firefighters from outside of Colorado fought the 416 fire, so the practice has benefits and drawbacks.
- There is an economic incentive for firefighters to leave the state to fight fires and make extra money when there are no fires in Colorado. Leaving the state to fight fires provides some districts with the majority of their annual funding. Finding ways to provide financial incentives to local fire districts could keep firefighters at their posts more often. Options for doing this include allocating separate funding for prescribed fire teams and providing additional money for districts to incentivize firefighters to stay.
- Firefighters benefit from the training opportunities presented by leaving the state to fight fires. Developing ways to replicate that training in Colorado could keep firefighters in the state more often.
- Fire agencies need to adapt to the increasing role of women within the workforce. There are a lot of women on fire crews. Fire agencies need to acknowledge this fact.

- There should be a dedicated prescribed fire workforce. Colorado needs to burn 800,000 acres a year to treat unhealthy, over-dense forests. The obstacles to reaching that goal include lack of staff and equipment, burning regulations, competition for firefighting resources, and the top-down management style of firefighting agencies. Colorado needs bottom-up solutions that the state and federal government agencies adopt, not vice versa. Private landowners, foresters, timber companies, and contractors all need to be empowered to conduct prescribed burns.
- The Wildfire Advisory Committee is examining Colorado's level of preparedness for combatting severe wildfires and the financial cost of that preparedness. Having firefighters on stand-by all the time is expensive and difficult to justify. Accordingly, the Wildfire Advisory Committee's four-quadrant model is designed to spread the cost of preparedness over larger geographic areas and to shift resources around the state as necessary. This flexible firefighting model depends on spending sufficient money on both fire suppression and mitigation. Focusing on one or the other is inadequate. However, the Wildfire Advisory Committee acknowledges the need to be realistic about how much money can be spent on mitigation during years with severe fires. Much of this mitigation spending is considered part of the suppression efforts conducted at the fire sites.
- The current balance between suppression and mitigation is untenable. Suppression often takes the form of panicked mitigation. Air quality concerns conflict with public safety and prescribed fire concerns.
- The past month's fires have demonstrated the benefits of mitigation. The Buffalo Fire in Summit County was stopped by a fire break that saved a whole community and millions of dollars in suppression costs. Summit County's Community Wildfire Protection Program (CWPP) allowed the county to work with local, state, and federal agencies (and their accompanying funding streams) to spend about a million dollars to do mitigation work that saved lives and a billion dollars' worth of property. As part of Summit County's CWPP, county officials went door-to-door with local firefighters to identify residents who were willing to allow their defensible space zones to be treated or connected to treatments on government land. The treatments stemming from this outreach played a key role in halting the fire.
- Some communities resist fire mitigation treatments; it is important to find ways to address situations where communities are opposed to treatments because local buy-in to treatments can save lives as the Buffalo Fire demonstrated. During the Buffalo Fire, some Summit County residents wrote on Facebook that they had been opposed to the treatments but were so grateful for them now that a fire had occurred. Many residents who treated their defensible spaces saved their homes.
- The Colorado Emergency Fire Fund (EFF) has generated about \$1 million a year to fight catastrophic fires since its creation in 1967. However, the State of Colorado alone spends \$11 million a year on fire suppression.
- In Utah, there used to be local control over firefighting efforts. The State of Utah changed its model by offering to aid communities as long as they did sufficient mitigation work themselves. If communities do not do their fair share of the mitigation work, the state does not pay for more. The Utah model could be an interesting concept to apply in Colorado. Colorado Counties, Inc. plans to discuss EFF reform at its next meeting. FHAC members who will attend that meeting should review Utah's system and see how applicable it would be for Colorado.
- Over the years, the way that people think about fire risk has changed. Some Coloradans have used local government control to build houses in locations with high wildfire risk. When fire threatens these houses, the state and taxpayers must pay to save those who built

houses in dangerous locations. On the federal level, FEMA is increasingly warning state and local governments that they cannot expect to receive as much help in addressing wildfires as they have historically received if they are not conducting robust mitigation themselves.

- After the Missionary Ridge Fire of 2002, the CSFS and National Fire Protection Association implemented the Firewise USA program in Colorado to provide technical assistance and training to homeowners and communities to protect themselves from wildfires. The program has had some clear successes. Areas where the Firewise program was active have fared better in the 416 fire than those that have not.

Watershed Wildfire Protection Group

- The Watershed Wildfire Protection Group (WWPG) was created in 2007 as a working group of the Front Range Roundtable (FRRT), a coalition of organizations focusing on restoring forest health and protecting communities from wildfires. Analysis from the Pinchot Institute identified a strong connection between water sources and wildfires hazards, which concerned the FRRT. The WWPG examined the hazards posed by wildfires to water supplies in 14 sub-watersheds in Colorado and Wyoming.
- The group is mainly composed of Front Range water provider representatives and their state and federal partners. The WWPG played a role in facilitating the “fire funding fix” and works with watershed groups that have memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the USFS to cooperate on forest treatments. Water providers have spent tens of millions of dollars on watershed protection in the last ten years in addition to the treatments conducted through the MOUs.
- Water providers aim to leverage their funding by cooperating with the CSFS, county governments, and city councils. The WWPG and its water providers are gaining traction with members of Congress and their staffs on getting some help from the federal government. For example, the federal Farm Bill has created a problem by only creating categorical exclusions from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements that make it much easier to conduct forest treatments for certain forest types. Much of Colorado's water comes from high-elevation snowmelt, and at least 40% of water providers' "zones of concern" that provide this crucial snowmelt do not benefit from the exclusions because they are under certain fire regime designations.
- Another example of a major policy need is the lack of a consistent legal definition of the WUI. CWPPs included a definition, but they are local and inconsistent: some define WUI as an entire county and others define it as the area immediately surrounding houses. The State of Colorado cannot seem to establish a single definition of WUI.
- The WWPG is serving with the CSFS and USFS on watershed protection groups like the Colorado-Big Thompson Headwaters Partnership and Poudre Watershed Coalition. Beetle kill surrounds these watersheds and provides high-value, low-cost treatment opportunities. Both of these watershed protection groups are spending money on these types of treatments, in part by paying local firefighters to show up to prescribed burns (which they are not typically paid to do).
- Prescribed fire looks different on each side of the Continental Divide. There is a lot of prescribed fire work happening on the Front Range, but the lack of snow at low elevations makes it difficult to conduct at times. Some restoration treatments leave a lot of fuels on the ground, defeating the purpose of the treatments. Implementers need to get rid of downed material or stop making piles. On the Western Slope, agencies like the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests' Granby Ranger District want to conduct large, NEPA-compliant prescribed fires on USFS land. Unfortunately, the District does not have the personnel or the

experience to do those kinds of burns, even though the burning window is wider there because of heavier snowfall.

- The WWPG is also examining ways to protect watersheds beyond the “standard ponderosa restoration model” by treating wilderness areas, mixed conifer, and lodgepole forests. These treatments can do a lot to protect reservoirs, even on roadless, steep terrain. Creating fuel breaks on ridgelines (like those that were so successful in stopping the Buffalo Fire) is critical to protecting water sources in these kinds of areas. The challenge is that treating ridgelines on steep terrain typically needs to be done manually and removing wood from steep terrain is difficult.
- In Salida, a contractor from Oregon is using a forwarder vehicle to masticate and cut trees and cable it down from ridges on steep hillsides as part of a USFS project. The forwarder is effective on slopes of up to 80%. Relatedly, Ben Gannon of CFRI is working on modeling the costs of treating steep slopes in critical watersheds. Gannon and the WWPG's Brad Piehl are working on modeling the return-on-investment (ROI) of treatments in different watersheds based on slope, erosion, and the cost of eroded materials going into streams and water sources. These modeling efforts have different levels of support based on different perceptions of the assumptions that went into them.
- Wildfires can devastate water supply systems. Water providers are willing to spend a lot of money to conduct treatments that protect critical water resources during a fire.
- The WWPG is also working on developing relationships with a wider array of organizations. The WWPG split from the FRRT because the WWPG was interested in working beyond the FRRT's counties of interest, but the WWPG still considers it important to work with the FRRT. The WWPG is also cooperating with smaller watershed protection groups in Colorado and west-wide organizations like Carpe Diem West and the Healthy Headwaters Alliance. Additionally, the WWPG is helping smaller water districts by funding water diversions in their areas of operation.

Group Discussion

The FHAC discussed the WWPG's activities.

- A group member noted that while Front Range water providers can afford to fund extensive restoration work, the Western Slope does not have the population necessary to fund restoration work on the same scale. The Colorado River District and the Southwestern Water Conservancy District represent many of western Colorado's water interests. The WWPG should reach out to those groups about the possibility of collaborating on similar watershed protection work in the western part of the state.
- The WWPG responded that it is currently engaged in work on the Western Slope. Denver Water is doing mitigation work around Dillon Reservoir and Colorado Springs Utilities is treating the area around Blue Mesa Reservoir. Aurora Water is considering the reservoirs in upper Eagle County and eastern Pitkin County for mitigation work. The 2-3-2 Forest Partnership, San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership, and the Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest Collaborative (DWARF) have all joined WWPG meetings by phone. The WWPG is making its quarterly meetings accessible by phone so that interested organizations from around the state can take part. The WWPG plans to hold its meetings in major cities and conduct outreach meetings in less populous parts of the state. However, the WWPG needs more money to work in small towns and on the Western Slope and to support coordination and facilitation of meetings. Colorado cannot rely on Front Range water providers to do all of the outreach work on the Western Slope.
- DWARF is using support from collaborative groups and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to piece resources together for treatments on the Western Slope. DWARF

needs help targeting its treatments and obtaining public support to conduct treatments at high altitudes. The WWPG is happy to discuss this with DWARF, although the WWPG has not done many treatments at high elevations yet. That said, the WWPG has learned lessons from the Buffalo Fire and wants to share the benefits of these lessons with the whole state. basin roundtables (BRTs) are another great place for these discussions. BRTs have diverse representatives and considerable influence. Historically, there have been joint roundtable meetings for the Front Range and Western Slope, but there is now also talk of holding a joint BRT meeting for southern Colorado on both sides of the Divide.

Proposals for Other Actions on Prescribed Fire

FHAC members briefly provided other ideas for action on prescribed fire.

- There needs to be parity between fire and flood disasters in funding mitigation, response, and recovery at the federal level. There is currently much more funding available for floods than there is for fires.
- Fire departments should receive funding to reimburse the costs of travel and training for workers.
- A network of statewide fire groups should share lessons from fire mitigation and suppression.
- Prescribed fire should receive as much funding as firefighting aircrafts.
- The FHAC should collaborate with Fire-Adapted Colorado to create solutions to prescribed fire problems, because both groups have similar concerns.
- The CSFS and the CDFPC should create a “one-stop shop” that provides information on forest planning, implementation, permitting, etc. Creating a seamless application instead of the current patchwork of applications for burning from multiple agencies would help put more acres under treatment. It is currently far too easy to get lost in the bureaucracy of permitting.
- There is the possibility of providing more support to the CDFPC on its prescribed fire efforts. CDFPC staff have sufficient support on weather modeling reform, air curtain burner permitting, and staffing. CDFPC recently received \$3 million from the General Assembly to do more mitigation work, establish year-round staffing, and create four more fire modules around the state. The CDFPC will see how this new funding changes its operations before deciding whether it needs support from the FHAC in the future. However, more money could help the CDFPC with its joint staffing efforts.
- There was a past General Assembly bill that provided support for volunteer fire protection districts. It is possible that bill could be used to leverage more resources for fire modules. Before the bill passed, there were a lot of groups calling themselves "local fire departments" who want to work as "mercenaries" for fire suppression. The bill granted the CDFPC control over a Firefighter Health and Safety Grant. The CDFPC examined fire departments across the state to determine who was eligible to receive the grant and ended up excluding some fire groups from receiving grant funding. The bill could be paired with a 2010 bill covering public-private partnerships to avoid the need to return to the General Assembly to ask for more money for fire-adapted community groups, forest collaboratives, watershed groups, etc.
- The current Colorado revenue forecast expects an extra billion dollars to be available for the next revenue cycle. A lot of this money will go to education and transportation, but some of it should go to Colorado's Water Plan (CWP) so that fire and water districts can work at a high level. CDPHE is interested in linking its Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAP) with the US Geological Survey (USGS) Wildland Fire Decision Support

System, particularly within smaller communities. Extra funding could be used to facilitate that linkage.

WATER AND WATERSHED HEALTH: WHAT THE STATE IS DOING

Amy Moyer, Assistant Director for Water at the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR), provided an update on what Colorado's Water Plan says regarding forest and watershed health, what the state and its partners are currently doing to address these issues, and what the future holds for additional efforts and actions.

- The CWP was completed in 2015 following a directive to the CWCB from the Governor to create a state water plan. The CWP is meant to be a roadmap for the future as Colorado approaches an election and the inauguration of a new governor.
- The CWP has three broad objectives:
 - Maintaining a productive economy (by meeting the needs of recreators, cities, and agriculture)
 - Maintaining efficient and effective water infrastructure
 - Maintaining a strong environment
- The CWP addresses nine more specific concerns:
 - The supply-demand gap in water
 - Conservation
 - Land use
 - Agriculture
 - Storage
 - Watershed health, environment, and recreation
 - Funding
 - Education, outreach, and innovation
 - Additional concerns
- The CWP references watershed health at several points. Chapter 7.1 emphasizes the role that forests play in protecting ecosystem structure and function. The CWP calls for the support of watershed and forest health coalitions and the development of master plans among stakeholders. Chapter 7.2 discusses preparedness for disasters and response. The chapter emphasizes the need to be proactive as fires become more intense over time.
- A 2017 report to the General Assembly from the CSFS and CWCB on forest management discussed the critical nexus between forest health and water supplies. The report identified 24 million acres of forest that impact the state's water supplies. The link is made clear by the fact that Denver Water spent \$28 million responding to the Buffalo and Hayman Fires, minus the costs of suppression and staff time.
- The CWP identifies several action strategies on watershed and forest health. The first is to encourage partnerships around both issues. Working with BRTs is also critical, as is ensuring that forest health is a component of BRTs' basin implementation plans. Funding is a challenging component of these plans because much of it comes from severance tax proceeds, which is a particularly volatile funding stream. CWCB has identified a \$100 million gap in funding for critical water projects beginning in 2020.
- CWCB is in the process of updating the Statewide Water Supply Initiative, which is a huge study on future water supplies gaps and strategies to fill them. Ideally, basin implementation plans will be updated accordingly.
- The State of Colorado and CWCB are taking a number of different steps to support watershed health. The state established the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program (CWRP) in 2008 and provided it with an additional \$5 million in 2017 and \$2 million in 2018 through the annual Projects Bill. The CWRP funds the Water Supply Reserve Fund,

grants tied to the CWP, and related environmental programs. Each of these programs is associated with measurable objectives.

- CWCB has identified 10 CWRP funding buckets that could be used to fund forest health projects:
 - Education, outreach, and stakeholder collaboration to promote and plan for forest health
 - Watershed planning focused on protecting water supplies and ecosystem processes
 - Comprehensive pre-wildfire assessments designed to protect critical water supplies, including environmental, recreational, agricultural, municipal, and industrial water supplies
 - Restoration of decommissioned forest roads
 - Protection or restoration of headwater stream channels addressing geomorphology, biology, and ecology. This protection or restoration may include perennial, ephemeral, and intermittent streams.
 - Woody invasive species removal in riparian areas
 - Wetland protection and restoration, including fens
 - Alluvial fan protection and restoration
 - Channel reconfiguration associated with mine restoration
- The CWRP aims to protect both the water supply for both consumptive and non-consumptive uses. To meet this goal, the CWRP grant program uses four primary criteria when evaluating projects. A project must demonstrate:
 - Commitment to collaborative approaches
 - Commitment to restoring or protecting ecological processes
 - Multi-objective approach with broad support from relevant local, state, and federal agencies
 - Ability to provide match support (in-kind and cash)
- DNR uses its Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program to fund fuels treatments. The grant provides \$1.05 million of severance tax funding to fund fuels treatment and capacity building projects.
- DNR had a previous grant program in 2013, but in 2017 its Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant was combined with the CSFS Forest Restoration Grant Program to create efficiencies in administration and technology. Before the combination, DNR's program provided \$12 million to 132 projects in 30 counties.
- Because severance tax funding has been low, the General Assembly provided \$1 million for the program from the General Fund for 2018 and 2019. It is encouraging that the assembly viewed the program as important enough to do so.
- Possible future State of Colorado/FHAC actions concerning watershed and forest health include:
 - *Leveraging state funding by building locally and regionally based partnerships.* DNR has some money to help with this and could work to develop grants and spread information about opportunities for collaboration.
 - *Encouraging watershed and forest health partnerships by working with BRTs.* DNR or the FHAC could identify where well-functioning forest partnerships exist and what resources they need to move forward. BRTs could also update their basin implementation plans to make forest health a higher priority. Some CWCB grantees have struggled to develop requests for proposals (RFPs) and grant programs because of a lack of capacity. Putting resources together for smaller groups could be beneficial.

- *Encouraging water providers to prioritize critical area of concern and build partnerships for treatment.* The FHAC could identify areas to target for treatment and areas that offer the highest ROI.
- *Helping the FHAC to partner with the WWPG to offer tours and share knowledge.* The two groups could partner a couple of times to help water providers understand when and where it is useful to invest funding in treatments.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC asked several clarifying questions about Moyer's presentation. Questions are indicated in italics with the corresponding responses below in plain text.

Has DNR or the state looked for funding sources beyond severance tax?

The DNR was extremely concerned by the decline in severance tax funds this year. The alternative source of funding was the General Fund. The General Assembly passed a bill to backfill funding for critical staff costs for the DNR in case severance tax revenues decline too much to meet those needs. State leaders are currently examining alternative revenue streams.

Is it correct that the General Assembly has indicated that DNR will have to repay the money taken from the General Fund with money from future severance tax revenues?

Severance tax money is allocated in several "tiers." Tier 1 projects (including those of CWCB) receive most of the money, but Tier 2 covers a number of deserving but partially funded water and forest projects. The bailout bill was structured so that the General Fund will pay for Tier 1 expenses to fund DNR's core functions. If there is more severance tax revenue in the future than what the General Assembly projects, DNR will pay that money back into the General Fund. DNR will not have to repay \$1 million given to the Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant Program.

Group Discussion

The FHAC discussed Moyer's presentation and the state's work on watershed and forest health.

- Water providers should expand their role in funding watershed and forest health projects. The need for water providers' funds has grown with the decline of other revenue streams. For example, the White River National Forest's annual budget has fallen from \$30 million to \$12 million in the last ten years.
- Counties, towns, and fire districts will also have to provide more funding. Summit County has funded code enforcement officers to hike the trails to check on unattended campfires and write tickets for illegal burning. However, important water sources like the Colorado River headwaters are in some of Colorado's smallest and poorest counties. These counties do not have the resources to do large-scale mitigation work, but they have the greatest need for it. These treatments need to go beyond the county level.
- The philanthropic community in Colorado underfunds natural resource work. Colorado's economy depends on the state's natural resources. Forty million people rely on Colorado's water for drinking, agriculture, and non-consumptive uses. The 416 fire is hurting the state economy and tourism, particularly in Durango. It is crucial to convince the public that this has a severe impact on the whole state.
- It would be wonderful if Colorado's next governor could meet with the philanthropic community and hold a roundtable discussion to persuade donors that funding natural resource work in Colorado is funding public safety, people, and water.
- The Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) has prepared a letter to brief the new governor on water issues. The FHAC could do something similar regarding forest health. There is a risk that neither major party candidate knows much about water or forest issues.

- Chapter 9 of the CWP discusses funding needs and options. There is a good chance that the state will create extra funding for watershed and forest health based on the extra revenue projected in the revenue forecast and the awareness created by large fires this summer.
- Colorado needs to find a funding source for watershed and forest health work that is as repeatable and non-political as possible. Funding needs to be allocated on a landscape-scale because small-scale forestry cannot prevent catastrophic wildfires. For treatments to be effective, Colorado needs a funding source that aggregates diverse revenue streams.
- Another challenge facing the state is the lack of markets for timber.
- Environmental groups like The Nature Conservancy (TNC) are working to create public-private partnerships with businesses. TNC is exploring the possibility of creating a common forum to consolidate private, public, and philanthropic water funds based on a similar model used in the Rio Grande watershed of northern New Mexico. The challenge is that water providers are already spending large sums of money on mitigation. The USFS Regional Office and TNC have hired someone to work on this project for the next few years. Other possible solutions to funding problems could be to issue a bond through the Trust for Public Lands or to create a recreation tax.
- BRTs can play a role in spreading the word about the need to prioritize forest health. BRTs are adept at providing policy support and could help to grow the funding pot. Groups like DWARF and the San Juan Headwaters Partnership formed in response to major fires in 2008. There is currently no such group in the Animas watershed (where the 416 fire is burning) but creating such a group provides the chance for different watersheds affected by severe fires to share their challenges and successes in fire mitigation and suppression. The 416 fire has also illustrated the success of the Fire-Adapted Communities program. Houses and lives have been saved in the 416 burn area because outreach and cooperation on fire mitigation have been aggressive in the WUI for years. The FHAC could help educate BRTs on the importance of forest health. Political support would be easier to secure after that.
- The state could ask insurance companies to participate in mitigation. The mitigation that stopped the Buffalo Fire saved insurance companies a lot of money in property damages.
- Governor Hickenlooper created a task force on insurance and wildfires in 2013. However, wildfires still represent a much smaller loss profile for insurance companies than, for example, hail. Insurance companies are beginning to require defensible space mitigation, which is a positive development. There are challenges to working with insurance companies. They cannot fund mitigation through collaboratives because antitrust law prohibits them from sharing how they calculate rates for customers. Antitrust laws are difficult to change, so that is probably not a viable way to fund large-scale treatments.
- Additionally, Colorado has a law stipulating that homeowners do not need homeowner's insurance. However, it is becoming increasingly common to see insurance companies sending their firefighting forces to protect specific houses that paid for more protection.
- Another possibility for addressing funding challenges is conservation investment, wherein people accept lower ROI in return for conservation value. A member of Carpe Diem West's Healthy Headwaters Alliance is examining the possibility of issuing bonds for water projects. Water providers in Colorado do not often issue bonds or take out loans because there is funding easily available from CWCB. That fund needs to be expanded not just for municipalities but for conservation groups, as well.
- FEMA will begin to offset some federal firefighting costs in 2020. This change (added to this year's federal Omnibus Bill) allows the USFS to do more mitigation and fight fires with FEMA money on federal land. FEMA's flood spending greatly outweighs its fire spending.
- The FHAC needs to persuade politicians and the public that spending money on forestry and fire should be a much higher priority than it is now. Forest health is one of many needs on

the state level, the most prominent now being transportation and education. People on the plains (where the bulk of the state's population lives) also benefit from the services of watersheds and forests. So do Kansas and Arizona. The public must be persuaded that forest health might be a higher priority than discretionary projects like schools and roads and sewage plants.

- In Summit County polling, fire and forest health are the current topic priorities for residents. The County is considering providing \$500,000 to partner with federal and state agencies on mitigation work. The County passed a ballot initiative to provide funding for this forest health work. However, statewide funding initiatives do not usually pass. Transportation funding will be on the ballot this fall, and it is difficult to tie that into forest health.
- The Pittman-Robertson Act (which created a tax on hunting goods to be used for conservation) could serve as a model for capturing a portion of the recreation money flowing into Colorado. However, Colorado's Taxpayer Bill of Rights law (TABOR) makes it exceedingly difficult to create new taxes. Watershed and forest health advocates could ask the General Assembly for a share of marijuana tax revenues.
- Many groups (such as rafters) use forest and water resources for little or no cost. Users should contribute to the protection of those resources. A recreation or recreational equipment tax could be effective. Recreational equipment companies could voluntarily contribute money to protect forest and water resources, but that could be difficult to implement.
- CPW is studying ways to raise revenue from nontraditional users using a variety of possible funding mechanisms. The ideas detailed in that study could be broadly applicable to funding forest and watershed health projects.
- If the FHAC is going to ask people and organizations for funding, it needs to have a clear idea of who will spend the money and how projects would grow. The FHAC will also need to be explicit about which agencies will administer any money raised. The CSFS or DNR could administer the money. The CSFS could use its regional offices to provide funding for treatments in poorer and smaller counties. Alternatively, additional funding could funnel into existing forest-related grants under the CWP. Fundraising will require the FHAC to develop its public narrative about forest health further. The first step could be developing a supplemental publication on the technical aspects of forest health and how fundamental it is to the economic health of the state. The population on the Front Range also needs to be convinced of the link between healthy water supplies and the health of forests.
- Encouragingly, water leaders at the recent joint Front Range BRT meeting discussed forests and wildfires in the context of water. FHAC members who attended the meeting said that agricultural leaders and water providers seemed to understand that sedimentation from fires can ruin reservoirs and valuable real estate. The FHAC should send representatives to a meeting of each roundtable and present on watershed health and its links with fire mitigation. FHAC members representing water providers can help to inform urban water consumers about the realities of forest health.
- Mark Morgan has prepared a statement detailing the case for the State of Colorado and other funders allocating \$100 million for forest fuels mitigation work. This statement could form the basis for outreach efforts.
- The FHAC could help to create a Colorado Forest Plan as a companion to the CWP.
- The CSFS needs to redo its Forest Action Plan within the next year. The CSFS annual budget is \$13 million. The CSFS could use some additional funding within its existing programs and structures. However, CSFS would almost certainly need to be restructured through the Forest Action Plan or some other means to administer \$100 million in funding properly.

UPDATE ON FOREST HEALTH DISCUSSIONS AT THE COLORADO WATER CONGRESS

Tom Spezze, Senior Director of Western Conservation Operations for the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), and Mike Preston, General Manager of the Dolores Water Conservancy District, provided an update on discussions stemming from their presentation on forest health at last winter's Colorado Water Congress (CWC) Annual Convention.

- The CWC is a powerful political engine in this state. Influential groups like the Colorado Timber Industry Association and Club 20 are active in its proceedings. FHAC member Travis Smith sits on the Board of the CWC and has offered to act as a liaison between the two organizations. The FHAC would frame forest health ideas that intersect with water, and the CWC would help with advocacy and political support. The CWC is a great vehicle for moving these ideas forward because it includes a large and diverse group of stakeholders who may not know that they have a stake in forest health but who could throw their weight behind the FHAC's efforts once they did. Additionally, state legislators are accustomed to working with and through the CWC, and their staff members (and those of US Senators and members of Congress) will be present.
- The CWC's Executive Director, Doug Kemper, has been in touch with FHAC members about these potential linkages. CWC staff are considering forest health issues as part of their strategic planning and will be studying fire and fire mitigation along the Front Range.
- Former Colorado State Senator Ellen Roberts has spoken with FHAC members about an idea based on a success story in California: the California Forest and Watershed Alliance. The Alliance is composed of NWTf, CAL FIRE, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, water interests, farm bureaus, rural counties, forest interests, TNC, etc. The Alliance was formed in 2014 because California had many different watershed health groups, but none had the power to work statewide. Senator Roberts envisions a similar process whereby the FHAC works on generating funding while the CWC advocates for any necessary political actions. The partnership would be particularly beneficial to groups in smaller and poorer watersheds in need of larger partners with clout on the state level. One potential challenge, however, is the increasing reluctance of municipalities to pay high membership fees to the CWC. If the CWC and FHAC become the primary conduits for this work, municipalities do not want to be the primary funders.
- Senator Roberts, Travis Smith, and Tom Spezze are meeting with the Gates Foundation on the subject of forest restoration in the southwest. The meeting is another opportunity to secure funding or political support for forest health projects.
- Peak Facilitation took notes on a recent webinar on forest health issues offered by Roberts. Peak will share these notes and a link to the webinar with the group.
- Disparate watershed organizations should communicate through the BRT system. Mike Preston and Travis Smith have discussed the need to bolster cooperation among water organizations with the General Assembly's Water Resources Review Committee (WRRC). Local, place-based watershed groups meeting within umbrella organizations like the Colorado Watershed Assembly and the Sustaining Colorado's Watersheds Conference are other suitable venues for communication.

WATERSHED HEALTH AND PRESCRIBED FIRE: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The FHAC discussed next steps for the group on ideas mentioned during the meeting and new suggestions for action.

- The FHAC needs to develop a consistent narrative so that group members can spread the same message around the state. The audience for the narrative(s) is the CWC, BRTs, and Roberts' group. Creating a list of themes and chapters to distribute to the general public,

academics, and the press would also be helpful. The narrative should prioritize the importance of watersheds when discussing forests rather than focus on recreation, as forest stakeholders have traditionally done.

- An effective public education campaign is key to setting up any long-term funding discussion. The campaign should start with outreach to BRTs and then move to water providers and the relevant committees of the General Assembly.
- One possible narrative could be the journey of water from “forests to treatment plants.” Some group members said that the FHAC’s preliminary agreements did not sufficiently address water, so those agreements should be modified to reflect the importance of water within forest health. Another group member said that the FHAC should confront people with blunt information about what is at stake concerning fire danger.
- Several key state legislators who have been advocates for forest health will not be returning to their seats next term. The FHAC could offer a “Water Policy 101” for new legislators that provides tangible examples at the beginning of the legislative session next year.
- Actions and communication materials should focus on developing partnerships. The State of Colorado can only provide so much funding. Additionally, the FHAC should only approach the Joint Budget Committee when it has crafted a detailed and consistent message. There are many competing stakeholders seeking funding from the Joint Budget Committee, so the presentation needs to be effective.
- The narrative campaign will need to assume the new legislators and the new governor’s administration have no knowledge of forest health issues. The FHAC should create a simple explanation of what forest health is and why it matters, what the consequences of no action would be, and what an effective response would look like. The narrative should include a focus on the long-term impacts of fires on ecosystems and economies even after they have been extinguished. The FHAC will focus on raising general awareness and then leverage that awareness in seeking funding.
- The group will collect images and videos from recent fires for use in a short film. The group could present the film at the Colorado Mountain Film Festival. Ryan Ludlow of Natural Focus Digital and Bruce Ward of Choose Outdoors were suggested as possible partners for making such a film.
- FHAC members will consult their organizations’ public information officers (PIOs) about proposed narrative and marketing materials. Carpe Diem West’s PIO may also be interested in working on this kind of project. Next, the FHAC will focus on political engagement. An FHAC representative should meet with the General Assembly’s Joint Budget Committee and discuss wildfire risks to drive home the need for more funding.
- The FHAC could spend the next couple months developing communications materials, send speakers out across the state to spread the message in the fall, and then prepare the “Water Policy 101” session for new legislators with Moyer.
- The WMRC meets on July 10, August 21, and October 2. Members of the Committee have easier access to the Joint Budget Committee, so presenting to the WMRC is the logical place to begin engaging with the legislature. The FHAC should also present on the nexus between forest health and water to the WMRC.
- The FHAC will develop legislation to try to secure a portion of the surplus revenue project for the next fiscal year.
- Mike Lester and another yet-to-be-named FHAC member will attend the WMRC Committee meeting on July 10 to outline the basics of the forest health problems posed by wildfires. Group members will write a document detailing forest health problems and potential solutions this summer. The group will discuss this document at its September meeting. The CSFS Legislative Policy Liaison, Carolyn Aspelin, will work to get State Forester Mike Lester

and other FHAC representatives some time on the agenda for the WMRC's October meeting so that they can make specific requests for legislation.

- Another component of the FHAC's narrative outreach efforts could be for some group members to attend the CWC's summer meeting (from Wednesday, August 22, to Friday, August 24, in Vail) and potentially participate in planned panels on forest health at the meeting. Most of the members of the WRRRC will be at the meeting, so this would be an opportunity to get the FHAC's message to them before formally appearing at the State Capitol.
- The FHAC will try to bring Marilyn Gally, Senior Advisor with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs' Resilience and Recovery Office, to speak to the legislative committees about the importance of planning for fire resiliency. The legislature does not typically hear about the long-term costs of wildfires. For example, the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire's long-term cost-per-acre for recovery is \$41,000.

FOLLOW-UP ON ACTION ITEMS FROM THE LAST FHAC MEETING

The group discussed action items identified at the last FHAC meeting.

- Neilie Goodwin provided an update on the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) that Heather Bergman shared with the group.
- Carolyn Aspelin is researching the legislative framework around the SHPO.
- Colorado State Representative Jeni Arndt, Lyle Laverty, Jason Lawhon, and Mark Morgan met with the Legislative Council and CSU President Tony Franks. The FHAC members and Franks agreed that the CSFS could prepare a bill that reinstates governmental immunity for pile burning (and, potentially, broadcast burning). They decided to wait until the next administration enters government to propose the bill, which should have bipartisan support.
- Since the Omnibus Bill passed, proposed reforms to the Equal Access to Justice Act have lost momentum. The act provides reimbursement to people who litigate against the government. However, the Open Access to the Equal Access to Justice Act passed the House of Representatives that aims to collect data on how much money is paid out under the act and to whom.
- Carolyn Aspelin completed revisions to the preliminary agreement document.
- The FHAC will discuss the letter in support of forest science in September.

NEXT STEPS

- Dan Gibbs and Peak Facilitation will coordinate to find a venue and time for the next FHAC meeting, to be held in September in Summit County. Gibbs and Peak will try to set up a tour of the Buffalo Fire site (and a barbecue!) for the night before the meeting.
- At the meeting, the FHAC will discuss the progress made by the narratives committee and prepare a specific set of requests to take to the WMRG meeting in October in addition to selecting FHAC representatives to attend that meeting. The FHAC will also discuss Aaron Kimple's landscape approach to management and potential prescribed fire actions.
- Kirk Will will provide an update at the next meeting on the CDFPC's efforts to expand its Certified Burner program to include HOAs in WUI neighborhoods.
- Peak will create an internal website for the group to post images, share documents, etc.