

Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC)
March 20, 2019, 9:30 AM – 3:30 PM
Summit County Commons, Frisco, CO
Meeting Summary

Attendance: Carolyn Aspelin, Norm Birtcher, J. Paul Brown, Phil Daniels, Joe Duda, Carol Ekarius, Scott Jones, Aaron Kimple, Jason Lawhon, Mike Lester, Paige Lewis, Steve Lohr, Mike McHugh, Mark Morgan, Brad Piehl, Molly Pitts, John Ring, Travis Smith, Tom Spezze, and Kirk Will

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Dan Myers

ACTION ITEMS

Carolyn Aspelin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research HB-19-1188 requiring greenhouse gas notes on all legislation and how the bill would work to promote forest health. • Provide suggestions of people to fill vacant FHAC seats to the responsible state leaders.
Norm Birtcher	Reach out to the Colorado Motor Carriers Association about working together to promote the accommodation of combo trucks.
Carol Ekarius	Reach out to Mark Morgan and Molly Pitts about starting a timber industry apprenticeship program.
Aaron Kimple	Research examples and possibilities for creating a “Colorado certified wood program.” Contact the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)’s Tim Reader and New Mexico’s Rachel Wood for more information.
FHAC Members	Send Carolyn Aspelin any suggestions of people to fill vacant FHAC seats and notify her if anyone expresses interest in one of the seats.
Jason Lawhon and Mike Lester	Reach out to Heather Bergman about topics, speakers, and information needs for a data and mapping discussion at the next meeting.
Mike Lester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the new CSFS organization chart to Peak Facilitation for distribution to the group. • Start a conversation with Western State Foresters about conducting Forest Industry Analysis (FIA) measurements in the West every five years instead of every ten.
Paige Lewis	Convene a subgroup (Aaron Kimple, Mike McHugh, Mark Morgan, and Molly Pitts) to plan an FHAC-led field trip for legislators highlighting pile-burning restrictions around this summer's interim meetings for the Water Resources Review Committee and the Wildfire Matters Review Committee. Reach out to Peak Facilitation for assistance as needed.
Peak Facilitation	Send out a Doodle poll to schedule the next FHAC meeting.
Kirk Will	Send the Division of Fire Prevention and Control’s prescribed fire templates and policy guides to Peak Facilitation for distribution to the group.

USFS PERCEPTIONS OF INDUSTRY CAPACITY AND OPPORTUNITIES IN COLORADO

Steve Lohr of US Forest Service (USFS) Region 2 briefed the group on the USFS's views on challenges and opportunities surrounding Colorado's timber industry. His comments are summarized below.

- The pine beetle epidemic has substantially changed Colorado's forests and timber industry by killing millions of trees. The USFS has substantially increased its timber programs in Region 2 to remove those dead trees, leading to a 70% increase in timber sales since 2011.
- USFS Region 2 harvested 320 million board-feet of timber in 2018, the most since 1990. One hundred sixty million board-feet of the total were harvested in Colorado.
- With many beetle-kill trees already removed from the landscape, markets have been saturated with dead wood. The rates of decomposition for beetle kill indicate that the major merchantable supply of dead wood timber will be exhausted in two or three years.
- USFS Region 2's limited budget means that it needs to make strategic investments in timber treatment that make the largest positive impact on forests. Examples of such opportunities for strategic investment include the San Juan National Forest, where the USFS wants to increase its timber operations because a large timber purchaser has invested in a ponderosa pine mill there. There may also be opportunities to boost the timber industry on the west end of the White River National Forest, which has reliable access to markets.
- Colorado relies heavily on two mills in Saratoga, Wyoming and Montrose, Colorado. In many of the areas with the highest treatment needs, like the Front Range, there is a significant lack of industry. However, a study conducted by the University of Montana found that the majority of Colorado's saw timber is already being taken to the mills. The larger challenge is that much of the state's trees are smaller, thinner products-other-than-logs (POL). There is limited capacity to process those trees in Colorado.
- The State Legislature could support the USFS by incentivizing the use of small-diameter wood. Other options for increasing the use of that wood include federal grants for timber operation feasibility studies and bonds for timber industry infrastructure.
- The mix and quality of Colorado's forest products also present a challenge. Many of Colorado's trees are thin, on a steep slope, dead, or burnt. 40% of the state's suitable timber base has been impacted by bugs, fire, or other events that limit the quality of the product.
- The USFS is working to improve its data on the size, age, and quality of trees in Colorado. The USFS wants to use Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data to take snapshots of the landscape that can help the industry determine where it can most safely invest.
- Forest products like engineered lumber, oriented strand board, medium-density fiberboard, and cross-laminated timber provide options for using smaller, thinner logs as high-end beams for building interiors. However, few facilities in the US create those products.
- Bioenergy is often discussed as a way to utilize shavings and other refuse from mill operations productively. The State and other partners probably need to provide incentives or subsidies to the industry for bioenergy to be viable in Colorado. Feeding the existing bioenergy plant in Gypsum costs the USFS \$1,000 per acre, which may become unsustainable as the Region's vegetation management budget decreases.
- Regulatory tools will help the USFS meet its timber goals. Region 2 has been authorized to sign 20-year Shared Stewardship contracts with timber companies, which should provide the industry with more certainty about supply (the current contracts last for ten years). The USFS will also work to structure contracts in a way that better allows for market fluctuations. Good Neighbor Agreements (GNAs) have allowed the CSFS to help the USFS keep up with the timber workload on USFS lands.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC members asked several clarifying questions after Lohr's remarks. Questions are indicated in italics.

Has there been any discussion of the industry sharing the risk in the expanded Shared Stewardship contracts with the USFS?

There has been some discussion of sharing those risks. It is a challenge for the federal government to share risk with private enterprise. However, the USFS has offset risk on some projects like the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) and the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership by matching the funding of other partners. The industry will, however, always face risks.

How does Colorado's logging capacity impact the timber industry?

There is a finite number of loggers in the state. The USFS needs to ensure that its timber sales are not located in a way that will pull loggers from other parts of the state where they are needed.

Roughly speaking, how much of Colorado's wood is timber-eligible (as opposed to POL)?

The regional milling capacity is around 350 million board-feet per year. USFS lands are producing 85% of that capacity now, but the biggest fuels treatment needs in Colorado do not align geographically with valuable timber products.

Is it possible to project what sort of timber supply would be needed to sustain the industry and protect communities for the next 30 years?

The USFS needs better data on supply, particularly concerning growth rates that allow observers to determine when stands are suitable for harvest. Groups like the FHAC can help to support the improvement of such data.

Group Discussion

FHAC members discussed Lohr's comments. Their conversation is summarized below.

- The government does not have the money to adequately address forest health problems, and the USFS cannot harvest timber in roadless areas, wilderness areas, etc.
- Some former loggers are returning to the industry, which is boosting Colorado's logging capacity.
- The lack of markets for POL is increasing the cost of timber treatments. While Colorado has one of the best ratios of saw logs to POL of any state, the Front Range and other population centers lack large, marketable trees.
- The USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program currently operates on a ten-year cycle in the Western US, which is too long to account for rapid changes in forest health.
- The motorized recreation community paid crews to cut 12,000 unmarketable trees off trails last year.

ATTRIBUTES OF A SUCCESSFUL TIMBER INDUSTRY

Mark Morgan of Morgan Timber Products presented on the keys to success for the timber industry. His comments are summarized below.

- Social license is critical to industry success. It takes time for companies to build operational capacity and making a timber program a part of the community is crucial to securing buy-in as an operation grows.
- Purchasing harvesting equipment (harvesters, log skidders, feller-bunchers, etc.), can cost a small business \$1-2 million, and most businesses cannot raise that kind of capital in a short timeframe. Most timber businesses run out of money because they do not develop business plans that allow them to withstand repeated setbacks.

- Respectful relationships between contracting agencies and operators are vital. This includes well-designed, feasible project layouts (e.g., operable slopes and contracts long enough to adequately complete work in high-altitude areas).
- Instead of looking for a single, silver-bullet product, the industry needs to produce and market saw logs, fencing poles, firewood, chips, mulch, bedding, etc. It takes time, price stability, and adequate manufacturing capacity to develop markets for those products.
- Morgan provided several examples of his company's successful timber projects, which all featured a landowner or agency with clear plans and achievable goals:
 - A whole tree removal (low-value ponderosa pine) project just outside of Estes Park. The community, county, state agencies, and other stakeholders all bought into the project, which was designed to improve wildfire habitat, reduce fuels, and restore forests among other goals.
 - A salvage project designed to reduce dangerous fuels. Morgan used a harvester and forwarder to pre-sort logs, POL, chips, etc., that were used to create multiple products. Morgan also created road safety units, slash piles, and a lop-and-scatter mat on the landscape.
 - A USFS fuels removal project targeting mid-altitude, low-quality lodgepole pine. Morgan used chipping and grinding to process whole trees into ground mulch. Hauling ground material requires the use of a large and fragile trailer, which serves as an example of the need for quality roads to get ground material out of the forest quickly (it can freeze if it is left to sit out overnight).
 - A ponderosa pine fuels reduction project. Morgan piled and burned blown-down wood and used a feller buncher to cut and pile wood from steep ground.
 - A forest health project at the Shambhala Mountain Center Buddhist retreat. The community prayed for trees that were cut but supported the project's goal of improving the broader ecosystem.
- Timber projects are dependent on a number of factors, including:
 - The politics behind the funding available for agency projects
 - Wildfires
 - Roads and infrastructure
 - Variability in product type and quality
 - The presence of threatened and endangered species
- The timber industry faces challenges in hiring and retaining workers. The riskiness of logging work has led to high worker's compensation rates that threaten the solvency of timber businesses. There is a small pool of qualified workers, so the industry spends a lot of money recruiting and training people.
- Many timber businesses pay for expensive machinery over time, so they need contracts that at least exceed their payment periods to justify the risk they take in purchasing that equipment. If smaller businesses can demonstrate their ability to complete small contracts, they can earn the trust of cautious municipalities who finance their projects with bonds and want evidence of a contractor's ability to complete large projects.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC members asked clarifying questions following Morgan's presentation. Questions are indicated in italics.

How much overlap is there between the markets of different timber companies? Do timber companies support each other in developing markets?

The few timber operators in the state have formed a tight-knit community, but they sometimes compete directly with one another. Members of the Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA)

take the risk of collusion (e.g., coordinating a reduction in bid prices for USFS contracts) seriously and are careful to avoid antitrust issues when working with one another.

Is there a need for additional mapping of forest inventory?

Most operators need to be familiar with the inventory in their area to be successful, but additional information always helps.

What is the main barrier to operating on steeper slopes?

Cable logging on steep ground is difficult. On extremely steep ground, logging requires a chainsaw and high worker's compensation rates. There is a large backlog of forest management work on flat ground, so it may not make sense to invest money in timber projects on steep ground while there is other, cheaper work to be done.

How much does the lack of qualified workers limit the growth of the industry in Colorado?

The lack of qualified workers accounts for up to 70% of the constraints on the industry's growth.

Has the trade war with China hurt the industry by reducing timber exports from Colorado?

Most of Colorado's lumber stays in the US, so the trade war has not affected Colorado's timber industry much. The tariffs on soft lumber from Canada have benefited Colorado. 90% of Morgan's products are used in Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, or Kansas.

Group Discussion

FHAC members discussed Morgan's remarks. Their conversation is summarized below.

- In an attempt to expand the qualified labor pool, Morgan works with Front Range Community College (which offers an associate degree in forestry) to give students hands-on training opportunities.
- There are few qualified applicants for timber jobs who are legal US residents, speak English, have a driver's license, do not smoke, have no felonies, and pass a drug test.
- A law was passed in 2018 that will reimburse agricultural and forestry companies up to 50% of the cost of hiring apprentices. This will help businesses fund the crucial early months of an employee's tenure so that the company does not have to put as many resources into someone who may not stay for long.
- There is a critical need for logging truck drivers. Many timber companies create more product than the existing trucking capacity can haul. The timber industry has lost many experienced drivers to the oil and gas industry in recent years.
- There is a need and an opportunity to cut small diameter trees on steep slopes. Such treatments create valuable fuel breaks that protect reservoirs. Colorado needs to increase the timber industry's capacity to treat on steeper slopes.
- There is not much moderately steep ground in Colorado. Even on the moderately steep ground that does exist, removing and processing timber from those areas using a masticating machine or feller buncher for small-diameter logs becomes prohibitively expensive. That said, it can make sense to complete cable logging projects on steep ground if the timber is large enough, covers enough area, and is close enough to a mill. Spanish-speaking contractors do good work when they have an effective English-speaking liaison. At times, Spanish-speaking crews coming from other forest types in the US may have difficulties with implementing contracts in Colorado's forests.

CHALLENGES IN TRANSPORTING FOREST PRODUCTS IN COLORADO

Norm Birtcher of Montrose Forest Products presented on some of the transportation challenges facing Colorado's timber industry. His comments are summarized below.

- Getting logs to processing facilities in Colorado is expensive. When a timber sale is close to a mill with good roads, transport is around 25% of the total logging cost. If a sale is far from mills, involves heavy loads, and requires the use of roads with weight limits, transport can be up to 60% of the total cost. Reducing transit costs will be critical to the industry's future.
- The difficulty of taking logs through Denver is a major impediment to the industry.
- Plowing through snow, putting on and taking off chains from log trucks and avalanche risks can make it difficult for logging trucks to travel in certain areas in the winter.
- The timber industry takes safety extremely seriously when transporting logs. However, hours of service regulations (which stipulate that drivers can only drive for 11 hours a day and then need 10 hours off-duty before driving again) provide barriers to companies seeking to work outside of the small geographic limits effectively created by those regulations' limits on travel time. Drivers also need to complete electronic logbooks when they're working more than 100 nautical miles from their operational base.
- There are disparate weight limits on Colorado's highways. Interstate highways have 80,000-pound limits for traditional logging trucks. State highways have a base limit of 85,000 pounds that can increase to 97,000 for companies that purchase a \$500 permit from the State. The lower interstate limits create operational barriers for companies seeking to carry up to the 97,000-pound state highway limit. Those limits should be revisited.
- USFS roads have an 85,000-pound limit for logging trucks. Most USFS roads were designed to hold that weight, but those same roads could safely hold 100,000-115,000 pounds without suffering damage when they are frozen solid in the winter.
- The San Juan National Forest is fighting a pine beetle infestation on its west side, so the USFS increased weight limits for loggers on that side of the forest to help the industry remove infected trees more efficiently. Timber companies agreed to add four inches of gravel to those roads to prevent damage from the increased cargo weight and pay surface rock replacement fees to the USFS to compensate it for the improvements and increased use of the roads. Asking the industry to complete road improvements to compensate for increased weight limits could be a model for other parts of the state. Montezuma, Dolores, and Archuleta counties could increase weight limits on county highways to help fight the beetle epidemic.
- Another potential area for reform is regulations on combination logging trucks. Longer semi-trucks can only be used in Colorado along I-25 and on I-70 between the Utah border and Rifle and east of Denver. "Combo" trucks efficiently transport logs. It is not safe to use them everywhere, but they could safely increase logging efficiency in certain areas. Birtcher has not yet identified highways that are suitable for the use of combination trucks.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC members asked clarifying questions following Birtcher's presentation. Questions are indicated in italics.

Is the industry having trouble finding enough qualified truck drivers?

In 2017 and 2018, there was a serious trucker shortage around the country, but the situation has improved. Birtcher's own logging truck fleet has increased from 27 to 44. Competition with other industries, like oil and gas, has a large effect on the available pool of log truckers in the state. New regulations on the oil and gas industry could lead to more drivers entering logging. It is also now legal for 18-year-olds to drive semi-trucks, so that could expand the labor pool.

Could mobile, deployable bridge and road infrastructure help to address some of the road quality problems on USFS lands?

Tent bridges could help.

What is the difference between a normal timber sale, a stewardship sale, and a salvage sale?

In a traditional USFS timber sale, a contracting entity pays the government a set amount to harvest timber from a given area. The arrangement may also require the timber company to make road improvements. Salvage sales are structured similarly, but the timber involved is less valuable. In a stewardship sale, the contractor pays for the value of the timber by doing other work for the contracting agency. Stewardship arrangements also pay for the competition of work by the truckload or acre.

How prominent are salvage sales in Colorado's timber industry?

The bulk of the salvage work on USFS land in Colorado is wrapping up, although there will always be some salvage work to be done in the state. Colorado has maxed out its ability to process salvage wood in its milling capacity, hauling distances, etc. Once the bulk of the deadwood supplies have been exhausted, it will be time for the state to transition to a system that focuses on protecting greenwood stands from threats like beetles and fire.

Group Discussion

FHAC members discussed Birtcher's presentation. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Colorado Motor Carriers Association (CMCA) is working with the CTIA and state legislators to address the combo truck issue.
- Projects producing wood chips face additional transportation challenges because trucks need to use chip bands to haul that material. The bands make it dangerous for trucks to make tight turns.
- Generally, timber companies try to ensure that their drivers do not travel on roads with more than an 8% grade, and they travel only near or at an 8% grade for short stretches. Traffic control barriers and public use of backroads also pose safety challenges for drivers.
- When considering investments in road improvements, the industry and its partners must be cognizant of the value of the timber that the improved roads allow them to access.
- There are concerns about the fairness of requiring timber industry trucks to pay for gravel replacement when other types of vehicles who use USFS roads far more often are not also required to do so.
- Roadwork is one of the USFS's most underfunded activities. It is easier to gain support for the use of temporary roads on USFS lands than it is for permanent roads.
- It will be critical for the industry to build its capacity to address forest health threats on private lands. Environmental impact bonds may be a way to fund that work, potentially by increasing bioenergy capacity.
- Treatments on private land often involve the creation of slash piles, because doing so can be up to \$1,000 cheaper per acre than hauling out the material. For Colorado to burn through those piles at an adequate rate, there needs to be a political change that eases pile burning restrictions.
- The CSFS and USFS are working on using new and existing data to identify communities facing high wildfire risks. Shared Stewardship and GNAs will help the agencies to maximize their limited resources to protect communities and counties that are receptive the idea of forest treatments in their areas.

THE ROLE OF THE FHAC IN ADDRESSING INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

FHAC members discussed ideas for how the group could address the challenges facing the timber industry. Their comments are summarized below and do not reflect consensus among FHAC members.

- The FHAC could take a stand against new wilderness areas on USFS lands, particularly when wilderness expansion proposals remove suitable timber ground from previous Forest Plans. A bill recently introduced in the US House of Representatives placed limits on 8,000 acres of suitable ground in Colorado, which jeopardizes mills that have made investments based on past Forest Plans.
- The FHAC could support shortening the FIA data collection cycle from ten years to five years in Colorado, which could help the USFS and its partners identify areas suitable for strategic investment in timber industry capacity.
- The FHAC should redouble its advocacy efforts with the legislature's Wildfire Matters Review Committee and Water Resources Review Committee by returning to those committees with improved messaging.
- The FHAC could work with legislative committees and Colorado's congressional delegation to address road weight limit issues. The federal government could replicate Colorado's system of selling permits for increased weight limits.
- The FHAC could work to promote the use of Colorado-grown wood in the state, potentially through a certification program.
- The recent uptick in the use of cross-laminated timber products (which incorporate smaller diameter logs like those found in much of Colorado) could provide a new market for the timber industry. The FHAC could recognize or award buildings using cross-laminated timber.
- Local utilities are considering creating small, three-to-five megawatt biomass plants to productively use wood chips and other material from treatments on private lands. The plants would create jobs in rural areas and could help fill renewable energy gaps in the use of wind and solar. There are efforts to promote the creation of these plants happening in the state legislature.
- Utilities and government may be more likely to pay for bioenergy plants and other fuel mitigation projects if they were credited for the avoided cost of wildfires from completing such treatments.
- The FHAC could create a data partnership with universities, government agencies, and other relevant parties to project the needs of a sustainable, long-term timber supply in Colorado.
- The FHAC could support the creation or funding of a timber industry apprenticeship program.
- Conservation or private forest resilience bonds could fill the gaps in available funding necessary to treat forests at the appropriate pace and scale.
- The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is mapping the entire state using LIDAR and has already finished that work in many counties. The FHAC and its partners could ask for permission to use that data as part of its broader efforts to map out strategic timber industry investments.
- The Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) has developed a wildfire mitigation carbon market protocol that is currently under review by the American Carbon Registry. Carbon markets could serve as a funding source for forest treatments.
- The FHAC could support the creation of a Youth Corps equivalent for the timber industry.
- A bill in the state legislature would require all legislation in Colorado to include calculations of associated greenhouse gas impacts. The FHAC should closely monitor that legislation and its potential effects.

- The FHAC could focus on education and outreach through the production of a messaging video.
- The FHAC should focus on removing barriers to private citizens completing forest treatments rather than relying too heavily on governments to fund that work.

FHAC/CSFS OUTREACH TO LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

FHAC members discussed recent presentations to state legislative committees by group members and partners. Their discussion is summarized below.

- Several FHAC members testified in front of the Wildfire Matters Review Committee and Water Resources Review Committee in support of the provision of limited legal immunity to state government workers implementing prescribed fires for forest treatments. The committees rejected the idea despite previous indications it would be well-received.
- Several of the FHAC members who testified got the impression that, while the committees understood the importance of prescribed fire in addressing forest health challenges, they did not know that state employees did not have a layer of legal protection for prescribed fires implemented on behalf of a state agency.
- Several legislators expressed their firm belief that governmental immunity should only be provided for prescribed fires beyond a certain dollar limit. For example, the government could be required to pay the full assessed value of a destroyed home.
- There is also a belief in the legislature that if the state allows a fire to get out of control, it should pay for it, and that government should have no more immunity than private citizens. The Colorado Certified Burners program provides some immunity for private citizens conducting controlled burns.
- Legislators also had unanswered questions about the number of slash piles in Colorado's forests. FHAC members stated that there is a backlog of more than one million piles.
- Trial lawyers' opposition to government immunity for prescribed fire was a major factor in the committees' rejection of the proposal. Statements of support from the Polis administration on the governmental immunity issue could mitigate some of the trial lawyers' concerns.
- The State Forester recently sent the Governor a letter outlining the forest health challenges facing the state.
- Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director Dan Gibbs has been supportive of forest health efforts in Colorado.
- Many of the state's fire chiefs would like to use prescribed fire in their districts but refrain from doing so because of the lack of governmental immunity.
- There is a great deal of uncertainty in existing legislation about the respective rules for pile burning and broadcast burning. This uncertainty is exacerbated by turnover in the legislature, which increases the amount of time it takes to educate legislators on the issue. There is also some ambiguity and contradiction in the five or six relevant and existing laws and regulations.
- The FHAC should promote the fact that changing governmental immunity is a free way for legislators to help their constituents and Colorado's forest health.

Next Steps for Legislative Efforts

FHAC members discussed next steps for the group in the legislative process. Their conversation is summarized below.

- The legislative session is finished for the year. The FHAC should focus on developing responses to legislators' concerns in preparation for future engagement with committee members. One argument in favor of providing government staff with immunity when

conducting prescribed fires is that it is essential to doing work that will save the state hundreds of millions of dollars in fire suppression costs.

- The FHAC should also stress that it supports placing a practical limit on governmental immunity and that the state should pay for damages in some cases. “Limited liability” should perhaps be written into any eventual bill, rather than “governmental immunity.” Another possible shift in language could be from “governmental immunity” to “wildfire responsibility.” The phrase “governmental immunity” implies that the government would be able to do whatever it wants when implementing prescribed fire, which is not the case: immunity would only be available if conditions laid out in the legislation were met.
- Messaging videos are useful for promoting an organization's work, but they are expensive, and the enthusiasm that they generate diminishes over time. Mark Morgan is compiling footage and photos of pile burning projects and comparisons of land that has been properly managed with land that has not as another communication tool to reach decision-makers.
- FHAC members supported the idea of leading a field trip for legislators to observe the pile burning process and the existing constraints surrounding it. The FHAC could hold the field trip at a location near the site of the Water Resources Review Committee and Wildfire Matters Review Committee's summer interim meetings or a summer Colorado Water Congress meeting so that committee members can attend while they are together.
- One iteration of the field trip could involve Mark Morgan and/or Norm Birtcher leading the legislators on a tour of one of their companies' projects on private property. Legislators seem receptive to the timber industry's support for governmental immunity.
- Paige Lewis will organize a group consisting of Aaron Kimple, Mark Morgan, Mike McHugh, and Molly Pitts in planning the field trip, which will probably take place in advance of the Water Resources Review Committee's August meeting.

FHAC MEMBERSHIP AND PROTOCOLS UPDATES

FHAC members discussed candidates for vacant seats on the FHAC and approved the draft protocols (with pending membership list changes) that the group last discussed in April 2017. State government officials fill FHAC seats, not FHAC members, so all discussed candidates should be considered as suggestions. Discussion of a candidate should not be construed as unanimous FHAC support for that candidate. The discussed candidates and stakeholder groups are listed below by vacant seat (note that there is a vacant seat for a fire chief, but no suggestions were discussed for that role). Group members will send additional suggestions to Carolyn Aspelin.

County Commissioner

- Cindy Dozier (former commissioner), Hinsdale County
- Greg Felt, Chaffee County
- Matt Jones, Boulder County
- Gwen Lachelt, La Plata County
- Max Vezzani, Huerfano County

Insurance Company

- Carole Walker, Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association

Non-Motorized Recreation

- Auden Schendler, Vice President of Sustainability with Aspen Skiing Company
- A State Recreational Trails Committee representative
- A ski industry representative
- A water-based recreation representative
- A mountain biking representative

- An Outdoor Industry Association representative
- A guide outfitter representative
- A Ducks Unlimited or Trout Unlimited representative

Public Utility

- Nadia El Mallakh, Assistant General Counsel for Xcel Energy

Senior-Level Executive Branch Policy Advisor

- The next Assistant Director for Parks, Wildlife, and Lands at the DNR
- Kate Greenberg, Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture
- Amy Moyer, DNR Assistant Director for Water

Tribal Government

- Lena Atencio, Southern Ute Tribe Natural Resources Director
- LaTitia Taylor, Southern Ute Tribe Education Director

CSFS/USFS SHARED RISK ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Mike Lester of the CSFS and Jason Lawhon of the USFS provided an update on their agencies' shared risk assessment efforts and related concerns. Their comments are summarized below.

- The USFS and CSFS are working to deepen their cooperation. The USFS Regional Office, Rocky Mountain Research Station, CSFS, Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, and Governor's office met in November and December 2018 to write a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the Secretary of Agriculture outlining common risks facing Colorado's forests and agreed-upon values to protect in cooperative efforts. The government shutdown and administrative transition have delayed final agreement on the MOU, but discussions are ongoing.
- The Regional Office and CSFS are using data from the Missoula Fire Lab to assess the risk of wildfires to communities, soils, and other values at risk.
- The USFS has awarded a contract to a firm updating the agency's 2013 risk assessment in tandem with the state. The assessment will be a high-level planning tool to inform funding and areas of opportunity for projects.
- The Missoula Fire Lab analyses and the updated risk assessment will produce different outputs that the USFS and CSFS can use to inform decision-making.
- There is a strong need for local collaboratives and partnerships to support the work of the MOU agencies, and past versions of the MOU contains language acknowledging the role of local groups in rolling out and communicating the MOU agencies' work. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other State of Colorado agencies will also be vital to this work.
- The CSFS Forest Action Plan update is not ready yet.
- The reorganization process for the CSFS is mostly complete, but there are key leadership positions that still need to be filled. CSFS leadership is meeting with all CSFS employees to address their concerns with the reorganization process.

COLORADO FOREST AND WATERSHED HEALTH ALLIANCE UPDATE

Travis Smith provided an update on the work of the Colorado Forest and Watershed Health Alliance ("the Alliance"). The update and FHAC members' comments are summarized below.

- Since the last FHAC meeting, the Alliance has prepared its guiding principles document, which was unveiled at a January Colorado Water Congress workshop.
- Alliance representatives are meeting with key officials from the DNR, CWCB, CSFS, USFS Regional Office, and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to share information about the Alliance's purpose and priorities, which include advocating for government

agencies that cannot advocate for themselves. Governmental immunity and agency capacity are two of the major topics the Alliance has discussed.

- The Alliance is considering the funding needs and funding mechanism for its work.
- It would be helpful for Colorado if agencies ranging from the USFS to water providers could capture their risk assessments in one database to create a single map of areas of concern. The Watershed Wildfire Protection Group has developed a useful map of zones of concern along the Front Range. The CSFS' upcoming Forest Action Plan and the risk assessment process could provide a chance to compile the relevant maps to create a statewide resource.
- The FHAC can provide a vital service to the Alliance by providing feedback on what its priorities should be.

NEXT STEPS

- FHAC members revisited ideas for supporting the timber industry. These ideas included:
 - A field trip focused on pile burning for legislators.
 - Shortening the FIA cycle from ten to five years, including by working with the Council of Western State Foresters and the USFS. The CSFS will reach out to the CWCB about the applicability of LIDAR data to forest inventory analysis.
 - Working with the CMCA to address regulations on combination trucks.
 - Working with the USFS to assess weight limits on forest roads.
 - Developing timber industry apprenticeships.
 - Establishing a Colorado certified wood program to incentivize the use of POL.
- FHAC members discussed wilderness area regulations. The issue is a sensitive one, and members opted to focus on areas of agreement instead. FHAC members are free to work on wilderness issues, but not on behalf of the FHAC.
- The FHAC will spend time at the next meeting discussing existing capacity and unmet needs in forest inventory analysis and other data and maps pertinent to forest health decisions.
- The FHAC will also hear a briefing from the field trip subgroup at the next meeting, follow up on action items related to today's timber industry discussion, and revisit membership questions.
- The next FHAC meeting will be in Glenwood Springs in late May or early June.