

**Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC)
June 19, 2019, 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM
Morgridge Commons, Glenwood Springs, CO
Meeting Summary**

ATTENDANCE

FHAC Members: Norm Birtcher, J. Paul Brown, Carol Ekarius, Scott Jones, Aaron Kimple, Lyle Laverty, Mike Lester, Paige Lewis, Chuck Rhoades, Travis Smith, Tom Spezze, and Ben Tisdel

Partners: Joe Duda, Brian Ferebee, Nancy Fishering, Kristin Garrison, Vaughn Jones, Mike McHugh, Amy Moyer, Molly Pitts, John Ring, Mark Shea, Mike Smith, and Kirk Will

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Dan Myers

ACTION ITEMS

Heather Bergman, Mike Lester, and Ben Tisdel	Discuss approaches to road limit issues with Steve Lohr in preparation for the next FHAC meeting.
Heather Bergman and Mike Lester	Meet to discuss future FHAC meeting topics based on the list included at the end of this meeting summary.
Carol Ekarius and Molly Pitts	Report to the group at the next meeting about ideas to improve jobs capacity in the timber industry.
Lyle Laverty, Paige Lewis, and Ben Tisdel	Continue to plan a legislative field trip and consult with the Colorado Forest and Watershed Health Alliance to avoid duplication. Distribute any FHAC-branded outreach materials to group members for review and comments before they are released.
Ben Tisdel	Share the Woodshole Institute’s map of carbon concentrations in Colorado’s forests with Peak Facilitation Group for distribution to the group.
Peak Facilitation Group	Send out a Doodle to schedule the next FHAC meeting.

CONVERSATION WITH THE REGIONAL FORESTER

Brian Ferebee, the Regional Forester for the US Forest Service (USFS) in Region 2, joined the FHAC to discuss the status of the Shared Stewardship agreement between the USFS and the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), as well as the status of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). His comments are summarized below.

Shared Stewardship Agreement and Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative

- The USFS is focused on the challenge posed by the abundance of low-value, small-diameter biomass in Colorado’s forests. The USFS is setting new priorities to increase the pace and scale of forest treatments on the landscape. The USFS and its partners are investing significant funding in forest treatments, but vulnerabilities in communities, recreational assets, and infrastructure persist. In Colorado, the USFS will address these challenges by prioritizing work on some parts of the landscape over others to maximize the impact of its treatments.
- Recently, the Chief of the USFS, leadership from the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), and the Regional Forester met to discuss a large cooperative project called the Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI) focused on protecting values at risk in Colorado. The USFS believes in its work elsewhere in the Region and the country but selected Colorado for its strong track record with collaborative partnerships.

- Additionally, Region 3, the CSFS, and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are working to finalize a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for continuing collaboration, incorporating common values, and addressing shared risks to maintain values at scale in accordance with defined priorities.
- DNR Assistant Director for Water Amy Moyer attended the meeting and emphasized her department's commitment to the Shared Stewardship MOU.
- The RMRI and the Shared Stewardship MOU complement each other. The Region is working to ensure that representatives of different geographical areas and stakeholder groups are involved in efforts to address barriers to treat at a greater pace and scale. At the initial meeting with the NWTF and its partners on May 21, the USFS invited a representative sample of the primary players in addressing forest health challenges. The Region successfully persuaded the Chief of the USFS that Colorado (with its record of collaborative work on the landscape and as the location of headwaters from several major rivers) was the appropriate place for this work.
- Region 2 has a dedicated internal team working exclusively on the RMRI. The team includes financial experts working to leverage conservation financing options, communications staff, and staff liaising with state agencies and the NWTF.
- The Regional Forester estimated that reaching the scale necessary to meaningfully address forest health challenges will require spending \$150-300 million beyond the Region's current budget over the next ten years. That money will be used to add capacity and bring in additional resources to overcome barriers to treating the forest at scale.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC members asked clarifying questions following the Regional Forester's remarks. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by responses in plain text.

The MOU is designed to help the states like Colorado define priorities beyond specific targets (e.g., timber targets) that do not fit well with the priorities of a state. How will that play out for Colorado and Region 2? Will the MOU be specific enough for the USFS and Colorado to set goals beyond fallback targets?

The MOU will not specifically address that dynamic, but it will emphasize values and risks beyond timber targets. Growth will always be a valuable part of the USFS' work, and the Region and its timber industry partners are interested in addressing low-value, low-diameter vegetation on the landscape.

How can groups like the FHAC support the treatment prioritization process, the RMRI, and the MOU?

It is critical for FHAC partners to show up to the next RMRI stakeholder meeting. If the RMRI leads to good work on the ground, more organizations will become interested in joining in on these efforts. The partnership will take an all-lands approach to treatment prioritization, which could include the identification of values at risk on private lands. The USFS will come to prioritization conversations open to working at a variety of locations on the landscape in order to treat at the scale necessary to minimize wildfire risk. The FHAC can also help the partnership obtain social license and raise awareness around the need to treat at scale. FHAC members have longstanding experience with many of the barriers to treating at scale, and they should raise those at partnership meetings. Colorado's forest health stakeholders need to signal to the USFS's Washington Office (WO) and the NWTF that they are serious about doing this work. Additionally, FHAC partners can bring their collective skills (e.g., in marketing) to help the funders navigate bottlenecks.

Are the industry partners necessary to get to scale present in Colorado?

Not yet. Colorado needs more partners, including those from industry, at the table.

How will the USFS address bottlenecks in personnel, contracting, and financial resources in the RMRI?

The USFS is going to add resources and capacity and should be aided by ongoing reforms designed to make the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance process more efficient.

What do the Shared Stewardship partners see as the relationship between the MOU and Colorado's recently passed HB 1261 (which regulates carbon emissions in the state)?

The partners welcome ideas on that subject.

What are the chances of Region 2 receiving the additional \$150 million it needs to reach scale this year?

Reaching scale is about more than money. Until the USFS finds a way to get more timber to market, it cannot solve this problem. Region 2 is asking the USFS for at least \$150 million in additional funding for the ten year period beginning in 2020, but the USFS is not the only partner bringing resources to these efforts. The NWTF, state agencies, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) can all bring money to this work. There are also groups that benefit from, but do not pay for, forest treatments that could be persuaded to contribute to efforts to reach scale once they have seen initial successes created by the early funders.

Group Discussion

FHAC members discussed the Regional Forester's comments. Their conversation is summarized below.

- The motorized recreation community welcomes the USFS's efforts to reach scale and asked the Regional Forester to work with motorized recreation groups to ensure that their activities are minimally disrupted (e.g., by providing routes for motorized recreationists to drive and haul wood outside of active treatment zones).
- County governments often purchase a by-product of paper pulp (much of which comes from outside of Colorado) to protect roads from erosion. Colorado's timber industry could find a new market in county governments for that by-product.
- The timber industry is concerned by the USFS' new emphasis on treatment prioritizations because there are areas of the state that will not be prioritized where a base level of timber work will need to continue to keep timber industries in those areas in business. The Regional Forester acknowledged existing timber industry investments and reiterated the agency's desire to see the industry grow. He also stated that while reaching scale was nonnegotiable, where and how that is accomplished is negotiable.
- Colorado has built out only 25% of its wildland-urban interface (WUI), and another three million people are projected to move to WUI areas in the next 30 years. The more that the WUI becomes built out, the fewer tools the USFS has to treat the forest near those areas and the more expensive that work becomes. This is a major challenge for efforts to reach scale.
- A group member suggested that the FHAC take a holistic view of existing barriers (governmental immunity for prescribed fire, nonattainment regulations, etc.), to treating priority areas. Developing a communications plan will be critical to overcoming identified barriers, securing social license, and bringing outside groups who benefit from forest treatments into the fold. Place-based forest treatment collaboratives can build social acceptance for treatments.
- Federal agencies involved in this work need increased funding and capacity, but so do their non-federal partners. State and federal partners are working to formalize cross-agency collaboration in the MOU and are committed to identifying priority areas regardless of land ownership. A small governance board could be created under the agreement to help with oversight.
- Region 2 is committed to the use of prescribed fire to address small-diameter fuel loads and treatment backlogs and will incorporate prescribed fire in landscape-scale planning.

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

- The CFLRP is a \$54 million national USFS program that funds 23 large-scale forest treatment collaboratives. The program has been successful, but it was intended to be a temporary program to incentivize collaboration and to leverage resources from partners.
- The WO recently decided that it would only invest money specifically appropriated by Congress for CFLRP going forward (the WO had historically contributed an additional \$14 million to the

project). It also decided that it would honor the ten-year commitment it had made to current projects (i.e., 2012 projects will be funded through 2022), which covers 13 of the 23 projects (the other ten were funded in 2010). With that funding allocated, the program has \$7 million to allocate among the ten non-guaranteed projects, which will all either be terminated or extended.

- There are two current funding scenarios for CFLRP: one in which Congress allocates \$40 million and one in which it allocates \$80 million. In either scenario, collaboratives can either apply for a new project or request an extension. For the latter, Regional Offices will review one-page, narrative extension applications and determine whether to support those extensions. If they opt to do so, a Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) committee will be convened to consider the request and make a recommendation on it to the Secretary of Agriculture. The current timeline indicates that nomination requests for new projects and extensions (and FACA committee member nominations) will be issued in July. FACA committee recommendations would be issued by December, and the Secretary would approve or reject extensions in January.
- The WO is developing identical criteria for selecting both new applications and new extensions.
- The Regional Office will keep the FHAC informed of selection criteria, application deadlines, etc.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC members asked clarifying questions following the Regional Forester's remarks. Questions are indicated in italics, followed by responses in plain text.

What will happen to funded projects that are not extended? How will those decisions be made?

Members of the collaboratives in question would determine if their work was finished and, if it was not, what they should do next. There are non-CFLRP ways to pay for important work that the USFS has identified as important. That said, collaboratives will be free to request CFLRP extensions from the RO.

Where will new CFLRP projects be located, and how will they differ from old projects?

The selection criteria will probably align with Shared Stewardship concepts on priority landscapes. The Regional Forester will support new CFLRP projects if they are in priority areas (which have yet to be determined.)

FHAC DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL FORESTER'S REMARKS

After the Regional Forester left the meeting to attend another event, FHAC members and partners discussed his remarks in further detail. Their comments are summarized below.

- The initial RMRI meeting on May 21 featured a small group of funders discussing what they wanted to work on and how. The July 10 meeting will feature a broader array of traditional and non-traditional partners discussing funding options and next steps. RMRI partners are considering creating a steering committee for core participants so that it can involve a broader array of groups (including place-based collaboratives) in the RMRI itself.
- FHAC members emphasized the need to identify novel sources of funding for the work that the Regional Forester described.
- Several group members stated their support for streamlining NEPA while continuing to ensure that projects are completed in an environmentally-responsible way. Similarly, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is streamlining its work by using completed environmental assessments that resulted in a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) rather than duplicating those assessments.
- FHAC members were encouraged to provide individual or shared comments on the proposed NEPA changes by the August 12 deadline.
- Several FHAC members expressed concerns that they had not been consulted on the Shared Stewardship agreement's parameters and the CSFS's reorganization despite the FHAC's role in advising the State Forester. They also stated that the Shared Stewardship agreement could be improved if the process were to be slowed down. The State Forester stated that much of the reorganization had involved human-resources work and that the Shared Stewardship agreement

process had moved too quickly for the CSFS to take the time to consult stakeholders on the particulars of the agreement. The FHAC and other stakeholder groups will be engaged more directly in the future. DNR officials stated that the prioritization work within the MOU had yet to be done, so there is still a valuable opportunity for partners to participate in the process of planning treatments on the ground rather than involving themselves in the symbolic commitment the MOU itself represents.

- Several group members expressed their support for moving the CSFS from the Colorado State University system to DNR, as its mission of completing treatments on the ground would be better aligned.
- Group members requested that future FHAC meetings feature a standing agenda item for the FHAC to advise the State Forester on the goals and outcomes of the MOU.
- Group members stated that social license could be built through trusted place-based forest treatment collaboratives. Colorado has a mosaic of social acceptance and social opposition to forest treatments, so the State and its partners will need to educate local stakeholders on the risk posed by not treating the forest and move to more amenable areas to do work if those stakeholders still oppose treatments. Group members could provide the State Forester with specific advice on achieving social license.
- There are several serious barriers to achieving social license. Recreation groups may be concerned by the closure of certain areas during forest treatments, and some environmentalists are concerned by the ecological effects of removing dead trees from the landscape.
- Messaging around the carbon emissions reductions ultimately accomplished by reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires could help build social license for Region 2's work. The nexus between forest health and watershed health is another potential tie-in for messaging efforts.

Clarifying Questions

FHAC members asked state officials and NWTF representatives several clarifying questions regarding the MOU and the RMRI. Questions are indicated in italics with responses below in plain text.

Are there specific proposals the State Forester is seeking from the FHAC surrounding the MOU?

The FHAC and the Colorado Forest and Watershed Health Alliance (COFWHA) can complement each other in supporting the State's efforts on the MOU. The FHAC can provide technical expertise and advice that COFWHA (which is not affiliated with any government agencies) can use to lobby the General Assembly without creating legal concerns for the CSFS.

What are NWTF's goals within the RMRI?

NWTF is better known in the eastern US than it is in the west, and it wants to build its presence in that part of the country. NWTF has conserved or enhanced 20 million acres of land since its founding, and it wants to build upon that success by working to protect the forest and watershed health that is so critical to westerners.

COFWHA UPDATE

COFWHA members Nancy Fishering, Paige Lewis, Molly Pitts, Mark Shea, and Travis Smith attended the meeting and provided an update on their group's activities. Their comments and those of FHAC members are summarized below.

- COFWHA, the FHAC, and the newly-created Colorado Fire Commission can complement each other's communication and outreach surrounding forest health efforts. Because it is not affiliated with the state government, COFWHA can be an advocate for ideas espoused by the FHAC. This summer, COFWHA and its partners will have an opportunity to engage stakeholders at the Western Slope Roundtable Summit, the Colorado Water Congress's summer convention, and the Statewide Roundtable Summit, among other events. COFWHA members will emphasize the need for social license to achieve the necessary pace and scale of treatment at these events.

- COWFHA members expressed a desire to communicate how crucial it will be to plan forest treatment projects large enough to mitigate the wildfire risk posed by the high volume of biomass on the landscape. Those projects will need to take place on the Western Slope in addition to the Front Range.
- Colorado's Water Plan could provide new funding sources to protect forested watersheds through wildfire risk reduction projects. FHAC members represent several organizations that have spent Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) funding effectively in the past and should communicate that fact to secure more funding for forest health work.
- COFWHA and the FHAC are both leading educational field trips to forest treatments for legislators, and members of both groups emphasized the need to avoid duplication and to complement each other's approaches to those field trips.
- Several FHAC members supported inviting COFWHA members to future FHAC meetings.
- COFWHA members encouraged the FHAC to continue to provide candid advice to the State Forester. The FHAC can keep the CSFS from being too internally focused by providing the perspectives of key Colorado constituencies on CSFS activities.

REVIEW OF MARCH ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS

FHAC members discussed and reviewed action items and related updates from the March meeting. Their comments are summarized below.

Carolyn Aspelin: Research how HB-19-1188 (requiring greenhouse gas notes on all legislation in Colorado) would affect forest health promotion efforts.

- Aspelin was unable to attend this meeting, but she prepared a handout summarizing her findings that will be attached to this meeting summary.
- Other CSFS officials explained that the bill requires the fiscal notes on legislation to include an assessment of whether any bill creates a net increase or net decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, as well as the net effect of related carbon sequestration. The bill applies to the ten-year period after a piece of legislation is passed and provides for 9/10 of a full-time employee at the legislature to track the issue.
- The ten-year assessment period could pose challenges to foresters because although forest harvests provide a net carbon benefit, they create a net increase in carbon emissions in the short-term. The method of harvest and the ultimate use of the wood would also impact the effect of any forest health legislation on carbon emissions. For example, prescribed burning could minimize the emissions associated with a catastrophic wildfire in the long-term, but the bill only considers net changes in emissions in the first ten years after legislation is signed, which would not be sufficient to capture the avoided emissions gained by the prescribed fire in the long-term. There were suggestions that the FHAC could develop a technical document outlining why it is unwise to look at forestry's carbon effects over a period as short as ten years.
- HB-19-1118 could be beneficial to forest health improvement efforts because it links forest treatments to carbon storage.
- The Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) and RenewWest have developed a methodology to capture the avoided emissions from wildfire mitigation work for voluntary carbon markets. The North American Carbon Registry is conducting a peer review of the methodology for potential use on its exchanges. CUSP and RenewWest are also working with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to analyze the carbon emissions benefits of using bioenergy in place of coal and natural gas. They are also advocating for the reforestation of burned areas to capture carbon.
- In 2018, California wrote a Forest Carbon Plan that analyzes the science, goals, implementation, and monitoring of the capacity of the state's forests to store carbon. California's carbon tax also puts hundreds of millions of dollars a year into CalFire's budget for wildfire mitigation work. Colorado could do something similar.

- There were suggestions that finding solutions to transportation barriers to the use of biochar could enable Colorado to productively use beetle kill and dead trees while noting the carbon sequestration benefits of doing so. Carbon sequestration can be touted as just one of the benefits (along with water quality protection, job creation, etc.) of forest health work.
- The group expressed interest in discussing climate and carbon impacts at a future meeting.

Norm Birtcher: Discussions with the Colorado Motor Carriers Association (CMCA) about the accommodation of combo trucks.

- At the March meeting, the FHAC discussed the possibility of advocating for the use of combo trucks for hauling wood outside of the corridors in which they are currently permitted (the full length of I-25 in Colorado and I-70 west of Rifle and east of Denver) as a way to reduce transport costs for the timber industry. Birtcher discussed this idea with the CMCA, but further analysis and discussion indicated that the grades and weather on the proposed expanded routes would be too severe for combo trucks to travel safely.
- Another option could be to work with the USFS to increase weight limits on forest roads, which are the principal transportation obstacles for the industry. Recently, the Regional Office provided the San Juan National Forest with funding to increase the weight limits of its roads from 85,000 pounds to 97,000 pounds (which involves overlaying gravel and upgrading cattle guards in key locations).
- Providing money to counties to improve county roads adjacent to forest roads could be a way to get buy-in from key counties for weight limit increases in strategic locations. Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, and Montezuma counties all recently agreed to increase their weight limits to those being used by the San Juan National Forest.

Carol Ekarius: Starting a timber industry apprenticeship program with Mark Morgan and Molly Pitts.

This item will be discussed at the next FHAC meeting.

Aaron Kimple: Examples and possibilities for creating a Colorado certified wood program

- Kimple was asked to identify groups involved in the certification of specific sources of wood to use as a model for a Colorado-certified wood program that could promote the use of timber from the state. Kimple discovered that Tim Reader of the CSFS is already working on such a program, called CoWood.
- There is a parallel program in New Mexico that tracks wood from harvest to use. The American Tree Farm System and Forest Stewardship Council are also involved in wood certification efforts.
- Kimple suggested that CoWood could be used to create a certification for sustainable homes built with wood from the program. Portland, Oregon has had success with incentivizing the use of Oregon forest products for commercial building. The positive reputation of those products could serve as a model for Colorado to boost its timber industry while improving social license.
- A beetle-kill sales tax exemption that has benefited the utilization of Colorado wood is set to expire soon. FHAC partners could lobby to extend that exemption or work to broaden it to apply to all forest products from the state, which are being outcompeted on cost by producers of cheap wood from elsewhere. However, it would be politically difficult to eliminate an existing source of tax revenue.
- Forest health stakeholders have tried to persuade the legislature to mandate the use of Colorado forest products in state-funded building projects, but they have been unsuccessful so far. There are also early-stage proposals being floated to allow the use of more wood in multistory buildings in Denver, which could increase sales over time.
- Certification programs like CoWood or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative can involve a lot of compliance work for small businesses, but timber industry representatives stated that most businesses would apply for certification as a way of building social license.

- The motorized recreation community would probably oppose any wood purchasing mandates because similar mandates in the past have hurt smaller manufacturers of recreation equipment.
- FHAC members supported combining the carbon storage and wood certification program conversations at a future meeting.

CSFS DATA AND MAPPING: STATUS AND TRAJECTORY

Colorado State Forester Mike Lester presented on his agency's current data and mapping efforts. His comments are summarized below.

- The Shared Stewardship MOU discussions between the CSFS and Region 2 have featured conversations about conducting a joint wildfire risk analysis of Colorado's forests. It is important to note that while some of those risks can be mapped spatially at the landscape scale (e.g., burn probability), others will be too local to incorporate (e.g., a particular ridge).
- The layers presented by the State Forester were drawn from the CSFS's Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (CO-WRAP). CO-WRAP multiplies the burn probability for a given area of the state by a weighted composite of assets at risk (WUI X 36.4 + drinking water assets X 36.4 + forest assets X 18.2 + riparian assets X 9.1) divided by 100. Changing those relative weightings produces very different maps of risk. For example, a map where WUI is the only asset would concentrate risk on the Front Range. The CSFS has opted to make WUI and drinking water assets weightier.
- While the CSFS's current weighting system highlights risk on the Front Range, the far western and southwestern portions of the state also appear as strongly at-risk.
- The CSFS acknowledges the role that the existing timber industry has to play in treating the most at-risk acres in a cost-effective manner. Their ability to do so depends in part on proximity.
- The CSFS and partners from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station, and Colorado State University's Warner College of Natural Resources also used CO-WRAP to produce a map of priority landscapes where the CSFS believes it can make the most difference. The exercise used three equally-weighted map layers: WUI, erosion risk to existing infrastructure, and how far current vegetation is from historical conditions. The partners will continue to refine this analysis, but its initial results show approximately 2-3 million high-risk acres on all three measures where foresters can maximize scarce funding by treating key locations that can help protect water supplies, protect against prevailing winds, etc.

Group Discussion

Group members discussed the State Forester's presentation. Their comments are summarized below.

- The drinking water assets layer of CO-WRAP was drawn from the USFS's national Forests to Faucets dataset. That means that the layer might be missing water used for municipal and domestic purposes (including the 83% of the state's water used for agriculture). A group member encouraged the CSFS to incorporate those water sources within this layer. The CSFS stated that it was working on expanding its water layer beyond drinking water access.
- The mapping exercise does not consider terrain and does not capture all previous treatments, but the CSFS is working on a Colorado Forest Atlas that will show where previous treatments have occurred. The treatments currently incorporated within CO-WRAP primarily took place on private lands. The CSFS hopes to use that layer of previous treatments for planning exercises with place-based collaboratives.
- Group members stated that recent droughts had led to a greater emphasis on using forest treatments to protect water assets.
- Colorado's Water Plan featured an informative map of the overlap between water assets and the risk posed to those assets by wildfire on a basin-to-basin basis. That map could be adjusted to apply to water considerations other than drinking water if other watershed health and quantity indicators were weighted differently.
- A property data firm called CoreLogic could provide information on values at risk from a wildfire insurance perspective. They have data down to the 30-meter level. However, 30-meter level maps

get to the community level, but not to specific parcels of risk. Parcel-level risk assessments exist, but not for the entire state, so it would not be very informative to analyze at that scale for the entire state. A group member stated that past efforts to extend risk analysis to the parcel-level had been opposed by realtors' lobbyists.

- The recreation economy is massive (\$28 billion in consumer spending) and driven by forest health. A layer could be created showing the economic value of forested areas across the state. Even if this was not made into a mapping layer, the MOU partners are working to bring the recreation industry into forest health conversations. Group members stated that it could be challenging to engage with the recreation industry because it features many fragmented user groups. Scott Jones can provide expertise to the FHAC as its motorized recreation representative, and CSFS leadership is working on getting the FHAC's vacant non-motorized seat filled. While the FHAC's recreation representatives have typically focused on users, there were suggestions that staff from the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office could be invited as ex officio members.
- The State Forester confirmed that "fired" data developed by the Missoula Fire Lab was featured in CO-WRAP.
- While some group members stated that they or their partners had had difficulties using CO-WRAP, others stated that TNC had done a separate analysis on wildfire risk that identified largely similar areas as priorities for treatment.
- If forest health stakeholders could develop a set of standards for valuing forest treatments' benefits to water resources similar to those used by the California Water Action Collaborative, they might be able to secure funding for projects from large corporations looking to invest in watershed protection. The Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP) is a strong example of a forest health project that protects water assets through funding from major corporations (PepsiCo, MillerCoors, Wells-Fargo, etc.). Additionally, CO-WRAP could overlap with the stream management planning efforts taking place around the state, which are placing a new emphasis on studying environmental and recreation water needs in equal measure to the traditional focus on municipal and agricultural needs.
- Group members discussed projects (like that at Upper Monument Creek) that went through intensive NEPA planning only for the originally allocated funding to be removed. They suggested creating a map layer of portions of the landscape that have been through NEPA and are only awaiting funding for treatment to begin.
- The CSFS will collaborate with DNR on the development of CO-WRAP layers for wildlife (habitat linkages, migration corridors, etc.) and recreation. Foresters used to focus on the health of individual species as an indicator of the well-being of wildlife, but ecologists have shifted their focus to habitat quality, which often overlaps with fuels issues. Colorado has key values (homes, water assets, wildlife, etc.) that overlap with one another on the landscape and which should be reflected in the CSFS's mapping exercises.

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES – TASK GROUP REPORT

Members of the legislative engagement task force created at the March FHAC meeting (Joe Duda, Aaron Kimple, Paige Lewis, Molly Pitts, and Kirk Will) reported on their activity since that meeting. Their remarks are summarized below.

- The task group agreed that they needed to provide a broad wildfire risk overview (current conditions, available tools, unique advantages of prescribed burning, etc.) to legislators to be most effective. They also agreed to facilitate a legislative proposal to restore governmental immunity for state employees using prescribed fire.
- The task group has identified key decisionmakers to target with outreach efforts, including members of the interim Water Resources Review Committee (WRRRC) and Wildfire Matters Review Committee (WMRC), state agency leaders, leaders in the state legislature, and stakeholder groups.

- The core of the task group's outreach plan consists of prescribed fire-focused field trips for legislators covering burn planning, pre- and post-treatment conditions, etc. Ideally, there will be one field trip on the Front Range and one on the Western Slope. Task group members are working with COFWHA to avoid duplicating the messages on their respective field trips. COFWHA will discuss its own outreach plan at a meeting on June 28.
- Task group members also propose to draft and distribute legislative content and outreach materials, write a "frequently asked questions" document on Colorado's forest health crisis and potential options to resolve it, create case studies of prescribed fire projects, and conduct media outreach around developed legislative concepts.
- The task group acknowledges that state officials and some local officials can serve as subject-matter experts in the legislative outreach process, but not as advocates.

Group Discussion

FHAC members discussed the task group's update. Their conversation is summarized below.

- Group members stated that the FHAC's previous efforts in support of governmental immunity for prescribed fire had fallen short in part because of a lack of understanding among legislators of the State's options on the issue and their implications. It was noted that state employees who have prescribed fire in their job descriptions could not be held liable for prescribed fires, but those whose job descriptions do not include prescribed fire can be held liable.
- The livestock industry supports prescribed fire and could provide stakeholder partners.
- Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, the San Juans, Ouray County, and Aspen were all suggested as field trip sites based on exemplary past or planned prescribed burns.
- Group members emphasized the importance of letting natural fires burn when conditions make it safe to do so. Fire can be a tool in multiple forms. Historically, many county fire marshals (i.e., sheriffs) have been afraid to let fires burn, regardless of conditions. The Colorado Emergency Fire Fund Advisory Committee and the Colorado Fire Commission could use their platforms to encourage tolerance of natural fire when conditions are safe. States like New Jersey and Florida can also serve as models for allowing more natural and prescribed fire on the landscape.
- FHAC members encouraged one another to attend the field trips to show their support for prescribed fire and to answer legislators' questions.
- FHAC members supported the task group's plan and asked the group to pursue next-steps regarding outreach at the Colorado Water Congress's Summer Convention and related events. If the task group develops any documentation on behalf of the FHAC, it will distribute it to FHAC members for review and comments before it is released.

COLORADO FIRE COMMISSION UPDATE

Vaughn Jones and Kirk Will of the DFPC provided an overview of the newly-established Colorado Fire Commission. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Colorado Fire Commission will be legislative (rather than advisory) in nature so that it will have accountability and set deadlines for its work.
- The Commission will discuss all of the State's fire programs (structural fire qualifications, building codes for health facilities, etc.), not just wildland fire.
- Commission members will represent the Department of Public Safety, DFPC, the CSFS, DNR, the Department of Homeland Security Emergency Management, the State Fire Chiefs Association, the State Sheriff, Colorado Professional Fire Fighters, Colorado Municipal League, 911 dispatchers, and volunteer firefighters. The USFS, BLM, and the National Park Service are ex officio members. Geographic diversity is considered as a membership criterion. Would-be members will have to complete an application explaining their motivation and qualifications for serving on the Commission. Appointments will be made later this summer, and the group's first meeting is scheduled for October 9.

- While the Commission was being established, there was some confusion in the legislature about the relationship between the Commission's mission (which mentions wildfire mitigation) and the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. Some legislators wanted to embed the Cohesive Strategy in the legislation establishing the Commission, but fire officials felt that this could be an instance of mission creep and asked those legislators not to take that step.
- FHAC members welcomed Jones and Will to future meetings and asked to keep the lines of communication open with the Colorado Fire Commission.

NEXT STEPS

- Peak Facilitation Group will send out a Doodle poll to schedule the next FHAC meeting in August or September.
- FHAC members identified possible topics for future discussion during the meeting. These topics included:
 - A communication plan or strategy (could be related or unrelated to the RMRI and MOU; could complement COFWHA's engagement efforts, perhaps by targeting place-based collaboratives)
 - Conservation financing
 - A combined conversation on carbon/climate impacts from forest treatments and certification of Colorado forest products
 - General Shared Stewardship considerations and the role of treatment prioritization therein
 - Unintended consequences (of all of the FHAC's areas of interest, but treatment prioritization in particular)
 - Timber industry transportation barriers and road weight limits
 - The CSFS's Forest Action Plan
 - A strategic framework for future FHAC discussions