

Colorado's Citizen and Place-Based Forest Collaboratives

Compiled by the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council

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Blue Knight Group



The Blue Knight Group (BKG) is an entrepreneurial, consulting, non-profit (501(c)3) organization providing many operational services in an effort to be the "Blue Glue" to addressing the residual effects of the Mountain Pine Beetle (MPB) pandemic and Aspen die-off. The BKG has become the "eyes and ears" for several governmental organizations but also acts as an advocate and business consultant for multiple public and private organizations. We are communicating with several organizations in an effort to strategically utilize all available resources and provide a consolidated effort to solve the issues the MPB has created with as little environmental impact as possible. We are looking to the future of our forests and the economical impacts an unhealthy forest can cause.

Through the collaboration of private industry, non-profits, federal, state and local governments the BKG is positioned to assist in the coordination of activities among all parties involved. We also manage the implementation, development, best practices, harvesting, etc to aid in the resolutions identified. The BKG also performs independent analysis regarding knowledge gaps, identify best practices, lessons learned, and ensure the communications within several sectors and jurisdictions while monitoring and managing the general public's awareness, understanding and concerns, private industry issues, and governmental roadblocks and coordination in dealing with MPB related subjects.

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Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP)



Since 1998 the Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) has worked to protect the 2,600-square-mile watershed that reaches from the Continental Divide to Strontia Springs Reservoir, southwest of Denver.

CUSP works with Partners to provide essential services such as project planning, implementation, and monitoring within the watershed. Our commitment to the land and the people it serves is unparalleled. CUSP's crews work tirelessly, whether on-the-ground or in the boardroom, to ensure communication, cooperation and completion of vital programs. Working with volunteers, we plant thousands of trees each year, restore habitat, and improve recreational opportunities. Our crews also remove damaged and diseased trees, and help reduce the threats from wildfire upon our communities. Focus areas: Water resources and quality, Forest health, Fire rehabilitation, Noxious weeds, Stream/River restoration, Erosion and flood control, Environmental education, Riparian corridor enhancement, Sustainable recreation, Local green economies, Volunteer outreach, Community preparedness, Alternative energy, Community involvement, and Mine hazards assessments.

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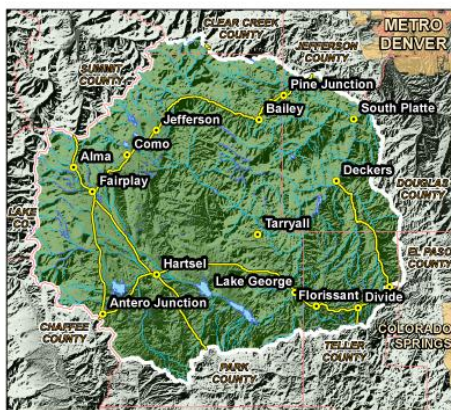
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UPPER SOUTH PLATTE WATERSHED

Coalition for the Upper South Platte Boundary



Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative



The Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative (CBBC) was formed in 2005 as an intergovernmental cooperative between federal and state land management agencies and municipal and county governments to address the impacts of the mountain pine beetle outbreak in Jackson, Routt, Grand, Summit and Eagle Counties. The USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management were the principal federal agencies, the Colorado State Forest Service was the primary state agency, and Northwest Colorado Council of Governments represented municipal and county governments. A steering committee made up of policy level representatives of the various governmental entities guided the cooperative's efforts that were implemented by an implementation team comprised of personnel assigned by the cooperating agencies. The primary focus areas of the CBBC were and remain:

1. Remove administrative barriers that inhibit effective efforts.
2. Formulate, promote, and endorse state and federal legislation and funding to enhance effective efforts.
3. Promote public information and education efforts.
4. Support and promote the involvement of the private sector in addressing the effort.
5. Organize pre-disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness efforts.

In 2007 the CBBC's steering committee directed that the cooperative expand from an intergovernmental cooperative to a broad, multi-stakeholder collaborative. That directive was achieved and the CBBC developed by-laws and articles of incorporation and became an Internal Revenue Service designated 501(c)(3) in 2010. The governance of the CBBC is guided by adopted bylaws, policy level steering committee, implementation team, and the general membership for accountability.

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Forest Health Task Force

Forest Health Task Force

A program of The Greenlands Reserve



The Forest Health Taskforce (FHT) is a program of the Greenlands Reserve, an IRS 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and all

contracts, grants and donations to the FHT pass through the Greenlands Reserve. Based in Dillon, Colorado the FHT was formed in 2006 as a result of the spreading mountain pine beetle outbreak into Summit County. In an effort to inform and educate citizens, the FHT began conducting two informational meetings per month that are open to all who wish to attend. In the ensuing years the FHT has hosted numerous land and resource management specialists and scientists as guest speakers and expanded its information dissemination system to include print and electronic formats. The information network of the FHT has expanded well beyond Summit County into adjacent counties and reaches over 500 people on a consistent basis. Seminars sponsored by the FHT usually attract over fifty persons.

Since its inception the FHT has expanded beyond information collection and dissemination to include on the ground thinning projects, wood utilization studies, the compilation of an electronic Colorado wood products catalog and it is currently forming a Colorado wood products sales and distribution network. In addition, the FHT is working with other groups, including the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative and the Friends of the Dillon Ranger District to organize multi-stakeholder monitoring processes and procedures.

The governance of the FHT is very informal with a small steering group, but all decisions regarding direction and guidance are consensus based within the larger group of participants.

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Front Range Roundtable



Following the severe 2002 Colorado fire season the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service realigned forest budgets within the five state region to provide additional funding to the Front Range forests to accelerate fuels reduction planning and implementation. The Front Range Roundtable (Roundtable) was formed in 2004 to serve as a focal point for diverse stakeholder input into efforts to reduce fire risks and improve forest health through sustained fuels treatment along

the Colorado Front Range.

The Roundtable is a coalition of individuals from state and federal agencies, local governments, environmental and conservation organizations, the academic and scientific communities, and industry and user groups, all with a commitment to forest health and fire risk mitigation along Colorado's Front Range. The Roundtable's focus area encompasses 10 Front Range counties: Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, El Paso, Gilpin, Grand, Jefferson, Larimer, Park and Teller.

The work of the Roundtable is focused on community and watershed protection and the restoration of more ecologically resilient conditions for the future. Our specific activities center on addressing the 1.5 million acres of forest land we've collaboratively identified as in need of treatment and on pursuing additional policy and economic solutions to ensure our goals can be accomplished.

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Lake County Forest Health Task Force

Formed two and a half years ago, the focal area of the Lake County Forest Health Task Force is Lake County, Colorado. Most land in Lake County is federal, and much of the area is roadless. Focus areas include work on Highway 24 (Tennessee Pass) and communicating information about bark beetles and property treatment options.

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Northern Front Range Mountain Pine Beetle Working Group

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group (NFRMPBWG) was formed in 2008 to address the spreading Mountain Pine Bark Beetle outbreak from the Western Slope to the Front Range.

The NFRMPBWG is an intergovernmental cooperative comprised of federal, state, county and municipal governments, including Clear Creek, Jefferson, Gilpin, Boulder, and Larimer Counties.

The NFRMPBWG does not have legally recognized status and cannot enter into contracts or accept grant funding. However, the North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group can request that one of the member governments serve as fiscal agent for the group's activities. The organization is working closely with the Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership Roundtable to utilize the most current information available. One of the primary purposes of the working group is to provide a centralized source for information to the public. The primary focus areas of the North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group are:

- Multi-level governmental interaction.
- Collaboration between the agencies.
- Public outreach through information and education with a unified message.
- Utilization of woody biomass.

The North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group recognizes that woody biomass utilization is one of the primary keys to necessary forest treatments. A vision of the North Front Range Bark Beetle Working Group is the development of the necessary infrastructure to support the utilization of the wood that is cut and removed from Front Range areas.

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Roaring Fork Future Forest Roundtable

The goal of the Future Forest Roundtable is to help the Forest Service set Roaring Fork Valley priorities for next year and many years into the future. USFS and For the Forest invited approximately 30 local environmental non-profit organizations for a series of two roundtables held at the Aspen Institute. The idea is that by reaching out to local valley leaders, the USFS would gain a heightened understanding of our community's values, which in turn would help to inform and guide Forest Service priorities.

The topics discussed at the roundtables included watershed quality, wildfire threats, loss of open space, atmospheric carbon reduction strategies such as biomass and biochar, bark beetle infestation, trail erosion and alignment issues, invasive species, recreation enhancements and other general forest restoration issues.

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Upper San Juan Mixed Conifer Working Group

The Upper San Juan Mixed-Conifer Working Group (Working Group) started in the fall of 2010 and is focusing on the warm and cool mixed-conifer forests in the Pagosa Ranger District, which is a unit of the San Juan Public Lands in Southwest Colorado. The charge to the diverse stakeholder group is to participate in a year-long working group process that includes education, speakers and field trips, along with public meetings, facilitated dialogue and consensus-building. The goal is a shared vision for management of the mixed-conifer forests tied with concrete actions and recommendations. Phase II of the group will look at establishing a monitoring plan.

The group is made up of: ecologists, ranchers, educators, forest-related businesses, fire personnel and EMS, Home Owners' Associations, representatives from federal, state and county government and entities, consultants, conservationists, staff from the Pagosa Ranger District Office (USFS) – and interested citizens.

The specific activities the group is undertaking include:

- sharing and strengthening understanding of appropriate methods of maintaining and increasing health and resiliency in the mixed-conifer landscape;
- broadening knowledge of current conditions, conservation needs, and opportunities;
- developing a set of restoration approaches, actions, and projects;
- initiating and recommending projects that address high priority needs and opportunities for restoration; and
- establishing follow-up monitoring methods to guide adaptive management.

While the group is advisory in nature, the intention is to craft a plan in such a collaborative fashion that it will assist the USFS in their decision-making related to the mixed-conifer forests for years into the future.

This project is funded by a grant from the National Forest Foundation, and in-kind contributions from many organizations and volunteers. The San Juan Resource Conservation and Development Council serves as the fiscal agent.

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Western Colorado Landscape Collaborative

The Western Colorado Landscape Collaborative (WCLC) is a combination of partners and working groups that focus on a variety of public and related private lands issues. The partners to the WCLC Memorandum of Understanding are: Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Western Area Power Administration, Tri-State Generation & Transmission and Uncompahgre/Com, Inc. Working groups that represent these partners and other parties of interest to public lands issues include the Public Lands Partnership (PLP), the Uncompahgre Partnership (UP), and working groups focused on Gunnison Sage Grouse issues.

The primary areas of interest include: coordinated landscape planning for evaluation and implementation of programs to improve land health and restore areas impacted by wildfire; economic development; restoration; a comprehensive native plant program to restore disturbed areas with local ecotypes; a broad based agency and private landowner program to address invasive plant issues; a community-based monitoring program to assess the outcomes of various treatment programs; and other programs that address recreation, wildlife, utility infrastructure, biomass and related land issues. Many of these are the focus of the UP working group.

Uncompahgre/Com, Inc. is a non-profit that is the “operating partner” of the WCLC, providing fiscal, contracting, project planning and management services; contract positions are hired to assist with grant writing, public education and outreach, contracting, and technical coordination.

The Public Lands Partnership was instrumental in the development of the original UP collaborative concept. The PLP is a long standing working group that had its origins in the early 1990’s over concerns about the impacts of planning issues on federal lands. The PLP continues as an active forum that addresses current issues regarding public lands. Their “table of trust” has been very effective in promoting collaboration among diverse groups on often contentious matters.

It is the interest of the partners and working groups of the WCLC to participate in a greater association of Colorado land based collaboratives in an effort to leverage resources and further our common interests.

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