

# MINUTES FROM FRONT RANGE ROUNDTABLE WILDLIFE WORKING TEAM MONTHLY MEETING JANUARY 22, 2013

**Date of meeting:** Tuesday, January 22, 2013, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**Location:** USFS Regional Office, 740 Simms, Golden, Colorado

**Date minutes posted:** February 1, 2013

**Roundtable contact:** Gali Beh, c/o Beh Management Consulting, Inc., 637-B South Broadway, #134, Boulder CO 80302, 303-499-1576, gali@behconsulting.com

**Meeting presentation:**

## ATTENDEES

Rick Truex (US Forest Service), Casey Cooley (Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife), Lynne Deibel (US Forest Service, ARP), Felix Quesada (US Forest Service, PSICC), Hal Gibbs (US Forest Service), Terra Lenihan (Beh Consulting), Gali Beh (Beh Consulting), Janelle Valladares (US Forest Service, PSICC), Jenny Briggs (US Geological Survey).

By phone: Steve Germaine (US Geological Survey)

## AGENDA:

- 1. Introductions** Ice breakers and review of the agenda (Gali).
- 2. Project Outline:** Need to come up with a Mission Statement for the team. Gali suggested each participant come up with a Mission Statement on his/her own then we will synthesize. The team didn't get to the Mission Statement; will revisit at a later meeting.
- 3. Updates:** Gali went over what has been completed on the High Level Work Plan. The team's progress to date (see PowerPoint for chart view):
  - Revising proposed team goals, deliverables, timeframe, scope (RT).
  - Summarizing from CFLR proposal: what restoration is, expected vegetation trends, and wildlife monitoring intentions (HG) posting to website (TL).
  - Schedule calendar for team (GB).
  - Update on checking in with Sara Mayben. She has talked to Glenn Casamassa. USFWS will not be participating on the team, due to workload, priorities and staffing. Sara requested we keep them (USFWS) on the mailing list. We can check in with them on key points for their input. Gali reminded the group that USFWS is still a major funder on the Roundtable so although they are not on this team, they are still a contributor to the group as a whole. Jenny and Janelle checked in with Craig Hansen and Leslie Ellwood but has not heard back. Lynne has also communicated with Craig and Leslie. No feedback yet. Craig has a binder of information he can give us, but nothing electronic. There wasn't a systematic process (in the past) so he's glad the group is doing the wildlife priority list in a systematic way.
  - Casey spoke to their local senior aquatic person (CDPW). He's interested in aquatics being on the list. Felix has not asked Mike and Denny about including fish (they also talked to Doug). They talked about macro-invertebrates or direct monitoring of the water (temperature, etc) as a better indicator. Casey – Doug Krieger (CDPW) was going more toward geomorphology (are pools silted? etc). Doug suggested working through that. Casey – monitoring fish population doesn't show a whole lot from our perspective.

Evaluating soil erosion on treatment sites is better, and then look at the habitat in the stream. Fish guys are more comfortable with saying if the pool is changed then you're impacting fish. So monitor the habitats not the species. Gali will change it on the scope. Jenny and Rick agree we shouldn't include. For aquatic and some terrestrial species we monitor habitat. Hal – it's a different type of monitoring. With fish, we're not doing restoration. Desired condition is to have pools and riffles (?). We're not trying to restore, we're trying to prevent degradation. It's different then when we're talking about trees and some species. Jenny pointed out that Denny Bohan brought that up that point as well.

4. **Species List:** Rick brought up what he's done with the species matrix. Rick worked with the list to develop a database. He came up with broad categories. Includes the three monitoring groups (ecologically informative, politically prudent, social/economically important). The system will be to build a thorough list and then collapse it. Includes the 6 "cookie" affiliation types. Jenny explained the cookies (A = very sparse to F=dense forest). Rick took all of Casey's species and put them (about 97) into the database, including TSN (taxonomic serial numbers). Right now it's categorized by Class. Casey's list was prescreened already and not comprehensive and was put together by other lists. Gali asked if there is a column to cut whether the species is part of lower montane or not. Rick confirmed yes, in Column Y – Habitat Association. Today we can do the easy ones.
- Process: Let's make it comprehensive first. After lunch we will start culling it down. Set up a GoTo Meeting for Steve so he could see the process.
  - Janelle added the fish. Lynne added her amphibians/reptiles. Casey added birds. Steve will fill in. Casey added pollinators. Jenny added mammals. Steve added birds.
  - Felix added invertebrates. List for beetles, butterflies, bees, but there are thousands (?). Rick – per Forest Service manual invertebrates are not wildlife. Suggested we keep Felix's list. In red "in care for wildfire." We can enter at the genus level for now. Jenny has a list of 10 orders of insects/arachnids they trapped from pre and post-treatment stands. Didn't address butterflies or anything not on the ground. Felix – included bark beetle; not sure of the value. All the pollinators are invertebrates. Pollinators are more for ecological. Hudson Emerald Dragonfly. Rocky Mountain Capshell. Rick added Genus names.
  - Gali led the team in starting the culling. Starting point was 300+ species.
  - Rick: Step 2 is the Venn Diagram. Step 1 is culling down if it's in the lower montane. Jenny asked if we decided on elevation. Lynne suggested 7500-12,000 ft, roughly. Gali asked if treatments are going up that high. Hal suggested for lower montane the group uses 5000-9000 ft. Felix said it's higher for Pike NF and will include treatments, approximately to 10,000. Jenny said on the AR just below Peak-Peak Highway it's up to 10,000. Hal thought 7,500 too high to start. So group decided on 6000-10,000 ft.
  - Rick: For distribution/occurrence we think about at scale of CFLR we describe them as
    - a) Core
    - b) Marginal
    - c) Doesn't occur
    - d) Need more information
- Lynne – what about migratory/transient species? Rick suggested doing that later. Team started the process. Gali suggested on the ones that "need more information," original team member take that and that will be homework for next time. Janelle asked if we need to assume the "core" habitat is the species' main home. Casey suggested "core" would include a large range of their home. Casey's looking at Integrated Bird Monitoring (AR and Pike) to decide. He's looking at detections and density numbers. Rick said that

doesn't capture everything (owls, hummingbirds). Casey asked if that would be a proper way to determine "core" v "marginal." Lynne suggested yes, as a first cut. She knows some of these occur on the Arapahoe NF, but wasn't sure about the Pike.

- Hal – I think we need to have a cutthroat trout on there, like the greenback. Casey said most of the greenback was stocked with Colorado River cutthroat. Hal said that presents an issue for USFWS. They want to keep it listed, but if you call it "Colorado," then that presents a taxonomic issue. The taxonomy is confused right now.
- Lynne asked what was our definition of exhaustive? Rick suggested exhaustive includes species we know would occur along the Front Range.
- Hal's referring to the Mammal book. He's narrowing down the mammal list by "4, 5, or 6" (alpine, montane, subalpine and riparian). Rick suggested using geography instead.
- Discussion about species like the wolf and the grizzly bear, that historically are in the lower montane, but not now. Group decided to keep them on list for now.

## 5. Break

6. **Species Matrix:** Now that we have criteria #1 (core, marginal, etc), how do we start culling down the list? How do we decide on the marginal? Lynne suggested that the team has identified enough core species that we will have a good representation to work with, once we go through the criteria: ecological, economical and social/political. Steve asked if we have enough with the core or do we consider others, species that are on a concerned list? Rick suggested we focus on our core species, and in our "report" we discuss why we didn't use the marginal. Gali asked what is our reasoning for doing it that way? We are coming up with one plan that could be used everywhere, not forest by forest. Marginals will be considered "No's" with the option of being able to go back to them. Gali suggested for next steps take cores and go from there, or take the "Need more information" category, and divvy up the spreadsheet from there. Lynne suggested that not everyone needs to do that homework (perhaps not Rick or Hal). Team decided that Lynne, Jenny, Janelle, Felix, Casey, five core members, will divvy up the species in the "Need more information" category" and do homework on those. There are 84 total. Hal mentioned that some are going to be more difficult than others. The geography boundaries may be more difficult to understand.

It was determined that on the Species XLS list, where column O (Occurrence) says "Need info", the responsibilities for making an assessment on the species' occurrence are as follows:

- Lynne: reptiles and amphibians
- Janelle: invertebrates
- Felix: mammals
- Casey: birds
- **All:** If you determine that the occurrence for a species is "core", then please go ahead and rate that species for columns R, S, and T (the criteria we are using for assessing whether to keep a species on the potential monitoring list for now). Remember that 3 = High, 2 = Medium, 1 = Low, and 0 = No (in terms of how well that species meets each criteria). If you have any huge uncertainties in your ratings, go ahead and make a rating, but flag your concerns (use column U – "other" – enter the text "need discussion") and bring your concerns to the next team meeting for team evaluation.

For the birds that have already been evaluated as "Core" but have not yet been evaluated by all 3 criteria, responsibilities for rating each species by the 3 criteria are as follows:

- Jenny: Rate “core” birds beginning with A through L
- Steve: Rate “core” birds beginning with M through Z
- **Note** that some of these “core” birds have been rated for the Ecologically Informative Criteria but not for the Political or Social criteria – please do rate any missing areas.

Rick led the group in starting to look at the core species. There was a lot of discussion about the reasoning behind the filters or categories. There are 37 mammals to begin. The group will put each species through the Venn chart. Going to try a few to see how it goes. Asked Steve for recommendations, as he’s been through a similar process in Arizona. He said there, they also thought about the effects of the thinning treatments to be benign, beneficial or detrimental. He thinks High/Medium/Low/No may be a better rating system. Rick explained that Steve’s suggestion has been considered, but this is the first step, and later we will look at spatial/temporal response, etc. It was brought up that if the other categories are rated this way, then how do we weigh “Politically prudent?” Hal thinks we need to use the same scale, otherwise it will dominate other categories. Steve suggested that if it’s on a federal list it’s ranked 3, if it’s on a state list it’s ranked 2, if it’s an MIS it’s a 1. Rick said ok, but ESA trumps everything. The discussions are really informative. Lynne said when she was on district and had open houses for fuels district, the Abert squirrel is talked about a lot, so that reveals a public/social interest. Hal asked what makes it ecologically important? Rick gave the example that a beaver would be a 3. Lynne said she tried to find all the MIS (Management Indicated Species) lists for the region. Rick said they have it. Felix brought up that a lot of the species are around aspens, and for the Pike NF, the aspens are in pretty bad shape. Jenny asked if we should amend the definition of ecologically important as defined in relation to the CFLR (e.g., so we can give beaver a 2 ranking, not a 3). Rick said let’s whittle it down later.

Discussion about the brown-headed cowbird. Jenny & Steve pointed out that they thrive in disturbed areas. They are ecologically informative (in a negative way) and are driving some species toward extinction. Also bird watching generates millions of dollars in some states. Rick said economically/socially important category is going to be more challenging. Birders for instance go far and wide to see some of these species. Does that make them important? Gali said she think it’s an important category in light of Congress, the media, and what the general public pays attention to. Rick updated the definition of economically/socially important. Hal said it will be easier to know what we know will not make our list, such as species that are NOT here, like wolves. Rick said we can skip to Step 6 and choose what we’re going to (preliminarily) keep. Hal replied that the ecologically informative species will be harder to determine.

There are 131 core species to begin. Rick said bird’s will have a lot of question marks about how ecologically informative they are. Hal suggested the group started at the top and just went through the ecologically informative filter, then we can fill in question marks at the next meeting.

Rick – if the person whose doing the core list decides it’s core, then that person should take the “ecological importance” and give that a rating. Gali asked what about the other ratings, like Economic/Political? Jenny suggested each person make those assignments, and flag those that we need to go over as a group. Fill in the chart for your species. Rick will set up the spreadsheet so we know who assigned the scores. We should put the revised list on the website.

Jenny suggested on the “needs more information” rating, we keep notes of our reasoning, so it’s clear and rationale. Rick pointed out that this spreadsheet is a work in progress. We will do a quality control check later. For group task/collaborative, the thinking is okay. Also reminded the team not to change spelling (if they find a misspelled word), so that Rick can merge back together.

7. **Project High Level Work Plan** – Gali said we don’t need to change the work plan right now. Will be doing research to fill in gaps for our spreadsheet. At the next meeting, we will review new research. Move to next month. We should have everybody’s data before the next meeting, so we’re not merging data into the spreadsheet during the meeting. Data from each member should be sent to Rick by Tuesday of that week, February 19 by end-of-day.
8. **Team Roles and Capacities** – Gali reviewed the Organizational Chart. Summer Grimes will be able to take notes at the upcoming meetings. Lynne said it’s important and valuable to have someone capture the process. She was suggested by Tony Cheng. Terra will hold times on her calendar as a back-up note taker. Hal is pleased that Tony found her. She should be here to see how it goes. Maybe not a long-term solution, as she may not be available over the summer. Rick said there will be more note-taking of importance in the future. Having her here early will be valuable.

Funders – we have been funded by National Forest Foundation and likely will be by Colorado Forest Restoration Institute from March-October 2013. Will add SMEs to this list. Gali asked Janelle and Hal how much time each can contribute to this team each month. Hal can give 1 day/month and Janelle can give 2 days/month. That gives this team about 20 days/month total.

Next meeting is February 21<sup>st</sup> at USFS-RO in the Carghill room.

9. **Next Steps:** Rick will send the MIS lists so we can post on the website.