



MINUTES FROM FRONT RANGE ROUNDTABLE Q2-14 QUARTERLY MEETING

Date of meeting: Friday, April 11, 2014, 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

Location: USGS

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Meeting presentation(s): Available at http://frontrangeroundtable.org/Meeting_Materials.php

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Torsten Lund Snee introduced his master’s survey to the group.
- Megan Davis shared information about the Community Protection Team. Next meeting will be in early May; she will send information out soon. Next meeting will include Brett Wolk who will talk about DNR grants.

- Jim McGannon shared information about the SAF workshop in Colorado Springs April 26-27.
- Sallie Clark announced the National Association of Counties – President’s initiative is Ready and Resilient Counties. May 1-2 in San Francisco – www.NACO.org for more info about their upcoming workshop in early May.
- Shawna Crocker shared information about the Fire and Forest Ecology Institute June 16-20 at the Nature Place in Florissant. Looking for partners, sponsors, etc. Let her know if you’re interested.
- Glenn Casamassa gave kudos to Patty Champ – for her recent Science that You Can Use article about the Northern Colorado Flood 2013.
- Marcia Pfleiderer announced that Erin Connelly will be here as the new director of USFS-PSICC beginning in May.

ABOUT THE ROUNDTABLE

Speaker: Gali Beh, Roundtable Facilitator. Gali presented the About the Roundtable slides (see meeting presentation to view).

PARTNER UPDATES – LOCAL HOST SPOTLIGHT

Speaker - Jenny Briggs and Warren Day (Deputy Director of Science) of the USGS provided a summary of the USGS’s work in the southwest district.

NATIONAL INDICATORS

Jenny Briggs (USGS) and Gali Beh (BMC) briefly explained CFLR funding, and the requirement that collaborative stakeholder group report on the progress against what they are supposed to be achieving. The Roundtable needs to report to Congress every five years, which is this November for our grant. Hal Gibbs and Sara Mayben (USFS) have been leading the reporting. At the August Roundtable meeting, the LR team will tell the Roundtable how we plan to rate ourselves on these indicators. There will be a Monitoring Jam Session to process that. Sallie Clark (El Paso County) mentioned that the President’s budget doesn’t include pre-mitigation money. She asked what type of influence this group can have on this. Gali explained that we have members of the Roundtable that advocate for that type of funding. We also send out CFLR sign-on letters that are circulated and sent to Congress, etc. Sallie said with her new position at NACO she can track that for us. But sometimes they are not aware of different proposals. Hal Gibbs (USFS) said having more experience with a number of collaboratives, those that have elected officials have a bigger voice when they have support from counties. Glenn Casamassa (USFS) warned about the advocacy from state to counties to congressional

delegation, it can be a circular process. Perhaps advocacy should be more the appropriators rather than the authorizers. Jenny Briggs thought the science and monitoring people can do the data part but could use more of the Roundtable people – advocacy, etc. – to help tell the whole story. Chuck Dennis (West Range Reclamation) talked about West Range Reclamation's project on the White River; 30-day test hauled over 330 loads of material to a power plant in 28 days. The plant is going to be viable which is exciting. Jim McGannon asked about where the CFLR treatments are occurring. Hal Gibbs (USFS) said we need to update those maps.

HAL GIBBS RETIREMENT CELEBRATION – FUNNY MEMORIES

Attendees took time to share funny stories about Hal Gibbs, who is retiring from the US Forest Service next month.

REPORT ON UPPER MOUNTAIN CREEK & UPPER FOUNTAIN CREEK WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

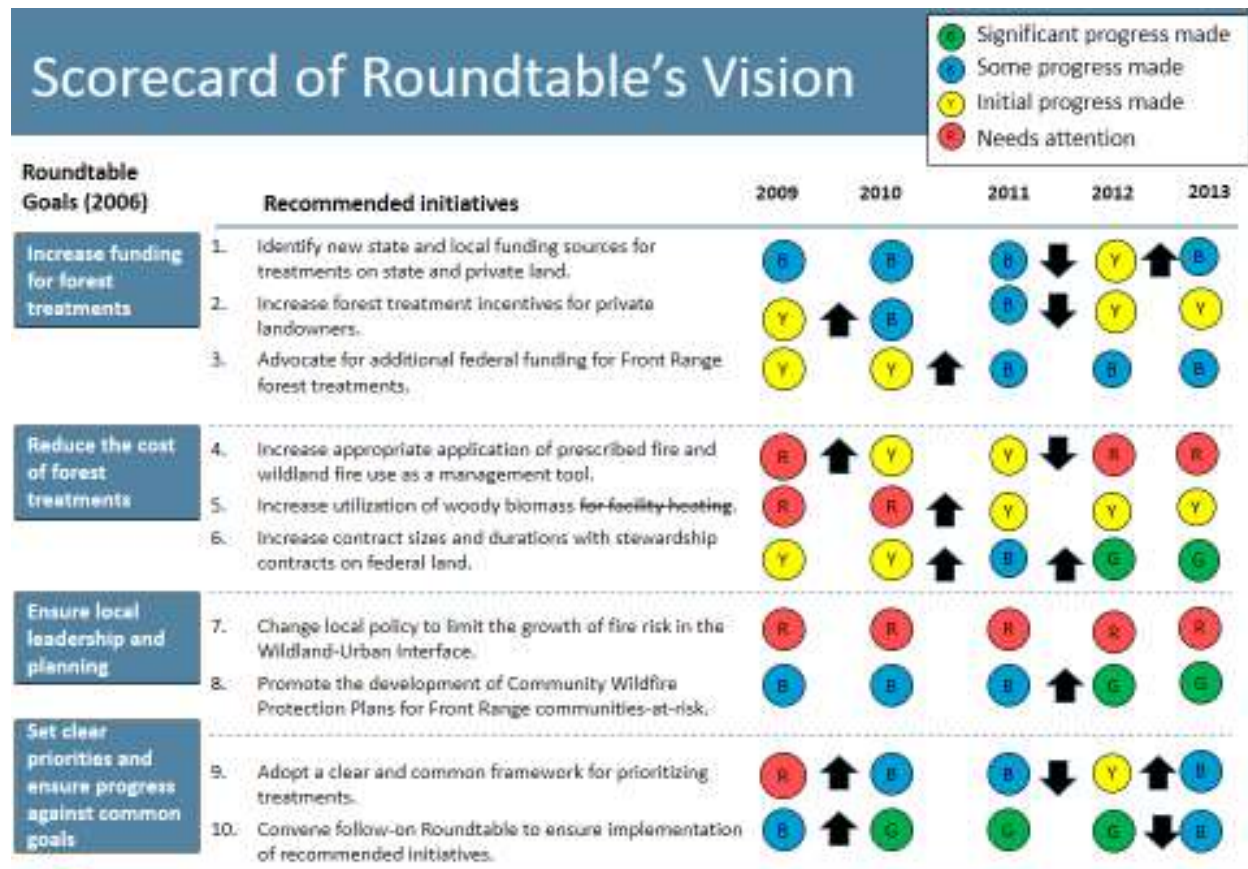
Speaker – Paige Lewis (TNC). Paige discussed and showed a slideshow on the Upper Mountain Creek Restoration Landscape Restoration Initiative. This is an opportunity for the Roundtable to think about a future Forest Service area before it has gone through the formal NEPA process. It was also complimentary to a CFRI project. Sara Mayben (USFS) was interested in having stakeholder work and TNC volunteered to be a convener. Interesting landscape (see overview map). The project is on a 67,000 acre landscape northwest of Colorado Springs. Waldo Canyon fire burned a tip of the land before work could begin. There is a lot of Forest Service land, as well as Air Force and utilities. Several watersheds are within this area and it is important for drinking water and recreation. The landscape was logged heavily in the 1890s. So the landscape is variable; there was replanting done but not all was native. There are two threatened species in this area. There is also bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk, and other indicator species. The UMC Collaborative – includes Casey Cooley (CPW), Greg Aplet (TWS), and Jonathan Bruno (CUSP). Met in five work group sessions. They created a mission and values, with both ecological and social resilience elements. A lot of talk about desired future conditions: heterogeneity, watersheds, ecosystems, etc. Looked at current conditions, which was not always close to desired conditions. There aren't many young forests, or old growth forests. Surface fire mostly absent. Developed a series of recommendations. Includes what, where, and how of the 1 ½ year process. Tools they used included Landscape Conservation Forecasting and Mechanical Feasibility Analysis with the Forest Service. Recommendations include the Forest Service treating 18,000 acres using mechanical, manual and prescribed fires over 7-10 years. Interesting aspect that came out of this was that it showed that you had to use prescribed fire for a project like this to be successful. They also looked at the strategic placement of treatments. Used a Forest Service tool

called the USFS Integrated Fire Risk Assessing Framework. Shows how fire positively or negatively effects different factors on gradient, such as drinking water and the WUI. Looked at risk density on local watersheds, as well as positive effects of fire. Recommended that watersheds with the highest density get treated first. Explained the work that the Design Criteria Working Group did. They worked on a great amount of detail. At end of process, they put together four areas of other management concern which included community coordination, fire protection, wildlife habitat, and climate adaptation. They spent a lot of time talking about adaptive management, monitoring and collaboration. They wanted to make sure this was something the Forest Service could move on with. Current status – they produced their final recommendations to the Forest Service in January. It will go to Erin Connelly. They will develop an EIS (not an EA). They are using iterative NEPA. Incorporating AM into their action, and hoping for final action by 2015. This group is continuing to stay engaged. They will be discussing monitoring and looking for trigger points. Several will participate in the public process (open houses, etc). Keep advocating for the collaborative spirit. Marcus Selig (NFF) asked about continued funding. Paige said there is support there. Glenn Casamassa (USFS) said this is a good template that we can replicate across the landscape. He asked if Paige and the group could summarize that so they could replicate. She thought they probably could. She could produce lessons learned. He also asked about the three different treatment types. She said they analyzed what they could do with just one or two of the treatments, but the benefit was best when all three treatment types were used. There was not much difference financially to use all three. This could be different on the East Coast. Paige said they are trying to set an aggressive timeline with NEPA. Sara Mayben (USFS) has been working with them on this. Jenny Briggs (USGS) asked the pros and cons of burning. Paige talked about the economic cost of prescribed fire – and they looked at all different scenarios – but the tool they used didn't have that capacity. Greg Aplet (TWS) answered Glenn's question and he said this was their first time working on such a collaborative process, but he said we may not know for a long time if it's helping; it will take future monitoring. Greg asked about the iterative NEPA process. Paige said it is an approved adaptation of NEPA, and other places are using it. Glenn added that it's about getting to a refined proposal as things come up. It means you don't have to reset. Hal explained the iterative process. He said part of the purpose of the collaborative is to reduce the likelihood of an entity being unhappy with what's going on. James Schriever (Mason, Bruce & Girard) brought up the wood treatments and asked if it is possible to put up timber sales. Paige said in their economic analysis they looked at that somewhat. This project will be under the Longterm Stewardship Contract. Hal explained if the Forest Service sees an opportunity to sell timber, they will do that.

40 YEAR TREATMENT INITIATIVE

Gali Beh (BMC) explained the Roundtable initiatives and told the present group that they would have a chance to vote on whether or not we made progress on those initiatives in 2013. Gali described the voting process. Megan Davis (Boulder County) explained some of the initiatives, including #7 which hasn't made progress. She pointed out that Boulder County included in DRCOG's vision plan a wildfire risk component saying local governments should include fire risk in their planning. Also in 2013 the Roundtable was a joint convener with the National Fire Foundations and CCI, and put on a seminar about land use planning to talk about planning for wildfire and wildfire mitigation. Also on issue's #7 and 8 the governor's insurance task force has had an impact on that.

Those in the group that wanted to, voted. Gali went over the results. Funding sources had a lot of red. She asked for feedback. Hal voted yellow. He explained why, like when the enthusiasm wanes (progress slows). After so many big fires it's not unusual anymore. Greg added that while there have been some initiatives there has not been a fundamental shift. Here are the results:



Source: Most initiatives were rated by a poll at the September 28, 2009 Quarterly Roundtable meeting of 37 attendees from 24 organizations representing 11 stakeholder groups. Ratings for Initiatives 2, 5, and 6 were increased by one level at the December 2, 2010 Executive Team meeting. Ratings for Initiatives 2, 5, and 6 were raised one level at the March 4, 2011 Roundtable meeting. 2012 assessment made at Q4-Q3 meeting Nov. 30, 2012.

Andrew Perri (Denver Mountain Parks) asked about #5 – why is it just with heating? Should we change that? Mike Lester (CSFS) said don't close any options. Paige mentioned we don't have any broader context to put that in. We don't have any recommendations for that. Mike Lester (CSFS) mentioned we're not talking about bio energy we're talking about biomass. There are some products that are coming out of that. Roundtable to vote on taking out facility heating. Gali asked if we take it up to the Executive Team? Shawna Crocker (CSFS) asked which choice is more measurable. Mike Lester (CSFS) said the data is not strong, but they have identified the biomass utilities around the state. Gali said we used to measure it by how many facilities are using it or opening up? Mike Lester is thinking about what do we do with all the debris? The point is to reduce the biomass on the ground. Paige brought up – what does that mean if we're promoting biomass? Andrew Perri said he would help convene a meeting to talk about interest. The following will join in the meeting Chuck Dennis, Mike Lester, Jim McGannon and Mike Eckhoff. Mike McHugh said we have all this burned area that will be sprouting with new trees. If that's going to be managed, there will be a continued source but it will look different than what burned the first time.

#10 – why yellows? Casey said it wasn't worded well. Gali is asking is it worthwhile to keep moving on this one. Greg said we can't stop on this initiative, or else we lose our legitimacy with CFLR funds. Megan Davis (Boulder County) said it's important for us to keep chipping away. Greg said in the early days of the Roundtable, we were more effective at making progress, reaching decisions, in last few years it's been more all comers gathering to share and inform, but not as much progress being made. Gali said when she first started we formed into four teams, with great deliverables. Budget was high; in 2012 we decided to scale back how much we all did. So she feels like we are more convening and less doing. Our budget is about 1/3 less than in previous years. Paige thought part of that is we have fragmented into subgroups. What's the role of the Roundtable as a bigger group vs some of these regional geographic groups? Marcus Selig (NFF) asked how the CFLR money is implemented. Gali explained we don't implement but we monitor. Greg explained the collaborative implementation part is largely on the shoulders of the LR team now. Jenny Briggs (USGS) wondered if a lot of the big decisions that the Roundtable used to make, have been done, and now they are underway. So it's probably good and necessary that we have broken down into groups. What would the big action items be now? Gali explained those are the 40-year vision, the prescribed fire initiative and the policy initiative. Hal explained it would not be good for us to focus on CFLR because there is so much more landscape than CFLR. Megan thinks the policy initiative idea would be a good one. In order to continue to interject into the dialogue we need to have people available to go speak on behalf of the Roundtable in a well-organized way. Paige did send something around at the last Roundtable about the policy.

TUNNEL HILL FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

Speaker - Reid Armstrong – USFS. Reid explained the project. The project is west of Continental Divide between Winter Park and the Winter Park resort. Determined that 416 acres would benefit from fuels reduction. Name comes from the tunnel through the Moffat Tunnel. There was concern about the public support because of its visibility. Got a lot of support from community leaders, etc.; they didn't want to see piles sit around. Ran lots of press about the project. State's smoke permitting – showed the conditions. Normally they would have permitted at best conditions 250 piles on a best burn day. December 2012 they met with Air Pollution Control Division to work around these constraints; the two agencies agreed to work together. In August 2013, they made Tunnel Hill a pilot project for smoke management. They were offered a “learning permit” for being this pilot project. Press releases started going out about 6 weeks before burning. There was lots of public outreach. Big component was the smoke monitoring component. They put three monitors in town to measure the particulate levels. They also had to minimize the impact of smoke management as a part of the leaning permit. They burned up to five times the piles they would have been able to burn on a traditional permit. Casey asked about the feedback from Fraser and Winter Park. Overall they got resounding support. The public bought into it early. Greg asked Glenn Casamassa (USFS) how they got all those players to the table. He said locally we worked with them to come up with language. Primarily it was Reid's ability to work with the community. Public affairs approach was a really big piece of it. Also smoke monitors – the Forest Service is considering purchasing those for the forest. Worth having real time information. What incentive do the air quality folks have to come to the table? Glenn explained after having come from some of the catastrophic wildfires – the pollution was so bad. They were asking what they could do to change that. Hal Gibbs (USFS) explained – because it was a learning permit there was a lack of data. Now that data gives everyone information. Air quality wanted that data. Don Kennedy (Denver Water) asked about the wood utilization part – why wasn't that being used for biomass, etc? Glenn answered about the slope – where the wood was residing – there was economically no other viable alternative to burning. Reid explained that they are selling piles, but this spot wasn't included. Pat McLaughlin (CDPHE) said they are accepting more proposals for this type of permit. They would highly encourage it be used for broadcast burning. Patty Champ (USFS) asked if the monitoring data is available; Reid said it's on the website. She said this data could be very useful in telling the story about the difference of having a major wildfire event. Hal said there is a report with a lot more data. Jenny asked what the major selling points with the communities were. The Church Park fire and other big fires on the Front Range were fresh in their minds, so they understood the difference – didn't require a big sales pitch. They also talked about the impact to the water infrastructure. Jason Lawhon (TNC) asked about the cumulative effects of the smoke? For this instance they were in a valley

so they had some protection. Plus they are doing it at the best time of year with the best smoke dispersal rates. Chuck asked about the final estimate? \$450,000, so \$11,000/acre.

40 YEAR TREATMENT VISION

Paige Lewis (TNC) introduced this topic. Maybe we can have a bigger conversation of where we can do community treatments. This discussion may lead into making different recommendations. How can we make the number of “1.5 million acres” more effective? Don Kennedy (Denver Water) explained that have that same issue at Denver Water. They have data methodology refinement to focus their money. Jenny brought up that maybe we haven’t spent enough time synthesizing data from some of the big recent fires. Rob said it seems like climate change is a bigger part of the discussion. Gali explained that we also have a desire to add to our completed treatments map that hasn’t been updated since 2009. Paige would like to know if that’s worthwhile and if it’s yes, put a smaller group to propose that.

Speaker - Rich Homann – presented about The Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (COWRAP). He showed how they make their data available to everybody to anyone who wants it. Rich showed the portal. Anyone can sign up for this. He showed how all the maps work. You can look up counties by watershed; fire risk, forest assets area; etc. You can look up by county, or draw a management area and create a report of risk assessment. He explained that COWRAP is only a tool and can be used in conjunction with others. You need to sign up to use it. There’s a public and a professional site. Rich brought reports on the western states risk assessment report. He can get other people that information. They can add layers if someone were to want that, they could talk to Rich and they could come up with a cost of what that would be. Landfire and Fire Occurrence data is where they are getting some of their data. Don Kennedy (Denver Water) asked about having maps available to foresters in the field. Rich explained a new program called SMART. He thinks they will have updates annually.

Questions – should we break open that map and see what further prioritization we can do? Who will do that? Also what would folks like to see happen as part of that process? No one is opposed but Hal has caution: this is not a quick exercise. Reaching consensus the first time was a substantial process. It was a two-year effort the first time. Chuck asked if there are new tools available to help us prioritize that. Rob added that part of the geotechnical report group has a landscape level component they are trying to identify landscape features – hopefully we can use that as a starting point. It would be great to have them implement. People that will help: Caesy, Rob, Paige, Greg, James Schriever, Matt Schulz, Chuck, Mike McHugh. Paige suggested that we ask the whole group as well. It’s not going to be a fast process but it will be great to get it started. Glenn asked what kind of support will we need? GIS - yes. Come up with strategy and they can

see what kind of resources we can add at a later date. Paige to come up with what resources we will need.

BIOMASS I-BOOK FROM THE FOREST SERVICE

Speaker - Mike Eckhoff (USFS) presented the iBook. It's not on iTunes yet but it should be soon. Mike showed the book and the calculator. It will allow people to tour the different biomass facilities across the state. Mike said they would like the book to be comprehensive at a time, but right now it's just Fairplay and CSU Foothills campus. He'd like it to include the other sites (Boulder County, Boulder Jail, etc).

HOUSEKEEPING

Gali led a discussion on Executive Team structure. Proposing having no more open seats. Designating Sallie's seat as a Southern County Commissioner, and adding three additional seats: one for a forest industry representative, one for a fire protection representative, and another for a wildlife representative. Mike McHugh (City of Aurora) mentioned the categories in the footnote 4 are other stakeholder group seats. Terra said if we do add a seat for say fire protection or forest industry that could open up fundraising possibilities. Hal said if we add those seats it has to come with the provision that they need to be a part of the Roundtable. He also thought how big should it be? What would be the rationale if they are not a decision making body? Glenn said it brings different perspectives to how we steer the Roundtable agendas. Gali said it's a smaller intimate place for different stakeholder groups to communicate with the USFS and the CSFS. What if we added one seat that is open to some of these industry groups. Group agreed. They also agreed to make Cindy's seat a designated Southern County Commissioner seat. Glenn said an entity associated with fire community has been discussed, would be valuable. Mike McHugh suggested adding one person per year and this will give you different perspectives.

Gali went over the budget. Costs until now is \$8500.

WRAP UP

After thanking speakers and attendees and reviewing the 2014 calendar, the meeting was adjourned around 3:40 p.m.