

MINUTES FROM FRONT RANGE ROUNDTABLE SCIENCE AND MONITORING TEAM KICK-OFF MEETING



Date of meeting: Thursday, Oct. 27, 2011, 9:30am-12:30 pm

Location: US Fish and Wildlife Service offices, 134 Union Boulevard, Lakewood, 80228

Roundtable contact: Gali Beh, c/o Beh Management Consulting, Inc., 1107 12th St., Boulder CO 80302, 303-499-1576, gali@behconsulting.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for hosting this meeting and providing teleconferencing in cooperation with the US Forest Service.

ATTENDEES

At the Front Range Roundtable Quarterly meeting in West Boulder County, Colorado on October 27, 2011 26 people attended in person, via video conference or by phone. If you attended the meeting but your name is not recorded in the list below, please send an email to Kendall Slee at Kendall@behconsulting.com.

Name	Organization
Gali Beh	Beh Management Consulting, Inc.
Jenny Briggs	US Geological Survey
Peter Brown	Rocky Mountain Tree-Ring Research
Jonathan Bruno	Coalition for the Upper South Platte
Tony Cheng	Colorado State University
Casey Cooley	Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife
Rich Edwards	Colorado State Forest Service
Richard (Dick) Edwards	US Forest Service
Leslie Ellwood	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Jonas Feinstein	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Paula Fornwalt	USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station

Hal Gibbs	US Forest Service, ARP
Craig Hansen	US Fish and Wildlife Service
Laurie Huckaby	USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station
Don Kennedy	Denver Water
Paige Lewis	The Nature Conservancy
Mark Martin	U.S. Forest Service
Sara Mayben	U.S. Forest Service, PSICC
Kathie Mattor	Colorado State University
Ken Morgan	Colorado Division of Wildlife
Pam Motley	West Range Reclamation, LLC
Kawa Ng	U.S. Forest Service
Julie Schaefers	U.S. Forest Service
Kendall Slee	Beh Management Consulting, Inc.
Rocky Smith	Rocky Mountain Wild
Jeff Underhill	US Forest Service, PSICC

MEETING NOTES

Gali: Background on Front Range Roundtable (see presentation material)

Role of working team (if you are interested in joining):

1. Execute on the Roundtable's strategic goals, according to work plans developed jointly by the teams
 2. Present progress updates at Quarterly Roundtable meetings
 3. Attend working team meetings as scheduled, typically two calls per month with some in person meetings as determined by the team
- Meetings typically twice/month (one in person, one phone)
 - Members of working team contribute with content
 - Hoping this team will help Roundtable agree on collaborative adaptive management process (one of executive team's goals)
 - We're here today to figure out what this team will do for next year.

Tony: Colorado Forest Restoration Institute's role in Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) on the Front Range:

1. Scope of work for social-ecological monitoring of CFLRP;
 2. Ecological monitoring scope and schedule of work (handouts posted on Website)
- A fairly large group met from October 2010 through June 2011 for multiparty monitoring project. From that there was agreement developed with Pike and ARP for first expenditure of FY11 funds to implement the plan. These are the scopes of work to implement the plan.
 - Ecological implementation held up by CSU hiring process. Wanted to go out and do post-treatment measurements. Hope to have offers to employees made next week and work starting in January.
 - Five major topic areas (6th being coordination issue, which he hopes to discuss and start to finalize today)
 - What are the desired condition and basis for these conditions? Might be opportunity for this team to look at some areas that have been treated (e.g. on Boulder County open space)
 - Pulling out of work that's been done, what might be desired conditions. Clarify what that basis is for restoration, how we might be able to quantify it better than what's in the plan (e.g. "complex mosaic.") Getting down to the brass tacks.
 - What are the current designations, do they match up, what extent do we need to adapt those? How might we improve the efficiency of the implementation, are there opportunities as operators work within the framework to improve economic efficiencies.
 - Pre and post treatment monitoring. For first set of FY11 treatments, stand exam, CFRI would assemble team to do post treatment monitoring; start accumulating database of pre and post treatment.
 - Landscape monitoring. Has yet to be defined. Topic we are working with Uncompahgre group on.
 - Coordinating all of this monitoring. As Jenny, Paula, Craig and Jonas will talk about, there may be other opportunities to do monitoring.
 - Paige: In our process of figuring out the priorities for this team, how will we figure out engagement in these (CFLR monitoring) items versus what else is on the list of goals (for SM Team)?
 - Gali: for me, it's in number one priority to (participate in CFLR).

- Tony: From lesson on Uncompahgre Plateau that was very important as collaborative discovery moment. Until you get out on the ground and understand what density looks like. Getting out is important. In winter when there's access opportunities on lower montane. Chad Julian offered his crew's time to assist.
- Paula: As far as getting down and counting plants and botany ID, less conducive in winter time.
- Tony: Opportunities for the collaborative on social and economic side as well.
- Multiparty marking experience.

Possible Roles for SM Team involving CFRI and CFLRP monitoring:

- Observe and adapt lessons from Boulder County Open Space treatments
 - Help collect monitoring data
 - Help reconstruct fire histories
 - Help on social/economic monitoring
 - Multiparty marking activity.
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- How do you measure trends, develop concept of landscape monitoring. Can you detect change at the landscape scale?

Social and economic:

- Topics and indicators were identified through multiparty monitoring. Flesh out indicators and define scope of work. We narrowed the topics to four. We thought some were biophysical side (goes hand in hand with pre- and post-treatment monitoring)
- Implementation monitoring: how many acres being treated around the WUI
- Peter: Historic behavior modeling, post treatment
- Co-PSI on joint fire science proposal that's looking at predicting wildfire behavior. Working on one that's more specific (accounts for topography, vegetation density, fluid dynamics)
- Would Roundtable consider writing letter of support for that proposal? He is getting two computers that have processing power of 16 duo core processors. (Mike Battaglia of Rocky Mountain Research Center)

Jeff on Pike-San Isabel:

- Awarded orders on 1,883 acres, three separate projects most in Phantom Creek area. Ran two stand exam contracts. First was sampling that small area. One project in same area was operational before our stand exam contractor got in. A small set of 221 plots sampled post-treatment. Most were pre-treatment.

Data's been loaded into our database, hasn't been analyzed or processed.

- Tier 1 data – Doing the preparation for upcoming task orders. Once we hit next year (this fiscal year) stand exam contracts will be more of a combo of pre-treatment/post treatment. Will go back to Phantom Creek for post-treatment data.
- Acres: some are already operational. We've completed 800 to 1,000 acres in that area.
- Paula and Jenny's crews worked some in that area. Some overlap with the contract stand exam effort.
- Tony: When do you expect to do post-treatment data gathering?
- Jeff: will put together another contract, factoring in weather, spring would be earliest to start collecting some of this data.
- 100 plots in Catamount area. I would say April/May.
- Sara: USFS doesn't have authority to spend CFLR funding because we're under continuing resolution. Hopefully we'll have that authority to issue those contracts.
- Tony: Do you need that for creating volume estimation? Why the choice of CSEs?
- Jeff: We're following standard exam protocols tried to hit the variables the monitoring group is working with. Not same inventory we would run for volume data. We would do a separate effort for that.
- Hal: Thank you Tony for pulling this together. We got funding in June, cutoff for agreements in July. Tony pulled this stuff together in about two days in between travel.
- Stand structure and fire history: Paula, Laurie and Mike came to me to offer help.
- We seemed to have a lack of information for Arapaho and Roosevelt.
- From ARP: we went out and did common stand exam. We have 400-some plots (Dick says in Database) Ready to turn over to CFRI.
- Our intent for next year would be to collect post and pre-common stand exam data.
- Rich: Are you keeping track of cost information?
- We estimate about \$45 a plot if we do it in house. It costs us about \$20,000 to collect the data that we did.
- Paige: Who will be collecting the data in the future? CFRI or USFS?

- Hal: We haven't had that discussion with Tony. Discussion to date is around the data we have already.
- Sara: my interpretation is we'd collect through our crews because that's pretty efficient.
- Jeff: I took it as far as getting it into the database.
- Jeff: Cost figures very similar in PSI to ARP for data collection.

- Hal: scope of work is evolving, not cast in concrete. We've had agreement with CFRI in place and things can change.

Jenny: Briefing on SRLCC pilot project (Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative)

- People were interested in understory plants and other variables on treated forest (comparing to untreated control areas).
- Opportunity to test the monitoring efforts that we've all be discussing.
- Craig has done multi-species monitoring

Three clusters of sites:

- Pike National Forest (2 units)
- Boulder County Parks and Open Space (3 units)
- Arapaho Roosevelt (3 units)

- Some surveys on Pike had been done by USFS contractors (USFS common stand exam). We added more details to that.

- We put in control plots next to the treatment units. Phantom Creek, Estes Valley, Heil Ranch, Hall Ranch. Most slated for treatments.

- CSE plots served as a foundation for treatment areas. Added understory plants, wildlife use, tree age, within stand clumpiness

- We did broadcast survey for goshawks. (Never called one in)

- We counted nests and cavities, anything wildlife related.

- Tony: on socio-economic monitoring-- NFF held a learning group on all CFLR projects, charged with coming up with national set of economic indicators (and social). Individual regional groups to figure out ecological monitoring

Jenny: We went to existing CSE data and collected new data.

- Scat samples, pine squirrel feeding sign.
- "Feinsten clumpiness" transects.
- Measured openings versus clumps. Plot data doesnt really do it, you have to crisscross the stand in multiple ways.

- Additional methodology: Four point intercept transects (tally on abundance of understory species) would record trees, wood, litter, soil, rocks, etc. recorded every single species present within a plot.
- Unknowns being identified in lab.
- Wildlife: number of species present, using areas, squirrel use.
- Will repeat data collection on same 79 plots next year.
- It's important to us to coordinate with the broader CFLR/Roundtable effort.
- Funding permitting: Would like to add plots in other sites, sample plots through time (2, 5, 10 years post-treatment)
- Would like to consider other forest types, land ownerships, coordinate with other CFLR nationwide
- Funding is just for two years. They got about 80 plots done over time. 1 ½ hour per plot.

Gali: SM Team brainstorming session: New ideas not on the list of goals to consider?

- Dick: never got around to how we want to monitor broadcast burns. CSEs (stand exams) don't really address this because you don't know that there's going to be something that will happen on a given spot. We need to plan it differently. Designing in a way that is economical. Putting plots on that large of a landscape can get expensive.
- Paige: Several colleagues working Landscape Conservation Forecasting- Putting together process to identify desired future conditions on a landscape level. Analyze different management scenarios, what are best areas to treat? Doesn't get into prescriptions for individual sites, but helps focus the work to make sure it's having meaningful impact at right scale. We'd be able to say, here's the desired conditions that we want, opportunities for investment. Would help prioritize areas for treatment. Help refine priorities.
- Craig: in USFWS landscape energy action plan. Landscape view regarding energy development and trust resources. Have Science Base, USGS data repository. Need for information sharing on fuels treatment, wildlife related values. Vulnerability assessment for our trust species. Where have we done all these treatments, look at spatially, vulnerability assessment, wildfire hazard areas, wildlife, resources important to us. Part of this assessment landscape view of what has happened, what will happen, replicate what we're doing for energy action plan. Data collection and storage is very important so all collaborators can access simply and easily.
- Paige: This kind of data would help on landscape analysis. As treatments happen, can assess where it's more effective.

- Map that Hal and his group generated.
- Idea is we'll collect the data on where fire histories are.
- Having a central repository for treatment, analysis, future development.

- Pam: By doing prioritization and planning upfront, knowing if this group identifies priority areas and the NEPA's not complete, there'll be a lag time. That will help in collaboration.

- Laurie: I like (ideas 7,8,9) Front Range forest science issues. All involved with using this group as central repository and exchange of information between scientists and managers. We've been working on this for a decade. Clearinghouse where managers can come with questions. We can put them in touch with scientists. Data go in a location where everyone can get to them.

- Peter: seems like there's an analysis step to repository. Repository Exchange Analysis and Learning. (REAL)

- Laurie: concept of adaptive mgt. has been put forth, but who does that hasn't been defined.

- Ken: encourage #3. Eleventh hours at this process. Wildlife important.

- Jenny: want to check with group on their methodology. When grant's involved there's obligation to evaluate data we collected. Evaluate CSE data in partnership.

- Paige: I see these as two categories:
 1. body of work around CFLR and monitoring,
 2. larger Front Range science questions.
- I don't know that we can pick and choose on CFLRP. Then we need to figure out what else around larger Front Range questions.

- Sara: need to continue with CFLR monitoring group. We started with basic plan there's need to add to it and analyze. There's need to answer some bigger broader questions.

- Gali: Not sure all of us can put forth same level of effort. Let's be realistic in what we want to take on. When we identify #1 priority, we don't want to burn people out.
- Boulder County Open Space is in parallel with CFLR, can inform the monitoring process. (extra data on what restoration looks like across the Front Range)

2012 GOALS

(Meeting attendees were asked to vote with a green on their top three priorities for goals; mark red on items they didn't think should be a priority for 2012)

- Join CFRI teams on CFLR monitoring (includes evaluating monitoring data, reviewing Boulder County Open Space treatments to inform monitoring) = 13 green votes, 0 red
- Revise CFLR monitoring plan published in June through CFRI (CFRI hasn't been contracted for revision so Roundtable would take on) = 15 green votes, 0 red
- Tree marking exercise (model treatments) = 4 green votes; 4 red votes
- Study other CFLR groups = one green vote; four red
- Track science; create prioritized research agenda = 8 green votes
- Compile existing GIS layer of fire histories and other scientific data as available (Craig offered to lead, so this will be a goal thanks to his leadership) = 5 green votes; one red
- Landscape conservation forecasting = 12 green votes; 0 red
- Add to and revise glossary of terms = 0 green votes; 16 red
- Ground-truthing Roundtable map = 1 green vote; six red
- Create monitoring map = 6 green votes; 0 red
- Evaluate monitoring data and translate to adaptive management practices = 8 green votes; 0 red (rolled into CFRI-led monitoring process)

Goals selected:

- Partner with CFRI to monitor Front Range CFLR treatments (including evaluating monitoring data to guide adaptive management)
 - Revise CFLR monitoring plan published in June 2011
 - Landscape conservation forecasting: Developing a process to identify desired future conditions on a landscape level. Analyzing different management scenarios, identifying best areas to treat
 - GIS layers- Craig leading, to create a repository of treatment areas, fire histories, vulnerability assessments (as data is available)
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- Gali: Next meeting will develop a workplan for these goals; break into phases. We can divide up into subgroups of working team, if we want. Figure out what deliverables are.
 - Do workplan. Then detailed workplan. Tasks, groups, work schedule.
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- Paige: Different time frames on these goals. Tracking science might not take so much time. Reconsidering landscape priorities may be longer term.
 - Jenny: GIS compiling effort is something one person could do in a systematic way doesn't require group opinions. More quantitative, figuring out who's doing what where, how do we compile into a database. CFRI could have grad assistants working 10 hrs/week in systematic way.

TEAM COMMITMENTS

Gali asked meeting attendees if they want to be part of the working team, and to determine their availability to serve on the SM Team (number of days/month).

The following signed up:

Gali Beh 2 days

Kendall Slee 2 days

Rocky Smith 1-2 days

Ken Morgan 1 day

Jeff Underhill 2 days

Sara Mayben 2 days

Peter Brown 2-3 days

Paige Lewis 2-3 days

Mike Babler 2 days

Dick Edwards (USFS) 3 days

Coalition for the Upper South Platte (Marti Campbell as committed by Jonathan Bruno?) 2-3 days

Leslie Ellwood 2-3 days

Julie Schaeffers 1-2 days (focus on social/economic monitoring)

Casey Cooley 2 days

Paula Fornwalt 2 days

Laurie Huckaby 2 days (less in summer)

Don Kennedy 2 days

Pam Motley 1.5 days

Hal Gibbs 2 days

Craig Hansen 2-3 days

Jonas Feinstein 4 days

Jenny Briggs 3 days

Other Roundtable members are welcome to join. Please contact Kendall Slee (kendall@behconsulting.com) if you are interested.