

Southwestern Crown Collaborative

Meeting Notes

April 12, 2011

(Approved May 17, 2011)

Present: Scott Brennan*, Ashley Grant, Cara Nelson*, Brian Fauver, Keith Stockmann*, Jon Haufler*, Mo Bookwalter*, Tim Love*, Amber Kamps*, Craig Rawlings*, Dale Kerkvliet*, Rich Kehr*, Gary Burnett*, Debbie Austin*, Megan Birzell*, Rob Ethridge*, Sarah Canepa*, Erin Zwiener, Kevin Riordan*

(Indicates voting member. A quorum of 15 is present.)*

Action Items:

- **Megan** will work with the Monitoring Committee to ensure that communication concerns are addressed.
 - **Amber, Rich, and Tim** will provide short project summaries for FY 2010 projects to Megan by April 18th.
 - **Anne Carlson** will send a note to the voting membership regarding the Doris Duke Foundation proposal in order to begin the process of a developing a collaborative proposal.
 - **Megan and Mo** will reduce the draft due diligence statement into a short paragraph that may be included in the SWCC charter. They will seek input from voting members, and a vote on the final version will be taken at the next meeting.
 - **Rich, Amber, and Tim** will communicate project contractors' plans of work with Megan as soon as they receive this information. (ongoing)
 - **Megan** will send the publicity flyer for the Contractors' Workshop to the voting membership and participants.
 - The **Executive Committee** will draft a letter to Bob Harrington (for approval by the voting membership) thanking him for his help in ensuring the implementation of the Auggie Restoration Project.
- I. Review/approve notes from the March 15th meeting
 - a. The notes were approved unanimously.
 - II. Updates/New Information/Progress since last meeting
 - a. There is \$25 million in the just released FY 2011 budget for the CFLR Program. While this is very good news for the program, we must remember that the Forest Service as a whole saw significant funding cuts that will impact our ability to generate match and to provide funding for the necessary planning of CFLR projects.
 - b. A national monitoring workshop is expected in early June, and we may be asked to participate in the planning for that workshop.

III. Subcommittee Reports and Key Questions

a. Monitoring

- i. UM has made an employment offer to Cory Davis for the Monitoring Coordinator position, and they are waiting to hear his reply.
- ii. The Committee is in the process of designing a long-term monitoring program, and this will take a bit of work.
- iii. They also have short-term, on-the-ground goals. This summer, the Monitoring Committee will focus on the following:
 1. Efficacy and ecological effects of herbicide treatments (\$40,000 budgeted)
 - a. Ashley Grant has been hired with CFLR monitoring funding to lead this effort and is coordinating with the weed specialists from each Ranger District to identify the priority areas for monitoring. She will also be leading field crews and incorporating citizen scientists to conduct the monitoring.
 2. Socioeconomic analysis (\$15,000 budgeted)
 - a. Census of contractors this summer via individual interviews to refine the TREAT economic analysis tool.
 3. Key questions from the SWCC:
 - a. Where will this monitoring happen on the ground?
- iv. Brian Fauver, an undergraduate student at UM, has received grant funding for the summer to evaluate the effectiveness of using citizen scientists in monitoring programs. He will be focusing his work in the SW Crown.
- v. The group agreed that there needs to be better communication between the SWCC and the Monitoring Committee, and this will be a focus of discussion at the monitoring meeting next week.
 1. Land managers and the Monitoring Committee need to clarify responsibilities (e.g., who is responsible for what with respect to collecting monitoring information for CFLR projects)
 2. There is a need for a process for communicating and seeking approval for the use of CFLR funds for the monitoring program.
 3. CFLR project implementation and monitoring need to be better integrated.

b. Prioritization

- i. The Participating Agreement with the Blackfoot Challenge for the baseline analysis work is being adjusted. Work will proceed as planned, but the contractor (EMRI) will enter into a direct agreement with FS.

- ii. The baseline analysis will inform future work, and work will be completed in late summer.
 - 1. The data layers for the Blackfoot and Clearwater are done, but the analysis of the Swan remains to be completed.
- c. Communications
 - i. The website is out for review of the full SWCC. We plan to launch the website next week but still have a few key needs:
 - 1. We need project summaries of FY 2010 projects from District Rangers for incorporation into the project page. **Rangers** agreed to provide this information to Megan by Monday, April 18th.
 - ii. Some comments on/suggestions for the website provided at the meeting were:
 - 1. Have a direct person to contact instead of a contact form in “contact us” page. This would make it more personal.
 - 2. Make sure the homepage is linked on every page in the site.
 - 3. Provide a link to cooperators’ pages for contract work (e.g., RMEF).
- d. Executive
 - i. Anne Carlson briefed the Executive Committee on a new funding opportunity through the Doris Duke Foundation, and there was support for pursuing the strategy of submitting a collaborative proposal from the SW Crown.
 - 1. The RFP was released through the Bozeman-based Wildlife Conservation Society a week or so ago and is national in scope. An initial letter of inquiry is due by the end of April.
 - 2. The grant program is focused on implementing applied, on-the-ground conservation projects for priority wildlife species across the country.
 - 3. Projects will need to address climate change adaptation for priority species at a landscape scale.
 - 4. Funding is available only for 501(c)(3) organizations, and they will award between \$50,000 and \$250,000.
 - 5. **Anne** will send a note to the voting membership about this grant opportunity and ask people to self-identify interest in participating in a collaborative proposal.
 - ii. The discussion of the Doris Duke proposal led to a broader discussion about the need for a pro-active process for fundraising going forward. The idea of creating a fundraising committee was raised, but no decisions were made. This will be a topic of discussion at the next SWCC meeting.

IV. Review/approve draft due diligence statement

- a. There was some confusion about the purpose of this statement, and after lengthy discussion, the group agreed that the document should be condensed into a short paragraph for inclusion in the SWCC Charter.
 - b. **Megan and Mo** will prepare a draft due diligence paragraph for inclusion in the Charter and will circulate to the voting membership for feedback. A vote will be taken at the next meeting.
 - i. The new language will clarify differences between federal and non-federal funds and will also clarify that this statement refers to recommendations the SWCC makes to the FS regarding which vehicles (types of contracts, agreements, etc.) should be used to implement CFLR projects. Make it clear that federal funds and non-federal funds are different beasts.

- V. How to ensure effective information exchange between contractors and the SWCC
 - a. Contractors must supply the districts with a plan of work before they begin on-the-ground work. The District Rangers will communicate this information to Megan as soon as they get it.

- VI. Update from Rob Ethridge about MAIRS work on non-NFS lands in the SW Crown
 - a. MAIRS (Multiple Agency Integrated Restoration Strategy) is a statewide, agency-led collaborative effort to prioritize restoration opportunities across the state. This group has identified the Blackfoot Watershed (specifically the Arrastra Creek, Cooper Lake, and BCCA areas) as a priority area and has been working with the Blackfoot Challenge to bring private landowners into the discussion and to assist in the coordination of work across agencies in this landscape. The planning processes for various government partners have made it difficult to implement these projects. There is an opportunity to work with the SWCC to accomplish some of the prioritized work for NFS lands in the SW Crown. The SWCC can also benefit from the work of MAIRS that is occurring on non NFS-lands in the SW Crown.

- VII. Other items
 - a. FS Coordinator Update
 - i. Even with the reduced budget, the FS is still interested in hiring a coordinator for the SW Crown work.
 - ii. The position has been advertised, and numerous applications have been received. A referral list is expected to be sent to the Forest Supervisors this week, and then they will have 30 days to complete the hiring process. There is the option of a 15-day extension as well.
 - iii. There have been some questions about whether any non-FS SWCC partners can participate in any part of the hiring process. If

appears that there may be a possibility for some SWCC partners to participate in the process, but they will not have the authority to rank candidates. Kevin is continuing to look into this issue.

- b. Update from Erin Zwiener on the April 19th Contractors' Workshop in Seeley Lake
 - i. The workshop will be held on April 19th and 20th at the Seeley Lake Community Hall. Sixteen Montana Logging Association credits are available for attendees. The afternoon of the 19th will focus on the SWCC and CFLR projects.
 - ii. The Communications Committee will meet tomorrow to nail down our press release strategy. An op-ed (authored by a contractor) will come out after workshop.
 - iii. **Megan** will send the workshop flyer out to voting members and participants.
- c. Follow-up on action item regarding letter to RMEF about the Auggie Mountain Project
 - i. The contract for the road package has been awarded, and work is expected to run June 5 – end of September. A contract for the vegetative work will be awarded by the middle of the July.
 - ii. RMEF has received match (from Bob Harrington) of \$5000 that enables them to receive the \$25,000 Missoula RAC money to implement the Auggie Project.
 - iii. In light of the new information, the group agreed to not send a letter to RMEF but instead to send a letter to Bob Harrington thanking him for helping to see the Auggie Project through to implementation.
 - iv. The **Executive Committee** will draft this letter and send to the voting membership for approval and feedback.

VIII. Next meetings: May 17, June 7, July 12, August 9