

**Southwestern Crown Collaborative**  
**Meeting Notes**  
June 7, 2011

**Present:** Megan Birzell\*, Mo Bookwalter\*, Craig Rawlings\*, Scott Brennan\*, Gary Burnett\*, Debbie Austin\*, Tim Love\*, Nancy Heil, Jon Haufler\*, Kevin Riordan\*, Chris Bryant\*, Jim Burchfield\*, Rich Kehr\*, Angela Farr, Chip Weber  
(\* indicates voting member.) A quorum is not present.

**Action Items:**

- The **Communications Committee** will take up the discussion of correcting factual errors in the media about the Colt Summit Project and will provide recommendations to the SWCC.
  - **Megan** will send an email to the voting membership asking for their ideas on possible corporate partners for the SWCC's CFLR work.
  - **Scott and Debbie** will talk to the appropriate people in the Department of Agriculture this week to glean more information about what private investment information is being requested of the SWCC.
  - **Gary and Mo** will work together to secure a location for the August 23<sup>rd</sup> SWCC meeting in Seeley Lake and organize any field or social activities associated with the meeting.
  - The **District Rangers** will bring copies of the watershed condition class maps for their districts to the next Prioritization Committee meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - The **Prioritization Committee** will integrate the WCF information with the work they've been doing to identify restoration opportunities across the SW Crown.
  - The **Prioritization Committee** will provide recommendations to the SWCC at the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting about potential 6<sup>th</sup> Code HUC watersheds within the SW Crown that should be prioritized in the WCF process.
  - **Jim** will send an email to the Monitoring Committee reminding them of the agreement to develop monitoring proposals and discuss them at the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. He will clearly lay out the timeline and guidelines for submitting proposals and process for proposal selection.
  - **Travis** will work with **Jim** and **Tim** to identify suggested representatives from the Fire Sciences Lab to speak to the SWCC at the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting about opportunities to work together.
  - **Tim** will follow up with Julia Altemus about the possibility of her joining SWCC.
- I. Review/approve notes from the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting
    - a. The notes were not approved due to lack of a quorum.
  - II. Updates/New Information/Progress since last meeting
    - a. Review action items from last meeting

- i. NOTE DONE: Scott will take the lead for the Executive Committee in drafting a thank-you letter to Bob Harrington regarding the Auggie Creek Project. The letter will be sent to the SWCC for review.
  - ii. Rich and Debbie will check to see whether the advanced acquisition plan already in place for the FS could help consolidate contracting opportunity information for CFLR projects.
    - 1. Rich looked into this and was advised to use project work plans instead.
  - iii. DONE: Megan will email the new draft due diligence paragraph to the voting membership for review.
  - iv. DONE: Megan will ensure that the Communications Committee discusses the Colt Summit appeal at their next meeting.
  - v. DONE: Scott will set up a meeting between the SWCC Executive Committee and the MFRC Steering Committee to discuss the Colt Summit appeal.
  - vi. DONE: Megan and Mo will raise the issue with the CFLR Coalition and ask for their input and advice regarding the appeal of a CFLR project.
- b. FY 2011 funding update
- i. \$3.5 million in CFLR fund money was allocated to the forests last week. The Forests are working to develop project work plans.
  - ii. If the Colt Summit isn't implemented, the money will likely go to other projects. Money can be carried over to the next fiscal year, but we would like to obligate it this year if at all possible.
- c. FS Coordinator position update
- i. Sandy Mack was offered and accepted the position today and will start on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. She will be physically based at the Lolo NF Supervisor's Office, and Debbie will be her supervisor.
- d. Colt Summit Project
- i. An appeal resolution meeting was held via conference call on May 25<sup>th</sup>. Several members of the public listened to the discussion. No resolution was reached.
  - ii. The team responsible for developing the Colt Summit Project has gone through each of the 131 appeal points and responded to them in a transmittal letter to the Appeal Review Panel, which is based out of the Regional Office.
  - iii. Currently, the Appeal Review Panel is reviewing the three appeals and the transmittal letters and will provide a recommendation about how to proceed to the Appeal Officer this week. After further staff work, the Regional Forester will make a decision to uphold, remand, or uphold with conditions the Decision Notice for the Colt Summit Project.

- iv. Separately, the Lolo NF also received a notice of intent (NOI) to sue the FS regarding the Colt Summit Project under the Endangered Species Act. This is a different process than the appeals process under NEPA. Within 60 days of receiving the NOI, the FS can work with FWS to make some small changes to the project in response to the NOI without having to change the Decision Notice.
- v. The MFRC Steering Committee and SWCC Executive Committee met two weeks ago to discuss the project and agreed that it is best to stay the course of strong, positive collaborative engagement in this and other projects.
- vi. An opinion piece concerning the Colt Summit Project that was authored by Michael Garrity appeared in both the *Helena Independent Record* and the *Missoulian*. There were numerous factual errors in the piece, and the Executive Committee has raised the question of whether we should respond directly to these factual errors.
  - 1. The sense of the group is that it is important to correct erroneous facts in a positive way.
  - 2. ACTION ITEM: The **Communications Committee** will take up this discussion and provide recommendations to the SWCC.

### III. Subcommittee Reports and Key Questions

#### a. Executive Committee

- i. As we move forward in implementation of the CFLR program, it is important to seek out as much private match as possible. With this in mind, the Executive Committee requests that all SWCC members brainstorm what corporations may be worth pursuing for matching funds to the CFLR program.
  - 1. ACTION ITEM: **Megan** will send an email to the voting membership asking for their ideas on possible corporate partners.
- ii. There has been a request out of the Department of Agriculture to provide information about what private investments have already been made in the SWCC. The group had questions about what specific type of information they are looking for.
  - 1. ACTION ITEM: **Scott and Debbie** will talk to the appropriate people in the Department of Agriculture this week to glean more information.
- iii. In response to the some feedback from SW Crown community members interested in participating in SWCC meetings, the Executive Committee has recommended that the August meeting be held in Seeley Lake. The date has been moved to August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

1. ACTION ITEM: **Gary and Mo** will work together to secure a location for the meeting and organize any field or social activities associated with the meeting.
- iv. Watershed Condition Framework
1. The FS announced last week the completion of the first step in a process intended to identify and restore priority watersheds on NFS lands.
  2. The 6 steps in the process are:
    - a. Establish a baseline of 6<sup>th</sup> Code HUC watershed conditions (red/low function, yellow/moderate function, and green/high function) across NFS lands for reference. (This has been done.)
    - b. Select 1-5 priority watersheds on each Forest for restoration focus. Due by July 15<sup>th</sup>.
    - c. Develop action plans to restore priority watersheds by moving them up at least one condition class (i.e. red to yellow or yellow to green). Due by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
    - d. Implement action plans.
    - e. Track costs and accomplishments.
    - f. Monitor and evaluate results.
  3. While this is an internal process, the FS is encouraged to work collaboratively to accomplish the goals set out in the program.
  4. Once priority watersheds have been selected, Forests will compete for \$80 million nationally that is being set aside for this work in the FY 2012 budget. This money can be used for NEPA planning, and we think it can be used as CFLR match.
  5. There was discussion among the group about whether and how we might integrate this work with our CFLR work. The group agreed that the Prioritization Committee is the best place for these two processes to come together.
    - a. ACTION ITEMS:
      - i. The **District Rangers** will bring copies of the watershed condition class maps for their districts to the next Prioritization Committee meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>.
      - ii. The **Prioritization Committee** will integrate this information with the work they've been doing to identify restoration opportunities across the SW Crown.
      - iii. The **Prioritization Committee** will provide recommendations to the SWCC at the July

12<sup>th</sup> meeting about potential 6<sup>th</sup> Code HUC watersheds within the SW Crown that should be prioritized in the WCF process.

- b. Prioritization Committee
  - i. This Committee hasn't met since the last SWCC meeting.
  - ii. Work on the baseline analysis continues to move forward.
- c. Monitoring Committee
  - i. The newly hired Monitoring Coordinator, Cory Davis, started yesterday.
  - ii. At the last Monitoring Committee meeting, the group agreed that having landscape-level measures based on an experimental design is a good idea.
  - iii. The FS has identified five people to represent them on the 5 major resource working groups on the Committee. Megan has added them to the Monitoring Committee mailing list. These people are:
    - 1. Scott Tomson – wildlife
    - 2. Shannon Connolly – vegetation
    - 3. Shane Hendrickson and Beth Gardner – fish/aquatics
    - 4. Keith Stockmann – socioeconomics
    - 5. John Ingebretson - fuels
  - iv. The committee discussed the idea of doing ex-post-facto studies – looking at past treatment data to better understand different landscape conditions based on past treatments. The group was generally receptive to this idea, but no decision has been made.
  - v. The FS would like to obligate FY 2011 monitoring money ASAP, but they need a clear understanding of how that money will be used before they will obligate funds. Their deadline to have agreements in place is August 1<sup>st</sup>.
    - 1. Timeline going forward:
      - a. June 23<sup>rd</sup> – Monitoring Committee presents and discusses proposals. (This has been their plan since their last meeting.)
      - b. July 1<sup>st</sup> – Proposals are finalized and submitted to the SWCC, allowing them time to review.
      - c. July 12<sup>th</sup> – Proposals are discussed at the SWCC meeting, and funding recommendations are made to the FS.
      - d. August 1<sup>st</sup> – Grants and agreements are in place.
    - 2. All proposals should include at least 20% match and request funding for just one year, even if the program they propose is multi-year.
    - 3. ACTION ITEM: **Jim** will send an email to the Monitoring Committee reminding them of the agreement to develop

proposals and discuss them at the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. He will clearly lay out the timeline and guidelines for submitting proposals and process for proposal selection.

**4. The SWCC strongly recommends that one representative from each resource working group be present at the July 12<sup>th</sup> SWCC meeting to answer any questions about their proposal.**

- d. Communications Committee
  - i. The Committee is working with the FS to identify dates and project options for site visits this summer.
  - ii. The Committee crafted talking points addressing the Colt Summit appeal. This is not a consensus document but is available to any SWCC members who get asked about the Colt Summit project.
  - iii. A press release announcing our FY 2011 funding was sent out on June 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - iv. The website has been updated with meeting information, and Megan is working with committees to approve a backlog of notes so that they can be posted on the website.
  - v. The Committee is working to set up over flights of the SW Crown on June 17th.

IV. Discussion items

- a. Review/approve draft due diligence paragraph to be inserted into SWCC Charter
  - i. This item was moved to the next meeting.
- b. Review NEPA process and guidelines
  - i. At the last meeting, there was confusion about whether the SWCC landscape strategy and CFLR proposal should undergo programmatic NEPA.
  - ii. Debbie explained that programmatic NEPA is not required because everything recommended in the strategy and proposal is consistent with the Forest Plans. The Forest Plans are permissive, not directive, documents and provide sideboards for what the FS is allowed to do on NFS lands. All individual projects will go through NEPA before being implemented.
- c. Engaging the Missoula Fire Sciences Lab in our work
  - i. A key driver of the CFLR Program is ensuring that fuel reduction happens, is scientifically sound, and is cost-effective. The Missoula Fire Sciences Lab, which focuses on these issues, is perhaps not as connected to our efforts as it could be.
  - ii. It was suggested that we ask the Fire Sciences Lab to come speak to the SWCC about the work they do and what opportunities there might be for us to work together.

1. ACTION ITEM: **Travis** will work with **Jim** and **Tim** to identify suggested representatives from the Fire Sciences Lab to speak to the SWCC at the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

V. Other Items

- a. ACTION ITEM: **Tim** will follow up with Julia Altemus about the possibility of her joining SWCC.

VI. **Next meetings: July 12, August 23, September 13, October 11, November 8, December 13.**