

SWCC Monitoring Committee
Meeting Notes
July 21, 2011

Present: Cory Davis, Sandy Mack, Beth Gardner, Bruce Rieman*, Andrew Larson*, Rich McAfee, Andy Kies*, John Ingebretson*, Dick Hutto*, Jon Haufler*, Scott Tomson*, Shane Hendrickson, Cameron Thomas, Megan Birzell*, Kathy Stewart (RO fire ecologist), Cara Nelson*, Keith Stockmann*, Travis Belote*, Jim Burchfield*, Adam Lieberg*, Tom Bansak*

*(*Indicates voting member.)*

Proxies: Travis (when not on the phone - Megan), Anne C.* (Megan)

Action Items:

- **Cory** will revise the Monitoring Committee Charter to reflect the newly approved amendment allowing for co-chairs and will circulate it to the Committee.
- **Cory** will send out an email to the voting membership asking for nominations for co-chairs through Tuesday, July 26th.
- **Cory** will set up and distribute an anonymous online voting tool to allow voting members to vote for two people to serve as co-chairs.
- The **Socioeconomic Working Group** will meet on Friday, July 29th and will determine whether to recommend this new proposal for funding to the Executive Committee.
- **Cory** will work with UM financial department to determine the deadline within which they can work for agreements with the FS and will communicate this to Sandy and the affected PIs.
- **Cory** will set up an optional anonymous survey to accumulate reflections on this year's monitoring proposal process.
- **Cory** will develop key questions to structure the discussion about lessons learned from this year's monitoring proposal process for the next meeting.
- **Megan, Cory, and Sandy** will ask the Executive Committee to assign a FS representative to the Vegetation Subcommittee.
- **Cory** will set up a Doodle poll to determine the best day for the prioritization workshop between September 20th and 30th and will circulate to the SWCC and all subcommittees.
- **Megan, Cory, and Sandy** will handle logistics for the next monitoring meeting, which will be held at the Seeley Lake Ranger District on Thursday, September 1st.

- I. Welcome/Introductions/Updates
 - a. The notes from the June 23rd meeting were approved unanimously.
- II. Discussion of proposal to amend the SWCC Monitoring Committee Charter to allow for two co-chairs

- a. The Committee discussed the possibility of amending the charter to allow for a co-chair model. Questions raised included:
 - i. Do we need two co-chairs given the added capacity of Cory and Sandy?
 - ii. If we adopt a co-chair model, should we require that one co-chair be a FS employee?
- b. Reasons given for adopting the co-chair model included:
 - i. It allows for continuity of leadership should one co-chair be called away to attend to other business for any period of time.
 - ii. It brings a diversity of perspectives to the Committee's leadership.
 - iii. It allows two people to share the load of leading the Committee.
- c. After discussion, the Committee voted on the following:
 - i. **Vote:** To amend the SWCC Monitoring Committee Charter to accommodate, but not require, two co-chairs.
 - 1. Thumbs up: 15
 - 2. Thumbs sideways: 0
 - 3. Thumbs down: 0
 - ii. *Note: The Committee decided not to require a FS employee to serve as one of the co-chairs because they felt it would be too prescriptive for the Charter. However, any voting member of the Committee – including FS employees – is eligible for nomination to be a co-chair.*
 - iii. **ACTION ITEM:** Cory will revise the Monitoring Committee Charter to reflect this vote and will circulate it to the Committee.
- d. Upon amending the charter, the Committee unanimously agreed to moved forward with a co-chair model for the next term of the chairmanship (August 1, 2011 – July 31, 2012).
- e. Because the charter was amended, the Committee decided to re-open nominations for co-chair. Nominations will be accepted through 7/26 and should be sent to Cory.
 - i. Current nominees are Travis Belote and Scott Tomson.
 - ii. **ACTION ITEM:** Cory will send out an email to the voting membership asking for nominations through Tuesday, July 26th.
- f. Voting procedure
 - i. The Committee agreed to use an online voting mechanism to elect the co-chairs.
 - ii. In an effort to not overcomplicate the election, voting members will be allowed to vote for two people. The two people with the most votes will be the new co-chairs.
 - iii. **ACTION ITEM:** Cory will set up and distribute an anonymous online voting tool to allow voting members to vote for two people to serve as co-chairs.

III. Monitoring Proposals

a. Review revised monitoring proposals

i. Aquatics

1. The Aquatics Working Group began with one proposal that had several parts to it. They were advised to break out into four separate projects (Proposals #8 – 11) for the purposes of the SWCC Monitoring Proposal submissions and evaluations.
2. When the SWCC Executive Committee reviewed the proposals, they asked the Aquatics Working Group to integrate their proposals into one proposal and ask for no more than \$50,000.
3. Under this direction, the Aquatics Working Group is presenting the following as a single proposal for funding under CFLR:
 - a. NetMap demonstration (Proposal #10) at \$3500. *(This is the same amount as the initial request.)*
 - b. Cutthroat trout genetic monitoring (Proposal #8) at \$16,200. *(The initial request was for \$22,000.)*
 - c. GRAIP pilot (Proposal #11) at \$30,300. *(The initial request was for \$41,000.)*
 - d. The GIS proposal (#9) was dropped from the proposal. *(The initial request was for \$14,000.)*
4. The nuts and bolts of the proposed work haven't changed. The Aquatics Working Group simply picked the three most important proposals, in their estimation, and repositioned the money to fit in the \$50,000 cap.
5. Questions/Discussions:
 - a. The purpose of the GRAIP pilot is simply to conduct the study on a small area before expanding – the purpose is not to vet whether this approach is valid. That has already been affirmed through other work.
 - b. It was recommended that the Aquatics Working Group interact with other working groups who are dealing with indicators related to road removal.
 - c. GRAIP is a process model driven by actual field measurements.
 - d. The Aquatics Working Group is not yet sure about whether they'll use a BACI design. They are likely to be opportunistic with this first effort but see opportunities to incorporate a BACI design in the future.

- e. Not expanding cutthroat work to Blackfoot, but there may be synergies with other existing work in the SW Crown.
 - f. Despite the fact that the highest aquatics priority in the Blackfoot is erosion from roads, while in the Swan the highest priority is invasive species, the Aquatics Working Group sees opportunities for cross-pollination between the Swan and Blackfoot and expects both the genetics monitoring and road-related monitoring to be expanded to cover the entire SW Crown.
 - g. Once baseline work is done, some of the money being requested this year can be incorporated into future project analysis. Therefore, not as much money would be requested from CFLR monitoring. However, the Aquatics Working Group does anticipate asking for money in the future for PIBO work that is currently being funded by other money. Further, they expect to ask for more money to fund GRAIP and genetics monitoring in the future.
6. After discussion, the Committee voted on the following:
- a. Vote: To endorse the revised Aquatics Working Group Proposal.
 - i. Thumbs up: 15
 - ii. Thumbs sideways: 1
 - 1. Keith voted thumbs sideways because he arrived late to the meeting and wasn't able to participate in the full discussion.
 - iii. Thumbs down: 0
 - ii. Socioeconomics
 - 1. The socioeconomics proposal (#2) addressing resident attitudes toward prescribed fire and the CFLR program was voted down in the last SWCC meeting. Jim voted thumbs down on this proposal, citing issues with the design and methodology, concerns about bothering the public with more surveys, and obstacles with OMB. He apologized for not communicating these concerns to the Socioeconomic Working Group Chair or the designated lead for the proposal.
 - 2. Per the SWCC Charter, Jim was asked to develop an alternative to the proposal that he voted down. His new

proposal was circulated to the Monitoring Committee earlier this week.

3. This new proposal focuses on reviews of past research as well as qualitative research as a precursor to the development of a quantitative survey that will hopefully be standardized across all 10 CFLR programs. It consists of four parts:
 - a. Meta-analysis of survey work that's already been done.
 - b. Focus group (no more than 9 people in order to avoid OMB regulations) to understand the contours of public concern/interest in elements of restoration.
 - c. Public meeting to look at opportunities for citizen science, etc.
 - d. Interviews with up to 9 citizen monitors that will address what effect being involved in CFLR monitoring has had on them.
4. Jim is currently listed as the lead on the proposal. However, he does not intend to actually lead the study. He is hopeful that Jill Belsky, who has done a lot of the work thus far surveying people in the Crown and who has been out of town for much of the summer, will get engaged when she returns next week.
5. Questions/Discussion:
 - a. The work proposed will benefit our socioeconomic monitoring efforts in the future by helping us recognize the dimensions of people's perceptions, which will in turn help us figure out what questions to ask before we engage in a larger survey. It will also help us look at other kinds of social trends.
 - b. Does trying to understand the mindset of appellants figure into the objectives at all?
 - i. For focus groups, we will try to intentionally get as diverse a cross-section of perspectives as possible.
 - ii. Also, the proposal mentions reviewing public comments (received through the NEPA process) on previous projects in the SW Crown.
 - c. Will it be repeated?
 - i. Yes, we intend to repeat the exact same questions in survey at a later date to see changes in perceptions of residents.

- ii. Focus groups likely won't be repeated.
 - d. Some members were hesitant to endorse this proposal without having a solid PI in place. While the design appears solid, we want to be sure we have the capacity to actually carry out the proposal.
 - 6. The Committee decided to not immediately recommend this proposal to the SWCC Executive Committee due to questions about who the Principal Investigator will be.
 - 7. The Committee agreed to empower the Socioeconomic Working Group to make the decisions about whether to recommend this proposal to the Executive Committee after they meet to discuss the proposal next week.
 - a. **ACTION ITEM:** The Socioeconomic Working Group will meet on Friday, July 29th and will determine whether to recommend this new proposal for funding to the Executive Committee.
 - iii. Integrated Design Proposal (#4 – Andrew Larson PI)
 - 1. The SWCC directed Andrew, as PI, to work with John Ingebretson (PI of Proposal #6 – fuels monitoring) and Cara Nelson (PI of Proposal #7 – herbicide treatments) to see if there is the opportunity to integrate their work.
 - 2. Ultimately, the different treatment types, designs, and spatial locations preclude any integration between Proposals #4 and #7. As such, these two proposals will be funded separately.
 - 3. There is, however, lots of common ground and opportunity for synergy between Proposals #4 and #6 with respect to objectives, metrics, etc. Andrew and John will use John's effort this year, and the protocol being developed by Andy, Renate, and John, as a pilot season. The information that comes out of this year's monitoring will feed into the integrated design for use in the field in Summer 2012. Further, John and Andrew will work with the National Fire Lab on plot location and saturation.
 - 4. John is still planning to do post-treatment work on CFLR projects next year.
 - b. Next steps for all approved monitoring proposals
 - i. The FS leadership met last Friday and developed their final direction. This will be distributed to the SWCC and Monitoring Committee ASAP. This direction will also include the template for the financial plan and operating plan needed for agreements.

- ii. Essentially, the FS approved the recommendations of the SWCC (including funding levels). In addition, the FS is requesting more details about matching funds and CFLR funds requested.
- iii. Because Jim's socioeconomic proposal is entirely new (not a revision), it will need to go back to the SWCC Executive Committee for review before the FS will fund it.
- iv. There will be signed agreements for all proposals, including internal ones (in which a FS employee is the PI).
- v. All agreements need to be finalized by August 1st. The goal is to get as much done by August 1 as possible.
- vi. The decision letter requests information to be sent to Sandy and Michele by July 28th.
 - 1. Some UM reps expressed that this is likely not feasible for them due to UM's internal process.
 - 2. **ACTION ITEM:** Cory will work with UM financial department to determine the deadline within which they can work and will communicate this to Sandy and the affected PIs.
- vii. Jon agreed to let EMRI's agreement be used as an example of one type of agreement in order to help others who are filling out agreements for the first time.
- viii. Not all proposals will be funded through the same type of agreement. The PI will work with FS Grants and Agreements specialists to determine the most appropriate tool.

IV. Discussion of monitoring proposal process

- a. The Committee agreed to table this discussion due to limited time. They further agreed to focus the next monitoring meeting on this discussion. It will be split into two parts: 1) reflections on this year's process, and 2) developing a plan for next year's process.
- b. **ACTION ITEMS:**
 - i. Cory will set up an optional anonymous survey to accumulate reflections on this year's process.
 - ii. Cory will develop key questions to structure this discussion for the next meeting.

V. Discussion of state of subcommittees

- a. This discussion was tabled for today. However, the leads ("chairs") of each Working Group were reviewed. They are as follows:
 - i. Wildlife – Dick and Jon
 - ii. Vegetation – no clear lead
 - 1. This group hasn't met in over a year and has been, in effect, combined with the fuels and experimental design subcommittees.

2. There were differences of opinion regarding whether this subcommittee should be specifically revived or absorbed by the Fuels and Experimental Design subcommittees.
3. The Monitoring Committee requests that the Executive Committee assign a FS representative to this subcommittee.
 - a. **ACTION ITEM:** Megan, Cory, and Sandy will ask the Executive Committee to assign a FS representative to the Vegetation Subcommittee.
- iii. Fuels – Jim B. and Jim R.
- iv. Aquatics – Cameron
- v. Socioeconomics – Joe
- vi. Experimental design – Jon and Cory
 1. Cory will set up a meeting for this group in the next month.
- vii. Data management –Cory
 1. This committee is meeting on July 27th at the Lolo SO from 10am – 12pm.
 2. There was brief discussion about combining this committee with the Experimental Design Subcommittee, but no decision was reached.

VI. Discussion of proposed prioritization workshop

- a. The Prioritization Committee has suggested – and Jon has agreed – that EMRI should present their methods and progress on their baseline analysis of the SW Crown, with time for in-depth Q&A, to anyone interested. Presumably, this workshop would be advertised to the SWCC and all its subcommittees.
- b. Monitoring Committee discussion identified three main aspects of the needed discussion:
 - i. EMRI's methods
 - ii. Identify the missing pieces
 - iii. How to move forward with the development of objectives (when the work is done) to inform the development of the long-term monitoring framework.
- c. There was discussion about the pros and cons of addressing all three of these aspects in this workshop versus only addressing a subset. The Prioritization Committee will discuss this further at their next meeting (August 4th).
- d. **ACTION ITEM:** Cory will set up a Doodle poll to determine the best day for this workshop between September 20th and 30th and will circulate to the SWCC and all subcommittees.

VII. Date and location for next meeting

- a. There have been requests from the SWCC for the Monitoring Committee to hold their meetings in a place with reliable teleconferencing (minimum) and videoconferencing (ideal) capabilities.
- b. Megan recommended moving the central meeting location to the Seeley Lake Ranger District because it is centrally located and has video and teleconferencing capabilities.
 - i. The Committee supported this recommendation and stressed that the agenda may need to be structured differently so that people participating from various hubs have opportunities to interject into the discussion.
 - ii. **ACTION ITEM:** Megan, Cory, and Sandy will handle logistics for the next monitoring meeting, which will be held at the Seeley Lake Ranger District on Thursday, September 1st.