

Southwestern Crown Collaborative
Meeting Notes
August 24, 2011

Present: Scott Brennan*, Debbie Austin*, Cory Davis*, Keith Stockmann*, Chris Bryant*, Gary Burnett*, Sandy Mack, Mo Bookwalter*, Rich Kehr*, Robert Rasmussen, Craig Rawlings*, Angela Farr, Sarah Canepa*, Chris Bryant*, Gabe Furshong, Tim Love*, Jon Haufler*, Anne Carlson*, Casey Hayes, Rich Torquemada, Cynthia Manning, Lois Rasmussen, Chip Weber

**Indicates voting member.*

Action Items:

- **Megan** will send a request for nominations to replace Mo on the Executive Committee to the voting membership.
- **Megan, Gary, and Anne** will make sure that SWCC members are invited to all Lincoln RC, Lolo RC, and Swan FSC field tours.
- **Megan and Gary** will share the support letters for CFLR projects from the Lolo RC and Lincoln RC, respectively.
- **Jon** will email Megan his available dates (October and November) to present EMRI's results to the SWCC.
- **Megan and Gary** will add the topic of addressing invasive species more specifically to the next Prioritization Committee meeting.
- **Everyone** who would like to participate in the Monitoring Committee meeting via VTC needs to let Cory and Keith know what specific location and device they will be connecting from.
- **Sandy** will work with Rich to develop a draft page of talking points and photos for a CFLR project.
- **The Communications Committee** will develop at least one news story highlighting the positive work of the SWCC by this fall.
- **Megan and Scott** will talk with Jared to gauge his availability to work on an SWCC news story for the fall.
- **The Communications Committee** will develop an annual update based on information from the Annual Report.
- **The Communications Committee** will develop talking points for the Missoula County Commissioners to use when they attend the MACo convention.
- **The Communications Committee** will discuss the opportunity of doing media around the Forest Products Industry Week and decide whether it makes sense to work with these groups.

I. Welcome/Introductions

a. Brief history of the SWCC

- i. In March of 2009, President Obama signed the Forest Landscape Restoration Act (FLRA) into law as part of the Omnibus Public

Lands bill. FLRA was sponsored by Sen. Bingaman from New Mexico and authorized the development of a new pilot program – the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR Program) – encouraging collaborative, community-based restoration to create jobs, protect communities from fire, and restore ecosystems.

- ii. In April 2009, several participants in the Seeley-Swan-Blackfoot Summit discussed the possibility of working together to develop a proposal for CFLR funding. Over the next 16 months, these local, national, and agency partners developed a landscape strategy for the SW Crown and wrote a proposal for CFLR funding.
 - iii. Out of 70 submitted proposals, the SWCC was one of 10 that were funded. We received news of funding, along with the first installment of funds, in August 2010. This process has been an example of an area with a long collaborative history taking advantage of a new opportunity for funding.
 - iv. There has been lots of support for this program – and interest in seeing it succeed – at the local, regional, and national levels.
- b. Review/approve notes from the July 12th meeting
- i. The notes from the July 12th meeting were approved unanimously.

II. Updates/New Information/Progress since last meeting

- a. Chip reported that he was recently assigned to a team working on the larger Crown of Continent through the America’s Great Outdoors initiative. This team is currently assembling a report of a high-level look at what’s going on in the Crown. Once this is complete, they will conduct a more in-depth report. The overall broad-scale objectives of this work are very similar to those of SW Crown. Chip will bring information back to this group as he gets it. There is currently no specific money associated with this, but their work will likely influence funding and legislation going forward.
- b. Keith met with the two leads for climate change at the GNLCC in the RO. The GNLCC reps are very interested in integrating with SW Crown.
- c. Anne C. reported on a new funding opportunity for the SW Crown that was recently brought to TWS. Yale University has developed a framework to fit climate data into forest management planning and is currently looking to apply this framework to 6-8 test sites. TWS has been invited to submit a proposal for funding and is considering using the SW Crown as a test site. If selected for funding, Travis would be the lead, and it would begin with an initial 6-month test time to apply the framework. There would be the potential for increased and longer-term funding. Yale is requesting proposals between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and TWS’ draft budget right now is about \$66,000.

III. Subcommittee Reports and Key Questions

a. Executive Committee

i. Change in Executive Committee membership

1. Due to transitions in her work, Mo is stepping down from the Executive Committee and hopes that someone who can be more engaged will step up to fill this role.
2. The SWCC will hold a special election at the September meeting to elect a new person to serve the remainder of Mo's term, which ends on September 30th, 2012.
3. Nominations for a replacement will be open until September 6th.
 - a. Mo nominated Anne Dahl to serve.
 - b. ACTION ITEM: Megan will send a request for nominations to the voting membership.

ii. Colt Summit

1. A field tour of the Colt Summit area was held in early August. Several in attendance noted how important it is to get on the ground and see a project.
2. ACTION ITEMS:
 - a. Megan, Gary, and Anne will make sure that SWCC members are invited to all Lincoln RC, Lolo RC, and Swan FSC field tours.
 - b. Megan and Gary will share the support letters for CFLR projects from the Lolo RC and Lincoln RC, respectively.

iii. UM biomass facility

1. This facility was erroneously listed as "needed infrastructure" for SW Crown in our Work Plan, and this caused some confusion. The work plan has been amended to make that more clear.

iv. 2011 Annual Report

1. Keith, Sandy, Cory, and Megan will begin work next month on our FY 2011 Annual Report, due November 15th.

v. FACA/NEPA/FOIA training

1. A FACA/NEPA/FOIA training session has been tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 26th, 9am – 12pm, at the Lolo SO. VTC and webinar connection options will be available.

b. Prioritization Committee

- i. The District Rangers will present their initial list of FY 2012 projects at the Sept. 30th Prioritization meeting.
- ii. EMRI has met with all the Districts at this point regarding the baseline analysis project. Their recommendations for CFLR

priorities for the Lincoln and Seeley districts will be done in the next two months, maximum. Recommendations for the Swan will be about one month behind.

- iii. Once the recommendations for the three districts are complete, they will need to be combined together and then discussed with the Lincoln RC, Lolo RC, Swan FSC, SWCC Monitoring Committee, and SWCC for feedback and, ultimately, collaborative approval and adoption.
- iv. EMRI recently presented their work for the SWCC to the renewable natural resources group at RO.
- v. Jon noted that we may need to revise our 80% WUI treatment objective due to feasibility issues.
- vi. ACTION ITEM:
 - 1. Jon will email Megan his available dates (October and November) to present EMRI's results to the SWCC.
- vii. Weeds have not been incorporated into EMRI's work.
 - 1. Invasive species – including terrestrial and aquatic species – is a national indicator, and we need to address it in a more specific, quantifiable way.
 - 2. ACTION ITEM:
 - a. Megan and Gary will add this topic to the next Prioritization Committee meeting.

c. Monitoring

- i. Two new co-chairs, Keith Stockmann and Travis Belote, were recently elected and will serve a one-year term.
- ii. Summer 2011 monitoring activities:
 - 1. The contractor interviews are wrapping up.
 - 2. The herbicide treatment monitoring is also wrapping up.
 - 3. Fuels monitoring hasn't begun, but we are hoping to begin this fall.
- iii. FY 2011 agreements are currently being finalized.
- iv. Prioritization Workshop
 - 1. A joint workshop between the Prioritization and Monitoring Committees is scheduled for Thursday, September 29th, from 1 – 4pm in Seeley Lake.
 - 2. The main objectives are:
 - a. Discuss in detail EMRI's methods in their baseline analysis work
 - b. Identify any gaps in EMRI's work and figure out how to fill them
 - c. Discuss how the Monitoring Committee will respond to the prioritization once it's out for review.

3. This will NOT be a roll-out of the results of the baseline analysis.
- v. The next Monitoring Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, September 1st, from 1 – 4pm at the Seeley Lake RD. VTC and teleconference are available.
 1. The main topic will be developing a timeline for the FY2012 funding process as well as an after-action discussion of the FY 2011 process.
 2. ACTION ITEM: Anyone who would like to participate via VTC needs to let Cory and Keith know what specific location and device they will be connecting from.
 - vi. The Data Management subcommittee is meeting tomorrow, August 25th, at the Lolo SO to continue working on how to make sure all monitoring information is publically available.
 - vii. The Wildlife sub-group is meeting the morning of September 1st at the Seeley RD.
- d. Communications
- i. This Committee is currently working on preparations in case of a lawsuit on the Colt Summit project.
 - ii. With direction from the Executive Committee, this group will work to develop an annual update based on information from the Annual Report.
 1. ACTION ITEM: The Communications Committee will develop an annual update based on information from the Annual Report.
 - iii. Rich suggested that we have one page of talking points and photos for each CFLR project.
 1. ACTION ITEM: Sandy will work with Rich to develop a draft of this.
 - iv. The SWCC directs the Communications Committee to develop at least one news story highlighting the positive work of the SWCC by this fall. The story could highlight one project in each District and show the diversity of our restoration projects.
 1. ACTION ITEMS:
 - a. The Communications Committee will develop at least one news story highlighting the positive work of the SWCC by this fall.
 - b. Megan and Scott will talk with Jared to gauge his availability to work on such a story.
 2. Sarah stated that the Missoula County Commissioners are very supportive and available to help.
 - v. The Montana Association of Counties (MACo) convention in September would be a good opportunity to expand Commissioner support of the CFLR program beyond Missoula County.

1. ACTION ITEM: The Communications Committee will develop talking points for the Missoula County Commissioners to use when they attend the MACo convention.
- vi. Forest Products Industry Week is the 3rd week of October. The Missoula Chamber of Commerce is going to have a timber tour and will tie in with this event. There is the possibility of tying in with a SWCC press release.
 1. ACTION ITEM: The Communications Committee will discuss this opportunity and decide whether it makes sense to work with these groups.

IV. Discussion items

- a. Integration between the Swan Forest Stewardship Committee, Lolo Restoration Committee, Lincoln Restoration Committee, and SWCC
 - i. There is an opportunity for greater integration moving forward, and we want to make sure that, as all our groups move forward, we don't cause confusion or inadvertently have cross purposes.
 - ii. There is the potential for an annual meeting between the three groups and the SWCC.
 - iii. There is also potential for improving the conceptual model explaining the relationship of RCs and FSC to SWCC and opportunities for engagement.
 - iv. We want to make sure that the RCs and FSC have input into our collaboratively developed objectives.
 - v. Rich announced a September 8th field trip to the Glacier Loon Project on the Swan District.
 - vi. Monitoring can also be a point of engagement with RCs and FSC.
- b. After-action discussion of 2011 monitoring proposal process
 - i. The Executive Committee met on July 29th and developed the following suggestions going forward for the monitoring proposal process:
 1. Allow for a longer process (i.e. more time between advertisement of the RFP, proposal submission, and review) that takes into account the time needed to set up agreements.
 2. Make the RFP much more public.
 - a. This would need to be framed as a partnership opportunity in order to fit the FS' agreement requirement of "mutual benefit."
 3. Potentially add a pre-proposal process.
 4. Avoid having a Monitoring Committee member vote down, in the SWCC meeting, a proposal that was recommended by the Monitoring Committee.

5. Start planning for the FY2012 process ASAP.
 6. Try to set it up so that FY2012 money can be spent in FY2012 (as opposed to FY2013) in order to enable more FS participation.
 7. Monitoring Committee should develop a work plan for the year, including a timeline of what will be completed by when, to help ensure that work is done in a timely manner.
 8. Ensure as similar an evaluation and funding process as possible between FS-led and non-FS-led monitoring projects.
- ii. Cory explained that one major change going forward that will help tremendously is that the Monitoring Committee will begin planning for FY 2012 immediately instead of waiting until we get funding to start the planning process.
 - iii. Keith indicated that one of his focuses as a new co-chair will be to make sure the Monitoring Committee is much more strategic moving forward.

V. Other Items

- a. Colt Summit Update
 - i. Comments on the new soils report are due in mid-September.
 1. The FS has received a request for the data that went into soils surveys.
 - ii. The IDIQ contractors are in the field today looking at the public works contracting opportunities (road decommissioning). Funds will be obligated this year for public works. Vegetative work (through an IRTC) funding will be considered and obligated in FY 2012.
- b. Scott raised a question of what, if anything, we can do to ensure that implementation of CFLR projects happens in a timely manner, particularly with respect to the length of contracts to complete the work. He has been asked if this could be a problem or be perceived as a problem in the context of the SWCC.
 - i. Rich explained that the timing of when the US Government's budget comes out also significantly affects how much work can be done on the ground during the current budget year.
 - ii. Timber sales are the contracts that typically have longer lengths. Part of the time length is due to timing the timber market. Contractors are protective of this and even want longer timeframes.
 - iii. We need to be careful about how we talk about accomplishments (i.e. reporting versus on-the-ground).
 - iv. Long-term contracts will make monitoring very difficult.

- v. This issue will impact all CFLR programs. It was suggested that perhaps it should be addressed through an NFF peer-learning call or the CFLR Coalition.
- vi. It was suggested that favoring a bidder who has a track record of finishing work early through best value criteria could be a way to encourage work to process in a more timely manner.
- c. Lincoln just received ~\$240,000 for SW Crown planning for Helena NF. They will allocate this to an Enterprise Team for a categorical exclusion fire/wildlife project. The rest will go to next NFMA area – Flescher to Stemple Pass.
- d. Gary brought forward the issue of the capacity of collaborate and would like to discuss at a future meeting.

VI. Next meetings: September 13, October 11, November 8, December 13