

Southwestern Crown Collaborative
Meeting Notes
October 11, 2011

Present: Megan Birzell*, Cory Davis*, Craig Rawlings*, Gary Burnett*, Anne Dahl*, Debbie Austin*, Sandy Mack*, Amber Kamps*, Sarah Canepa*, Joe Kerkvliet*, Dale Kerkvliet*, Mo Bookwalter*, Rich Kehr*, Keith Stockmann*, Rob Ethridge*, Melanie Parker*, Julia Riber, Sarah Velk, Diani Taylor, Erin Williams, Meara Cassidy, Emile Legandre, Riley Clement, Charlie Smillie

**Indicates voting member.*

Present by proxy (in parentheses): Scott Brennan* (*Megan*)

- I. Welcome/Introductions
 - a. A quorum is present.
 - b. The notes from the September 13th meeting were approved unanimously.

- II. Updates/New Information/Progress since last meeting
 - a. The Swan Lake District spent about \$1,050,000 of CFLR funds in FY 2011 and had a higher amount of match. They do not anticipate any carryover funds.
 - b. The Lincoln District expects to have about \$140,000 in carryover funds due to a lack of burn windows and some miscommunication within the District.
 - c. The Seeley Lake District is a bit under their FY 2011 allocation due to some savings in a few contracts.
 - d. Types of work that were accomplished in FY 2011 include: cleaning up landings on former Plum Creek land, verbenone and carbaryl treatments, wetland restoration, trail reconstruction and restoration, bridge abutment removals, weed abatement, and aquatic invasive check stations. Many of these accomplishments still need to be uploaded into the appropriate FS databases.
 - e. The agency hopes to receive authority to spend carryover funds soon. There are no FY 2012 CFLR funds included in the current CR. This CR expires November 18th, and FY 2012 CFLR funds may or may not be made available in a subsequent CR.
 - f. The Lincoln Restoration Committee has requested a field trip showing accomplishments over the past couple of years. Amber, Gary, and Megan will keep the SWCC posted about this.
 - g. Update on 2011 Annual Report
 - i. The FY 2011 Annual Report is due to the Regional Office on November 9th. Keith, Cory, Sandy, and Megan are working together to develop a draft. The majority of the information for the report will come from the FS databases, and so we are asking

that our accomplishments be uploaded to the databases earlier than in the past in order to accommodate the deadline.

- h. The Lolo Restoration Committee is hosting an open meeting for interested people to learn more about the process of how a project moves from a Decision to implementation. The meeting will be held this Thursday, October 13th at 6pm at the Lolo NF Supervisor's Office. The meeting will follow a panel format with Tim Love, Jim McCormack (Lolo NF Contracting Officer), Michele Wasienko-Holland (Lolo NF Grants & Agreements Specialist), and Charlie Sells (private forester) presenting information about various aspects of this process.
- a. America's Great Outdoors (AGO) is an initiative of the Obama Administration to develop a 21st century conservation and recreation agenda. Initial listening sessions in 2010 led to the creation of five pilot landscapes around the country. One of these landscapes is the Crown of the Continent, and the FS has been identified as the lead federal agency for AGO in this landscape. Last Friday, a meeting was held at the RO to brainstorm ideas for what the AGO initiative could look like in the Crown of the Continent. Approximately 25 people attended, and some initial themes that emerged were: engaging with youth, eradicating weeds, and preventing the establishment of aquatic invasive species. The FS will take all the ideas presented, categorize them, and continue working with interested parties to move it forward.
- b. The Washington Office has asked us for the following information: 1) whether we think it would be helpful to have national GIS support, and 2) what NEPA work is ongoing in the SW Crown as well as future needs related to NEPA. Sandy provided responses to these requests as follow: 1) local GIS support is more appropriate than national support, although we could benefit from additional funds to enable our designated local GIS support person (Lisa Blackburn) to more fully engage, and 2) we provided the WO with a list of current and upcoming EAs and EISs and explained that we project a need for \$1.7 million/year in planning money through FY 2014 to do these analyses.
- c. RMEF Habitat Stewardship Services (HSS) is being taken down. Won't be entering stewardship agreements. Exec staff and board determined risks and costs aren't justified by benefits. Balance of Auggie fuels will transfer to FS mgmt. May morph HSS into something else. 10-year agreement is being terminated.

III. Subcommittee Reports and Key Questions

- a. Executive
 - i. The Committee affirmed that, while the FS alone is responsible for addressing comments raised in the NEPA process, issues that are raised in these comments may be brought forward and discussed by the SWCC.

b. Prioritization

- i. EMRI expects the results of their contract work to be ready by the end of the calendar year.
- ii. At the last Committee meeting, the District Rangers provided initial spreadsheets for FY 2012 CFLR projects. The group discussed the need to have more projects ready for implementation than just enough to meet the expected financial allocation. The purpose of this is to be able to meet our objectives each year even if some projects get held up for any reason.
- iii. The Committee is discussing expanding the SWCC's prioritization approach beyond NFS lands through partnerships with other ownerships.
- iv. There was discussion about how the more specific objectives, once agreed upon, will be incorporated into the program of work consistent with the applicable Forest Plans. EMRI has been working closely with the Districts, and there is a lot of overlap between EMRI's findings and the Seeley and Lincoln Districts' current priorities. EMRI's analysis brings an added emphasis on integrating terrestrial restoration with aquatics and fisheries restoration. The analysis on the Swan District isn't yet complete. The Committee agreed to develop a document outlining a proposed method for incorporating the new SWCC objectives, once agreed upon, into the program of work.

c. Communications

- i. The Lolo NF sent out a news release today highlighting the work that was done this summer with CFLR funds to fight the introduction of aquatic invasive species in the SW Crown.
- ii. There was also discussion about drafting a story that highlights the partnership between the Lincoln Ranger District and the Ponderosa Snow Warriors and the benefit that is having on work to mitigate noxious weeds.
- iii. The group discussed the idea of sending out future news releases as a collaborative group, when appropriate, to further highlight the diverse partnership of the SWCC.
- iv. The group affirmed our desire to increase public awareness and understanding of the complexities and costs and benefits of forest management.
- v. The group agreed that we need to provide more information for potential contractors on the SWCC website. Mo and Craig have developed some ideas for a page on the website providing information about how to use the fedbizopps.com website, the procurement technical assistance center, and the four key economic development groups in the area and the help they can

provide. They would like more ideas for the website from members of the collaborative.

1. There was discussion about whether we could link directly to RFPs instead of just the fedbizopps.com website. While everyone likes this idea, there's concern that we wouldn't be able to keep it up to date due to capacity issues. One suggestion was to use the MLA newsletter to get the word out about contract opportunities.
2. The group agreed that we should be tracking how many contracts are going to contractors in Seeley, Condon, and Ovando.
3. There is also a need to get the word out to local contractors about forest-wide IDIQ service contracts and encourage them to get on the list to be eligible for these types of contracts.
4. ACTION ITEM: Mo will send her and Craig's ideas for a contractor page on the SWCC website to Sandy, Megan, Tim, Amber, and Rich.

d. Monitoring

- i. The next meeting is scheduled for October 19th from 1-4pm at Lolo SO.
- ii. All partnership agreements for FY 2011 monitoring funds have been finalized.
 1. There was one \$30,000 aquatics monitoring project that was intended to go to the RMRS in Boise through a partnership agreement. However, we found out that we couldn't obligate funds to the RMRS through an agreement, and so, given the time constraints, those funds were obligated to aquatic restoration projects.
- iii. The subcommittees are working now to address monitoring needs for FY 12 funding and to develop a long-term monitoring plan.
 1. A draft table of contents has been developed for the long-term monitoring plan. The outline is organized around the CFLR objectives, and the subcommittees are working to fill in their sections of the plan. The Committee's goal is to have a draft of this plan by January.
 2. Each section of the monitoring plan will identify triggers or ranges of acceptable variation in data that, when breached, will cause us to adapt our management approach.
- iv. Vegetative monitoring is happening today and tomorrow via Northwest Connections.
- v. There is a meeting scheduled for next week to discuss monitoring plans for the Auggie project.

- vi. The data management subcommittee has suggested, and the Committee has agreed, to use the LC Map (developed by the GNLCC) to manage data and export it to the website.

IV. Discussion Items

- a. The SWCC will host a training on FACA, FOIA, and NEPA on Wednesday, October 26th from 9am to 12pm at the Lolo SO.
 - i. Julia Riber was present to listen to our questions for the training in order to help her tailor the training to our needs.
- b. Debrief the Prioritization Workshop and discuss next steps for Prioritization and Monitoring Committees
 - i. Twenty-eight people participated in the Prioritization workshop last week. The workshop was recorded and should be available soon on disk. Several presentations from the workshop will also be made available.
 - ii. The first 1.5 hours of the workshop were devoted to a detailed discussion of EMRI's methods. This was followed by presentations and discussions about other prioritization efforts in the area (e.g., IRPS).
 - iii. In hind sight, we tried to discuss too much information in a relatively short time frame, and we weren't able to delve into deep discussions about the other prioritization efforts and what roles they might play in the SWCC work.
 - 1. The compressed timeline also meant that we weren't able to fully flesh out the connections between the various prioritization efforts.
 - iv. They also weren't able to discuss how the monitoring committee could respond to the prioritization work. This discussion will happen at the next Monitoring Committee meeting. It has also been suggested that the Prioritization and Monitoring Committees should have a combined meeting in January to further address this and make sure the two committees are on the same page.
 - v. At the end of the workshop, Cory put up a list of the various prioritization efforts and allowed people to identify the ones that they thought could be useful to the SWCC's work. Cory has summarized these results will give this to the Prioritization Committee to inform their work.

V. Next meetings: November 8, December 13