

**Southwestern Crown Collaborative**  
**Meeting Notes**  
November 8, 2011

**Present:** Dale Kerkvliet\*, Scott Brennan\*, Megan Birzell\*, Tim Love\*, Gary Burnett\*, Debbie Austin\*, Anne Dahl\*, Cory Davis\*, Amber Kamps\*, Rob Ethridge\*, Sandy Mack\*, Jim McCowan, Robert Rasmussen, Rich Kehr\*, Craig Rawlings\*, Sarah Canepa\*, Travis Belote\*, Anne Carlson\*

*\*Indicates voting member.*

- I. Welcome/Introductions
  - a. Review/approve notes from the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting
    - i. The notes from the October 11<sup>th</sup> SWCC meeting were approved unanimously with one recusal. Scott recused himself because he wasn't present at the October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- II. Updates/New Information/Progress since last meeting
  - a. Safety
    - i. The FS wants all of our partners to be safe in all of their SWCC endeavors.
    - ii. ACTION ITEM: Sandy will talk to Michele about adding safety information to the monitoring partnership agreements.
  - b. America's Great Outdoors
    - i. AGO is an initiative of Obama administration that was launched in June 2010. It is an effort to focus and catalyze new on-the-ground conservation efforts across the country.
    - ii. The Crown of the Continent has been identified as a focal/priority landscape for this effort. The FS is the lead federal agency for this landscape and is working to develop proposals to be submitted to the White House. These proposals will be recommendations for implementation of AGO in the Crown. The FS is trying to coordinate existing programs within existing agencies to be more efficient in implementation.
    - iii. Five deliverables have been identified for the Crown:
      1. Changes in NRCS and FS policies for assistance programs and contracts
      2. Consistent Ecological Site Description (ESD) mapping
      3. Expanding markets for biomass
      4. Multi-Agency Integrated Restoration Strategy (MAIRS)
      5. Increased coordination in agency alignment of opportunities for connectivity.
    - iv. There are potentially small pots of seed money (10k – 20k range) available to help get these project started.
  - c. Glacier Loon

- i. This is a larger NEPA project in the Swan that is being planned to coincide with 2012 – 2014 Grizzly Bear Agreement window in that area. A scoping notice was sent out last month, and the comment period closed yesterday. The FS held two field trips to the project area during scoping.
- ii. There are three major issues in the Project that relate to FLRA and the SWCC:
  - 1. FLRA requires that no new permanent roads will be established in CFLR projects. However, in some instances, there is a need for new, short-term specified roads for long-term management of the landscape.
  - 2. FLRA requires CFLR projects to maximize the retention of large trees. However, “large” is not defined in the legislation. In the Glacier Loon project, some large trees may need to be cut in order to preserve other large trees.
  - 3. There is confusion regarding the relationship of the FLRA, the SWCC’s landscape strategy, and prioritization to the forest plans.
    - a. The Forest Plan is the guiding document for the affected Forest. It is permissive, not prescriptive or directive. It provides parameters within which to work. Every action on the Forest must be done within the parameters set by the Forest Plan.
    - b. The SWCC prioritization process helps us figure out where on the Forest we want to engage in active restoration. Once those locations are identified, the agency uses the Forest Plan to guide what type of activity they perform in those areas. The Prioritization process helps the agency determine where they want to implement the Forest Plan.
    - c. This issue also begs a larger question of how we treat lands to be managed for timber (according to the Forest Plans) in the context of CFLR.
- d. Stewardship agreements and authorities
  - i. RMEF is withdrawing from the world of stewardship agreements but still feels that this type of agreement should be used as a valuable tool in landscape restoration. They are willing to share their lessons learned to anyone who is interested in getting engaged in stewardship agreements.
- e. FY 2011 Annual Report
  - i. Sandy, with help from Cory, Megan, and Keith, has prepared a draft of our FY 2011 Annual Report, which is due to the Washington Office on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The Regional Office is currently reviewing it.

- f. Report from MFRC Implementation Workshop
  - i. Those who participated in this workshop agreed that it was highly beneficial. The workshop was recorded and is in the process of being made available publicly.
- g. FY 2012 funding update
  - i. The federal government is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution that will expire on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>. At that time, another CR is expected that will last until Christmas.
  - ii. The agency can and is spending FY 2011 carryover CFLR money, but they cannot spend FY 2012 funds yet.
- h. The national CFLR RAC met a few weeks ago, but we haven't heard anything about that meeting.

### III. Subcommittee Reports and Key Questions

- a. Executive
  - i. Committee Structure/Charter Revisions
    - 1. The Committee discussed a desire to ensure our governing documents continually improve and are informed by public input. Therefore, they want to revisit how we're structured, how our charter is structured, and entertain ideas/suggestions for potential revisions to charter.
    - 2. The Committee discussed several clarifying edits, such as clarifying what is and is not considered an "official" SWCC document and clarifying that the SWCC has no decision-making authority regarding the management of public lands.
    - 3. Megan will incorporate these suggestions into a draft amendment to the Charter, and these will be presented and voted on at the December 13<sup>th</sup> SWCC meeting.
  - ii. The Committee requested a short presentation to the SWCC on roads, the various definitions of roads, and the effects of different kinds of roads and decommissioning in order to enhance our understanding of roads issues and to ensure that all members are equally informed.
- b. Monitoring
  - i. The next Monitoring Committee meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, November 9<sup>th</sup>, from 1 – 4pm at the Seeley Lake Ranger Station.
  - ii. Data Management
    - 1. The Data Management working group is doing a minor cleanup of the SWCC boundary lines so that the boundary lines conform to ownership and watershed boundaries at a fine scale. They are also talking to UM about data storage and to GNLCC about exporting data to the SWCC webpage.

They will present a data management plan and a suggested cleaned-up boundary to the SWCC in the near future.

- iii. The other working groups are currently filling in their sections of the long-term monitoring plan, including:
  - 1. Types of treatments to monitor;
  - 2. Questions being asked;
  - 3. Indicators to measure;
  - 4. Methods for measuring indicators;
  - 5. Who could do the work; and
  - 6. Estimated budgets.
- iv. Updates on FY 2010 projects:
  - 1. Herbicide monitoring: Field work is mostly completed. Seeding is currently occurring on 19 sites across the three districts. Data entry is starting. The data will be summarized, but no analysis will be completed until post-treatment data is collected.
    - a. Issues:
      - i. They have a smaller sample size than anticipated for two reasons: 1) Roadside treatments were not conducted on the Lolo due to funding being received too late in the fiscal year, and 2) two other sites (Dick Creek and part of Horseshoe West) did not receive planned aerial spraying.
      - ii. Crews sampled areas that were ultimately not treated for various reasons: 1) Contractor schedules (flying for fire first priority, communication about where work would be occurring during specific weeks), and 2) Weather.
    - b. The first-year post-treatment data will be collected next year.
  - 2. Economic data collection: Jimmie McKay interviewed seven different CFLR contractors and collected data related to general business characteristics, revenues, and employment. The results have been summarized and given to Keith and Krista. They are currently determining how they can incorporate that information into their economic model.
- v. Updates on FY 2011 projects
  - 1. The agreements were just finalized for many of these projects, and so there hasn't been a lot of activity yet. Cory has asked each project lead to develop a project timeline

of key steps that incorporates sufficient time for data management needs and includes deliverables. These are due at the end of the month.

2. Fire management options and costs (Keith)
  - a. No action has been taken yet, but it is included in Keith's schedule of work, and he is developing a timeline.
3. Meadow Smith old growth monitoring (Renate)
  - a. The field work is currently being done through an agreement with Northwest Connections and will hopefully be completed prior to snowfall.
  - b. The late arrival of CFLR funds and subsequent lengthy process of developing agreements forced this work to be started later than planned.
4. Carnivore baseline inventory (Scott Tomson)
  - a. This is in the planning stages. The biologists involved have met a few times to discuss personnel, logistics, and responsibilities. Carly Lewis of the Lolo National Forest will likely be heading up the field crews for this work, and Northwest Connections will also be involved.
5. Development of habitat models (Jon Haufler)
  - a. Several meetings about these models have occurred, and the species to model have been selected. Existing models and literature on habitat variables are being reviewed. The group will have the vegetation parameters that will need to be measured in the field finalized in time for the vegetation working group to incorporate them into their forest plot protocols.
6. Developing and implementing sampling protocols for fuels and forest restoration treatments (Andrew Larson)
  - a. This project is being developed by the vegetation working group in parallel with the long-term monitoring plan. A timeline has been developed that includes deadlines for finalizing sampling protocols, advertising for and hiring field crews (by mid-April), and starting field work (early June).
7. Post weed treatment monitoring (Cara Nelson)
  - a. Based on the pre-treatment data collection, Cara and Ashley have a general timeline of key steps. As field work is completed, they will review this past field season and see where improvements and

adjustments need to be made. They are working on a project timeline.

8. Aquatics monitoring (Cameron Thomas)
  - a. Roughly \$30,000 for this project was moved to implementation because an agreement could not be developed between the RMRS and the Lolo NF. This is because agreements undertaken by different branches within the same agency cannot be carried over beyond the current fiscal year. The remainder of the money went toward two projects:
    - i. A successful workshop in October on the Netmap program which evaluated the use of this tool for the SWCC.
    - ii. Cutthroat trout genetics work: the physical sampling of streams was completed last month and the genetic lab work has begun. Results of the physical sampling will be available in Feb 2012, and the genetic results will be available by March 31, 2012.
9. Socioeconomic monitoring (Jill Belsky)
  - a. A graduate student has been brought on (Laura Caplins-Bosack) to assist with this project and will begin after the first of the year. Mo Bookwalter will also be contracted to help summarize current data.
  - b. Jill has developed a timeline for each of the five individual projects. She and Mo will co-lead the meta-analysis component, and a report will be completed by mid-spring or June 15, 2012 at the latest. Jill and Laura will co-lead the focus group, public meeting, and interviews to be completed by July 1, 2012 or December 31, 2012 at the latest. Jill will lead preparation toward a future survey instrument and sampling design to be completed by October 15, 2012 or December 31, 2012 at the latest.
10. Fuels and vegetation monitoring is being conducted by a FS Strike Team at the Auggie and Cooney-McKay projects. This is using carry-over implementation money to make up for some of the monitoring money that was shifted to implementation on the aquatics work.
11. GNLC provided money for establishing soils and water monitoring plots to be used in the Geomorphic Road Analysis and Inventory Package (GRAIP) program. The

aquatics group hopes to use this package for future monitoring efforts in the SWCC.

c. Prioritization

- i. This Committee has not met since the last SWCC meeting and has not update.
- ii. The next meeting is tentatively set for Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>.
- iii. EMRI will present the results of their work to the SWCC in January.

d. Communications

- i. This Committee's next priority is developing an annual report for the public. They will begin working on this after November 15<sup>th</sup>.
- ii. They currently do not have a meeting date set.

IV. Next meetings: December 13, January 10, February 14, March 13, April 10, May 8