

**Southwestern Crown Collaborative  
Meeting Notes**

December 13, 2011

**Present:** Dale Kerkvliet\*, Scott Brennan\*, Gary Burnett\*, Debbie Austin\*, Gabriel Furshong\*, Anne Dahl\*, Cory Davis\*, Amber Kamps\*, Rob Ethridge\*, Sandy Mack\*, Jim Burchfield\*, Sarah Canepa\*, Lisa Bay (TPL), Keith Stockman\*, Adam Rissen, Ken Barber\*, Joe Kerkvliet\*, Rob Rasmussen (TPL), Jon Haufler\*, Kevin Riordan\*, Amber Kamps\* Tim Love\*

*\*Indicates voting member.*

*Note:* Scott held proxy for Megan Birzell and Craig Rawlings, and a quorum was present.

**Action Items:**

- Cory or Joe will send the Montana Woody Biomass Utilization Strategy report or a link to the report to the SWCC membership.
- Scott will re-send a link to the November 2011 Report on the CFLR program written by the CFLR Coalition Steering Committee.
- Jon will present the framework and his analysis results at the SWCC meeting on Jan 10th –approximately 1 hr – 1 1/2hr. The vegetation working group should try to attend this meeting. Jon will present spatial prioritization work at the Feb. SWCC meeting after meetings with Districts.
- Jon will schedule meetings with Swan and Lincoln Ranger Districts for early January to work on unit prioritization.
- Cory will check with Rich on the minor modifications on the north end of the SWCC boundary within the Swan Ranger District, but all agreed to the proposed changes as discussed.
- Cory will get on the SWCC meeting agenda for the next few months to present portions of the draft monitoring plan. Maybe 2 groups present / month. Send an executive summary prior to the presentation(s).
- Megan will put on SWCC agenda a discussion of the manner in which the SWCC wants to monitor the goal to maximize the utilization of wood.
- Megan will put on Feb. agenda a discussion of the process for reviewing monitoring projects for 2012.
- Scott will work on language in the Charter related to proxies, membership, and quorums and send it back out to the SWCC for comment.
- Sandy and Megan will draft charter language that addresses potential FACA concerns and present it to the Executive Committee on January 10th.
- Gabe will invite Tracy to next meeting to talk about The forest Jobs and Recreation Act, its relationship to the CFLR Program – and what it would mean to “opt in”.
- Megan will put a discussion on next SWCC agenda concerning projects where only a portion is funded by and/or consistent with the requirements of the CFLR Program.

- I. Welcome/Introductions
  - a. Review/approve notes from the November 8<sup>th</sup> meeting
    - i. The notes from November 8<sup>th</sup> were approved unanimously.
- II. Updates/New Information/Progress since last meeting
  - a. Scott reported that The Wilderness Society (TWS) went through some realignment in structure and positions. Joe Kerkvliet's position unfortunately was eliminated. Joe is interested in continuing work with the SWCC and that was welcomed by TWS. The SWCC will not likely be affected by any other TWS changes.
  - b. Joe reported on the Montana Woody Biomass Utilization Strategy. A report has been published by MT. Resources Association. The report talks about challenges and opportunities using biomass. The report is on DNRC web site.
    - i. **ACTION:** Cory or Joe will send out the report or a link to the report to the whole SWCC.
  - c. Lisa Bay presented opportunities to partner with TNC and TPL
    - i. Robert Ramussen will continue as the Liaison for the Trust for Public Land (TPL).
    - ii. Lisa Bay has been contracted by TPL to develop a restoration plan on 14,000 – 16,000 acres The Nature Conservancy (TNC) currently owns in the north portion of the Swan Lake Ranger District within the SWCC which is planned to be transferred to the state of Montana in a few years. Lisa worked for TNC for 10 years and raised money for Legacy Land acquisitions. The transfer to the State is not going as quickly as originally planned so they are planning to do some restoration work (ex. forest and riparian restoration, culvert removal, enhance climate resiliency) before the transfer occurs. The land has three different conservation easements. MT Fish Wildlife and Parks has done a complete inventory on these lands including extensive snag and downed wood data collection that might be relevant to us and which might help inform Jon's prioritization work. She wants to work closely with TNC, DNRC, FWP and the SWCC in developing the restoration plan. She wanted this opportunity to interface with the SWCC and she hopes we will keep an open mind about things that might help each other.
      - 1. Potential opportunities include: leveraging grant money and match funding between the programs; sharing construction equipment; anything that might help each other; Prioritization committee – could potentially influence the kinds of projects and locations TPL and TNC

embark on; Monitoring committee could share monitoring protocols and results.

2. Lisa will meet with Rich as soon as possible (Rich was ill and could not attend today's meeting in person). Keith mentioned the need to coordinate actions related to activities in Grizzly Bear Units.
  3. Scott noted that this type of coordination across boundaries is highly consistent with the spirit of FLRA and CFLRP and welcomed the opportunity to work together.
  4. Lisa said they are trying to hire locally – relying on SEC contractor list.
  5. 3 conservation easements were drafted with knowledge of HCP requirements.
- d. Debbie reported that there is still was no FY 2012 federal budget. We may get a continuing resolution. We would get a percentage of last year's allocation – but last year we did not get the budget until late in the year. FY11 carry over money could be used for some implementation work in the interim. (Note: At the time of compiling these notes the CFLR program was fully funded at \$40M by Congress in the 2012 budget). Debbie said we should be getting an acting Regional Forester soon with Leslie's move to the Washington Office.
- e. Keith and Scott mentioned that the report on the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program written by the CFLRP Steering Committee used FY10 data. Keith said we want to be prepared to respond if we are challenged on the data so we have put together a list showing where each number comes from. Tim Love helped get the picture of Bud Moore which appears on the cover.
- i. **ACTION:** Scott will send out a link to the Report.

### III. Subcommittee Reports and Key Questions

- a. Prioritization - Update on EMRI's baseline analysis
  - i. Background: Jon H. explained the project's background. EMRI completed a project in the Blackfoot watershed for NRCS in which they did an historical analysis of ecosystem reference conditions and compared them to current conditions. SWCC asked for the same information for the entire SWCC project area to see if this information can inform what we want to do in the future. As an example, the SWCC landscape strategy proposes we treat 80% of high risk WUI areas. Consistent with our commitment to adaptive management, this analysis should help determine if that is still feasible – early analysis indicates it may or may not be. Also, Jon is trying to help distinguish where work is being done primarily for fuel reduction – or where it is being done primarily for forest restoration – and where the objectives overlap. It could help

inform what we really mean by forest restoration and where we should do that work in a focused manner to get best value for CFLR money over the 10 year program. Jon explained that the same question was asked for aquatics; where should we invest to get the best ecological responses. The prioritization work will integrate aquatics and vegetation.

- ii. Status - Vegetation: Jon has completed the Swan historic analysis. He has developed much more detailed descriptions of habitat groupings and at a finer scale than has been mapped previously. He has completed pre-fire suppression descriptions. Scott clarified that the work Jon is doing is not a magic system to identify exactly where we will go, rather it is input to communicate to the Forest Service. There are some gaps – for example weeds, insect and disease and climate change will need to be considered locally. Jon developed a straw-man (10% representation of historical conditions across ecological groupings) and asked the Districts in August and September to better identify what they want to accomplish with fuel work and forest restoration across the ecological sites. He also provided pre-fire conditions across the landscape and asked for feedback on these. The assumption is the pre-fire conditions will provide a reference condition to help describe restoration goals.
  1. Questions: Lisa asked if the work covers private land. Jon said yes at a rough scale, but the prioritization analysis focuses only on Federal Lands. Question – are these discrete polygons we are recommending to treat – or 20,000 foot level assessment? Jon said he focused on areas where there are currently large trees (VMAP uses a 15” dbh cut off) – that is where his initial polygons are. Legacy lands are not identified in his analysis for moving on a trajectory for forest restoration but they are included in consideration for aquatic restoration and road work. Keith asked if we should be identifying a larger percentage of priority areas now so we can pick from them – given that other issues/resource needs are not considered yet and may limit where active restoration can occur.
- iii. Upcoming Work: All of EMRIs analysis will be completed by the end of December. Jon does not need District feedback for this.
  1. **ACTION:** Jon will present the framework and his analysis results at the SWCC meeting on Jan 10<sup>th</sup> –approximately 1 hr – 1 1/2hr. The vegetation working group should try to attend this meeting. They will likely have a lot of questions and may need to have more detailed discussions with Jon.

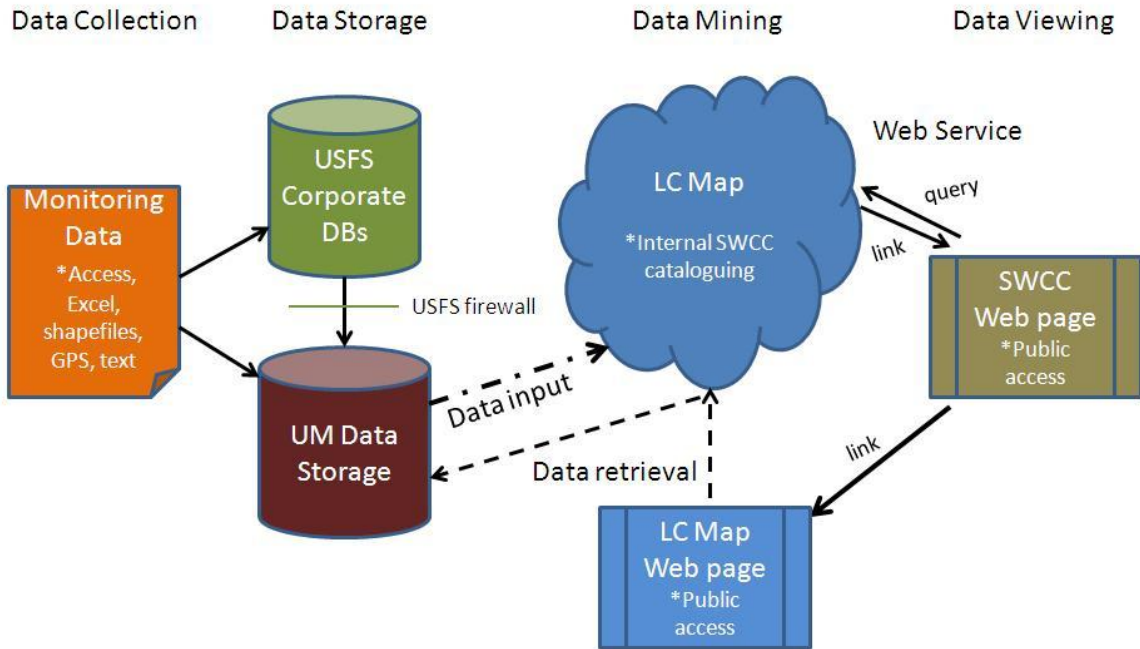
2. Jon is waiting to get responses back from the Districts. He received initial feedback from the Silviculturists last week and he has a meeting scheduled with them this week. Amber would like consensus agreement on reference conditions from the silviculturists at the Thursday meeting. These will drive the restoration goal. Amber is ready to run with Jon's straw-man if consensus is not reached.
  3. Jon will work with each District to develop the spatial prioritization. This will not be completed before the January SWCC meeting. Seeley's meeting is scheduled on Jan. 17th.
    - a. **ACTION:** Jon will schedule meetings with Swan and Lincoln for early January to work on spatial unit prioritization.
    - b. **ACTION:** Jon will present spatial prioritization work at the February SWCC meeting.
  - iv. Status – Aquatics: The Swan map will be done in a couple of weeks. They have completed work on degree of road disruption and are preparing a report and summary information.
    1. Aquatics coordination has been good – the monitoring and prioritization groups have been having ongoing discussions.
    2. Questions: Sarah – What were the criteria looked at for aquatics? Jon said the value for Westslope cutthroat trout and Bull trout were the criteria used. The prioritization asked where work would help maintain the streams with the highest value for these species and where the best opportunities to improve streams are. Roads were a focus.
- b. Executive
- i. Received a preview of Jon Haufler and Lisa Bay's presentations.
  - ii. Discussed potential charter revisions – agreed to further discuss at this meeting.
  - iii. Discussed a large change proposed by Rich Kehr to the SWCC boundary on the north end of the Swan Lake Ranger District – no consensus to bring the proposal forward.
  - iv. Had a discussion with Michelle Wasienko-Holland and Matt Gordon about partnership liability agreements. The Forest Service cannot limit liability.
- c. Monitoring
- i. SW Crown boundary: The group reviewed proposed minor modifications to SW Crown boundary.
    1. Amber made the clarification that the Continental Divide has always been considered the boundary of the SW

Crown. It was never intended to be the District Boundary on the east side. The map correction there is a correction – not a change.

2. There was agreement to the minor modifications Cory and Lisa Blackburn proposed.
  - a. **ACTION:** Cory will check with Rich on the minor modifications on the north end within the Swan Ranger District, but all agreed to the minor proposed changes as discussed.
- ii. Cory reported that the committee is working on the monitoring plan, and it is going well. Each subcommittee has a draft created but there is more work to do. Generally all of the objectives and questions are completed in the plan.
  1. **ACTION:** Cory will get on the SWCC meeting agenda for the next few months to present portions of the draft monitoring plan. Maybe two groups present / month. He will send an executive summary prior to the presentation(s).
  2. Scott said to be sure to describe how the plan fits into our overall process – how it will inform adaptive management.
  3. Keith said the monitoring committee wants an early review so they don't spend a lot of time flushing out details on things the SWCC does not want to focus on.
  4. The manner in which to monitor the goal to maximize the utilization of wood could be controversial, and so Keith said the Socioeconomic Subcommittee would like the full collaborative to provide feedback on this monitoring question.
    - a. **ACTION:** Megan will put on SWCC agenda a discussion of the manner in which the SWCC wants to monitor the goal to maximize the utilization of wood
  5. Roads are part of the integrated monitoring plan.
- iii. Cory has a list of 2012 proposed monitoring projects. The idea is that the monitoring committees will identify what needs to be done and who can do that work. The committee is moving away from a proposal process. The monitoring group doesn't meet again until after next SWCC.
  1. **ACTION:** Megan will put on February agenda a discussion of the process for approving monitoring projects for 2012.
- iv. The data management working group has developed a strategy for data management (Figure: SWCC Data Management Strategy). The data will be housed at UM (good storage) and made available

to the public through a tool called LC Map that the GNLCC developed. GNLCC is providing great support for us.

## SWCC Data Management Strategy



### d. Communications

- i. A layman’s version of the Annual Report is in development. Anne said it will be available in January and it will be 8 pages with short stories – side bars – and easy to understand pie charts. (Also see Item V.a in these notes below).
- ii. A press release is under development highlighting what went out in the Annual Report. It should go to the media this Thursday.

### IV. Charter

- a. Changes - The group walked through potential changes to the Charter
  - i. Changes **unanimously agreed to** include the insertion of the word “official” in six locations in paragraphs 1, 10, 14, 15; the insertion of “Although we always strive for consensus – if” before the language “consensus cannot be reached...”; and, In the RECORD KEEPING paragraph the last sentence will read “All official SWCC committees should provide a written summary of decisions made at each of their meetings.”

- b. Changes Still Being Considered. The group agreed we need to add language concerning proxies and that we want people to be actively engaged. It was also suggested to add language under QUORUM like – “For the purposes of calculating a quorum, members who miss three consecutive meetings will not be included in the calculation of the quorum for that meeting.” Exact language was not agreed to.
  - i. **ACTION:** Scott will work on language in the Charter related to proxies, membership, and quorums and send it back out to the SWCC for comment.
- c. It was suggested to improve information flow it would be good to require that Committee chairs be members in good standing of the full collaborative and for those Committee chairs to report back to the full collaborative on committee updates – as well as requesting that each Committee and subcommittee meeting start with an update of the last full collaborative meeting. No action or decision came from this discussion.
- d. Debbie led a discussion regarding questions members of the public have raised concerning the SWCC and FACA. The group reiterated its earlier agreement that we have always worked to meet the intent of CFLRP and FACA regulations.
  - i. **ACTION:** Sandy and Megan will draft charter language that addresses potential FACA concerns and present it to the Executive Committee on January 10th.

V. Discussion Items

- a. Sandy shared some FY 2011 highlights. Suggestions were made for improvements to the graphic presentations if the information is to be used in the public version of the annual report. It was also recommended that personal contractor/partner stories be linked to each of the accomplishment outputs as possible in the public version.

VI. Sandy provided a copy of the WO 2011 instructions for the CFLR annual report which included specific documentation needs for matching in-kind work, supplies, materials and equipment. She is looking for a way to collect this information in a manner least intrusive to our partners. She provided a DRAFT invoice template to get ideas, feedback, and suggestions from FS partners. She asked members to discuss the invoices with their finance folks for suggestions and to see if they would be willing to use this for all partnership invoices.

VII. Gabe suggested Tracy Stone-Manning come talk to inform the SWCC about Senator Tester’s Bill Forest Jobs and Recreation Act (FJRA) and its relationship to the CFLR Program in the SW Crown. There could be some direct interactions between FJRA and the work of the SWCC if FJRA were enacted. The group agreed that Gabe should invite Tracy Stone-Manning to present at our January

meeting. Senator Tester has been very supportive of CFLR funding and our project. Amber said that Lincoln may be included in the “opt in” provision of the bill. Kevin is concerned by this because no one discussed this possibility with him or the FS and it was not vetted with the community. The group would like Tracy to explain what the “opt in” provision would mean for Seeley Lake and/or Lincoln. Gabe and Scott said they are very surprised that Lincoln may be included.

- a. **ACTION:** Gabe will invite Tracy to next meeting to talk about the Bill – and what it would mean to opt in.

VIII. **ACTION:** Megan - put a discussion on next SWCC agenda concerning projects where only a portion is consistent with or funded by CFLR.

IX. The question was asked if FS match is going down because of the integrated restoration fund code (IRR). Kevin said he believes the fund code gives us greater flexibility. Debbie explained that the whole IRR package in the latest draft budget was ½ million dollars less than last year for the region which is a reflection of the overall downward trend in funding.

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

- a. Seeley Prioritization meeting with District January 17; Lincoln January 12. Swan yet to be determined.

XI. Adjourned