

Southwestern Crown Collaborative Working Group Meeting Notes 3/9/10

Present: Scott Brennan (TWS), Jon Haufler (EMRI/CRC), Scott Tomson (USFS – Seeley District), Gunnar Carnwath (UM), Mo Hartmann (NWC), Marnie Criley (MFRC), Debbie Austin (USFS – Lolo), Amber Kamps (USFS – Lincoln District), Keith Stockmann (USFS – Region 1), Craig Rawlings (MCDC), Gary Burnett (Blackfoot Challenge), Megan Birzell (CRC), Brad Gillespie (USFS – Swan Lake District), Joe Kerkvliet (TWS), Bo Wilmer (TWS), Kevin Riordan (USFS – Helena), Matthew Koehler (WWI), Anne Dahl (SEC), Earl Applekamp (USFS – Flathead), Rich Kehr (USFS – Swan Lake District), Sam Redfern (USFS – Lolo), Rob Ethridge (DNRC/MAIRS), Travis Belote (TWS), Anne Carlson (TWS), Jim Burchfield (UM)

Proposal Requirement Teams: Draft due 3/12 unless otherwise noted; Direction provided in “CFLRP Proposal March V3” document (attached)

- Proposed Treatment section: **Amber**, Matthew, Marnie, Mo, Travis, Gary, Jim.
- Ecological Context section: **Scott T.**, Travis, Jon H., John I., Gunnar.
- Collaboration section: **Scott B.**, Debbie, Gary, Anne, Jim B., Megan.
- Wildfire section: **Brad**, Keith, Joe, Bo, John I., Jon H.
- Utilization section: **Joe**, Craig, Keith, Angela, Travis.
- Investments, Funding Estimate, and Funding Plan sections:
 - Federal: **Debbie**, Richard, Amber, Tim
 - Non-Federal: **Gary**, Anne, Jim B., Rosalie, Megan
 - **Mo**, Joe, Jim, and Travis will answer bullets 7-9 (employment and training opportunities questions) under the Investments section.
- Maps: **Bo**, Kelsey (FS GIS person)/ Scott T., and Jon will figure out how best to display our project area visually.
- Landscape Strategy section (due 3/19): **Megan** and Scott with support from Matthew, Amber, and Jon H.

Action Items:

- **Scott B.**, Marnie, and Megan (and possibly others) will try to schedule a meeting with Leslie near the end of March to discuss the evolution of our proposal.
- **Gary** and Craig will begin working to schedule meetings with delegation staff this week.
- **Joe** will take the lead in contacting people who will be able to give us more information on non-CHP uses of biomass.
- **Scott B.** will schedule a conference call for proposal requirement team leaders to be held between March 25th and 30th.
- **Jim**, Travis, Amber, Marnie, Mo, Anne, and Gunnar will develop monitoring component for landscape strategy.
- **Scott B.** will build list of chambers of commerce and assign people to contact them.
- **Scott B.** will put a website mock-up together and send it around.

I. Goals for Meeting:

- Develop and assign specific tasks to complete the project proposal
- Develop a timeline for project proposal development
- Have a substantial draft proposal ready for Debbie to present to the Regional Forester in one week

II. Updates/new information

- The call letter was issued two weeks ago with specific project proposal guidelines and requirements. Proposals are due May 14th. A personal due date of May 1 for the SW Crown Collaborative was suggested to ensure that everything is ready to go by May 14th.
- Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell mentioned the CFLRP in his testimony for FY 2011 FS funding before the Senate appropriations committee.
- Montana Senators Baucus and Tester have submitted a letter to a Dept. of Ag. Undersecretary making the following specific requests for CFLRP implementation:
 - They asked that money be available for NEPA and planning
 - They asked that stewardship contracting be able to be used as FS match
 - They asked that the FS allow in-kind match from federal partners.
- Debbie and Scott B. have both met with regional forester Leslie Weldon to discuss CFLRP.
 - Debbie's meeting included FS staff working on the Clearwater (ID) proposal. They discussed what each group is doing and how that will work with the Regional Forester's funding plan. Debbie will meet again with Leslie in approximately one week with more information to talk more specifically about the funding plan.
 - ACTION ITEM: Scott B., Marnie, and Megan (and possibly others) will try to schedule a meeting with Leslie near the end of March to discuss the evolution of our proposal.
- ACTION ITEM: No progress has been made on scheduling meetings with delegation staff, but Gary and Craig will begin working on that this week.

III. Call letter Review and Discussion

- Comments on and suggestions for the existing draft proposal are noted in the document titled "CFLRP Proposal March V3," which is attached to these notes.
- Teams for drafting/revising the project proposal, due 3/12 unless otherwise noted:
 - Proposed Treatment section: **Amber**, Matthew, Marnie, Mo, Travis, Gary, Jim.
 - Ecological Context section: **Scott T.**, Travis, Jon H., John I., Gunnar.
 - Collaboration section: **Scott B.**, Debbie, Gary, Anne, Jim B., Megan.
 - Wildfire section: **Brad**, Keith, Joe, Bo, John I., Jon H.
 - Utilization section: **Joe**, Craig, Keith, Angela, Travis.
 - ACTION ITEM: Joe will take the lead in contacting people who will be able to give us more information on non-CHP uses of biomass.
 - Investments, Funding Estimate, and Funding Plan sections:
 - Federal: **Debbie**, Richard, Amber, Tim
 - Non-Federal: **Gary**, Anne, Jim B., Rosalie, Megan
 - **Mo**, Joe, Jim, and Travis will answer bullets 7-9 (employment and training opportunities questions) under the Investments section.
 - Maps: **Bo**, Kelsey (FS GIS person)/ Scott T., and Jon will figure out how best to display our project area visually.
 - Landscape Strategy section (due 3/19): **Megan** and Scott with support from Matthew, Amber, and Jon H.
- **Proposal requirement team leaders will convene a conference call (Scott B. to schedule) between March 25th – 30th to assess how the proposal is coming.**
- We need to document all ongoing work on non-FS lands in order to make our proposal more competitive. This should be incorporated into the landscape strategy.
- Proposed treatments on non-FS lands in the landscape can leverage the proposal but cannot be used as match for this proposal.

IV. Key Discussion Questions

- All key discussion questions (listed below) will now be addressed in the context of different proposal sections.

- What does restoration look like to everybody?
- How do context and existing conditions matter?
- What are we trying to achieve with treatments (other than WUI)?
- How do you think we should allocate resources among all possible activities, including monitoring?

V. Finalizing and prioritizing a list of projects

- The landscape strategy and CFLRP proposal are two different things. The landscape strategy should prioritize fuels mitigation and restoration projects across all ownerships on the landscape while the CFLRP proposal should prioritize fuels mitigation and restoration projects on FS lands in the landscape and should be more specific.
- FS Restoration Priorities Spreadsheet:
 - Types of projects:
 - Wildfire and fuels mitigation
 - Various treatment types: mechanical with commercial component, pre-commercial thinning, prescribed fire only (including in wilderness)
 - Not able to treat every high risk WUI stand in next 10 years because windows for prescribed fire burning are small
 - 4-5 solid prescribed fire projects from each district that will carry us through for the next 10 years, partially due to capacity and environmental (burning window) limitations
 - Spreadsheets total acres, planning costs, total costs, and monitoring costs
 - 500k total in 2010 to implement and monitor fuels reduction projects
 - Between 2011 – 2020, about \$1 million/year to implement fuels/prescribed fire
 - Didn't include cost for anything they thought they'd produce a commercial product off of
 - Didn't include follow-up activities beyond initial treatment in cost because assumed cost would come not from CFLRP. It would come from Brush Disposal dollars.
 - For the most part focuses on high risk areas within the WUI, but is land-form based and not necessarily all within the WUI line.
 - Invasive and exotic species (including aquatic)
 - Lots of partnership and in-kind match are already built-in
 - 2010 – 300k worth of treatments
 - 2011-2020, \$1 million/year.
 - Includes Legacy lands
 - Fish and wildlife
 - Includes Aspen and whitebark pine restoration, burning for wildlife (not double-counted), fish restoration (culvert replacement, etc.)
 - 2010 – 300k
 - 2011-2020, 800k – 900k/year.
 - Watershed and water quality
 - 2011- 2016 - \$2million/year, cost drops after that because it's hard to forecast.
 - Roads and trail maintenance
 - 2010 – 56k
 - 2011 – 2020 – 600k/year

- For FY 2010/2011, just projects that have NEPA completed are reported. Costs are implementation only.
- One question we need to answer is: How do we decide whether the second priority WUI treatment gets funded before (or after) the first priority invasive species treatments?
- Total cost is about \$50 million over 10 years.
- We need to make sure we don't max out our capacity in the WUI to the detriment of being able to do projects outside the WUI.
- We should tag projects that will affect T&E species.
- The district rangers met with MT FWP and BBCTU to ask for their input for watershed restoration projects both on and off federal land.
- Planning: We should have parallel tracks going for "big gulp NEPA" and "small NEPA" (EAs and CEs).
- There was considerable discussion about whether to add a 6th category of projects that would be titled either "Restoration" or "Large tree and old growth retention."
 - The Swan has already captured these projects in the current spreadsheets. They would just need to be pulled out and categorized differently.
 - The Seeley and Lincoln districts would have more work to do to identify these projects, but it is doable.
 - It's hard to separate out because lots of projects meet multiple objectives. It was suggested that we combine all 5 spreadsheets and identify the multiple objectives each project meets.
 - ACTION ITEM: We will revisit this issue after Debbie speaks to the regional forester.

VI. Incorporating Monitoring Plans and Budget in the Spreadsheet(s)

- Monitoring as it pertains to treatment design
 - Want to be able to aggregate treatments to understand consequences at landscape level.
 - This is basically research by a different name.
 - Measuring in a reliable and valid way the conditions and trends affected by these treatments.
 - Effectiveness depends on intensity of treatments.
- Major components of managing a monitoring program
 - 1: Need to synthesize and standardize monitoring. (Will need a data manager for integrated landscape monitoring system.)
 - 2: Data collection.
 - UM has 45k in match to look at who is monitoring what, is it effective, what is data quality, who holds it, how accessible is it?
- Deciding what to monitor and how
 - Monitoring must be simple.
 - 5 categories of monitoring:
 - Fire and fuel dynamics
 - Biodiversity and successional pathways
 - Water quality and watershed function (sediment, soil formation and movement)
 - Social and economic responses
 - Social implications/changes in attitudes/public trust
 - There will be associated costs (data management, transportation to/from monitoring sites, etc.)
 - UM advantages: server infrastructure for data management, lots of young people itching to get in the field, quality control.
 - UM's cost over 10 years would be 300k/year:
 - Field monitoring, social servers, staff person, etc.

- Can use lots of in-kind match
- Monitoring should be structured with existing databases to reduce costs.
- The D.C. office is currently reviewing the monitoring requirements for CFLRP.
- ACTION ITEM: **Jim**, Travis, Amber, Marnie, Mo, Anne, and Gunnar will develop monitoring component for landscape strategy. This language will be pulled from for the proposal requirements.
 - Jim will send Auggie monitoring protocol to this group.

VII. Review new background document

- The group will submit electronic comments to Scott and Megan.
- Scott will determine a deadline.

VIII. Outreach update

- Contacts since last meeting:
 - Amber and Tim met with Powell County Commissioners and incorporated one project that the Commission wanted to see.
 - CRC held community meeting about CFLRP and got information out to forest contractors.
 - Debbie met with Leslie Weldon. She suggested we work more closely with NRCS. The invitation has been extended, but they're not that interested. Need to speak with Chambers of Commerce.
 - Scott B. met with Vilsack's secretary last weekend and told him about our proposal. He also met with Leslie Weldon a few weeks ago.
- Who is missing and who will contact them?
 - ACTION ITEM: **Scott B.** will build list of chambers of commerce and assign people to contact them.
 - The Upper Blackfoot Chamber of Commerce has been contacted.
- Website discussion
 - ACTION ITEM: **Scott B.** will put a mock-up together and send it around.

IX. Wrapping up loose ends

- Suggestions for RAC nominations
 - Carl Fiedler
 - Cara Nelson
 - Clint Carlson
 - Other suggestions should be submitted to Scott B.

X. Next Meetings: (all 9am at Lolo NF)

- April 13th
- May 11th
- June 15th
- July 14th