

**Forsythe II Multi-Party Monitoring Group (MMG)
Wednesday, February 21, 2017
Meeting Summary**

Attendance

15 people attended the meeting, including private citizens, US Forest Service (USFS) employees, and Magnolia Forest Group (MFG) members.

Action Items

<i>All</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send edits to the roles and commitments document to Heather by March 5. • Send comments for the DAT field trip to Heather by March 15. • Send edits to the timeline document to Heather by March 5. • Send pin locations on Avenza by February 28.
<i>Heather</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a reminder email to the MMG about the deadline for comments for the DAT field trip, edits to the roles and commitments document, and edits to the timeline document on Friday, March 23. • Aggregate all MMG comments regarding the DAT field trip and send to Dallas and copy the MMG.
<i>Kevin</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare information for Forsythe II members about the contract officer representative (COR) process so understand the process to identify any possible systematic problems. • Indicate any hard deadlines on the timeline document, edit it to reflect the iterative process, and send to Heather by Friday, February 23.
<i>Brett and Kevin</i>	Work together to identify how to best present forestry science, particularly about historical stand reconstruction and the new General Technical Report.
<i>Brett</i>	Talk to Mike Battaglia to identify historical stand reconstruction data plots that are similar to Forsythe II.
<i>Lisa</i>	Get any documentation from the DAT from Dallas and send to Heather.

Introduction

Angie Gee, the new Boulder District Ranger for the Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest and Pawnee National Grasslands (ARP), introduced herself and her background. She is originally from South Dakota and started with the US Forest Service (USFS) on the Black Hills National Forest doing fire work. She moved onto the Region 2 Regional Office in Golden, Colorado, to do fire and fuels planning. She then moved to the Washington Office of the USFS, followed by time on a national forest in North Carolina, and has now relocated back to Colorado.

General Technical Report

Participants had received the new General Technical Report (RMRS-GTR-373, referred to as “the GTR”) via email prior to the meeting and discussed it. This report was in draft form for many years and has recently been finalized and published. It offers a summary of guidelines for designing treatments in the context of the Front Range landscape. The USFS

has used information that formed this report to inform possible treatments, particularly in the mid-montane areas. Below are the highlights of the group's discussion.

- The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) was started on Colorado's Front Range in 2010, and participants in that effort wanted to better understand the history of the landscape and fire to inform future treatments.
- The GTR has been in development for seven years, and since it is now completed, there is a larger effort underway to reach forest managers so it is widely used and correctly interpreted and applied.
- The GTR has only recently been published and is not yet available in print but is available online.
- The Forsythe II project was designed taking into account many of the principles of the GTR, as a draft of the report was available before it was finalized.
- The GTR suggest designing treatments that take into account factors such as slope, aspect, and elevation when identifying historical ranges for basal area and stand structure.
- It would be useful to know how the USFS and CFRI understand and apply the information in the GTR, particularly as it relates to the Forsythe II project. More information about available fire modeling technology and analysis would be useful.
- It is unclear if there is stand reconstruction data for the Forsythe II project, but there is likely other information available that is comparable based on similar elevation, aspect, topographic wetness index (TWI) information, and stand structure. New science is always being released and could help better understand the context of this project. However, there is never a shortage of available information, and there should be thought given to what information is useful and advances collective understanding rather than delays decisions.

After considering the above points, the Multi-Party Monitoring Group (MMG) agreed that Brett Wolk and Kevin Zimlinghaus should work together to identify what data and information from the GTR should be presented to the MMG and then develop a plan for a webinar. Brett Wolk will also talk to Mike Battaglia about identifying historical stand reconstruction plots that are similar to the Forsythe II project area.

Roles and Commitments

At the previous meeting, the MMG tasked Kevin Zimlinghaus and Teagen Blakey with completing the Roles and Commitments table that clarifies the interactions and expectations of the MMG's work with the USFS. They went back and forth multiple times to accommodate changes and ended with a mutually-approved draft document. The MMG discussed this draft document; below are the highlights of this discussion.

- One large discussion point was the ability for members of the MMG to accompany USFS contracting officer representatives (CORs) on inspection walks. Having MMG participants involved in the COR's work multiple times would significantly increase their workload.
- MMG participants often follow along with CORs, crews, and other USFS employees regardless of having explicit permission to do so, and there are safety concerns about this practice.

- A mutually beneficial solution could be for Kevin Zimlinghaus to provide a setting for people to learn about the COR process without having to always be on site. However, this may not suit everyone, as there is an interest in double-checking the work of the CORs.
- The most significant concern about people being in the woods with the contractors is that it creates inefficiencies in the treatment and contracting process. Addressing concerns with a designated contract representative may be less likely to cause process problems.
- The Roles and Commitments document should be edited to state that the USFS will respond to all comments or recommendations within two weeks, unless stated otherwise.
- This will continue to be a living document and can be revisited if necessary.

After considering the above points, the MMG agreed to the following:

- The MMG will review the COR process once to better understand it and then share any concerns with Kevin Zimlinghaus. This process will be used to identify any possible systematic problems.
- The Roles and Commitments document will be edited to state that the USFS will respond to all comments or recommendations within two weeks, unless stated otherwise.
- Any additional edits or comments for this document are due on Monday, March 5.

Design Advisory Team Input on Treatments for Units 1 and 2

The Nederland Design Advisory Team (DAT) has provided input to the USFS on the treatment prescriptions for Units 1 and 2. Kevin Zimlinghaus and a DAT member provided a summary of the DAT process, the input they have given the USFS to date, and the reasoning for it. Below are the highlights of this conversation:

- The DAT was put together by the Nederland Board of Trustees and assigned to create recommendations for unit aggregations. The recommendations they provided is the aggregation of treatments within the Units 1 and 2 themselves. The USFS met with them to better understand their recommendations and reasoning.
- The DAT recommendations were created by residents of the Big Springs area, local fire fighters, the Town of Nederland staff, and the USFS. Their recommendations took into consideration a variety of perspectives and landscape features.
- Many of the participants at the DAT meeting were concerned about the viewshed for the Town of Nederland as well as fire risk reduction.
- The resulting recommendations reflect patch cuts on 4.5 acres within Units 1 and 2.
- The ecological focus of the recommendations was on improving resiliency by increasing heterogeneity.
- The proposed patch cuts could help create a fire break around Nederland.
- Buffers are not included in the DAT recommendations and can be incorporated at a later date.
- This recommendation from DAT also includes the incorporation of the aspen along the road in Unit 1.
- Within the two polygons (Units 1 and 2), up to 15 acres are actually treatable.

- DAT is supposed to bring these recommendations to the Nederland Board of Trustees to be later presented to the USFS.
- The DAT and the USFS will continue to work together to refine Units 1 and 2. The recommendations will be part of what is considered for the treatment area, along with other sources of information such as MMG feedback.
- The next step for the DAT and the USFS is to visit the proposed treatment areas to see what the various treatment recommendations would look like on the ground.
- Treatment can occur within the buffer areas if there is explicit permission from the landowner.
- The DAT-recommended treatment may not offer a substantial fire break since the treatment footprint is roughly four acres.
- It is important to consider how treatment in this area will impact the viewshed from Nederland.
- The areas outlined on the map in blue are areas that could be feasible for treatment from the USFS perspective. These areas do not recommend a proposal for treatment. The areas in pink are those areas that the DAT proposed for treatment.
- There may be a difference of opinions in what treatment will be effective in impacting fire behavior for different types of fire.
- These units represent a small portion of the entire Forsythe II treatment and changing the density of the entire area could occur by switching treatments to different areas.
- This treatment area represents many social values.
- Human encroachment has created lots of diversity within the area, and there is lots of visible heterogeneity within the stands.
- All stakeholder interests should be represented in this treatment area.
- This area is a small part of a much larger treatment.
- The DAT should take the MMG's feedback into consideration, particularly on issues such as wildlife corridors. Perhaps MMG could submit comments to the DAT before they meet with the USFS to walk the units.
- Any agreement coming out of this meeting should be approved by DAT, since they are separate groups.
- Not everyone who started out as part of the DAT is satisfied with the final recommendations.

After considering the above points, the MMG agreed to the following:

- A representative of DAT will try to find documentation from previous meetings to see who participated and what was discussed.
- All MMG members should submit comments they would like DAT to consider to Heather Bergman by March 15. Heather will then aggregate these comments and send them to the USFS and DAT, copying the MMG.

Status Updates on Current Treatments

The USFS prepared information that outlined the process of implementation for Phase 2 of Forsythe II. The USFS provided a spreadsheet outlining the process for project implementation, as well as the deadlines associated with various activities. This

spreadsheet will be continuously updated, and the facilitator will send it out as an Excel file to the MMG when an updated version is available. Any additional comments about the current status of treatments should be directed to Kevin Zimlinghaus. The MMG discussed information listed on this file. Below are the highlights of the conversation.

- This spreadsheet shows various ways that data is being collected.
- Manual and mechanical treatments have been separated, and there is some repetition of units that have both types of treatments.
- Some units vary in treatment method (mechanical or manual) between phases. These are not often used in the same phase due to concerns about the contractors' safety.
- It seems likely that most property owners would prefer to have one entry on their property rather than have a phased approach.
- Not all units have been split out yet.
- Some of the identified units are steep and rocky, which may cause challenges with implementation. However, the entire area within a unit will likely not be treated. More groundtruthing is required to fully understand all the site-specific details.
- It may be possible to do a field trip when there is less snow on the ground. This will help MMG members to understand the USFS's approach to treatment layout.
- Sample marks and final marking progress are indicated on the spreadsheet.
- Some of these areas may not be as homogeneous as they appear to the USFS.
- More plots are taken in units with more stand diversity.
- The MMG cannot react to any information until information about the specific prescriptions is available.
- The USFS typically visits a site five or six times by the end of the contracting phase.
- Some people are unsure that the correct species of trees are being cut. Using Avenza is a good way to share these types of nuances with the USFS.
- Information shared through the Avenza app should be ready by the next meeting so the MMG can begin the prioritization process.

Scheduling

Kevin Zimlinghaus prepared a timeline that identifies each stage in the USFS process for Forsythe II and any associated MMG activity or deadlines. The MMG reviewed this draft timeline briefly and then agreed to the following:

- Kevin will indicate all hard deadlines and send that revised timeline to Heather Bergman by Friday, February 23. Heather will send the revised timeline to the MMG on February 23, and MMG comments are due by Monday, March 5.
- All contributions through the Avenza app are due on February 28.
- The next MMG meeting is on March 14.
- All MMG members should submit comments on the Roles and Commitments document to Heather Bergman by March 5.