



**Colorado Forest Restoration Institute  
Annual Report, FY2008-09**

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Summary of Deliverables

Deliverable from approved FY08-09 Work Plan	Outcome
Project 1: Capacity building/operations: an institute that meets needs in Colorado and updated interactive website	Present report; see further <a href="http://cfri.colostate.edu/">http://cfri.colostate.edu/</a>
Project 2: Outreach products for Colorado: 4 short-courses, white paper on Stewardship Contracting benefits, and workbook series on multi-party assessment and monitoring for Colorado forest types	4 participatory ecological monitoring training field courses for the Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative (March 2009 and October 2009) and the Uncompahgre Plateau Mesas Forest Restoration Project (July 2009 and August 2009); 1 wood utilization workshop with COWOOD, April 2009; completed draft of multi-party ecological monitoring handbook for Colorado forest types (online at <a href="http://cfri.colostate.edu/">http://cfri.colostate.edu/</a> )
Project 3: Pilot Landscape Project (SWERI Project): CFRI contribution to landscape-scale effort, progress report on development landscape evaluation for restoration treatments in Colorado	Pending final planning of the Four Forest Initiative in Northern Arizona; landscape evaluation of restoration treatments in Colorado is pending developing with involvement of a multi-stakeholder collaborative group for the Uncompahgre Plateau.
Project 4: Colorado Wood Utilization and Marketing: white paper on "restoration economy" in Colorado, 2 "making connections" workshops, variety of stakeholder consultations, and updated COWOOD webpage	White paper co-published with the Pinchot Institute for Conservation and the Heinz Center summarizing findings from a workshop on wood bioenergy development (online at <a href="http://cfri.colostate.edu/">http://cfri.colostate.edu/</a> ); 1 wood utilization "making connections" workshop, April 2009; the COWOOD biomass short-course workshop was canceled due to shortage of funds; COWOOD website: <a href="http://csfs.colostate.edu/cowood/">http://csfs.colostate.edu/cowood/</a>
Project 5: Supporting forest restoration collaborations: statewide workshop for collaborations, summary lessons learned reports from CFRI's involvement in forest health collaborations, and database for long-term storage and use of forest restoration information	1 statewide workshop for forest health collaborative, April 2009; lessons learned reports are pending with interviews with collaboration participants; interactive web-based ecological monitoring database is under development; pilot testing of the database will occur Spring 2010 with data collected Fall 2009.
Project 6: Continuing to develop evidence-based approaches in forest restoration: Outreach products on improving the use of evidence in forest restoration decisions, and a report on the development of an on-line Practitioner Experience Library, which will provide organized summaries of evidence based on practitioners' experiences and insights.	The Environmental Assessment and final Record of Decision for the Uncompahgre Plateau Mesas Forest Restoration Project were signed August 2009 using CFRI historical forest stand structure report; assisted in the development and administration of a community survey regarding the Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative.

## **Background**

Colorado has 23 million acres of forests, with federal lands comprising about 2/3 of the forested area. Over 200,000 private land owners control 9 million acres. Forest landscapes in Colorado are complex mosaics of forest types and ownerships, with nearly 1 million people living in the “red zone” area with high risk of catastrophic fires, largely as a result of unnatural changes in our forests. Direct costs for fire suppression totaled over \$200 million since 2000. The total cost of 500,000 burned acres is much greater than the suppression costs alone, including damaged forests, watersheds, communities, and lives. Declining forest health may decrease the diversity of species in Colorado forests, increase the risks of outbreaks of insects and diseases, and reduce the flow of rivers that provide water to all the states of the southwest (Colorado and San Juan rivers) and many states in the Great Plains (Arkansas, Platte, and Rio Grande rivers). These issues led Congress to pass the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act in 2004, authorizing establishment of forest restoration institutes in Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico.

The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) was established in 2005 in the Warner College of Natural Resources (WCNR), with the mission to restore the health of Colorado forests and reduce severe wildfires. Our goal is to provide the best-available science in forest ecology, restoration, and management, in ways that are readily usable by the diverse group of land owners and managers in Colorado. CFRI helps federal, state, and private land owners develop and implement the strategies of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, National Fire Plan, and the Forest Service’s Strategic Plan.

## **Organization**

The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute is a unit within the Warner College of Natural Resources, and also a member of the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) chartered by the Governors of Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. The Director of CFRI reports to the Dean of the WCNR, and is responsible for overall operations of the Institute, including budgeting, planning, administration, and generating products.

The activities of CFRI are developed in response to stakeholder discussions, collated into an annually updated “Colorado Forest Restoration Needs Assessment.” An oversight process has been developed to meet the requirements of the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act. The USDA Forest Service’s Southwest Regional Forester convenes an Executive Team (with multi-agency state and federal representatives) to approve annual workplans developed in collaboration with another multi-agency Development Team. The CFRI also engages in forest restoration that go beyond the defined responsibilities of the Act, using other funding sources.

## **2007 Support**

Federal funding of \$246,000 was provided through the USDA Forest Service for FY2008. The Colorado State Forest Service and Warner College of Natural Resources provided 6 months

of support for the Associate Director of Outreach, and 6 months of support for a graduate research assistant for information system development and management. The Forest Service funding for the FY2008 workplan became available more than halfway through the fiscal year, so actual expenditures (and deliverables reported here) continued into calendar year 2009.

### **1. Conferences, Workshops, and Meetings Sponsored by CFRI**

Co-convened, with the Western Aspen Alliance, a workshop of scientists on the current state of knowledge of aspen ecology and management in the Interior West, January 28, 2009, Fort Collins, CO. About two dozen scientists met to formulate an action plan for the Western Aspen Alliance.

Co-sponsored the Woody Biomass Utilization Partners workshop with the CWOOD program of the Colorado State University, Lakewood, April 20-21, 2009. Over 100 participants attended to learn about wood utilization opportunities from wildfire mitigation and restoration work.

Hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forest Health Collaborative Conference, Glenwood Springs, April 21-23. Over 80 participants attended the conference to share lessons learned, define policy issues, and network.



Wood Utilization Partners Workshop, Lakewood, CO, April, 2009 (Photo: Amanda Bucknam)



Participants at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forest Health Collaboratives Conference in Glenwood Springs work in small groups to discuss issues and needs (Photo: Tony Cheng)

Co-sponsor of the “Bridging the Gap:” conference with the Center for Collaborative Conservation at Colorado State University, Fort Collins, September 9-11, 2009. Over 150 participants attended the conference to share lessons learned and identify common issues and needs concerning collaborative approaches to conservation across the Western US.

## 2. Practitioner-Focused Outreach

Organized and facilitated the development of the Estes Park Forest Issues Forum, Fall 2008, as a collaborative learning and information sharing mechanism for community stakeholders and forest land managers around forest restoration and wildfire mitigation plans and implementation. The Forum now meets quarterly and serves to minimize conflict and improve working relationships between land managers and the Estes Valley community.

Convened and facilitated researcher-manager workshop regarding current status of research and management needs concerning the mountain pine beetle infestation and effects (Rocky Mountain Research Station researchers and managers from the Arapaho-Roosevelt, Medicine Bow-Routt, and White River National Forests), Fort Collins, March 9

Pre- and post-treatment multi-party ecological monitoring training for Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative, March and October 2009

Pre-treatment multi-party ecological monitoring training for the Uncompahgre Plateau Mesas Forest Restoration Project, October 15-17, 2008, and March 12-13 and May 21-23, 2009



Mica Keralis, CFRI research assistant, leads a community monitoring training for the Uncompahgre Plateau Mesas Forest Restoration Project, July, 2009 (Photo: Tony Cheng)



CSU silviculture professor Skip Smith discusses the rationale for experimental treatments during the Terror Creek aspen ecology and management short-course, June 29, 2009 (Photo: Tony Cheng)

Terror Creek aspen ecology and management stakeholder short-course, Delta, June 29-30

Publications: (posted on CFRI website)

Binkley, Dan and Sally L. Duncan. 2009. The past and future of Colorado's forests: connecting people and ecology. *Ecology and Society* 14(2):9 [online] URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art9/>.

CFRI. 2009. *Working Together to Sustain Colorado's Forests: Collaborating for Resilient Forests and Resilient Communities*. Proceedings from a conference hosted by the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, April 22-23, 2009, Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

Clement, Jessica, Corrie Knapp, and Mica Keralis. 2009. *Evidence-Based Collaboration: Ecological Monitoring in Colorado's Forests For Citizen Scientists* – a detailed handbook for collaborative ecological monitoring of forest restoration and health projects across Colorado's forest types.

Pinchot Institute for Conservation and the Heinz Center. 2009. *Ensuring Forest Sustainability in the Development of Wood-Based Bioenergy in the Interior West* – a white paper on sustainable forest bioenergy development in the Interior West, based on a conference co-sponsored with the Pinchot Institute for Conservation and the Heinz Center.

#### **4. Other Interactions With Stakeholders**

Presentation at the Colorado Conservation Summit, October 7, 2008, Keystone, CO on short- and long-term forest health issues relating to wildlife conservation.

Presentation to key supporters of The Nature Conservancy's forest conservation initiative, November 19, 2008, Boulder, CO on critical forest health and restoration issues in Colorado.

Needs assessment site visit to the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, January 14-16, 2009. The immediate result of this site visit was the planning and implementation of the Terror Creek Aspen Ecology and Management stakeholder workshop in June 2009 and the development of a multi-party monitoring framework for the Uncompahgre Plateau Mesas Forest Restoration Project. The GMUG needs assessment also spurred the development of a collaborative working group to address Uncompahgre Plateau ecological restoration issues as a whole and linking to biomass utilization opportunities locally.

Needs assessment site visit to the San Juan Public Lands Center and San Juan National Forest ranger districts, February 9-12, 2009. This site visit led to the formulation of the mixed-conifer collaborative learning workshop in Pagosa Springs in October 2009, and spurred dialogue with Dr. Julie Korb about potential joint applied research projects to inform restoration projects on the San Juan National Forest.

Participation in a contingent from the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative to Washington, DC, February 23-25, 2009, to inform the Colorado congressional delegation and agency leadership about immediate management needs associated with the mountain pine infestation to address hazard trees and wildfire risk mitigation.

Needs assessment site visit to the Rio Grande National Forest and RGNF Ranger Districts, June 16-18, 2009. This is an underserved Forest in terms of applied research and knowledge synthesis to inform forest restoration and wildfire mitigation.

Needs assessment discussion with Glenn Casamassa, Supervisor, Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forest, September 28, 2009.

Presentations to the Colorado Forest Health Advisory Council on summary results of the forest health collaborative conference in Glenwood Springs (June 19) and update on the status of forest health collaborative in Colorado (September 28)

Invited speaker, Colorado Roadless Area Petition workshop, Denver, September 1

Co-convened and facilitated a stakeholder discussion on utilization of biomass from forest restoration projects on the Uncompahgre Plateau, September 14

Invited participant, Joint Fire Science Program Governing Board field tour of Front Range fuels and wildfire management projects, September 16

Presentation at the Bark Beetle Symposium for Colorado State University alumni, REI Store in Denver, September 16.

Facilitating the Lodgepole Pine Zone of Agreement Working Group of the Colorado Forest Health Advisory Council

Co-lead, Large-Scale Treatments Subcommittee of the Western Governors' Association Forest Health Advisory Committee

Member, Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative, responsible for ecological and socio-economic monitoring

Member, Steering Committee of the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative

# Working Together to Sustain Colorado's Forests: Collaborating for Resilient Forests and Resilient Communities

A conference hosted by the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute,  
April 22-23, 2009 at the Hotel Colorado, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

## CONFERENCE REPORT



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## ABOUT THE COLORADO FOREST RESTORATION INSTITUTE

The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute was established at Colorado State University in 2004 through the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act, along with restoration institutes at New Mexico Highlands University and Northern Arizona University. The purposes of the institutes are to compile, translate, and apply the most current scientific information relevant to the needs of forest managers and communities in taking action to mitigate wildfire risk and restore healthy forest conditions.

CFRI emphasizes four areas of service:

- Synthesize and translate current scientific research and field-based knowledge and information to meet the needs of forest managers, landowners, and communities by producing and disseminating reports and bulletins written in non-technical jargon, sponsoring workshops and short-courses, and convening field-based forest condition assessments involving managers, interested and affected stakeholders, and researchers. Outreach and application is generally coordinated with local forest health collaborative groups, Colorado State Forest Service district foresters, and/or federal agency field units of the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, or US Forest Service field offices.
- Assist and support collaborative monitoring and adaptive management of forest restoration and wildfire mitigation projects by providing technical and human resources to assist collaborative forest health partnerships and land managers in developing and implementing ecological and socio-economic monitoring plans. Collaborative monitoring projects are developed and implemented in partnership with community-based non-profit organizations, the Colorado State Forest Service, and federal agencies.
- Enhance diversified economic use of wood from restoration and wildfire mitigation projects to offset treatment costs and contribute to local jobs and livelihoods by co-sponsoring networking workshops with the Colorado State Forest Service that bring together wood producers and users to learn about potential connections and new developments; contribute to analyses linking available wood supply from current and proposed treatments with existing wood utilization infrastructure, and disseminate wood biomass utilization information to collaborative forest health partnerships.
- Assist and support collaborative forest health and wildfire mitigation initiatives by consulting with collaborative partnerships regarding start-up, management, and transition issues, coordinating and communicating local needs and priorities at the state and regional level, and hosting an annual conference of collaborative forest health partnerships to facilitate learning, networking, and coordination. CFRI also provides monitoring and evaluation assistance to help collaborative partnerships adapt and evolve to achieve their shared goals.



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## RATIONALE FOR THE CONFERENCE

Since the early-1990s, there has been a proliferation of initiatives in Colorado involving diverse community, interest group, and agency stakeholders to address wildfire risk and forest health conditions for specific geographic landscapes and communities. Since the early 1990s with pioneering initiatives such as the Public Lands Partnership encompassing Delta, Montrose, and Ouray counties and the Ponderosa Pine Partnership, the number of so-called “place-based” collaborative initiatives has exploded over the past decade. These vary from neighborhood Community Wildfire Protection Plan efforts to regional collaborative partnerships, such as the Uncompahgre Plateau Project, the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative, and the Front Range Roundtable. These venues are where ecological science, economic considerations, and social values intersect and where participants can forge zones of agreements for priorities, project design, implementation, and monitoring. Federal and state agencies share leadership roles with local governments, non-governmental organizations, and community residents.

The beauty of these initiatives is that they are self-organizing and voluntary, with participants motivated to improve local forest conditions, protect ecological values, provide for economic opportunities, and sustain community values. It has also created a situation where many voices clamoring for attention in policy arena to garner limited resources for place-based priorities. As such, resources are not strategically allocated across forest health and wildfire mitigation priorities as well as they could be.

Rarely do individuals working on local projects in their local landscapes – often on volunteer time – have the chance to share their experiences with, and learn from, their peers around the state. The conference was organized to provide maximum opportunities for dialogue, interaction, learning, and informal discussions. The conference also did not center on any one government agency or program or single issue. The focus was squarely on strategies, tools, and resources to build, enhance, and sustain the efforts of place-based forest health collaborations.

## DAY ONE: Wednesday, April 22

### OPENING PANEL SESSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM AROUND THE STATE

\*\*Note: Several of these speakers had powerpoints to accompany their talks. Those presentations are available on the CFRI website [www.cfri.colostate.edu](http://www.cfri.colostate.edu)

The panel presentation featured individuals offering different perspectives on what is happening around the state with regards to forest health.

**Speaker:** Tony Dixon  
Deputy Regional Forester, Region 2, USFS  
**Topics:** Federal Legislation & Funding



The Fiscal Year 2009 budget for the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service is \$303.5 million, which represents a significant increase over prior fiscal years. These funds will help in critical areas: hazardous fuels, timber, forest health, and State & Private. The budget increase is a direct result of a concerted effort by Colorado state legislators, county commissioners, the Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative, and the Governor's office. Colorado needs more of this type of coordinated voice in Washington, DC; this conference is a great way to build this common voice. The USDA Forest Service estimates a budget need of \$210 million to address the impacts of the mountain pine beetle infestation. More important is the social license and acceptance from the public to do work that contributes to forest health and increases resilience to the beetle.

Stimulus money is starting to flow, but much of this money is targeted to states with high unemployment rates, and the states within the Rocky Mountain Region isn't as hard hit as some other areas. The Forest Service has a total \$1 billion of stimulus money. So far, only 10% has been released. Colorado was the only state in the Region to receive money: \$5.6 million. (Editor's note: an additional \$12 million was released to Colorado the week of May 11.) We probably won't get much more. But we may get more money in the next annual appropriations process.

The most significant piece of proposed legislation right now for the Forest Service and the Region is the FLAME (Federal Land Assistance and Management Enhancement) Act. The bill decouples fire-fighting efforts from the rest of the Forest Service's appropriation. Every year, 50% of the total \$4 billion USFS budget is spent on fire, mostly for fire suppression. That leaves just \$2 billion for everything else. In high fire years, fire suppression "borrows" money from the "everything else." This pattern creates major problems, even when the agency gets reimbursed for the fire borrowing. By the time we get the money back, the field season has passed and it becomes carry-over and gets absorbed in the hold; it's a cycle and we never get that money back. FLAME Act seeks to solve this problem. FLAME has been introduced in both House and Senate. It could pass this year.

**Speaker:** Jan Hackett  
Policy Director, Colorado State Forest Service  
**Topic:** State Legislation

The Colorado General Assembly has seen more forestry-related legislation in the past 2 years than observed in recent memory. This shows a growing awareness among state legislators of forest

health issues in the state, especially triggered by the mountain pine beetle infestation. Legislation of note from the 2008 General Assembly session:

- HB1110: Income tax deduction for landowners.
- HB1318: Lets people donate to help with beetle issue. Creates a fund.
- SB71: Extends pilot project. Currently have about 20 projects in the state for those funds. We should be receiving funds for that program soon. Spread throughout the state.
- SJR25: Joint Resolution. Not binding authority, but a statement of principle. This one creates an interim committee to deal with WUI. Met in August for a couple of months and came up with 7 bills that are now going into the 2009 session.

In 2009, the General Assembly had another active session for forestry-related legislation. Bills of note:

- HB1031: State match for emergency fire funds. Now postponed indefinitely.
- SB09-18: Fuels mitigation work. Also postponed indefinitely.
- HB1199: Omnibus bill with pieces from lots of other bills included. This one is likely to pass, and we are watching it closely. Currently being heard in Senate approps on Friday. Already passed out of the House.

**Speaker:** Paige Lewis  
**The Nature Conservancy, Forest Health Advisory Council**  
**Topic:** Introduction to the FHAC

The Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC) was created in February 2008 by an executive order of Governor Bill Ritter based on a perceived need for more state level engagement and leadership. A foundation for this perceived need was the 2007 conference of forest health collaborations hosted by the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute. The FHAC has 24 members, representing diverse interests and geographies, and is co-chaired by Colorado State Forester Jeff Jahnke and the Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Harris Sherman. The council is charged with: providing advice and recommendations to the Governor; identifying priority needs for Colorado forests; supporting and building synergy among local forest collaborative; acting as a sounding board for the Colorado State Forest Service; and developing consistent messages for public dissemination.

A summary of the FHAC meetings:

- 1<sup>st</sup> meeting (March, 2008): Get acquainted with forestry issues. Recommended that the Governor support funding for Forest Landscape Restoration Act; since passed. Developed a letter supporting FLAME Act.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting (May 2008): Vision & Guiding Principles. Update on legislative activity. Over the summer a working group created a draft vision & guiding principles. This was brought back to the FHAC in Sept.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting (Sept. 2008): Draft presented of vision. Also introduction to forthcoming State Assessment.
- 4<sup>th</sup> meeting (Dec. 2008): CO had received \$13M in supplemental money, due in part to Gov's letter to Gail Kimbell helped divert some of that money to CO. Benefit of state level



coordination. At this meeting, lots of time discussing HB1199 (Omnibus Bill on forestry), another update on statewide assessment, preliminary info on data layers. Also discussed public utilities commission and renewables.

- 5<sup>th</sup> meeting (March 2009): Vision & guiding principles still in debate (a year later!). It is now finalized, but with recognition that it is a living document and up for adjustment in the future. Now the Council can move to more substantive opportunities. Recommended support for FLAME act. Gov sent his support, and the Act has now passed the House and is being considered in the Senate.

It is time for local forest health collaboratives to help guide the FHAC. The next meeting is in Grand Junction, June 19. More information will be available; these are public meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend.

**Speaker:** Carol Ekarius  
Executive Director of the Coalition for the Upper South Platte  
**Topic:** Local level collaboration

The Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP) is a watershed group, working in the Upper South Platte watershed located southwest of Denver. CUSP gets involved in a number of issues including forest health. Woodland Park was home to the Hayman Fire in 2002. CUSP formed in part in response to the Buffalo Creek fire in the 1990s. Water and ecological health are the main emphasis.

Over the last year, Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative has come to the forefront. The Front Range Roundtable created this project in 2008 and Woodland Park was successful in its proposal. The group began meeting in May 2008. Goals for the project include: stronger networks between agencies and organizations; monitoring; and a significant increase in treatment in area surrounding Woodland Park spelled out by the Teller County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The goal is to double the number of acres treated. This is a challenging goal. At the same time, there is contagious energy for this project. Beetles are starting to come toward Woodland Park, so some beetle work has been incorporated into the project in addition to straight fuels work.

Some ideas for sustaining collaboration: you need a “spear point”, such as CUSP. CUSP does nothing by itself, but acts as the spear point to bring everyone together and get work done. State and federal agencies probably not the best spear point. The best is a non-profit or local group. Consider Colorado Watershed Assembly for helping you identify watershed groups around the state. They might be a good spear point. Spear point groups need support in terms of funding, donations, and volunteer time.

**Speaker:** Gary Severson  
NW Council of Governments, Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative  
**Topic:** Power of Grassroots Democracy

The Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative (CBBC) is a great example of energizing and activating democracy, and it’s amazing what can be done. The CBBC is a place-based collaborative organization. It was originally organized by Rick Cables, Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region, in 2005 as the Northern Colorado Bark Beetle Cooperative. It started out as a strictly intergovernmental group. At that time, it was set up to address the beetle and its impacts. It wasn’t on the radar screen along the Front Range then as it is now, but it was worrisome in north-central Colorado. This current outbreak is different than ever before; they are acting differently than observed historically, and some decisive action was needed. The steering committee of the CBBC was populated by decision-makers – individuals with decision-making authority in their respective jurisdictions. This is one of the key reasons for the success of the organization. They can make decisions and move ahead.

In 2007, the CBBC expanded to become a stakeholder group, including non-governmental groups. It received help from the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute to reorganize throughout 2008 to increase involvement. The CBBC has now transitioned from being an intergovernmental cooperative to being a stakeholder collaborative. This required a new set of bylaws. We needed an open, transparent process and a consensus decision-making process. The by-laws were ratified last year. Officers were selected: Gary Severson is the Chair, Chuck Dennis, Colorado State Forest Service, is the Vice-Chair.

Originally, the CBBC focused on four tasks: removal of administrative barriers (i.e., federal regulations that interfere with getting work done on the ground), state and federal legislation and funding, public outreach, involvement of private sector, and pre-disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness. The CBBC can be very active politically in a way that other groups, especially government agencies, can't. The CBBC has sponsored several trips back to Washington, DC to lobby for increased funding. 90% of life is just showing up. Working with local government is especially great.

Priority focus has remained the same and this won't change: protection of human life, infrastructure, and watersheds. The CBBC also seeks to develop community resilience to adapt to disturbance driven ecosystems – this is the longer term focus.

**Speaker: Pam Motley**  
**Uncompahgre Plateau Mesas Forest Restoration Project**

The Uncompahgre Plateau (UP) is located in western Colorado, and includes Forest Service, BLM, and private lands. The UP Mesas Forest Restoration Project area is 17,000 acres and includes Ponderosa Pine, mixed conifer, aspen, and spruce-fir. This area needs fuels treatments within the wildland-urban interface, reduced stand density, and restoration of stands back to pre-European conditions. Stakeholders involved in the project design process agreed to commercial cutting in the spruce-fir and use those funds to offset the costs of restoration work in lower elevation.

Workgroup participants include Colorado Forest Restoration Institute, the Forest Service, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Colorado State Forest Service, conservation groups, timber industry, and other stakeholders. UP Project is a non-profit partnership that coordinates the workgroup, and is developing a formalized Memorandum of Understanding among a number of stakeholders and partners. The project provides outreach, meeting facilitation, volunteer coordination, project documentation, etc.

The overarching challenges is that we're trying something new. Plus, everyone has busy schedules. Future funding for the project is uncertain. However, we have experienced successes: using science to guide the planning and we have received two grants from the National Forest Foundation. We're also emphasize having fun!



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## TOPIC SESSIONS

Participants spent the majority of Wednesday, April 22 in “topic sessions” – small break-out-type group settings facilitated by knowledgeable individuals about specific topics that have been identified by people around the state that are important to their ongoing work. The sessions were not trainings or presentations; they were designed to encourage sharing, learning, and discussion among peers. There were six topic sessions staggered throughout the day so participants have a chance to participate in up to 4 topic sessions.

### **A. How can collaborative groups interface with the Forest Health Advisory Council? How can the FHAC help your efforts on the ground?**

**Leads: Paige Lewis, Tony Cheng**

*Background:* The Forest Health Advisory Council was established in February 2008 to focus attention, resources, and dialogue to address forest health issues in the state. One of the topics the FHAC has identified is “to further the work of existing local forest collaboratives” (Press Release, Office of the Governor, March 28, 2008). This session will provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about the FHAC and to discuss how they would like the FHAC to operate on behalf of local forest collaboratives.

*Summary:* It was the first time many participants have even heard of the FHAC, even though it had been in existence for over one year. Given this reality, it was strongly suggested the FHAC clearly define and disseminate its purpose and role. A website that features the FHAC’s charter, purpose, and role would help with transparency and help the public understand who it is and what it does. Participants felt strongly that the FHAC needs regular, consistent avenues for input from the local level. Ideas about how that contact might be structured varied, from having Council members do a tour of the state to establishing a reliable system for inputs during their regularly scheduled quarterly meetings. Other suggestions included having a seat on the FHAC for a representative from a place-based forest health collaborative or chartering a working group composed of place-based collaborations around the state. There was a concern that the FHAC would emphasize Front Range forestry issues over the rest of the state, and public lands over private. Paige Lewis reminded participants that it is the explicit charge of the Council to develop state-wide consensus. Some expressed concern that members of the Council are not forestry experts, and that quarterly meetings don’t present the opportunity for sufficient education. Discussion also centered around the role and process for FHAC decision making at the state level, and it would be helpful for the Council to clearly explain how its recommendations will affect the Governor’s decisions. Open, transparent meetings were favored by all.

### **B. Enhancing Participation, Resource Flows, and Capacity for Collaboration Over the Long Term**

**Leads: Carol Ekarius (CUSP) and Sam Burns**

*Background:* Getting a collaborative effort off the ground is messy and involves numerous challenges many workshop participants have gone or are still going through. Keeping a collaboration going to follow through on priority actions and continually adapt is an entirely different matter. This session is a chance for workshop participants to learn about and share their principles, strategies, and tools and techniques to keep a collaboration going, from fund-raising to linking collaboration group priorities to agency priorities to getting and keeping key people at the table.

*Summary:* Participants in this session kept coming back to the critical role played by a “spear point” organization. No matter how far along the collaborative group may be, a spear point organization can help mobilize members and forge connections with other groups, agencies, and the public. Several participants brought up the recent bestselling book *The Tipping Point* and mentioned the concept of the “maven”, a role that fosters bridge building and develops momentum. Leaders of this session urged local collaboratives to establish a broad mission, as that better enables them to seek funding and find support. Other advice included: work with an intermediary organization to help create connections with state and national level agencies; get a local project on the ground to demonstrate results; and use facilitators at public meetings. The most efficient collaborations have clear sidebars / boundaries, trust for intermediaries, and access to scientists to help with complex ecological questions.

### **C. Opportunities for Utilizing Wood from Wildfire Mitigation and Forest Restoration Projects** **Leads: Bob Sturtevant (CSU) and Amanda Bucknam (CO Wood / CFRI)**

*Background:* In Colorado, there are many more acres in need of treatment than there is available public funding. Finding economic opportunities to use wood from mitigation or restoration projects can help offset costs, reduce biomass build-up in the forest, and bring job opportunities to places in need of employment. In this session, participants will learn about the various wood utilization opportunities in Colorado, from commercial wood products to biomass for energy, and how to become more involved in the sector.

*Summary:* Much of this topic session focused on the challenge of transportation costs, as those continue to be the crux of the problem for utilization. Unless there is a premium product, costs are prohibitive beyond 25-30 years. Participants also discussed the importance of developing a strong marketing strategy for Colorado Wood and others, to promote uses of blue stain wood. Some suggestions for jump-starting these markets include adding taxes to support Colorado’s forest products, adjusting local building codes, and revising the definition of “biomass” to specifically include products from federal land.

### **D. Policy Developments and Funding Opportunities to Help Develop Local Forest health and Wildfire Mitigation Collaborative Efforts** **Leads: Tony Dixon (USFS) and Jan Hackett (CSFS)**

*Background:* Numerous policy developments and funding opportunities at the federal and state level pertain to hazardous fuel reduction to reduce wildfire risk and restore healthy forests. Participants will get a chance to learn about the various policies, programs, and funding opportunities that are currently in operation or are expected to hit the ground very soon.

*Summary:* Stewardship Contracting continues to face numerous barriers including time limitations (contractors are looking for 20 year contracts), lack of contractors applying, and the cancelling ceiling provision. The agency would like to see a Stewardship Contract developed that involves trading only goods for services without any money being exchanged. Much of the discussion in this session also focused on



the recent closure of forest mills in the state. If Colorado doesn't have a functioning forestry industry, forest health will decline; our regional foresters have communicated this to their headquarters in Washington, DC. Building capacity is seen as the biggest barrier here; needs include funding and staff. Protecting utilities is especially critical, but there appear to be some process barriers to getting that work done too.

## **E. Integrating and Applying Current Forest Science into Wildfire Mitigation or Forest Restoration Plans**

**Leads: Jessica Clement (CFRI)**

*Background:* It is vitally important that the work of collaboratives around the state do right by the land. There are many resources in the state that can help a collaboration integrate and apply current forest science into mitigation or restoration plans. Participants will learn about these resources and discuss their experiences integrating and applying current science.

*Summary:* Scientific uncertainty plays a major role in the way the public views scientific issues. The public tends not to understand the scientific process, and as a result they expect "truth" and "answers" instead of theory and process. Much time in this session was spent exploring the ways in which scientific information gets to managers and to the public, as well as the potential for interfering factors to muddle those messages along the way. Translating science for the public can be tricky, and many participants emphasized the role of social sciences in easing that process. Especially challenging are situations in which the scientists don't agree. This lack of consensus adds layers of complexity for managers and the public. Different kinds of science (including citizen science, local knowledge, and academic work) were discussed, as were the roles for many entities involved in the process. CSU Extension can play an important role in getting the science to communities. Ultimately, the scientific picture today is a very complicated one in forestry.

## **F. Making the Most of your Community Wildfire Protection Plan**

**Lead: Judy Serby (CSFS)**

*Background:* Many communities in Colorado have a CWPP that identifies priority areas in need of treatment, identifies the kind of treatments that are to occur to reduce wildfire risk to community values, and address structural ignitability around homes and structures. Over the past 5 years, there has been a lot of lessons learned about how to develop, implement, monitor, and adapt and revise CWPPs. This sessions invites participants to share their experiences and learn about new ideas, strategies, and techniques to get the most of your CWPP.

*Summary:* Some participants described successes with top-down approaches to CWPP development, and others described bottom-up processes. There is no silver bullet, and success comes in many forms. Some tips for success are: the need for education of the community and the need for a "sparkplug" or "spear point" organization to lead the process. Questions of scale also dominated some parts of the session, again with different groups organizing themselves along different scales. County plans can be very efficient to complete, but sometimes need more specific community-scale plans in addition. Involving homeowners was a challenge for many participants, and again the discussion returned to the importance of community education as a way to empower people.

## DAY TWO: Thursday, April 23

The second day of the conference focused on the Statewide Forest Resource Assessment with is intended to define key forest priorities and strategies for achieving those priorities. Conference attendees were asked consider questions to ask of the Assessment and, in break-out groups organized by different geographic regions of the state, how to begin coordinating strategies to achieve geographically-specific forest priorities.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STATEWIDE FOREST RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Paige Lewis, The Nature Conservancy, provided an overview of the Statewide Forest Resource Assessment. The Assessment is part of a redesign effort of the US Forest Service's State and Private Forestry branch. The redesign was mandated by the 2007 Farm Bill to achieve better efficiency and effectiveness of money allocated to each state. Each state in the US will undertake an Assessment, which is a compilation of existing information about forest conditions and the ecosystem and social benefits that are associated with the state's forests. From the Assessment, statewide priorities will be identified and strategies for achieving those priorities will be developed and implemented. Stakeholder involvement is a key component of the Assessment and strategy processes. The Colorado State Forest Service is the lead agency for the Assessment and strategy. The Nature Conservancy was contracted by the Colorado State Forest Service to conduct the initial compilation and analysis of existing information about forest conditions and associated ecosystem and social benefits.

### BREAKOUT SESSIONS BY GEOGRAPHY

The purpose of the geographic break-out groups was to assemble conference attendees by their geographic affiliations – parts of the state where they are working on forest issues on the ground. The break-out groups were asked to connect the forthcoming Statewide Assessment to issues in particular regions of the state.



### General Themes Across Geographies

- Interest in seeing data layers on: other insects, invasive species, demographic data, Fire Regime Condition Class, watersheds, location of markets and mills, recreation use, CWPP coverage, conservation easements, and transportation.
- How detailed will the assessment be? Will communities be able to use it?
- In the absence of scientific agreement on fire risk and mountain pine beetle, and the landscape is changing so rapidly, how will they maintain accuracy?
- Will assessment be used to prioritize within the state or only between states? Will assessment determine where the money goes?

- Look at a comprehensive plans for communities, including county planning & local community plans. Communities should be able to look at layers from this group to utilize for long term planning.
- How does the assessment take into account the priorities that have already been developed? Current activity is to gather all existing forest data and coordinate – how is coordination phase being developed?
- LANDFIRE does not show fire risk while finer scale data does. What is the right level of science?

### Geography-Specific Comments

#### **I. West Slope**

- Concern Western Slope will not show up as a priority area on statewide assessment. It's generally more rural, with less resources, less money, and less/weaker data to provide to the state forest assessment. If it is state assessment on where state money should go – what impact will it have on USFS lands? Will it affect NGO projects on federal land?
- Critical needs in this geographic area:
  - Utilities
  - Importance of recreation in West Slope to Front Range visitors. Assessment should look at DOW license numbers, incorporate USFS recreation visitor data.
  - Need to be proactive on Western Slope – science is weak; where forest is more diverse the science is less certain, which leads to less consensus. It's difficult to make argument for funding and what change is important when there isn't consensus.
  - Need clarity on science, especially P-J ecology and aspen.
- 75% of infrastructure for forest industry is on western slope – need to do economic development to maintain the businesses; need revolving loan funds. Loss of timber expertise and infrastructure is crucial to forest health, expertise is not easily replaced; timber experts understand ground forest conditions. We cannot lose any more timber industry in Colorado!!

#### **II. South Central**

- Region is different from the rest of the state. Strong private landowner influence that should be used to help educate and encourage the use of Colorado wood. This area hasn't seen a massive build-out yet or Mountain Pine Beetle outbreak – management activities can still be done to improve forest health.

#### **III. North Central / High Country**

- What is the supply of the timber in the area, what is the social license, need a mapping of:
  - Different collaborative priorities
  - Quantify the supply of timber and map it
  - Where are the areas that we cannot treat: Private, wilderness, terrain
  - Map the collaboratively supported priorities, i.e., CBBC's objectives of life and community protection, infrastructure, and water supplies
  - National forest assessment or some kind of analysis of timber supply

#### **IV. Front Range**

- A map of the collaborative groups in the area would help to coordinate bottom-up assessments with the statewide top-down assessment.

## **NEXT STEPS**

One immediate outcome of the conference was a Letter of Support drafted by a group of attendees urging Governor Bill Ritter to use funds from the federal economic stimulus to assist forest products companies to stay afloat and to urge for administrative relief for federal timber sale contracting rules. Attendees were invited to sign the Letter of Support. The Letter of Support was sent to the Governor two weeks after the conference.

At the March 2007 conference hosted by CFRI bringing together place-based forest health collaborations, one of the key recommendations was a state-level board that served as a coordinating body and a voicepiece for the needs and issues place-based groups were facing. Since the then, the Forest Health Advisory Council was established to serve this very purpose as one of its chief charges. Using the comments and discussion points from the topic session on how place-based forest collaborations would like to interface with the Forest Health Advisory Council, CFRI will develop a briefing paper and present key points to the Governor's Forest Health Advisory Council meeting June 22, 2009 in Grand Junction.



One of the common themes of the conference was the need for the various place-based collaborations to coordinate a common voice for issues and needs. The Statewide Forest Resource Strategy provides a focal point around which to coordinate this common voice. Using the comments and key discussion points from the geographic area break-out groups, CFRI will work in partnership with the Colorado State Forest Service to carry out a series of regional discussions as part of the second phase of the Assessment, which is to develop coordinated strategies for addressing issues of concern across the state in a collaborative manner. The regional discussions will take place Fall 2009 - Winter 2010. A summary report of all the regional discussions will be produced by Spring 2010 for the Colorado State Forest Service.

Based on comments received during and after the conference, CFRI will explore the possibility of hosting a website clearinghouse for all local forest health collaboration efforts across Colorado to facilitate further communication and coordination between local collaboratives, and between local groups and state and federal policy-makers.

<b>Task / Project</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>When?</b>
Letter of Support sent to Governor Ritter, urging support for Colorado's forest product industry.	Coalition of attendees at the CFRI meeting	Sent May, 2009
Briefing paper for the Forest Health Advisory Council, summarizing the findings of the CFRI conference	CFRI staff and partners	To be presented at the FHAC meeting, June 22, 2009
Regional discussions around the state to support collaboration and application of the forthcoming Statewide Forest Assessment	CFRI staff and partners	Fall - Winter 2009 Presentation to the Colorado State Forest Service Spring, 2010

Website to help facilitate coordination of local collaborative groups around the state	CFRI staff	Fall 2009
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**Working Together to Sustain Colorado's Forests Conference**  
**Glenwood Springs, Colorado**  
**April 21-23, 2009**

**AGENDA**

Tuesday, April 21

5:00-7:00 PM: Reception – meet & greet with appetizers and cash bar

Wednesday, April 22

7:00-8:00: Breakfast

8:00-8:30: Welcome and introduction to the conference

8:30 – 10:00: Panel discussion of perspectives around the state

Federal legislation and funding - Tony Dixon, Deputy Regional Forester, US Forest Service

State legislation and funding - Jan Hackett, Policy Director, Colorado State Forest Service

Forest Health Advisory Council – Paige Lewis, FHAC Facilitator and The Nature Conservancy

Woodland Park Healthy Forest Initiative - Carol Ekarius, Coalition for the Upper South Platte

CO Bark Beetle Cooperative - Gary Severson, NW Colorado Council of Governments

Uncompahgre Mesas Restoration Project - Pam Motley, Uncompahgre Plateau Project

10:00-10:30: Break

10:30-11:30: Topic Session #1

- How collaborative groups can interface with the Forest Health Advisory Council to express their issues, needs, and concerns (Leads: Paige Lewis, The Nature Conservancy and Tony Cheng, CFRI)
- Enhancing participation, resource flows, and capacity for collaboration over the long-term (Leads: Carol Ekarius, CUSP and Sam Burns, Fort Lewis College)
- Opportunities for utilizing wood from wildfire mitigation and forest restoration projects (Leads: Bob Sturtevant, CSFS and Amanda Bucknam, COWOOD/CFRI)

11:30-12:30: Topic Session #2

- Policy developments and funding opportunities to help local forest health and wildfire mitigation collaborative efforts (Leads: Tony Dixon, USFS and Jan Hackett, CSFS)
- Integrating and applying current forest science into wildfire mitigation or forest restoration plans (Lead: Jessica Clement, CFRI)
- Making the most of out of your Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Lead: Judy Serby, CSFS)

12:30-1:30: Lunch

1:30-2:30: Topic Session #3

- Policy developments and funding opportunities to help local forest health and wildfire mitigation collaborative efforts (Leads: Tony Dixon, USFS and Jan Hackett, CSFS)
- How collaborative groups can interface with the Forest Health Advisory Council to express their issues, needs, and concerns (Leads: Paige Lewis, The Nature Conservancy and Jeff Jahnke, CSFS)
- Enhancing participation, resource flows, and capacity for collaboration over the long-term (Leads: Carol Ekarius, CUSP and Sam Burns, Fort Lewis College)

2:30-3:00: Break

3:00-4:00 Topic Session #4

- Opportunities for utilizing wood from wildfire mitigation and forest restoration projects (Leads: Bob Sturtevant, CSFS and Amanda Bucknam, COWOOD/CFRI)
- Integrating and applying current forest science into wildfire mitigation or forest restoration plans (Lead: Jessica Clement, CFRI)
- Making the most of out of your Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Lead: Judy Serby, CSFS)

4:00-6:00: Exhibition – appetizers and cash bar

Thursday, April 23

7:00-8:00: Breakfast

8:00 – 9:00: Discussion of key points from topic sessions – Topic session leads

9:00-10:00: Statewide Forest Resource Assessment - Paige Lewis, The Nature Conservancy

10:00-10:30: Break

10:30-12:00: Breakout groups by geography – What are the issues and needs in your part of the state, and how to communicate and work on these issues and needs

12:00-2:30: Working lunch, reporting out, and next steps

2:30: Adjourn

Registered Attendance List

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