**Forsythe II
MULTI-PARTY MONITORING GROUP (MMG) MEETING
May 21, 2018, 6:00pm – 8:40pm**

***Nederland Community Center,750 CO-72, MPR Community Room***

**Meeting Summary**

*Attendance*: Teagen Blakey, Paul Bosma, Marin Chambers, Tania Corvalan, Jim Dysinger, Mark Foreman, Dallas Masters, Yvonne Short, Emory Smith, Susan Wagner, Brett Wolk, Kevin Zimlinghaus

*Facilitation*: Heather Bergman and Dan Myers

**ACTION ITEMS**

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| Kevin Zimlinghaus | * Inform group of the date that USFS wildlife biologists will examine Unit 74 for old-growth habitat characteristics.
* Look into the possibility of the new USFS wildlife biologist mapping wildlife corridors and using species lists and other existing information from the Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice as starting points for analysis.
* Look into shifting northeastern patch-cut in Unit One to Northwest to mitigate erosion.
* Evaluate erosion potential on treatment areas.
* Prepare responses to group concerns as was done for April 16th meeting.
* Determine when Phase Three units will be selected and share that information with the group.
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| Marin Chambers and Brett Wolk (CFRI) | * Send the group links to Boulder County resource maps for treatment areas.
* Send the group the link to CFRI's Forsythe II collaborative page so that group members can review Avenza points.
* Prepare monitoring update for next meeting and send email to group on any monitoring developments in the meantime.
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| Peak Facilitation | Find information on existing wildlife monitoring happening on Forsythe II and across the Front Range (CFLRP). Share with the group. |

**PRELIMINARY USFS RESPONSE TO MMG INPUT ON PHASE ONE UNITS**

Kevin Zimlinghaus, Forester at the US Forest Service (USFS), elaborated upon the USFS’s preliminary response to the MMG’s input on the Phase One Units.

* Zimlinghaus presented the group with a document detailing his preliminary responses to questions that he believed interested the group the most.
* Zimlinghaus formed the presented responses in consultation with USFS wildlife biologists, who will examine Unit 74 for old-growth forest habitat characteristics. After that visit, Zimlinghaus will bring feedback from the biologists to the group. He also noted that this would be done with help from USFS biologists from outside of the Boulder Ranger District because that district, which encompasses this project, is bringing a new biologist up to speed.

**Clarifying Questions**

MMG members asked several clarifying questions about the USFS’ preliminary response to the MMG’s input on the Phase One Units. Questions are indicated in italics. The corresponding responses are below in plain text.

*Does the USFS have wildlife objectives for these units?*

Not all of the objectives are silvicultural. Some objectives cover fuels, restoration, lodgepole pine openings, etc. However, the USFS did not directly identify any wildlife objectives for the Forsythe II project.

*Will the USFS’ wildlife biologists evaluate all of the area around Big Springs? Will the biologist evaluate all of the areas in this project?*

The entire project area is important to the wildlife biologists. However, the biologists are focused on identifying threatened and endangered (T&E) and indicator species at the landscape scale. The biologists are required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to focus on the effects on hydrology, fish, and wildlife. That means that the biologists will probably not spend much more time evaluating each unit. Group members and the public can see the potential effect of the project on species in the biological assessment (BA) within the biological evaluation (BE).

**Group Discussion**

MMG group members discussed the USFS’ preliminary response to the MMG’s input on the Phase One Units.

* A group member expressed support for the first two pages of the response but expressed a preference that the information on streams found on the third page of the response document should not come exclusively from Environmental Analysis and Decision Making (EADM) documents.
* The same group member requested action on the issue of wildlife corridors rather than just a discussion of that topic. The group member suggested that the USFS use the actions proposed for Unit 74 that are identified on the first page as a model. The USFS responded that corridors are different for each species so using and monitoring these corridors for any species is predicated on wildlife biologists identifying that species there.
* Another group member stated that wildlife tended to follow old-growth corridors down drainage ways. The USFS responded that old-growth forest habitat is not only habitat with large, old trees; downed wood material, multiple stand structures, snags, and multiple species are also characteristics of old-growth forest habitat.
* The USFS requested more input from the group on what species it should monitor. This input would help the USFS to delineate what a corridor is or is not for each species. A group member requested that the new USFS wildlife biologist map wildlife corridors for all animals in the area because MMG members do not have the expertise to know what the best approach to mapping the corridors is. The USFS should map corridors for flammulated owls, goshawks, elk, muledeer, turkeys, bears, and mountain lions, among other species.
* Another group member added that a lot of this species mapping was probably completed in the Forsythe II project’s environmental assessment (EA) and environmental impact statement (EIS). If that is the case, the group member suggested using species lists from those documents as starting points. The USFS responded that while that information is in the EA, it is not fully available for public display due to the USFS’ concerns about the risk of poaching and other species sensitivities. However, the USFS stated that it would examine the possibility of creating maps of wildlife corridors and of using species lists from the EA and EIS.
* A group member stated that a USFS wildlife biologist had mentioned Big Springs and Kelly Dahl as two areas where tight corridors currently constrain wildlife. For example, many birds in these areas are too close to the edge of their habitats and so are vulnerable to predators. It is also important to note that corridors serve different animals. The USFS responded that group members should think of wildlife corridors on the landscape scale. Some species use the center of corridors, but others prefer the edges. Some birds will avoid corridor edges, but edges are suitable habitat for other birds. Wildlife is generally diverse in areas with diverse terrain and habitat.
* The USFS stated that one of its wildlife biologists addressed concerns from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) when creating the design criteria for the Decision Notice. The biologist created a criterion for 100-foot corridors to allow elk to pass through treated areas. A group member noted that these corridors were supposed to be 100 meters wide.
* Marin Chambers from the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) reported that she had spoken to two wildlife biologists at Colorado Parks and Wildlife and at Boulder County Parks and Open Space about the monitoring that will be happening in the project area. The biologists indicated that they would have needed to start monitoring this area several years before and after project implementation to properly determine the impacts of this project because of how small it is relative to the projects that the USFS and CPW typically do. Additionally, the biologists said that monitoring for elk, changes in fuel mitigation, and forest treatments are expensive.
* A group member suggested that while it is expensive to monitor individual species, it might be possible to example types of animals and their habitat preferences on a landscape scale by using a "heat map." A heat map would allow wildlife biologists to focus their efforts on areas where a lot of species' habitats overlap.
* CFRI stated that while existing species data have not yet been overlaid on such a map, it would be possible to identify areas where there appears to be a lot of overlap between species. However, CFRI cautioned the group that the available data on species distribution is coarse, so the entire treatment area will probably have areas where many species overlap, so this effort might not be worthwhile.
* The USFS noted that its wildlife biologists have already evaluated these units and have given approval to the treatments as they are written in the project. The biologists have already implemented design criteria to mitigate impacts to the species that they analyzed, so any further analysis of the treatment units is above-and-beyond their typical work.
* The group decided to examine what is in the Forsythe II Decision Notice to see what is included and what is missing in terms of wildlife mapping. Peak Facilitation will find the relevant documents and send those out.
* Several group members reiterated their interest in having the USFS' new wildlife biologist examine what wildlife mapping the EA includes. However, the USFS said that the new biologist would have a heavy workload in the next few months and so this effort will be competing with other priorities. That said, the USFS will discuss this possibility.
* A group member expressed concern for wildlife based on the current positioning of proposed cuts. Animals that live in covered habitat, such as bears and foxes, need dens and cover to survive. The Magnolia Road cuts drove such species away by creating too much open area.
* Group members said that elk do not pass through the southern cuts in Unit Two anymore, although moose and deer do. However, some group members said that elk were still using corridors in the area.
* The USFS reiterated that it must cut 100 feet away from riparian areas.
* The group decided to take the draft of Zimlinghaus’ responses home for review to provide comments to Peak Facilitation within a week.

**UPDATE ON PHASE ONE UNITS ONE AND TWO**

Dallas Masters, Trustee for the Town of Nederland, gave a presentation on the treatment decisions made by the Design Advisory Team (DAT) regarding Units One and Two of Phase One. Note: There is a diversity of perspectives on the DAT process and how it was conducted. These perspectives are included here as they were shared at the MMG meeting. The meeting summary draws no conclusions about the DAT process or the accuracy of what was about the process by anyone at the meeting; it simply captures what was shared at the meeting.

* The Nederland Board of Trustees (BOT) held a meeting in February of 2017 to review the Town’s ability to comment on the USFS’ Forsythe II decision. The BOT reiterated its support for the decision, but community members expressed some concerns. At a subsequent meeting of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Advisory Board (PROSAB), members discussed possible ways to address these community concerns. In response, PROSAB formed the Big Springs DAT, which PROSAB modeled after a Design Advisory Team created in response to treatments around Doe Trail.
* The Big Springs DAT was composed of volunteers who were residents of Big Springs, PROSAB members, firefighters, and USFS personnel. Starting in March of 2017, the DAT had five meetings in total. The last of these took place on April 18, 2018. At the first meeting, the DAT outlined the concerns that it wanted to address. These included erosion, wildlife, flooding, effective fuel treatment, long-term maintenance, windfall, life and safety of citizens and firefighters, recreation, and aesthetics.
* The USFS’ Decision Notice on Forsythe II added a 300-foot “no-cut” buffer to the edges of the treatment areas. The addition of the buffer reduced the number of treatable acres to 4.4 in Unit One and 14.7 in Unit 2. These numbers represent 30% of the acres of treatable lodgepole pine in each unit. Other tree aggregations were included in the treatments if ponderosa pine, meadows, or aspen were present.
* At its final meeting, the DAT discussed the treatment directives and its relationship with the MMG. Sylvia Clarke, Boulder District Ranger with the USFS, asked the Town of Nederland for directives on Units One and Two. The DAT believes that its directives should take precedence, because the DAT was specifically asked by the USFS to provide input on treatment and put in the work to do so. There is concern inside and beyond the DAT that these recommendations will be "taken apart" by the MMG or watered down by the USFS.
* The DAT’s general recommendations for the USFS are:
	+ Treatments require long-term maintenance to address regeneration in lodgepole cuts.
	+ Treatments should reduce windfall and the impact to viewsheds.
	+ Treatments should enhance aspens.
	+ Treatments should avoid drainages, wetlands, and prominent landscape features.
	+ Treatments should avoid ponderosa, spruce stands, and combinations of the two. Patch-cuts for these forest types are particularly unwelcome. The USFS has indicated that it will leave ponderosa standing in lodgepole patch-cuts.
* The USFS was not involved in discussions with the DAT until it approved the Decision Notice in July.
* The DAT’s recommendations for Unit One are:
	+ Enhance the existing aspen on Valleyview Drive.
	+ Treat ponderosa pine and mixed conifer on the unit’s western boundary.
	+ Conduct two or three areas lodgepole pine treatments totaling 4.4 acres. The DAT is not sure where exactly the USFS should implement the patch-cuts should because there is mixed conifer in the area. The DAT will leave it to the USFS to decide where to conduct these patch-cuts to avoid impacting mixed conifer.
	+ In response to concerns from the Nederland Fire Protection District (NFPD), the DAT has reached out to two landowners near the proposed cuts to ask if they would be willing to allow the treatments to cross over into their properties’ defensible space buffer. Much of this forest is thick lodgepole prone to fire. The two landowners in question have indicated their willingness to discuss this with the USFS, but any final decision on shifting part of the treatment area to their defensible spaces lies with the landowners themselves.
* The DAT focused on using Google Earth to understand where impacts to the viewshed would be most severe in Unit Two. The DAT discussed Unit Two in detail because of the unpopularity of previous treatments on the southern end of the unit. DAT members visited existing cuts within the current boundaries of Unit Two. Alice Bosma, Paul Bosma, Lisa Hynek, and Emory Smith mapped the polygon that the USFS is using for Unit Two.
* The DAT’s recommendations for Unit Two are:
	+ Cut around 8.7 acres of lodgepole on the eastern edge of the unit. This area is sensitive because it contains limber pine that the USFS should avoid in any treatment.
	+ Add 1.4 acres existing cuts in the northeastern part of the polygon. These cuts will total 10 or 11 acres.
	+ Create a third, narrow treatment to clear the planned egress from Wildewood Drive to Magnolia Road. The USFS’ goal is to treat 14.7 acres in Unit Two, so this treatment will add the three or four acres necessary to meet this goal. The DAT is not sure where exactly this clearing will take place because engineers have not yet designed the road based on existing topography.
* The DAT had differences of opinion between firefighters, residents, and other parties, but it made progress and achieved a result with which group members were satisfied. The BOT approved the recommendations and forwarded them to the USFS.

**Group Discussion**

MMG members discussed Masters’ update on Units One and Two.

* The USFS noted that it had initially outlined a contiguous area for cuts in Unit One, but fire responders requested that this be broken up for tactical firefighting purposes.
* The USFS also pointed out that non-lodgepole treatments like aspen and ponderosa were not present in Unit Two. Masters added that Unit Two had much more lodgepole to treat than Unit One did so it was easier to avoid impacts to other trees.
* A participant noted that the DAT fully expected the USFS to have discretion over the exact placement of the polygons. For example, the larger cut on the eastern side of the polygon may end up including a small gap in the middle of the current contiguous block.
* A group member said that the Decision Notice for Forsythe II allowed for a maximum of 30% in cuts. That means that the USFS could treat five or ten percent of the acreage if it desired.
* A group member stated that the DAT was a closed group and that members of the general public were not invited to participate. Two of the residents resigned because of misgivings about the DAT's work. A member of the BOT told this group member that the BOT wanted the Forsythe II project to move forward and did not want it stopped by the community. This BOT member responded to the group member's requests to meet with community members or publicize the project by saying that the project was up to the USFS. Community members presented the BOT with a petition to stop the project in December of 2016. In response, the BOT agreed to put the Forsythe II project on its January 5, 2017 agenda (the first time it had done so). At that meeting, about 75% of attendees opposed the project, but the BOT voted unanimously to continue its support. The BOT never explained the project to the community at any one of its meetings. Sylvia Clark wrote the BOT a letter telling it to listen to residents' concerns. The USFS has been more open with the public than the town has. Sylvia Clark told the group member that the community should bring concerns to the DAT. The DAT told community members that it was not taking outside input and that field trips to potential treatment sites were for members only. The USFS itself was prepared to abandon the project if the Town did not want it to move forward. The BOT used the DAT as a way to avoid public scrutiny. DAT members are not forest experts.
* In response to the group member’s comments, the USFS noted that Unit One is within the Town’s boundaries, so it is ultimately the Town’s prerogative. The USFS coordinated with the Town of Nederland to design the unit within the Town’s boundaries. However, the addition of the buffer made the treatable area smaller. The Town was involved in project design from the beginning, but the USFS worked with the DAT to make the project comply with the Decision Notice. The USFS would have treated the units with or without DAT input under the Decision Notice’s design criteria.
* A participant said that the DAT was convened by the BOT to decide whether or not to comment on the USFS’ decision. The BOT replied to a letter from Sylvia Clark letter stating that it had heard community members and addressed their concerns. The BOT voted to continue to support the project and sent another letter to Clark detailing community responses to the project. Community members were invited to attend a PROSAB meeting designed to address their concerns.
* A group member stated that everyone who volunteered to be part of the DAT was accepted. Another group member stated that this was false.
* Two group members discussed concerns about runoff stemming from the treatments. This area flows into Barker Reservoir, and some neighbors are experiencing severe runoff on these slopes even without clear-cuts. The DAT recommended that treatments should be irregularly shaped to reduce impacts to viewsheds and potential for windfall. It should also recommend that erosion be prevented, particularly for Unit One. As the polygons are now, they do not look irregular; they look likes chutes for wind and water. Flashfloods are frequent in this area, and these cuts could make them more dangerous. The group members recommended cutting in irregular shapes running parallel to one another to block the wind and reduce erosion. The group members recommended that USFS and Boulder County hydrologists examine the runoff issue, primarily because it impacts drinking water from Barker Reservoir.
* The USFS responded to these concerns about runoff by noting that the current polygons are just general locations designed to provide an idea of forest composition. The USFS can change the exact shape of the cuts. If the two landowners allow the USFS to cut their buffers, the polygon will be elongated. The USFS is open to putting "turns" into the cuts. The proposed cuts currently run north to south because the westward wind is less intense that way. The aspen, ponderosa, and mixed conifer treatments are going to be more exact, but there is flexibility for the lodgepole cuts, which the USFS will probably modify in some ways.
* Another participant noted that “j-shaped” cuts were discussed for Unit Two to avoid creating any square edges in the treatment areas. The DAT recommended that all of the polygons be irregular. The USFS will not disturb drainages and has leeway to tailor the cuts depending on conditions on the ground.
* A group member stated that the winds on the slopes that the Forsythe II project will treat are fast. The USFS is underestimating the erosive potential of the winds in this area. The Town does not want to address such details, but the USFS did not receive information about erosion as a result. The Town should work with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) to create a fuel-break around the town. The USFS is not equipped for this kind of work because it is accustomed to operating on a much larger scale. The USFS should partner with Boulder County and the CSFS to conduct fire mitigation around Nederland.
* In response, the USFS said that it would examine windthrow and wind-scour. Wind-scour can be minimized by shaping units that run north to south and making the units smaller. Additionally, the USFS stated that CSFS designs its prescriptions for its personnel to implement around houses. Every part of the treatment area is at least 300 feet away from the nearest house. Individual homeowners can choose to collaborate with the CSFS to create defensible space around their houses, but not many people have done that so far.
* A group member said that information about the respective roles of the USFS and CSFS, including defensible space, had not been well publicized. This group member also said that patch-cuts were not appropriate in this area even with the 300-foot buffer because new fuels will grow in these patch-cuts. Grasses and other surface fuels will grow back.
* The USFS said that it would pile and burn cut trees using manual crews because of the steepness of the terrain. The USFS will evaluate each patch-cut to determine whether it needs to plant other species such as limber or conifer to diversify the lodgepole area. Some conifer will probably regrow naturally in the patch-cuts as well.

**Clarifying Questions**

MMG members asked several clarifying questions about Masters’ update on Units One and Two. Questions are indicated in italics. The corresponding responses are below in plain text.

*Did DAT members walk the smaller cut in the northeast part of Unit 2? That cut seems to be close to a spring. The spring is near a trailhead with willows, aspen, and spruce. Why was that spot chosen for cutting?*

DAT members visited the larger area to the south that the DAT recommended that the USFS cut. After the DAT and USFS agreed upon this cut, the DAT still needed to identify six acres of cuts to meet the USFS’ goal of 14.7. DAT members pushed back against this target number, and the group debated whether more acres should be included. The northeastern area was selected because it connected existing patch-cuts in dense lodgepole. The Fire District supported this because it did not create difficulties for firefighting. The USFS noted that it could reshape this cut. The recommended units are hypothetical until USFS personnel walk them, so the USFS will ensure that the planned cuts are not too close to a spring. Additionally, the USFS is prohibited by law from cutting too close to a spring.

*How will the USFS weigh feedback from the DAT and MMG if each group provides different recommendations? How will the USFS reconcile the differences between these recommendations?*

The USFS will listen to all recommendations, but the treatments that the DAT has outlined fall within the design criteria outlined for conducting the treatments. The USFS cannot promise that the treatments will change from the DAT's recommendations, but the current treatments are in keeping with what MMG members have suggested at past meetings.

*If the two landowners allow cuts to fall within their buffers, will the USFS subtract that acreage from its goal of 4.4 treated acres in Unit One?*

Yes. The USFS is not permitted to cut more than 4.4 acres in Unit One, so there cannot be a net increase in treated acres. For example, the patch-cut in the northeastern portion of Unit One could be shifted to the northwest to mitigate erosion concerns if it does not result in a net increase in treated acres. The USFS will examine the possibility of shifting that particular patch-cut.

*Did the Decision Notice or any other Forsythe II document include an official erosion plan? Such a plan could address the community’s erosion concerns.*

No, but the USFS can evaluate the erosion issue.

*If the USFS is enhancing aspen and thinning ponderosa in Unit One, why can it not do thinning and removal treatments instead of patch-cuts?*

The dominant species in the area is lodgepole pine, so the USFS needs to treat lodgepole for the project to have much effect. Additionally, removal and thinning increase the risk of blowdown and the corresponding risk of a fire.

*Do the two westernmost slopes shown on the map of Unit One have a 100-foot buffer between them?*

Yes.

*Will the narrow corridors currently mapped between treatment areas withstand heavy winds?*

Those buffers have to be at least 100 feet wide under the design criteria.

*Will the USFS collect surface fuels in addition to removing trees and conducting slash-and-pile?*

Generally, no. In some units like Unit 74 where there is a great deal of surface fuel, the USFS will need to remove some surface fuels before piling, hauling, burning, and thinning. However, the USFS can only treat the forest per the design criteria outlined in the Decision Notice.

**Themes from Avenza Points**

Marin Chambers provided a handout summarizing common themes gleaned from previous meeting summaries and Avenza points that MMG members had submitted for units in Phase One and Two. The MMG discussed these themes, particularly concerning Phase One Unit Two.

* Group members who had walked on the eastern edge of Unit Two noted that CFRI had made a couple of mistakes in its summary of this unit, particularly by omitting the limber pine that group members identified in Unit Two.
* CFRI responded that it based its summary on the feedback that it had received. CFRI received no feedback on Unit One and based its summary on the two Avenza points that it received for Unit Two. For the remaining units, CFRI made observations from what personnel saw on maps of each unit. For example, Avenza points submitted for Unit Two showed gullies, areas where the USFS was discouraged from cutting, and areas with identified social values. CFRI identified similar features relating to social values or logistical concerns (e.g., slope) throughout the Phase Two units. CFRI can add any more input that it receives from group members. Group members can draw Avenza points or mark input on posters provided at MMG meetings by CFRI.
* CFRI noted that it has limited capacity to do more mapping. CFRI staff are willing to accept and map additional Avenza points for Units One and Two, primarily because it sounds like some data did not get sent, but the deadline for group members to provide input on these units was a few weeks ago.
* The USFS confirmed that there would be no other treatments in Unit Two besides lodgepole. There is some aspen along Magnolia Road, but there are not many aspen clones that the USFS could easily enhance as in Unit One.

**PHASE TWO UNITS**

The MMG discussed Phase Two treatment units using maps provided by CFRI. The maps showed input provided by group members through Avenza. The table distributed by Chambers shows themes within units or sets of proximate units (e.g., Units Three and Four).

**Units Three and Four**

* A group member stated that there is a section of limber pine mixed in with conifer in the middle of Unit Three. USFS said that limber pine is not typically left in clear-cuts because it is prone to blowing over. If the USFS decides to leave the limber pine intact, it will not clear-cut around it. Generally, the USFS does not cut limber pine at all.
* A group member said that there is small, dense lodgepole around the existing clear-cuts in these units that the USFS could cut.
* A group member suggested cutting dense lodgepole that has regrown adjacent to the meadow in Unit Three. The USFS indicated that it could thin that regrowth.
* The USFS noted that it will not cut aspen or meadows in wet areas and that it will follow the design criteria outlined in the Decision Notice when treating these areas.
* The USFS also said that the maps do not always line up with the reality on the ground depending on the quality of the survey data upon which the maps are based.
* A group member requested that USFS leave an area of healthy, large lodgepole in the northeast portion of Unit 4. The area was thinned in the recent past and does not have much surface fuel or blowdown. There are also social trails in the area.
* The same group member noted that the terrain on the north-facing slopes on the southern edge of Unit Three so that area may be difficult to treat.
* A group member recommended cutting a southwestern portion of Unit Three and the angled bottom portion of the Unit Four polygon. Connecting clear-cuts could supplement these cuts on the western edge of Unit Three. However, there is not much aspen to enhance in and around the clear-cuts and treatment might be difficult in an area with steep terrain and considerable blowdown. The group member also marked a wildlife trail that deer, elk, and moose use on the southeastern corner of Unit Three.
* Group members noted that a drainage in a densely forested area will be tough to treat because of the steep slope on which it lies.
* A group member noted that no group member had visited the southeastern portion of Unit Four yet. This area consists of the eastern slope of a large hill further up from the aspen clone that Phase One addresses. The area is a potential site for treatment.

**Units 45 West and 48**

* Group members noted that these units (referred to as the “lazy-z” units because of the shape of their polygons) possess north-facing slopes with a considerable amount of slash available to be piled and burned. Generally, group members recommended not treating south-facing slopes in these units because they include moist, shady habitat with a significant number of ungulates.
* The USFS responded to concerns about the impacts of such treatments to ungulates like elk by stating that there are still many elk living in recently treated areas around Nederland. The treatments have left narrow corridors for the elk to move between units. However, a group member expressed concern that future treatments might diminish the range of these elk.
* A group member said that the portion of Unit 45 near Unit 43 has shady lodgepole forest favored by ungulates and other desirable features. The group member asked the USFS not to cut this area.
* The same group member suggested treating the area near the road fork instead. This area has a lot of blowdown and is relatively open lodgepole and ponderosa forest. The USFS could expand these openings.
* gtyyhThe USFS commented that the presence of ponderosa and Douglas fir on south-facing slopes on these units means that the basal area that the USFS will remove will be different than it would be for lodgepole treatments. In this case, the USFS would prefer to treat the ponderosa rather than the lodgepole pine.
* A group member marked the presence of wildlife trails in the portion of Unit 45 lying directly above Unit 48. The group member also marked an arc of aspen patches located near a drainage running along the northern portion of Unit 48.
* A group member said that the portion of Unit 45 adjacent to Unit 43 is favorable for regeneration treatments. The USFS could thin the Douglas fir in this area, which is already somewhat open and address the present ladder fuels. The group member asked the USFS to treat the understory in this area because the trees themselves are mostly healthy and well-spaced.
* Group members who walked the northern part of Unit 48 near Unit 45 found what was probably a mountain lion kill in the area. One group member said that a recent video published by mountain lion researchers working near Mount Lyons indicated that three or four mountain lions were living in the Forsythe II area. The group members asked the USFS if there were any criteria covering mountain lions in the EA. The USFS responded that the EA only covered T&E species.
* A group member said that the southeastern corner of Unit 48 possesses small, dense ponderosa that seems suitable for thinning.
* A group member asked the USFS not to be "too heavy-handed" when treating the open ponderosa and lodgepole pine in the mid-northeastern portion of Unit 48 because this area has social value. The area also possesses rocky knolls, a drainage area, and songbirds, so it may not be suitable for treatment. However, there is downed material just west of that area that may be fit for treatment. Additionally, there is small, dense ponderosa suitable for treatment to the southwest of the area.
* The USFS stated that ponderosa without a healthy crown will likely stay stagnant after thinning. A certain level of robustness in the crown is necessary for the continued growth of those trees.
* The USFS told the group that the forest cover type designations would primarily determine its treatments in the area. USFS personnel will variably thin treated areas, so the USFS will not treat the maximum percentage of forest in all areas. Treatment teams will create openings and leave some small patches of trees, particularly ponderosa.
* The USFS said that it would treat less than 50% of the basal area in units (like Unit 63) with a lot of limber pine, because it would not want to remove all of the ponderosa, for example, to meet that target.

**CFRI MONITORING UPDATE**

CFRI staff provided an update on monitoring efforts for the Forsythe II project.

* At the last meeting, Marin Chambers presented the group with several options for effectiveness or ecological monitoring the Forsythe II project. At this meeting, the group had agreed that their higher priorities were providing input to the USFS on design layout of units and performing implementation monitoring.
* Of the suggested options that Chambers suggested, the MMG decided to leverage existing effectiveness monitoring that other groups are conducting in the area. The Front Range Roundtable's (FRRT's) Landscape Restoration Team (LRT) is conducting effectiveness monitoring with funding from the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Plan (CFLRP). CFRI has received funding from Denver Water and the USFS' Regional office to monitor Denver Water's projects on the USFS' land. h
* CFRI pointed out that both effectiveness monitoring efforts possess their own objectives within the scope of work outlined under their respective agreements.
* CFRI is talking to the USFS about monitoring other projects within Denver Water’s “zones of concern” (ZoCs) next summer (this summer would be too early because the relevant groups are still designing projects). This monitoring could include work north of the Forsythe II area. CFRI will monitor a subset of the units within the ZoCs, but it cannot monitor every unit and is constrained by the objectives spelled out in its agreement with Denver Water. However, if the MMG wants CFRI to monitor a specific unit, CFRI will consider this and will try to do so.
* CFRI will a provide a monitoring update at each MMG meeting and will send email updates to keep the group informed of new monitoring developments. When monitoring begins, MMG members can spend a Saturday in the field with CFRI staff to participate in and observe monitoring efforts, if that is of interest to group members.
* CFRI stated that it would accept input on what the group's interests are regarding monitoring so that CFRI can try to align those desires with its Denver Water objectives to ensure that it has the capacity for additional analysis. Group members expressed interest in reviewing monitoring results so that the MMG can compare before and after treatments as the USFS implements them. CFRI cautioned the group that the MMG's questions may not align with CFRI's obligatory funding-based objectives from Denver Water.
* Group members said that it would be helpful to discuss what CFRI is monitoring and for whom to see how much of that is relevant to the MMG. The MMG could discuss that at a future meeting.
* CFRI told the group that they had contacted CPW and Boulder County Parks and Open Space (BCPOS) staff about existing wildlife monitoring efforts that are occurring in Boulder County/Forsythe II treatment areas. CPW staff could discuss their wildlife monitoring efforts at a future MMG meeting or share some data for the group to discuss. Additionally, staff from Boulder’s Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) department expressed interest in monitoring birds in the Forsythe II area.

**Clarifying Questions**

MMG members asked several clarifying questions about CFRI’s monitoring efforts. Questions are indicated in italics. The corresponding responses are below in plain text.

*What is the CFLRP doing in the Boulder area?*

CFLRP has not included many treatments in the Boulder area in recent years. That means that there is not much data available from such treatments. CFRI has not encountered much CFLRP data for the Boulder area. That indicates that others have not found much CLFRP data worth analyzing in the Forsythe II area.

*Did CFRI monitor any CLFRP-related treatments in this area before 2014?*

Some, but there are inconsistencies between monitoring methods now and then.

*CFRI’s data may or may not overlap with the Forsythe II units. Does CFRI provide relevant data from different places in Colorado for comparison? Where can that data be accessed?*

CFRI will post any data that it collects in the Forsythe II area on its Forsythe webpage. Beyond that data from across the Front Range is available on the websites from a variety of groups.

*Can CFRI determine if a given treatment area to see if it differs or is similar to the rest of the Front Range?*

CFRI would need to conduct a large-scale analysis to make such a comparison. CFRI will try to bring those kinds of analyses to the MMG when it is relevant. It will not always be possible to conduct additional analysis specific to the MMG, but CFRI will try.

**NEXT STEPS**

* Heather Bergman, Marin Chambers, Brett Wolk, and Kevin Zimlinghaus will discuss how monitoring efforts and other MMG action items fit into the existing prescription schedule on an upcoming planning call.
* The MMG will meet in June to discuss the remaining Phase Two units and the “rules and commitments” document.
* Peak Facilitation will send out a Doodle to select a data for a field trip to the Phase Two units on July 21 or July 28. Group members should tell Kevin Zimlinghaus if there are certain areas they would like to visit on the field trip.
* The MMG will not have a regular meeting in July or August. After the June meeting and July field trip, the group will reconvene in September.
* Sometime this summer, the USFS will send out a list of the units to be treated in Phases Three and Four. MMG members are welcome to walk those units. The group will discuss this in further detail at the June meeting.
* MMG members will take home copies of Kevin Zimlinghaus’ draft responses to input from the April 16th meeting and submit comments on the responses to Peak Facilitation within a week.
* MMG members should send Marin Chambers and Jim Cowart of CFRI any remaining Avenza points for Unit One and Two by June 11th.
* MMG members should verify that Peak Facilitation has each group member’s correct email address so that so that group members can review the summary to verify the location of their concerns in the treatment units and make sure that the wording is correct.