

**Forsythe II Multiparty Monitoring Group (MMG)
September 13, 2018, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Nederland Community Presbyterian Church
Meeting Summary - FINAL**

Attendance: Marin Chambers, Mark Foreman, Reuben Mares, Alex Markevich, Yvonne Short, Kevin Zimlinghaus

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Dan Myers

ACTION ITEMS

Marin Chambers	Post a map of patch cut/clear cut locations online.
Kevin Zimlinghaus	Complete the unit responses document.

USFS PHASES 1 AND 2 TREATMENT STATUS UPDATE

Kevin Zimlinghaus of the US Forest Service (USFS) provided an update on the status of the Forsythe II treatment's first two phases.

- Over the past month, Zimlinghaus has worked to develop a summary of changes from original treatments prescriptions within Phases 1 and 2 on a unit by unit basis. This information has been coupled with the project's master stand list, which details the status of each unit. Both documents will continue to be updated and will be posted on the website.
- The prescription change summary details the acreage of each unit, the forest type, how much of the acreage of the unit and its aggregations the Decision Notice (DN) allows the USFS to treat, and how many acres the USFS originally planned to treat on each unit.
- The major changes are to the acreage of each treatment, particularly because of the decision by the USFS to shift many of the planned units from mechanical to manual treatments.
- The USFS had planned to treat 469 mechanical and 368 manual (847 total) acres across Phases 1 and 2 based on the acreage caps that the DN placed for each unit and aggregation type. Those 847 acres included 153 potential aggregation treatment acres within lodgepole pine units.
- Now, the USFS has decided to treat 47 mechanical and 476 manual (523 total) acres. This represents 62% of the acres that the agency originally planned to treat.
- Zimlinghaus showed a breakdown of these acres in several key lodgepole pine units by total unit acres planned, treatable acres planned, acres being implemented, percentage of units being implemented, acres of aggregations implemented in addition to patch cuts and clear cuts, and the total percent of the unit implemented with aggregations.
- Six units (2, 3, 4, 39, 43, and 45) have been shifted from mechanical to manual treatments and four units (24, 26, 27, and 28, all of which are near Lazy Z Road, Magnolia Road, and Kelly Dahl Campground) have been shifted from manual to mechanical treatments. It should be noted that the DN permits the USFS to get closer to removing caps on the basal area removed in mechanical treatments in mixed conifer, but not in manual contracts that cannot cut larger trees. Under those contracts, the USFS can remove 20% or so (as opposed to 40% or 50%) of the existing basal area. This is not applicable to lodgepole units because they are no governed by a basal area reduction gap in the DN.
- Manual treatments create more piles on the landscape, so the 476 manually treated acres will feature significant numbers of piles.

- The USFS will treat six acres of aggregations (it had planned to treat 153 potential acres) in three lodgepole units: 1, 4, and 75. Two of the aggregations are aspen and one is Douglas fir/mixed conifer.
- The USFS brought a map to this meeting showing planned patch and clear cuts and the location of aggregations in lodgepole units. The map will also be posted on the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) project website.

Clarifying Questions and Answers

Where is Unit 75?

Past the gates at Lazy Z. The unit is lodgepole and contains a small aspen clone.

Does the “final unit acres” column heading on the master stand list refer to the original unit acres plus no-cut buffers?

Yes. The list also details different types of treatable acres: lodgepole, patch cut, treatable, how much can be cut, etc.

What does the “Unit GPS” column heading mean?

Global Positioning System. That is the mapping system used to calculate acreages from the sum of potential acres in aggregations and treatable potential acres.

Breakdown of Lodgepole Pine Treatment Units with Aggregation Treatments

The USFS described lodgepole units to provide sideboards for treatments and to provide context around aggregation treatments.

- Example: The USFS planned to treat 15 total unit acres in Unit 1 (excluding buffers). These 15 acres included 4.5 planned treatment acres (30% of total). The USFS will implement 4.2 acres (28% of the unit total) of patch cuts/clear cuts in Unit 1. Additionally, the USFS will treat 2.1 acres of aggregations in the Unit (14% of the aggregation total). In sum, the USFS will treat 6.3 acres (42% of the unit including aggregations) in Unit 1.
- Three units (1, 4, and 75) are the only ones in Phases 1 and 2 with acreage changes based on treatments.
- All the mixed conifer, aspen, and meadows units already have established acreage numbers. Although treatments may be modified slightly as the USFS encounters knolls and outcrops within the unit, the acreage totals are fixed in the DN.
- Lodgepole unit treatments have changed in two primary ways. The first was a general shift from mechanical to manual treatments.
 - When it was laying out the treatments on the ground, the USFS identified some ground conditions (such as steep slopes) that were unsuitable for mechanical treatments.
 - The reduced diameter caps and clear cut acreages outlined in the Final Decision also influenced the economic feasibility of treating some acres mechanically.
 - The USFS also took the economic feasibility of completing road improvements for “single” units into account and looked for places with adjacent units that could be treated with the same road system.
 - Additionally, MMG Avenza point input identified areas of concern that led to shifting some units from mechanical to manual treatments.
- The second primary change to lodgepole unit treatments was a decrease in the number of acres treated from the number of acres planned.

- The Design Criteria and unit prescriptions excluded riparian area, knolls, patch cut/clear cut buffers, and other types of areas from treatment. That effects the size of the units that the USFS can treat.
- Lodgepole pine treatment units had minimal acres of aggregations that were identified to be included within individual acre totals.
- There were changes in unit design, diameter caps, etc. from the Proposed Action to the Final Decision.
- MMG Avenza points effected how treatments were planned.

Clarifying Questions and Answers

So as a rough summary, in mixed conifer units the change has primarily been a shift from mechanical to manual treatments, and the large reduction in acreage is in the lodgepole units (from roughly 800 to 500 acres)?

No, the reduction from 800 to 500 refers to the total vegetation treatment acres being implemented, not just the lodgepole units.

Where is the bulk of the reduction from 800 to 500 acres occurring?

Part of it is acreage changes due to changes in Desired Conditions, knolls, riparian areas, patch cut and clear cut buffers, etc. These changes were partially arranged based on the MMG fieldtrip when the group and the USFS decided to implement a buffer of 100 feet in patch cuts and 100 meters in clear cuts. On the ground, some areas were too rocky or had trees that were not the proper size for mechanical treatment. The USFS also wanted to treat some “doghair” lodgepole units (42, 75, and 76) manually. Additionally, the Boulder Ranger District currently does not have a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) staff person in the office, so there was some fluctuation in treatment size based on the difference between the mapped treatments and what made sense on the ground.

Is most of the total reduction in acres found in treating 30% of lodgepole units or in mixed conifer units?

More of the reduction is in lodgepole units, as the map shows.

Boundary Flags and Paint

The MMG and the USFS discussed boundary flags and paints for Phase 1 and 2 units.

- The USFS has flagged all units in both phases, but people have been pulling down flags in some areas. If this continues, the USFS will have to paint the boundaries. MMG members can help by spreading the word that pulling flags down adds extra time to the work, but the USFS will paint boundaries if it needs to. The flags may be being pulled down by hikers that use trails in the areas.
- It might be useful if the USFS flagged treatments using tape that said something to the effect of “temporary forest flagging, will be removed”. Sometimes flags are in found in the forest from treatments that occurred a long time ago and it can be difficult to distinguish between recent and older flagging.
- The USFS procures through specific forestry suppliers, so this change would have to be made on the national level.
- The USFS painted the (mixed conifer) trees that will be cut in Units 50 and 51 because it must indicate which mixed conifer trees will be cut or left.
- The USFS also marked Unit 46 (where the MMG went on a field trip last November) using orange paint dots (for trees to leave) and blue paint dots (for trees to cut) and marks at the base (so that if a tree that was marked to be kept is cut, a mark at the base of three will indicate that this was wrong).

- The USFS also uses a tracer and test kit to determine if paint on a given tree is from the USFS or from a random source. This is used to minimize timber theft.

Clarifying Questions and Answers

The master list referenced "layout." What does that mean? Is that when the USFS flags boundaries?
That refers to flagging unit boundaries, not to implementing a specific treatment. "Unit in place" would indicate when tree marking (painting) has been completed.

Will there be a difference between the final prescription document and which trees are actually marked?

There will be differences in some cases between the draft and final prescription documents. These differences will be reflected in the trees that are marked.

How can people check what prescription a unit ended up with? By going to that unit and looking at the boundary flagging and painting?

Not necessarily by examining the flagging, because mixed conifer units will be marked with the blue and orange paint discussed above. In patch cuts, there will be a boundary. Mechanical treatment boundaries will be painted, and manual ones will be flagged (unless flags keep going missing). Those treatments will not have individual trees marked.

The USFS has shown the MMG a spreadsheet with unit by unit inputs and a map that shows where patch cuts and clear cuts will be implemented. Is there a way to create a feedback loop for reviewing how treatments are laid out, either using the patch cut/clear cut or unit by unit information?

A digital map of the patch cuts and clear cuts could serve that purpose. That map will be posted on the CFRI project website.

AGGREGATIONS

The USFS provided three diagrammed examples to help to reach an understanding on the aggregation issue.

- The first example showed a hypothetical aspen unit (similar to Units 5, 7, and 8) with a 30-foot buffer. The USFS would treat the mixed conifer in the buffer up to the diameter caps outlined in the Decision Notice.
 - The example also shows that the USFS would not extend the 30-foot buffer beyond the edge of a defined unit.
 - Treatment activities in this unit would cut up to 14 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) in ponderosa and Douglas-fir aggregations and up to 12 inches DBH in lodgepole aggregations.
- The second example is a 20-acre lodgepole unit with two patch cuts: a five acre and a one acre, respectively. The unit also contains a 1.5-acre aspen aggregation, a one-acre meadow restoration aggregation, and a one-acre lodgepole regeneration aggregation.
 - Of these 20 acres, up to six could be patch cut or clear cut. There will be buffers of at least 100 feet between patch cuts and of at least 100 meters between clear cuts.
 - The aspen, meadow, and lodgepole regeneration aggregations are between 0.5 and 5 acres in size, so the USFS can treat them.
 - Within the aspen aggregation, conifers up to the diameter caps would be cut (14 inches DBH for Douglas fir and 12 inches DBH for lodgepole).
 - The USFS could place a 30-foot buffer around the aspen clone.
 - Within the meadow, the USFS could cut ponderosas and Douglas firs up to 14 inches DBH and lodgepoles up to 12 inches.
 - The regeneration aggregation would contain 10-15 feet in spacing between trees.

- All these cuts would be scalloped.
- The third example is a 20-acre mixed conifer unit with a five-acre aspen aggregation, which would have a 30-foot buffer.
 - Again, the USFS would not extend the buffer beyond the unit edge.
 - The species-specific diameter caps for conifers in the aggregations and the buffer would still apply.
 - The 15 mixed conifer acres would be thinned up to a corresponding basal areas reduction for old-growth forest (up to 30%), Douglas fir (up to 40%), and ponderosa (up to 50%).

Clarifying Questions and Answers

In the third example, the USFS would treat 5 acres of aspen and be left with 15 acres of mixed conifer. But that is different from the second example, where the USFS subtracts the meadow and aspen from the acreage total. In the third example, the USFS does no such subtraction. It treats 30% of 20 acres rather than 30% of 15 acres. Why?

This is the crux of the aggregation issue. The USFS interpretation is that aggregation acres are in addition to the unit total acres. That is why they are not subtracted from lodgepole unit totals when calculating how much 30% of that acreage is. Because there are aggregations present on the landscape, the USFS interprets the Decision Notice language to allow it to treat 30% of the unit total for patch cuts and clear cuts in lodgepole pine units. That is what the Decision Notice says. Treatable acres in other units are set by acres. The USFS treats mixed conifer units by working through the unit as a whole, as opposed to adding aggregations in addition to that as in the case of lodgepole pine units.

Where is that language located in the Decision Notice?

Page five, paragraph two. The USFS broke down different types of treatment units outline in the Decision Notice by using vegetation prescriptions. As the Decision Notice says, “some of these units have situations where a management unit might be delineated as a mixed conifer stand or a lodgepole pine stand but contain aggregations (1/2 acre to 5 acres in size) of the other dominant stand conditions.” The conditions found on the landscape are not homogenous. Additionally, page six mentions that the USFS can patch or clear cut up to 30% of the mapped acres in lodgepole units. That applies to patch cuts, but not to aggregations. Page five clarifies what the USFS can do when there are aggregations in other units.

Group Discussion

Participants discussed the aggregation question.

- The key words are “appropriate treatment for that stand type will be implemented as described below.” In the second example, the USFS is applying aspen and meadow acres towards the total lodgepole treatment. The USFS could patch cut 30% of the whole 20-acre unit. But just like in the mixed conifer unit, the USFS does not cut every tree, but focuses on acres treated. The USFS interpretation is to apply aspen treatments, aggregation treatments, and lodgepole treatments if there is an aggregation within a lodgepole unit. The language does not logically allow the USFS to do that. There is a broader question about how applicable this is: in Phases 1 and 2, the USFS is only treating six of 150 possible aggregation acres in lodgepole units.
- The Decision Notice says that lodgepole treatments can include up to 30% treatments for patch cuts and clear cuts.
- The Decision Notice says not more than 30% will be *patch cut or clear cut*, not treated. It is a nuance, but it is the crux of this issue.
- There are two different 30% numbers here. The USFS can patch cut or clear cut up to 30% of a lodge pole unit. For aggregations, page five, paragraph two says that the

aggregations can be expected to occur across 30% of any given unit. Those are two different points.

- There was no disagreement about treating 30% of the unit as an aggregation, but the USFS position is that up to 30% of a unit can be treated as an aggregation wherever that aggregation occurs.
- Example: There are 20 acres in a lodgepole unit with aggregations totaling five acres. The USFS can treat create a five-acre patch cut or clear cut, but it treats aspen on those five acres as well, which is different than using the treatment appropriate for the dominant stand type in the unit. The aspen acres are not being treated as lodgepole. There is a difference between “treatment” and “patch cut/clear cut” in the Decision Notice. By counting aggregation acres as part of the 20 total acres rather than treating 30% of the lodgepole acres, the USFS is conducting both, say, aspen *and* lodgepole treatments in an aspen aggregation. The Decision Notice does not say to do this. It says to treat that “the appropriate treatment for that stand type will be implemented as described below.”
- There was agreement that the USFS could treat 30% of the acres in a lodgepole unit without aggregations.
- The issue is how many patch cut and clear cut acres are available to treat.
- The aggregation issue has been drawn too far down from how treatment prescriptions were developed for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis. The USFS identified appropriate treatments using GIS images. It then determined what the dominant cover type was in each area. The USFS broke units down into polygons for analysis. The Decision Notice says that the USFS can make patch cuts in up to 30% of a lodgepole unit. It does not say that the USFS cannot deduct acres from patch cuts to include in other treatments. The USFS could have treated thousands more acres that it did not decide to treat. The Decision Notice was not designed to be dissected word by word. The USFS has incorporated internal and public input, but the Decision Notice is not perfect. The USFS believes that the language in the Decision Notice is sufficient for it to interpret the aggregation rule the way it has.
- The MMG does not get decide if the USFS is bound by the Decision Notice. The USFS is bound by that document. The aggregations language in the Decision Notice seems designed to allow the USFS to adjust treatment boundaries on the ground that reflect reality in light of the imprecision of the GIS imagery. However, the USFS interpretation of this language is incorrect in claiming that it can define aggregations based on where a species is dominant. The language of the aspen section, for example, says nothing about defining where aspens are dominant. It applies only to areas being treated for aspens. The aspen aggregation in the third example is independent of surrounding tree types. The language in page five, paragraph two says refers to “an aggregation of the other dominant stands conditions.” That means that there needs to be dominant stand conditions for an aggregation to occur. In the third example, the USFS could apply aspen treatments within the internal polygon where aspen aggregations occur but could apply aspen treatments outside of that. In buffers, the USFS could, for example, apply the conifer basal area reduction treatment in a conifer buffer, but not in an aspen buffer, but conifers are not dominant there. This is supported by the language in page five, paragraph two: “but contain an aggregation of the other dominant stand conditions.” Regardless, the aggregation language only pertains to six acres in Phases 1 and 2, so the group can revisit this subject if it becomes more pertinent.
- Under the aspen definitions on page six, the Decision Notice says that aspen buffers can extend 30 feet from the edge of an aspen clone. Regardless, the USFS said it would not take the buffer beyond the edge of a unit.

- However, that does not refer to dominance. In an aspen unit like Unit 5, the USFS can treat 30 feet into the buffer where aspen is not dominant. The USFS can cut any conifer in the aspen unit besides limber pine if it is within 30 feet of an aspen clone.
- The USFS should not take an aspen buffer across a boundary into a non-aspen unit. The Decision Notice says that it can create a buffer within the same unit, but it is the aspen clone, not the unit boundary, where the 30-foot buffer begins.
- Restoration (including aspen restoration) is the objective of this project.
- The USFS and homeowners disagree on the interpretation of the aggregations clause in the Final Decision and on how it applies to treatments proposed by the USFS, particularly for Unit 1. This remains an open issue for further consideration. The group moved on to another subject.

Clarifying Questions and Answers

In the second example, there are five acres of aspen. The USFS can treat the buffer as aspen, and the buffer extends 30 feet from the edge of the stand. Therefore, the larger the stand, the larger the buffer. That might mean creating more than five acres of buffer for a five-acre aspen stand. Then, the USFS would need to, for example, subtract 5 acres of aspen and 5.5 acres of aspen buffer from a mixed conifer unit. Is the USFS subtracting full buffer acres from non-lodgepole unit acre totals”

No.

The USFS can subtract portions of an aggregation if the unit is conifer, but not if it is lodgepole. So, the USFS uses different rules for lodgepole and mixed conifer units. What if there were 20 acres of lodgepole and 10 acres of aggregations? It seems obvious that the USFS it is treating parts of the unit twice.

This is a question of semantics for how the USFS counts acres: 30% can be patch cut/clear cut and 30% can be treated as aggregations.

LANDSCAPE-SCALE PROPOSAL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Alex Markevich of the MMG provided landscape-scale input from homeowners. His presentation was not the official opinion of the Magnolia Forest Group (MFG), but his proposal may be supported by other members of that group. The MMG and USFS discussed his input as the presentation proceeded. The input was categorized as:

- Individual unit inputs
- Special units
- Conifer units in general
- Conifer units with previous treatments
- Lodgepole units in general
- Lodgepole units with previous treatments
- Slash piles

Individual unit input

- There is not much visible evidence that the USFS has incorporated MMG input (e.g., Avenza points), although it has said that its unit by unit spreadsheet will be ready soon.
- Individual unit impacts will not impact the ability of the USFS to meet its project objectives. A knoll or riparian area may be treated differently, based on individual unit input, but that is minor on a landscape scale.
- However, Markevich’s input on Unit 77 may reduce the USFS’ landscape restoration or fire mitigation goals. Unit 77 was treated as part of the Winiger project. It is important to homeowners: it is the most visible feature from Magnolia Road, it is regarded as one of the best viewpoints in the area, it is a popular public hiking spot, it is a frequent animal

migration route, and it serves an example of effective interior forest habitat. The unit is the only one in the Forsythe II project area with interior forest.

- Unit 77 does not pose much fire danger because it is on a ridge and there is not much housing in the area.
- Markevich requested that the unit be removed from treatment.
- The USFS does not think that anything about treating that unit would mean not meeting project objectives.
- The unit is 269 acres and 5% of the total project area. However, it is not significant to overall fire danger in the area. The area was also already treated under the Winiger Project.
- The next most important unit to homeowners is Unit 52, because the entire ridge behind it is socially isolated land owned by Boulder County with good animal habitat. A local professor has set up game cameras in the unit and has recorded bears and mountain lions.
- Unit 52 was also treated under Winiger. The unit has good canopy spacing and reduced underbrush. It poses little catastrophic fire danger.
- Next is Unit 53, which includes a dispersed camping site along Forest Road 321. The area was treated as part of the Winiger Project and is dominated by aspen.
- The Winiger Project left some widely spaced conifers (and some conifer regeneration) in Unit 53. The UFS could remove the regenerating conifer to preserve the dominance of the aspen.
- The USFS should not cut down the widely spaced conifers because doing so would reduce the attractiveness of the camping site.
- Taking conifers out in Unit 53 will not impact the view from the dispersed camping area. There is conifer mixed with aspen across the road from the camping area, but that is not the case nearer to the camping area.
- It takes time for treated areas to regenerate. Eventually, the camping area will be entirely aspen. However, it could be 5-15 years before this is the case, and people will be camping in Unit 53 in the meantime. Preserving the aspen clone is part of Markevich's recommendation for this unit but cutting upcoming conifers could still preserve the dominance of the existing aspen clone.

Conifer Units in General

- The USFS should explain how it views the historic forest densities to which it aims restore conifer stands. The Decision Notice discusses the desire of the USFS to return conifer stands to their historic, characteristic species composition.
- Today, conifer densities are already low (perhaps because of previous treatments like Winiger). The Decision Notice prescription allows the USFS to reduce the basal area of conifer stands (depending on species composition) by 40-50%. However, it is not worth treating beyond that in upper montane forests, because fire danger is already mitigated by the sparse basal area in upper montane forests in the project area. Most of the project lies in the upper montane zone.
- The USFS considers the existing basal area in conifer units when implementing the prescription, but in mid-montane forests it is considering reducing basal area to 30% of existing levels because the relevant units lie in a transition zone between mixed conifer and lower montane ponderosa forests. Mid-montane forests include dry and wet mixed conifer, but also exist at a certain elevation and slope aspect. However, the USFS project implementers prefer to consider forest as simply "montane" and to apply different treatments to stands based on species composition.
- The Decision Notice prescription allows the USFS to reduce the basal area of conifer stands (depending on species composition) by 40-50%. Throughout the montane zone and the two mixed conifer treatment types, the respective basal area reductions are applicable to meet

the objectives of the project. In the areas dominated with lodgepole pine, patch cuts and clear cuts would take the existing basal area that is identified within the boundary from the existing basal area and reduce it to zero. However, it is not worth treating beyond that in upper montane forests, because the sparse basal area already mitigates fire danger in upper montane forests in the project area. The basal area is generally greater in the upper montane zone than in the lower montane zone. Most of the project lies in the upper montane zone.

- The USFS considers the existing basal area in conifer units when implementing the prescription, but in mid-montane forests, it is considering reducing the basal area to 30% of existing levels because the relevant units lie in a transition zone between mixed conifer and lower montane ponderosa forests. In the Douglas-fir mixed conifer and ponderosa mixed conifer treatment units, the basal area reduction is 40% and 50%, respectively. Because the USFS is treating most of the units in Phase 1 manually with chainsaws, the USFS anticipates the existing basal area reduction will be in the range between 20 and 35% depending on the site conditions, species size and composition, and the design criteria in the Decision Notice.
- The Forsythe II Project is designed to perpetuate stands over time. In some areas, more Douglas fir is growing on south aspects of slopes than the historic norm. Ponderosas have not been regenerating on such slopes but is more resilient to dry conditions on south aspects. The USFS wants to help ponderosas to regenerate on those slopes because they will be more resilient to climate change. This is one reason why the USFS focuses on historic conditions.
- Some of the mixed conifer units in the project area (such as those near Barker Reservoir) are drier than others. The units near the reservoir have low enough basal areas that the USFS risks overshooting historic conditions if it treats the maximum basal area that the Decision Notice allows it to. The USFS should treat units with varying elevation and moisture levels without using a one size fits all approach.
- The USFS has developed step transects that identify existing basal area in each unit. If the USFS reduces a unit's basal area to 30-40% of its original levels, it will compare that treatment to what took place during the Winiger Project and extend the comparison to adjacent stands that existed before Winiger.

Lodgepole Units in General

- Many previously treated lodgepole areas in the project contain either healthy, well-spaced lodgepole or scraggly areas with a lot of underbrush. Markevich recommended that (while recognizing that this may be an economic issue of determining whether to treat units mechanically or manually) the USFS remove scraggly lodgepole and keep previously thinned, healthy trees.
- The USFS is prioritizing the preservation of well-spaced lodgepole in some units. However, some units (such as Unit 24) are now scheduled to be treated mechanically and the USFS is therefore considering cutting larger trees where there is easier road access. The USFS is doing so partially because of the financial realities of contracting out mechanical units (i.e., the wood from the unit needs to be of some economic value to the contractor) and partially so that the USFS can create package deals for small contractors to do mechanical work. The USFS would like to minimize project costs by reducing the need to create additional roads.
- There were questions about whether focusing on reducing project costs in this way compromised project objectives and was a judgement call.

Slash Piling

- Slash piles have been left on the landscape from previous projects in this area. Markevich requested a concrete plan with a budget and timeline for treating slash piles. This is a top

priority for homeowners, and the project's general shift from more mechanical to more manual units will leave more piles on the ground.

- The USFS is making a forest-wide plan to use significantly more prescribed fire. The USFS will need to address the slash piles that currently exist on the landscape if it wants the social license and landscape conditions to use more broadcast burning.
- The USFS cannot provide a timeline or budget numbers for slash pile removal, but it has sent funding requests for new permanent and temporary staff to address slash piles.
- Some homeowners would also like to see more broadcast burning in the area, but the USFS should provide as much information as it can on its planned broadcast burns as soon as it can. The broader community may not want to see prescribed fire in the area, given the history of USFS controlled burns in this area.
- There are areas near Barker Reservoir that the USFS will be ready to burn once Phase 1 is completed (if it has the fuel crews it is requesting).
- Fire managers cannot create a precise timeline for broadcast burns because of smoke limits, burn windows, etc. However, the USFS can say what how many piles it plans to burn in a given year, while noting that those plans are contingent on burn windows, staff capacity, permitting, etc. The USFS should also explain how fire risk changes in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) if it does or does not get the resources it is requesting to address slash piles and controlled burns.
- The USFS should explain the limitations on prescribed fire scheduling (smoke limits, burn windows, etc.) to community members to gain more social acceptance for broadcast burns. Homeowners would also like to see the net change in piles over time.
- The Colorado State Forest Service is working with the National Weather Service to change the currently flawed models that determine burn windows in Colorado. Those changes could create longer and more frequent burn windows, particularly along the Front Range.
- MMG members would like a recorded response from the USFS on each of Markevich's suggestions.
- There are also concerns about surface fuels, particularly in Units 1 and 2 (which are very close to Nederland). The USFS cannot go beyond the patch cut limits in the Decision Notice, so some dead fall will remain on the landscape. The USFS could issue another Decision Notice to incorporate more surface fuels in prescriptions in specific areas. Prescribed fire could eventually address surface fuel concerns, but there is some surface fuel in lodgepole units that the USFS cannot entirely address based on the current Decision Notice.

NEXT STEPS

- The next MMG meeting will be on October 11.
- The USFS will need more time beyond that date to process the recommendations from tonight's meeting. The USFS will provide feedback at the November meeting.
- MMG members should respond to the Doodles sent out by Peak Facilitation to schedule the November and December meetings as soon as possible. They should also provide their availability to help schedule standing meetings for 2019.