

**Forsythe II Multiparty Monitoring Group (MMG)
 November 19, 2018, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm
 MPR Room, Nederland Community Center
 Meeting Summary - FINAL**

Attendance: Paul Alaback, Teagen Blakey, Marin Chambers, Mark Foreman, Angela Gee, Alex Markevich, Paul McCarthey, Sheila Ranegar, Yvonne Short, Susan Wagner, and Kevin Zimlinghaus

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Dan Myers

ACTION ITEMS

CFRI	Bring Topographic Wetness Index materials to the next meeting.
Heather Bergman, Marin Chambers, Angela Gee, and Kevin Zimlinghaus	Discuss marking each week on the Friday planning call and send the MMG an email with relevant marking information for the week ahead.
USFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward explanation of flagging and marking to Sheila Ranegar. • Bring an example treatment contract to the next meeting. • Send updated copies of the “master list” and map of Phases 1 and 2 to Marin Chambers for posting on the project website. • Send out the document detailing units where MMG input prompted specific changes when that document is ready. • Send information to the MMG about the upcoming Magnolia Trail Project and USFS public engagement about desired trails.

TIMELINE REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

Kevin Zimlinghaus of the US Forest Service (USFS) provided an update on the Forsythe II project’s timeline. His comments are summarized below.

- The MMG has now been meeting for over a year. The expectations of the USFS regarding its timeline for completing tasks have been accurate in some cases and off in others. The USFS has adjusted the project timeline through fiscal year (FY) 2019 with the hope of aligning completion schedules more precisely within different project stages.
- The USFS is ahead of its timeline for flagging units in Phases 1 and 2 and for cruising (i.e., gathering an inventory of which trees will be cut based on prescriptions to inform the treatment contract) Phase 1, because it has also finished cruising for Phase 2.
- The USFS is marking trees that will be cut under this project with blue paint, and trees that will not be cut in orange paint.

- The USFS needs to have completed contracts for Phase 1 by the end of January. The USFS hopes to complete the contracts for Phase 2 by the end of February. The MMG will receive a draft of the contract for Phase 1 before Christmas. The USFS would like the MMG to review the Phase 1 contract by January 11 and will keep the group informed as to by when it needs feedback on contracts.

Group Discussion

MMG participants discussed the project timeline and related subjects. Their comments are summarized below.

- The USFS marks some trees in blue and some trees in orange in some units for clarity. In the past, for example, the USFS has marked orange trees not to cut around a cultural site.
- The boundaries in mechanical lodgepole units have not all been painted yet. The USFS has to paint the boundaries of mechanical treatments, but it usually flags manual units. Some of these manual units have had their flags torn down, however, so the USFS may need to paint those boundaries. All boundaries are mapped using geographic information systems (GIS) data.
- The USFS leaves some younger trees uncut within patch cuts. In clear cuts, the USFS leaves limber pine and other mixed conifers uncut but has no maximum diameter at breast height (DBH) for leaving lodgepole pine.
- Local residents have seen many different-colored flags near Lazy Z Ranch. Some of these flags may be remnants from other projects. The flag and paint colors for the Forsythe II project have been standardized. Most of the flagging that the USFS still needs to complete will be implemented at the clear cut near Kelly Dahl Campground. Marking mixed conifer has taken longer than the USFS had anticipated.
- There was a request that the USFS provide the MMG with more time in the future to provide input on flagging and marking. The USFS will try to be better about notifying the MMG about markings even if the mast unit list has been updated.
- The USFS will bring an example contract to the next meeting to try to explain how USFS contracts work. It should be noted that there will be differences between contracts for Phases 1 and 2 because Phase 1 features more manual treatments and Phase 2 features more mechanical treatments.
- There are several types of USFS contracts (which are separated into "task orders") stewardship, supply, small business, etc. In this context, the USFS can probably get a lower price for its treatment units by using a small business contract rather than a stewardship contract.
- Step transect data, meeting summaries, and treatment prescriptions can be found on the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) project website for the Phases planned so far.
- It was clarified that there are contract clauses to prevent contractors from leaving garbage at treatment sites. It was suggested that the MMG could report on instances when the observe contractors in breach of those clauses.
- The March 1 and April 1 deadlines for MMG Avenza input on Phases 3 and 4, respectively, may be difficult to meet if there is heavy snow in the spring. The USFS has not started examining units for those phases yet.

MARKING REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

MMG members discussed the USFS' marking of treatment boundaries. Their comments are summarized below.

- The USFS brought its updated "master list" of prescriptions and map of Phases 1 and 2. The USFS made corrections to both documents based on comments from MMG members.
- The only changes to treatment boundaries for units in Phases 1 and 2 that have been made since GPS was used to set the unit boundaries have been additions of aggregations in clear cuts.
- The USFS has not yet added three aggregations in Phases 1 and 2.
- The USFS will primarily burn piles in the first stage of treatment in Unit 74. There is a specification in the contract for that unit that trees can be felled to accommodate piles as needed. Stage two will commence after piles are burned.
- A clause in the Decision Notice says that if the majority of trees in a unit are under the diameter at breast height (DBH) cut limit, then 10% of the largest trees in that unit will be kept. The USFS has not encountered those conditions yet, but plenty of overstory larger than 10-12 inches DBH is being retained under that clause in the Decision Notice.
- The group discussed the possibility of CFRI creating maps with layers of patch cuts and Avenza points of all the lodgepole units in Phases 1 and 2, as it did with Units 1, 3, 4, 63, and 107. This could help the MMG understand how its feedback has been incorporated based on the locations of patch cuts and clear cuts. The MMG agreed to consider which maps would help to move the group's process forward, which CFRI is willing to make as needed. It may not be useful to create those maps for every unit.
- The USFS is creating a draft document detailing how MMG input specifically influenced changes to individual unit prescriptions and will send that document out when it is ready.
- The group discussed the USFS' plans to burn downed wood in the area, particularly on the Winiger Ridge single track. The downed wood there is dry, susceptible to lightning strikes, and concerningly close to homes.
- The USFS is blocking six areas of a total of 930 acres for prescribed burning. Winiger Ridge was identified for broadcast burn in the Decision Notice. The prescribed burning portion of the project will probably start in 2020 or 2021. The USFS prioritize areas for prescribed burn based on the District Ranger's decision in consultation with other rangers and USFS fire staff. The USFS will work with the community to make sure everyone is on board. The USFS will check if there is any flexibility to start those burns before 2020, but 2019's treatments are fleshed out already.
- MMG members were largely satisfied with what the markings they saw walking Units 40 and 46. It was clarified that the far eastern corner of Unit 40 was excluded from treatment based on MMG feedback and the potential difficulty of burning and hauling in that area. The USFS has not had much of an opportunity to write prescribed burn prescriptions for the units near the reservoir.
- The USFS has clearly marked boundary trees, so contractors will be aware of the boundaries of units.
- There is a trail from the Magnolia Trails Project (MTP) that will run through Unit 4. There is a condition listed in the Decision Notice to avoid patch cutting in the area of trail systems. The MTP and the USFS are coordinating to ensure that the USFS can finish treating that area before the MTP begins work there and to consider the MTP's primary concerns. For the most part, the exact routing of trails through the treatment units will be determined after vegetation treatment. There may be some rerouting of trails to minimize erosion. The USFS

and the MTP will be collaborating on a public engagement process to determine what trails people want in the near future.

- MMG members stated that the aspen aggregation in Unit 75 seems legitimate. That aggregation is the minimum size for an aggregation.
- As has been discussed in previous meetings, there are issues remaining for Unit 1.
- Units 26 and 28 feature clear cuts and Unit 27 features patch cuts. According to the Decision Notice, clear cuts in lodgepole units can be between 5 and 10 acres. The USFS retains patch cuts of over five acres in lodgepole pine units. The USFS will try not to exceed ten acres in those cuts, but it can retain 25% of "islands" within five to ten-acre cuts, meaning the whole cut may be more than ten acres, but the island of retention will not exceed ten acres.
- The treatment prescription for Unit 3 says that the lodgepole there is dense "doghair," but a local resident says that the area features large and well-spaced lodgepole pine. There was concern that the USFS would remove those healthy trees in Unit 3 and in Unit 24.
- The Decision Notice listed diameter limits of removal of 14 inches for ponderosa and Douglas fir and 12 inches for lodgepole pine within aspen units. The USFS will cut large lodgepole in Unit 24, but Units 3 and 4 are not mechanical.
- There is a clear cut within the buffer zone south of Unit 28 because the landowner requested that the USFS treat to their property line in that location.
- The USFS stated that some of its treatment decisions (e.g., removing larger lodgepole pines in mechanical units) are partially driven by the economic viability of a treatment.
- The USFS will remove all evergreens up to DBH limits within the boundaries of aspen restoration units.
- An MMG member requested that the USFS leave an island of ponderosa and mixed conifer in Unit 5.
- The USFS will retain a quarter-mile corridor of lodgepole along the roadbed from the south end of Unit 5 to the boundary of Unit 5 and will cut conifers outside of that corridor within the boundaries of the aspen in that unit.

FUTURE WORK: LANDSCAPE-SCALE CONVERSATION

Heather Bergman introduced a new topic of conversation for the future of the MMG. Her comments are summarized below.

- As the MMG discussed at the October meeting, providing Avenza pins for all values on the landscape was tedious and inefficient, especially because the USFS was tending to some of those concerns anyways. As it approaches Phases 3 and 4, the MMG may want to focus those points and other input on specific values and issues. The MMG could identify these landscape-scale values during the next three or four meetings.
- Bergman asked MMG members to identify their highest priority values on the landscape and to consider whether those priorities apply to all units and all areas or vary geographically. This information could be coupled with a reminder from the USFS of which areas are not on the table for treatment based on the Decision Notice even if the USFS wanted to treat them.
- The MMG will need to determine what "landscape-scale" means in this context. The Forsythe II project area is massive, so it may be wise to focus on a subset of that area. The MMG can also discuss the potential need for mapping specific values on the scale selected.
- This value identification process could be messy, but it could focus the MMG's future efforts.

Group Discussion

MMG members identified and discussed landscape-scale values. Their comments are summarized below.

- Some MMG members stated that the priorities of homeowners had already been adequately identified with adequate data resources and that the MMG needed to talk about concrete details instead. Group members ultimately agreed to try the value identification exercise.
- MMG members identified landscape-scale values, including:
 - **Wildness:** particularly in terms of protecting old trees and large trees, for spiritual, ecological, social, and aesthetic reasons.
 - Forests are dynamic systems with which humans should follow the precautionary principle in their dealings.
 - Intense patch cuts and clear cuts can greatly degrade the wild feeling of an area.
 - Wildness would be difficult to map.
 - **Fire mitigation:** ladder and surface fuels are of particular concern, for fire safety, aesthetic, and ecological reasons.
 - There was disagreement as to whether surface fire or crown fire posed a greater risk to humans and the landscape.
 - The MMG discussed fuel piles and the USFS regulations on their frequency and spacing. MMG members expressed a preference for smaller and more widely spaced piles, and for hauling out chipped/masticated/slashed material when possible. It was noted that it is harder for the USFS to write contracts with smaller piles.
 - MMG members said that the USFS rules for leaving two "habitat piles" per acre created unnatural-looking and unscientific pile conditions. MMG members stated that there were more natural ways (like lop and scatter) to leave wood for nutrient cycling and wildlife. Boulder County aims to leave 20% of cut material on the landscape for nutrient cycling. The USFS stated that that was a reasonable goal depending on treatment type. If a treatment leaves a significant overstory intact, it will replenish surface fuels more over time than a clear cut would.
 - MMG members stated that it was crucial for doghair forest to receive longitudinal maintenance. The USFS stated that all stands needed long-term maintenance, often by allowing fire to return to the landscape.
 - The USFS and homeowners see fire risk differently, so it may be difficult to create a spatial conversation on this topic.
 - **Cumulative impacts:** From Gross Dam, the MTP, Forsythe II, Boulder County's work at Reynolds, housing construction, defensible space work, etc.; for ecological and social reasons.
 - This might be of particular concern on north-facing slopes in lodgepole units, where patch cutting could threaten wildlife corridors.
 - Maps overlaying treatment projects, wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, etc. could be created.
 - **Viewshed:** from all perspectives (houses, driving into town, vistas, etc.) for aesthetic reasons.
 - The viewshed may be difficult to map if it is considered to the entire area.
 - An MMG member suggested (for planning purposes) a viewshed hierarchy of the most frequently traveled roads in the area and views from housing concentrations, respectively.

- **Interior forest:** all cover types, for social and ecological reasons, and for its rarity.
 - MMG members' definition of the interior forest (e.g., a forest with abundant wildlife, few or no trails, and an absence of humans) may be different than that of the USFS.
 - There is an existing USFS map of interior forest in the area, but some MMG members stated that it could be improved.
 - **Wildlife:** general diversity (big animals like moose and bobcats, migratory birds, wildflowers)
 - There was concern that wildlife stays away from clear cuts.
 - It was requested the USFS stay away from key bird nests during nesting season.
 - Wildlife corridors would be useful and easy to map.
 - **Diversity:** all cover types, at the stand scale, for ecological, social, and human health reasons.
 - Some MMG members said Douglas fir and ponderosa were more important than aspen for ecology (promotion of flammulated owls, mosses, etc.) and fire prevention.
 - Some MMG members said that heterogeneous stand structure (particularly for mixed conifer and Douglas fir) was critical to preserve.
 - **Big trees:** all cover types, for ecological, fire risk, and spiritual reasons (e.g., forest bathing).
 - **Shady, wet areas:** all cover types, for ecological, fire risk, and social reasons
 - **Property values:** influenced by all of the above values, reduced in particular by nearby clear cuts.
- Maps of these values and the areas where they overlap could be used to inform the USFS of areas that would be best to leave alone. While the MMG has identified valuable units (for many of the reasons above), there was disagreement as to whether the USFS could end up (under the Decision Notice) harming those values in other units if a conversation to identify those values did not take place beforehand.

NEXT STEPS

- There are still some unanswered questions about Unit 1 and the 30% rules for aggregations. The USFS is somewhat flexible in Unit 1 (and may be able to incorporate an MMG member's suggestion to treat the southeast portion of Unit 1 more like an aggregation than a clear cut) but wants to consult a representative of the Design Advisory Team (DAT) given that they supported the prescription for that unit, which is very close to town.
- At the next meeting, the MMG will discuss homeowner input on treatment units, Unit 1, the USFS table detailing how MMG input influence prescription changes, an example USFS treatment contract,
- The next MMG meeting will be December 5 from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Nederland Community Center. The January meeting will be on the evening of the 9th.
- Peak Facilitation will doublecheck the Doodle to schedule the February meeting, which will need to be moved to a different date because of a scheduling conflict for the facilitator.