

**Rocky Mountain Region**

**Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests**

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##### SBEADMR-PLP

Spruce Beetle Epidemic-Aspen Decline Management Response Project-Public Lands Partnership

##### Promoting Healthy Landscapes for Healthy Communities

##### Communications Plan

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**Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests**

### 1. BACKGROUND

In July 2016, the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests signed a Record of Decision (ROD) authorizing implementation of commercial and non-commercial treatments on up to 120,000 acres over 8-10 year period. Vegetative types targeted for treatment are spruce-fir, mixed conifer and aspen. The ROD also authorized the use of adaptive management to plan treatments, implement those treatments, check to ensure objectives are achieved and make changes in actions when undesirable outcomes occur or objectives are not met. The Adaptive Management Group (AMG) was formed to assist the GMUG in applying the adaptive management framework in accordance with the ROD. Appendix E of the Final Environmental Impact Statement provides the basis for the framework. This communication plan identifies mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, types of information to be provided and how stakeholders will help inform the management process.

**Objectives of SBEADMR AMG**

1. Provide comments/recommendations on proposed treatments site and design of treatments with FEIS priority treatment areas (PTA).
2. Assist with articulating monitoring questions
3. Participate in post-treatment field review and provide recommendation to the Forest Leadership Team to improvement outcomes.
4. Have representation at the annual Management Review with Forest Leadership Team and Science Team.
5. Anticipate roadblocks that may arise and work with Forest Service and Science Team to resolve.
6. Strive for consensus of diverse interests on all formal comments/recommendations submitted to GMUG.

### 2. Points of Engagement and key dates.

* Mid-Winter Meeting with Stakeholders Annual - February
* AMG Review of Mid-Winter Meeting need for change Annual - March
* Forest Leadership Team Management Review Annual - April
* Post outcomes of Management Review on SBEADMR website Annual - May
* Interdisciplinary Team/AMG Review of a project Annual July-September
* Stakeholder Treatment Review Annual July-October
* PLP/AMG Open Houses Annual - Fall
* Compile stakeholder and internal comments and compile for Mid-winter meeting Annually by January
* Provide regular updates through website posts, newspaper, radio spots, etc. on As needed during operations

Roads used for hauling, road construction and re-construction and trails that could

be impacted by operations etc.

* Chambers of Commerce and Visitor Bureaus As needed during operations
* Congressional and Local Officials As needed during operations
* Notify special use permit holders, outfitter guides, and range permittees As needed during operations

### 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES

* Complete one mid-winter meeting annually to include all interested stakeholders.
* AMG will complete review of findings from mid-winter meeting and formulate recommendation to FLT on how the project should be modified to improve environmental outcomes and increased treatment efficiency.
* Annually share results of Management Review through posting to the Forest SBEADMR Implementation website. A summary report of MR outcomes will be produced annually.
* Complete an implementation review of one treatment annually with Forest ID Team and AMG.
* Complete a treatment review of one treatment annually. Rotate between Vegetation Management Zones where possible.
* Provide regular and timely information on timber and prescribed fire activities to minimize user conflicts and maintain public trust.
* Describe interdependence of the timber industry and local community economics to forest management.
* PLP Fall Field Trip – provide note taker to capture key points and highlights.
* Produce AMG Newsletter with “*Did you Know”* information and who provides fact based information.
* Highlight importance of working with industry for vegetation management objectives.
* Possible collaboration with other partners wanting to utilize data collected from SBEADMR for use on other projects.

### 4. AUDIENCES

* Adaptive Management Group (AMG) – composed of 19 members representing the following interests: County commissioners, Forestry processors, Forestry loggers, Environmental/conservation groups, community at large members, water resources, recreational users, wildlife and fish interests, education, Colorado State Forest Service.
* Public-at-large – individuals in affected communities having an interest in management of federal natural resources.
* Elected Officials
* Congressionals
* Local Officials
* Stakeholders
* Chamber of Commerce
* Visitor Bureaus
* Other Forest users that could be affected by timber and prescribed fire operation’s (e.g. outfitter guides, grazing permittees, special use permittees etc.)

### 5. COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH, FEEDBACK PRODUCTS

**Newsletter:** AMG will produce quarterly newsletters to inform AMG members and the public-at-large about the SBEADMR project. Tailor sections of the Newsletter to local County needs where possible. Newsletter will focus on the following:

* “Did you know” related to logging and prescribed (Rx) fire activities
* Road and trail closures with maps that show routes and/or listing of “potential routes” (updated quarterly, monthly or as conditions change)
* Types of treatments

**Website:** Two websites will be maintained: PLP and GMUG-SBEADMR Implementation website

*Public Lands Partnership website – Maintained by PLP*

* + AMG meeting notes
  + AMG meeting schedules
  + Up-coming public events
  + Maintain Newsletter and Website with pertinent information and updates
  + Total miles of new roads and re-constructed roads
  + Tailor information to small communities
  + Provide key highlights from annual field trips
  + Science team updates and presentations

*GMUG Implementation website – Maintained by GMUG Public Affairs*

* + Three year treatment proposed action (maps and narrative)
  + Next year proposed treatments for 30-day public comment period (maps and narrative)
  + Responses to public comments – published annually.
  + Results of treatment implementation review – published annually
  + Results of FLT Management Review – published annually
  + Final EIS trigger tracking – Lynx Analysis Units and Watershed Statistics, maintenance of 5-15 percent of habitat structural stage in affected watersheds.
  + Science Team updates (monitoring results, publications, and other information pertinent to the project) **NEED NAMES OF SCIENCE TEAM**

*Map and/or description of potential road closures due to hauling and/or construction*

* To be updated monthly or quarterly or when use of roads change

*SBEADMR Monitoring Results and Updates*

* Science team updates

*Question and Answer (Q & A) with science team information on the website*

* Clay Speas as point of contact
  + Science Team updates (monitoring results, publications, and other information pertinent to the project)

**Social Media:** Use approved social media outlets to disseminate updates through these tools. Share all PLP updates pertinent to SBEADMR.

* Twitter
* Facebook
* FB-Live (annual field trips, annual meetings, open house poster sessions, etc.)
* Publish all news releases related to SBEADMR

**Open Houses:**

* PLP to conduct poster session open houses to raise public awareness
* Science focused morning session with science “lightning round” forum afternoon session
* Display SBEADMR video developed by Enterprise Team and college students

**Annual Report:**

* Annual Report updated yearly prior to Mid-Winter Public Meeting

**Questions and Answers (Q and A):** Use Q & A’s to develop consistent answers to all questions anticipated.

* Add Q&A page to the website with a set of questions/answers from the research team- “anonymous” - Clay Speas as contact on the web page
* “Science You can Use” one pager developed by science team
* Q&A material:
  + Outcomes of monitoring and what do they mean?
  + What is expected of the science team?
  + Science on where answers come from?
  + Science team updates and presentations

### 6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES

**Note: This section of the Communication Plan is used to track activities as they occur on an annual basis.**

| **Date Frequency** | **Activity** | **Responsible Person** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| December-Annually | Monitoring findings Meeting (Matrix Update Summary) | Monitoring AMG/Science team (Call) |
| January -Annually | Share AMG Information to Full AMG | Full AMG - Science Team (Call) |
| February -Annually | Stakeholder’s Meeting (new info presented) | All (science team will attend) |
| April -Annually | Share Matrix to AMG | Monitoring Committee |
| April -Annually | Monitor Meeting - Recommendations | Full AMG – Science Team |
| May - Annually | Management Review Process Meeting Presented to FLT | Clay Speas-USFS |
| June–August Annually | Summer Field Trip | All (science team will attend) |
| September | Science team updates Matrix (after field trip) | AMG – Science Team (Call) |
| September | AMG BMP’s Field Trip | AMG |
| Annually - Fall | Public Open Houses-Poster Sessions | AMG |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| TBD | AMG Monitoring Committee Disband | Monitoring Committee |

### 7. KEY MESSAGES AND TALKING POINTS

* In July 2016 the Record of Decision (ROD) for SBEADMR was signed and authorized 60,000 acres of commercial and 60,000 acres of non-commercial treatment of spruce-fir, mixed conifer and aspen over a 8-10 year period.
* The SBEADMR project was in response to a spruce beetle epidemic and sudden aspen decline which to date has affected over 300,000 acres of spruce-fir and 230,000 acres of aspen.
* Because of the rapid changes in forest conditions, SBEADMR allowed for the adapting of prescriptions (e.g. green tree versus salvage treatments) quickly and easily and without additional NEPA.
* District Interdisciplinary Teams (IDT) developed a 3-year plan of treatments that was used to identify resource management objectives, complete surveys and layout through use of integrated crews, conduct monitoring, and involving the public.
* Achievement of multiple resource objectives on the landscape is the ultimate goal.
* The Forest hosts a mid-winter meeting with interested stakeholders, an annual field trip and completes informal public comment period each year.
* The Adaptive Management Group (AMG), working with the Science Team, establishes SBEADMR implementation and effectiveness monitoring priorities that are reported annually during the mid-winter meeting.
* An annual Findings Report is generated to inform management about what is working, what is not working, and what changes are needed to improve our environmental outcomes or to increase efficiency of the project.
* SBEADMR allows for on-going public involvement and helps with establishing a deeper understanding of treatment objectives and fosters trust and a greater acceptance of Forest Service actions.
* The AMG consists ofmembers reflecting a cross-section of key stakeholders (e.g., timber industry, conservation community, wildlife and fish interests, County Commissioners, etc.).
* The purpose of the AMG is to aid the GMUG in applying the adaptive management framework over the year timeframe in accordance with the SBEADMR Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision.
* The science team is composed of scientists from the Rocky Mountain Research Station, Colorado State University, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute and Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

### 8. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

* Monitoring Strategy Matrix-See Exhibit A