

**Forsythe II Multiparty Monitoring Group (MMG)
 August 12, 2020, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM
 Virtual Meeting
 Meeting Summary – FINAL**

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Chad Buser, Karen Blakemore, Teagen Blakey, Tania Corvalan, Aurelia DeNasha, Mark Foreman, Angie Gee, May Jarril, Alex Markevich, Sheila Ranegar, Susan Wagner, and Kevin Zimlinghaus

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

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| Angie Gee | Spend extra time with the Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) from the US Forest Service (USFS) Enterprise Team to make sure they know the history of the MMG and the commitments the USFS has made to the MMG. |
| Kevin Zimlinghaus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flag the area in Unit 53 in which all the conifers up to a 12-inch diameter at breast height (DBH) will be removed and notify the MMG when the task is complete. • Create a polygon around the surface fuel treatments in Unit 29. • Determine the treatment acres from the defensible space buffer treatments and the surface fuel treatments in Unit 29. • Create polygons for the treatment east of marker TB 26 to Track 16 in Unit 29. • Create polygons for the proposed patchcuts in Unit 31. |
| Kevin Zimlinghaus and Teagen Blakey | Virtually exchange ideas to plan the field trip for Saturday, August 22. |
| Kevin Zimlinghaus, Angie Gee, and Heather Bergman | Discuss the options for the prescription in Unit 31 before the next MMG meeting. |
| Aurelia DeNasha | Inform the MMG when she has assessed the area of nighthawk sighting in Unit 49. |

PHASE 3 CONTRACTOR UPDATE

Meeting participants discussed updates on the Forsythe II Phase 3 contractor. Their comments are summarized below.

- The USFS Boulder Ranger District COR recently left the position. The Boulder Ranger District is in the process of hiring another COR.
- The Boulder Ranger District is working with the USFS Enterprise Team to provide a COR for the Phase 3 contract while they hire a new Boulder Ranger District COR. The USFS Enterprise Team is an internal team in the USFS that is not attached to any National Forest or unit in particular; instead, Enterprise Team members perform specific tasks when a National Forest needs additional capacity. Enterprise Team members have additional COVID-19 restrictions that will make it more difficult for the MMG to inspect contractor work during treatments.
- The contractor that was hired for the Phase 3 contract has a crew and is ready to begin working as early as Monday, August 17. The USFS Boulder Ranger District is looking to get

the contractor into the field by the end of August or early September once they have a COR in place.

- With concerns around COVID-19, it will not be safe to have thirty workers, a COR, and members of the MMG on-site to monitor treatments as they occur. Group inspections during treatments will likely have to begin in 2021. One option for monitoring is for a small number of MMG participants to evaluate treatments after they have been completed as the contractors are working in another part of a unit. The MMG potentially could accompany the sales administrator in the final inspection of any unit too. The MMG can continue to explore options as the Boulder Ranger District hires a new COR as well.
- The USFS can continue to commit to having a COR on the ground when a treatment begins to make sure the contractor crews are implementing the contract as written. As the treatment continues and the crews become more familiar with the prescription, the COR will inspect the treatments after they are completed to make sure the treatment is following the contract and make corrections if necessary. MMG participants can drive by to make sure there is a USFS vehicle present at the beginning of a treatment.
- The USFS will spend extra time with the COR from the Enterprise Team to make sure they know the history of the MMG and the commitments the USFS has made to the MMG.
- Contracts can be difficult to understand and decipher because they are written for the contractors. There is not a contract that is written in layman's term available. Any MMG participant that has questions on a contract can direct questions to Kevin Zimlinghaus, Teagen Blakey, and Alex Markevich at this time. They can also email Samuel Wallace, who can direct them to meeting summaries for clarification.

UNIT 53 TREATMENT DECISION

Angie Gee, Boulder District Ranger, shared her decision on the prescription in Unit 53. Her comments are summarized below.

- At the July 22 MMG meeting, the USFS and community members did not agree on a prescription for parts of Unit 53. The meeting ended with the decision that Angie Gee would reach out to USFS recreation staff and make a decision on the prescription in Unit 53.
- Angie Gee has spent a lot of time thinking about Unit 53 and reached out to the USFS recreation program manager and Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) Forest Supervisor Monte Williams. She has looked at the Unit from multiple perspectives and values, such as forest health, recreation, wildlife, and wildfire.
- When Angie Gee first began as the Boulder District Ranger, ARP Forest Supervisor Monte Williams charged her with two tasks. The first task was to identify the critical areas to treat in the forest. The second charge was to make sure all treatments are beneficial – that government funding is spent in a way that creates value on the landscape.
- Angie Gee's decision for Unit 53 is that some level of treatment needs to occur across the Unit. The MMG had already reached two agreements for treatment in Unit 53. The first agreement was that they would not treat two Douglas fir islands identified on the Unit 53 map. The second agreement was that they would remove conifer trees up to a 12-inch DBH in a strip along Magnolia Road above ground juniper.
- The MMG could not reach an agreement on the remainder of Unit 53. One discussion point among the MMG was how far back the treatment along Magnolia Road would extend into the northern part of the unit. The decision on Unit 53 is to extend the Magnolia Road treatment to the dispersed camping sites on the north side of Unit 53. The treatment will involve cutting conifer trees up to a 12-inch DBH. This treatment will increase the likelihood

of stopping a wildfire and also decrease the risk of human-caused ignitions from the dispersed camping sites.

- For the remainder of Unit 53 outside of the Magnolia Road treatment area, the decision is to remove Douglas fir trees up to a 12-inch DBH and retain large ponderosa pine and limber pine trees. Additionally, all conifer regeneration with a 4-inch DBH or less will be cut. This decision was based on past discussions when some MMG participants shared a preference for the large ponderosa pine trees. The Douglas fir trees are also prolific seeders and will generate the greatest number of regenerating trees that will act as ladder fuels. Additionally, the value in treating Unit 53 is to enhance the existing aspen stand to modify fire behavior. Douglas fir trees will expand and stifle aspen growth unless treated.
- For activity surface fuels, the contractor will pill everything up to an eight-inch DBH. The Unit will be treated manually.

UNIT 53 TREATMENT DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the prescription for Unit 53. Their comments are summarized below.

- The MMG in the past had a third agreement, which was to treat conifer regeneration. The treatment of conifer regeneration up to a four-inch DBH is acceptable. The disagreement among the MMG is whether trees between a four-inch and 12-inch DBH should be treated.
- The treatment area extending from Magnolia Road to the dispersed campsites, in which all conifers up to a 12-inch DBH will be removed, is fairly open. Removing the large conifers will not change the fire risk as they are already well-spaced.
- There were differing perspectives on whether cutting conifer trees with a DBH between four inches and twelve inches would affect aspen restoration. One perspective was that removing the conifers up to a 12-inch DBH will not have a lot of impact on aspen restoration because conifers outside of the treatment area will continue to seed in the treatment area. Additionally, because the conifers are well-spaced, removing them will not significantly impact the amount of shade they are casting. Ultimately, cutting conifers with a DBH between four inches and 12 inches will not release aspen as the aspen are already doing well in Unit 53. Another perspective was that removing conifers up to a 12-inch DBH in the treatment area extending from Magnolia Road to the dispersed campsites will allow the aspen to take hold better and will help release the aspen stand. Additionally, the dispersed campsites in Unit 53 increase the risk of human-caused ignitions; promoting the aspen by removing conifer trees could help modify fire behavior in case a fire started in the area.
- Outside of the Magnolia Road to the dispersed campsites treatment area, the prescription is to retain ponderosa pines to accommodate social values while taking out Douglas fir trees. Although removing Douglas fir trees may not completely stop regeneration, a reduction in the Douglas fir trees means less seeding and regeneration in the future.
- Many of the trees that have a DBH between four inches and 12 inches are ponderosa pine trees, so there are fewer concerns with focusing treatments on Douglas firs. Additionally, there are Douglas fir trees with a DBH above 12 inches in the area that will not be treated. One reason the Douglas firs should come out is to prevent a new cohort of conifer trees from coming up and replacing the aspen stand over time.
- The Douglas fir trees are fire-resistant when mature and have an aesthetic value. Some of the young Douglas fir trees should be retained in Unit 53.
- Ponderosa pine trees are not prolific seeders, so they do not generate as many ladder fuels. By cutting the larger ponderosa pine trees up to a 12-inch DBH, the ponderosa pine tree removal is not creating benefits for the aspen. Removing ponderosa pine trees up to a 12-inch DBH will negatively impact the aesthetic and social benefits of the Unit. The reasoning

behind removing ponderosa pine trees up to a 12-inch DBH does not seem to be valid, except when they are over the ground juniper.

- Throughout the Unit, ponderosa pine trees will be retained, except in the strip that extends from Magnolia Road to the dispersed campsite. Douglas fir trees up to a 12-inch DBH will be removed throughout the Unit.
- People in the dispersed campsites are likely to take firewood from the surface fuel piles. Piling the surface fuels is a better alternative than a lop-and-scatter treatment design.
- There are four to six campsites in the area. The USFS will want to keep those sites as contained as possible.
- The shape of the treatment area that extends from Magnolia Road to the dispersed campsite is unclear. The strip that runs from Magnolia Road to the dispersed campsite may weave through the west side of the Unit, but it will not necessarily follow the road that runs through Unit 53. It would be helpful to the MMG if the USFS could flag or map the strip in which all conifers will be removed up to a 12-inch DBH. Kevin Zimlinghaus will flag the area in Unit 53 in which all the conifers up to a 12-inch DBH will be removed and notify the MMG when the task is complete. He will try to have the flagging completed by August 16.
- The treatment outlined by Angie Gee (retain the two Douglas fir islands, treat all conifers up to a 12-inch DBH in the strip between Magnolia Road and the dispersed campsite, treat all conifer regeneration up to a four-inch DBH, and treat Douglas firs up to a 12-inch DBH and retain the ponderosa pine above a 4-inch DBH in the remainder of the Unit) is a final decision.

ACREAGE TARGETS DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the acreage targets for Phases 5 and 6 of Forsythe II. Their comments are summarized below.

- Before the meeting, an Excel spreadsheet was distributed to the MMG. The Excel spreadsheet contained information on the total treatment acres for prescriptions in Units 29, 30, 31, 52, 53, 54/55, 61, 74, and 8. These units are the ones for which the community has provided proposed prescriptions.
- The Excel spreadsheet has five columns categorized as National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Treatable, MMG, GPS, and acreage targets. The NEPA column refers to the total number of acres analyzed in the NEPA decision.
- The USFS calculated the treatment acres using KML files. In treatment areas where the USFS has not completed flagging and gathered GPS coordinates, they had to estimate the number of acres in the treatment. The USFS indicated which treatment acres they had to estimate with blue numbers in the Excel spreadsheet.
- The current treatment acre calculation does not include the proposed treatments for Units 23, 24, and 49/73. The USFS staff that was estimating treatment acres using KML files were unsure if the proposed prescription in Units 23, 24, and 49/73 exceeded the number of treatable acres allowed by the decision notice (DN). The USFS wanted to gather more information from the MMG during tonight's meeting before calculating the estimated acres for this set of units.
- The USFS counts treated acres by the number of activities performed. Because of this counting methodology, one acre of mechanical treatment is counted three times, one acre of manual treatment is counted twice, and one acre of surface fuel treatments is counted once.
- The USFS acreage target for Forsythe II this year is 600 acres of treatment. The 600-acre target is the target after the counting methodology has been applied to treatments. The Excel spreadsheet does not incorporate the multipliers into the estimated acres of treatment.

- Currently, there are no mechanical treatments in Phases 5 and 6. The estimated number of treatable acres before the counting methodology is applied among all the units in Phases 5 and 6 is around 300 acres, which means that there will need to be some mechanical treatments to reach the 600-acre target. The MMG should consider adding more units to help them reach the 600-acre target.
- Initially, there were more units included in Phases 5 and 6. Some of these units were postponed until Phases 7 and 8 due to capacity issues. When they postponed these units, the USFS lowered their acreage target from 1,000 acres to 600 acres. If more units were added to Phases 5 and 6, then the acreage target would also have to be increased.
- Some of the units that were postponed until Phases 7 and 8, like Unit 77, were large units. The 600-acre target does not seem to have decreased proportionally with the size of the postponed units.
- The Boulder Ranger District is trying to stay consistent with past acreage targets and has committed to reaching the 600-acre for this year. It is uncertain what the targets and expectations will be for fiscal year 2021.
- Surface fuel treatments may be a way to supplement the treatment acres.
- It is difficult to rely on burning to contribute to the acreage target. Whether the USFS crews conduct burns depends on whether the appropriate burning conditions occur.
- There may be an opportunity to increase acres in Unit 29 by expanding treatments. The surface fuel treatments in Unit 29 will also increase the number of acres treated.
- The USFS will be treating up to 15 acres in Unit 53. Fifteen acres is one less than the treatable acres because of the Douglas fir islands that will be retained in the Unit.
- The estimated treatment acres for Unit 74 were based on the 2019 contract for Unit 74. The USFS conducted a surface fuel treatment in Unit 74. The treated acres in Unit 74 are helping to supplement the number of treated acres in Phases 5 and 6.

UNIT 29 TREATMENT DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the different treatments for Unit 29. Their comments are summarized below.

Emory Road Corridor Treatment

- One of the proposed treatments in Unit 29 is the Emory Road Corridor treatment, which extends from the powerlines north of Emory Road to the southern defensible space buffer boundary.
- The stands in the Emory Road Corridor have characteristics of an old-growth forest but do not qualify as old-growth forest.
- The prescription for the Emory Road Corridor treatment is to cut all conifers with a 10-inch DBH or less on the north side of the road up to a private driveway located in the southeast corner of the Unit. The treatment will retain a few islands of conifer trees to discourage people from going off the road for recreation. On the south side of Emory Road, the treatment will involve cutting conifer trees up to an eight-inch DBH to maintain the integrity of the old-growth forest. These diameter limits are a modification from what was discussed on the August 8 field trip. The new prescription would better maintain the old-growth characteristics around Emory Road while also meeting fire objectives.

Defensible Space Buffer Treatment

- A landowner on the southeast boundary of Unit 29 has notified the USFS that they would like for the USFS to conduct treatment up to their private boundary. A second landowner, whose property is to the west of the first landowner's property, also has expressed interest

in having the treatment come up to their boundary. Lastly, on the eastern boundary of Unit 29, a third landowner has verbally communicated that they would like the USFS to treat up to their private boundary. The USFS has not received official permission from the second and third landowner to treat up to their private boundary.

- The USFS should work with the landowners who want treatment up to their properties to determine the treatment in the defensible space buffer. The treatments in the defensible space buffer will add acres to the USFS's acreage targets.
- In the defensible space buffer leading up to the first landowner's private property, the prescription is to implement a patchcut in three acres of lodgepole pine forest and an aspen restoration treatment in an acre and a half. The USFS is waiting for official notification from the other two landowners before they design a treatment in the defensible space buffer leading up to their private properties.
- The second landowner, whose property is west of the first landowner's property, has verbally requested the USFS mechanically treat the defensible space buffer. There is a patch of dog-haired lodgepole pines, as well as an aspen stand, next to the landowner's driveway. The treatment would be designed to maintain the integrity of the old-growth forest on the property.
- There are different diameter limits for different forest types (old-growth, interior, and matrix). Old-growth forest treatments have a set diameter limit to make sure the old-growth characteristic of the forest is maintained through treatment.
- There are lodgepole pine and mixed conifer old-growth forests in the defensible space buffer. The USFS is still evaluating the old-growth forests in the defensible space buffer to make sure the treatment does not go beyond any established diameter limits. Treatments will not occur in lodgepole pine forests as specified in the DN unless the old-growth forest is no longer functioning as an old-growth forest.

Interior Forest Treatments

- The diameter limits for the interior forest are a six-inch DBH limit on north-facing interior forests and an eight-inch DBH limit on south-facing interior forests.
- The areas in Unit 29 that are proposed for mixed conifer treatment are a mixture of interior forests and matrix forest. The treatments for the areas identified for mixed conifer thinning will be different depending on if they are interior forest or matrix forest.
- One of the mixed conifer thinning treatment areas, identified on the proposed prescription map as Track 18, is an acre in size. Track 18 is located in the interior forest.
- The mixed conifer thinning treatment, identified on the proposed prescription map as Track 16, does not have many trees underneath the diameter limit. A treatment would not be effective in Track 16 because most trees are above the diameter limit. Meeting participants agreed to remove the treatment identified in Track 16 from the Unit 29 prescription.

Surface Fuels Treatment

- There is a proposed surface fuel treatment in the northwest corner of Unit 29. There are also other potential areas for surface fuel treatments identified by markers TB 18, TB 30, and TB 29 on the proposed prescription map. The marker TB 18 is located between two proposed lodgepole pine treatments on the west side of the Unit.
- The USFS has not mapped out the proposed surface fuel treatment area yet, but they are creating polygons for the surface fuel treatment.
- The northwest corner of Unit 29, a location for a proposed surface fuel treatment, may be a candidate for an interior forest designation.
- The surface fuel treatments will only be counted once towards the USFS's acreage targets.

- Surface fuel treatments should be considered less of a priority than treatments that cut trees because surface fuel treatments were not included in the DN. Additionally, treatments that cut trees align better with the objectives of the DN than surface fuel treatments. Surface fuel treatments should not be considered as a substitute for cutting trees.

Treatment East of Marker TB 26 to Track 16

- During the field trip on August 8, there was a proposal to add a treatment east of marker TB 26 on the proposed prescription map. The area to the east of marker TB 26 has a combination of saplings and full-sized trees. The proposed treatment would extend from the area east of marker TB 26 to Track 15 and further south to Track 16. The treatment prescription would be a thinning, cutting conifer trees up to a seven-inch DBH, which is the identified prescription for thinning on north-facing matrix forests.
- The forest stands in the proposed treatment area are primarily composed of lodgepole pine and Douglas fir trees because they are on a north-facing aspect. The forest stand is classified as a matrix forest, not an interior or old-growth forest. The area has a high density of sapling poles that could act as ladder fuels to larger trees. If the area burned, it could affect the adjacent interior forests. The area has more ladder fuels than some of the nearby interior forests, including the area in the northwest part of the unit, which has been identified as potential interior forest.
- The goal of this treatment is to reduce the existing stand density and improve the health of the forest. Thinning this area would remove regenerating trees and make the stand more resilient over time. The treatment would also focus on removing lodgepole pine trees to help promote Douglas fir trees.
- The estimated size of the treatment is approximately 10 to 15 acres. The proposed treatment has not been mapped yet.
- The acreage targets for Unit 29 are about 20 acres short of the treatable acres for the Unit. This treatment could help reach fuel reduction objectives while also contributing to the acreage target.
- The MMG should defer the decision on whether to add the treatment east of marker TB 26 until there is confirmation from the landowners on whether the USFS can treat in the defensible space buffer in the southeast corner of Unit 29. They should also wait until the MMG has more information on how many acres the surface fuel treatment in the northwest corner of the Unit is going to contribute to the acreage target.
- Treatments should not cut trees for the sake of cutting trees; there should be good reasons why trees are being cut.
- According to DN, the USFS can treat up to 30% of a lodgepole pine stand, which in the case of Unit 29, is equal to 49 treatable acres. The area in the defensible space buffer was not included as part of the calculation for treatable acres in Unit 29. The treatments in the defensible space buffer should be separated from the 49 treatable acres in Unit 29. If the treatments occur in the defensible space buffer, they should not be considered as substitutes for the 49 treatable acres in unit 29.
- The prescriptions in Forsythe II should not focus on reaching the 30% maximum set in the DN. If the defensible space buffer treatments are added to Unit 29, those should contribute to the USFS acreage targets.
- If the defensible space buffer treatments are added to the prescription, the MMG could consider them as part of the 30% of Unit 29 or think of them as an addition to the acres in Unit 29. The MMG will need to consider the tradeoffs and further discuss Unit 29 at a future meeting.

- The USFS crews need to begin flagging treatments in Unit 29. The MMG can defer the decision, but they will need to revisit the topic soon.
- The MMG does not need to decide on the treatment east of marker TB 26 at this meeting. Marking crews can begin marking other areas in Unit 29, and the USFS can provide treatment acreage updates at a future meeting to continue the discussion.

Lodgepole Pine Patchcuts

- Lodgepole pine patchcuts were identified on the proposed prescription map with orange boundary lines. The lodgepole pine stands proposed for patchcutting on the western side of Unit 29 are still being planned as patchcuts. People with firewood collection permits will be allowed to collect firewood from these treatments.
- One of the proposed patchcuts on the western side of the unit, identified on the community proposed prescription map by Track 15, will be divided in half. The eastern half will be a lodgepole pine patchcut, and the western half will be an aspen restoration treatment. The USFS is evaluating a small section in the southeast section of Track 15 for thinning instead of a patchcut.
- The treatment located in the southeast corner of Unit 29, which was originally designated for patchcutting, may be changed to a thinning prescription. Cutting the large trees in the area would lead to many surface fuels being left on the ground, and the area is not accessible for permittees to collect firewood and remove larger trees left behind. Thinning instead of patchcutting would help reduce the number of surface fuels left. The western side of the southeast corner treatment is still being planned as a patchcut, regardless of whether the prescription for the adjacent lodgepole pine stands is changed to a thinning.

Ips Beetles

The USFS considers the ips beetle when they cut and leave trees. The ips beetle is not an issue in the treatment areas of Forsythe II. In other parts of the Boulder Ranger District, where the ips beetle is an issue, the USFS favors mechanical treatments to remove more of the material out of the forest. In areas that have been thinned, ips beetle populations do not increase in size as much.

Unit 61

There were two areas in Unit 61 identified as areas to exclude treatment due to a nearby wetland and rock outcrops. These two areas have been combined into one polygon and identified as an additional unit.

Cultural Resources

There are cairns in Unit 29. The USFS will consider how to communicate with contracting crews to not pile on cairns. Contracting crews will not pile on rocks and old fire rings.

Road Gates and Closures

- There is a private driveway located in the southeastern corner of Unit 29. The driveway is not supposed to be used by the public, but members of the public sometimes use it.
- The USFS granted an easement to the private landowner to create this driveway, and there is not an expiration date associated with the easement. The easement granted to the landowner does have the language that allows the USFS to request the private landowner to install a gate. When the USFS granted the easement to the private landowner to build a driveway through Unit 29, there was an alternative proposal for the landowner to build a driveway from Coal Creek Canyon Road. This alternative road was not selected as an option

because the road was evaluated to be too steep to allow the individual to access their property.

- Another way to permit someone to build a road on public lands is through a special use authorization. Special use authorizations differ from easements as special use authorizations have a deadline, at which the special use designation needs to be reauthorized. Easements cannot be revoked.
- There is a road that runs through Unit 61 that was developed under a special use authorization. The special use designation was reauthorized in 2018. The agreement does not include language that allows the USFS to require the installment of a gate, but the USFS could consider installing a gate to close public access to the road network in Unit 61 in the future.
- The USFS was given the authority to decommission unauthorized roads that they find in Forsythe II. The USFS has identified unauthorized roads in Forsythe II that they will decommission or designate for administrative use only. The USFS can gate authorized roads as they close down unauthorized roads.
- The USFS cannot commit that they will gate the roads once the work is complete at this time. The USFS can gate the roads, but they also have to decommission the unauthorized road system where people enter into the forest as well.
- The USFS should close roads that were made for logging purposes. The logging roads increase access for dirt bikes and campers, which ultimately increases the fire risk. Some of the recreators may also start to camp closer to homes, especially if West Magnolia is closed to dispersed camping.
- The MMG will revisit the discussion on road closures and gates at a future meeting.

Unit 29 Next Steps

- The MMG will revisit the discussion around the surface fuel polygons in Unit 29, the treatment in Unit 29 that extends from the area east of marker TB 26 to Track 16, and road closures and gates at a future meeting. The MMG supported the other proposed treatments in Unit 29 beyond the three treatments identified for future discussion.
- The USFS will begin to mark treatments in black and orange flagging in places where the MMG agrees on the prescription.

UNIT 30, 31, AND 61 DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the prescription for Units 30, 31, and 61. Their comments are summarized below.

- There are no significant disagreements with the treatments in Unit 30 and 61. In Unit 61, MMG participants can identify the trees at the DBH limit to ensure that they do not cut. The community proposed boundary change in Unit 30 has also been incorporated into the prescription.
- The field trip participants did not have time to go to Unit 31 on the field trip to discuss the prescription. The MMG is not in agreement about two patchcuts on north-facing slopes in Unit 31. The MMG will discuss the patchcuts on Unit 31 at a future meeting. Kevin Zimlinghaus, Heather Bergman, and Angie Gee will discuss the options for the prescription in Unit 31 before the next MMG meeting.
- Before the next meeting, it would be helpful for the USFS to prepare a polygon for the proposed patchcut in the southern section of Unit 31.

UNIT 23, 24, 49, 73, AND 74 COMMUNITY PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

Teagen Blakey presented on the community prescription proposal for Units 23, 24, 49, 73, and 74. Her presentation is summarized below.

Unit 23

- There is an area in the eastern part of Unit 23, in which the community proposes a mixed conifer thinning treatment. Within the area proposed for a mixed conifer thinning treatment, there is an area outlined by a red boundary. The area within the red polygon contains a large number of squirrel middens and should be avoided for treatment. There are aspen stands on the north side of the mixed conifer thinning treatment area that will be able to expand as a result of treatment. There are also rocky knolls in some places within the mixed conifer thinning treatment area that have not been marked.
- In the southwest section of Unit 23, there is a pin that identifies an area for potential surface fuels treatment.
- The community proposed prescription for Unit 23 includes a patchcut in an area on the south side of the Unit. The patchcut is close to Magnolia Road and a ridgeline, so the topography, in addition to the patchcut, could help firefighters develop a control line. The patchcut also connects to a previously implemented patchcut outside of the Unit 23 boundaries. The patchcut is on steep terrain.
- The community proposal is to treat all the areas in Unit 23 manually.
- Many open areas surround Unit 23. The community proposed prescription does not include more patchcutting because there are already many open areas around the Unit. The forest in Unit 29 is healthy and acts as a connector to other nearby healthy forests. The thinning treatment, instead of a patchcut, would not damage the connecting nature of the forest.

Unit 24

- In the southwest corner of Unit 24, the USFS previously laid out a patchcut. The community proposed prescription includes leaving this patchcut as is.
- The USFS previously laid out a patchcut in the northeast corner of Unit 24. The community proposed prescription recommends replacing this patchcut with one in the northwest corner of the Unit. A patchcut in the northeast corner of the Unit could help enhance aspen and provide a defensible area between Magnolia Road and Lazy Z Road.
- There are various goals for patchcutting. One goal is to enhance ponderosa pines on south-facing slopes. Due to a changing climate, lodgepole pine trees are not doing as well on south-facing aspects in comparison to other aspects.
- The northeast corner of the Unit is on a south-facing aspect while the northwest corner of the Unit is on a slight north-facing aspect. The lodgepole pine trees in the northeast corner of the Unit are struggling more than those in the northwest corner. The northeast corner is better suited for a patchcut because it creates an opportunity to promote ponderosa pine trees. The lodgepole pine trees are also less healthy.

Unit 49, 73, and 74 Complex

- The community only outlined a couple of specific areas for treatment in the Unit 49, 73, and 74 complex. The community proposed prescription is based on conditional prescriptions (i.e., if this condition occurs, the prescription should be "x.")
- There is a red polygon in Unit 74 that should be excluded from treatment because it is near a stream corridor and a very steep north-facing slope.
- The community proposed prescription includes areas for aspen restoration treatments, identified on the proposed prescription map by green polygons.

- There are two blue markers: one in Unit 73 and another in Unit 49. These blue markers identify wetlands where treatments should not occur. The wetlands in Unit 73 and 49 did not have water in it at the time of observation.
- There are two proposed treatments identified by orange polygons in Unit 74. In these polygons, the overstory is dying back substantially, but the understory is healthy. The overstory is composed of lodgepole pine, and the understory is composed of Douglas fir. The recommended prescription for these treatment areas is to focus on treating the overstory. Some large healthy trees should be retained to promote the understory and create a diverse age class.
- There are two purple markers to the west of the orange polygons in Unit 74. The purple markers indicate areas where there are clumps of Douglas fir regeneration. These Douglas fir regeneration clumps are located in an open forest structure. They should be left on the landscape to act as potential cover for wildlife in the future.
- There is a red marker in Unit 74 that identifies the location of a barbed-wire fence.
- There is an orange polygon located in the middle of Unit 73. In that polygon, there is a small patch of lodgepole pine trees. The proposed prescription includes a patchcut in this orange polygon. The treatment area is located on a slight north-facing slope, but it is not very steep. In this area, the lodgepole pines are in decline and are being replaced by other mixed conifers.
- The red markers in Unit 73 identify areas where the USFS should evaluate the stands for old-growth classification. Some of the potential old-growth stands are in rockier areas. In these potential old-growth stands, there are large ponderosa pines with tops that are flattening out.
- In the northern part of Unit 73, there is a pygmy ponderosa pine forest. The pygmy ponderosa pine stands should be thinned in the same way as they were treated in past units.
- There is a red polygon in Unit 73 that should be excluded from treatment. The area contains a steep ravine that would make it difficult to treat. The area also has water occasionally flowing through it and serves as a good wildlife corridor.
- There are opportunities for surface fuel treatments in Unit 49 and the western part of Unit 73. In more remote areas, surface fuels should be left to benefit wildlife.
- There is a green marker in Unit 49 that marks an area where there are some aspen trees. The aspen trees are on an eastern-facing slope. The area should be treated, but some mixed conifers should be left to help retain ground moisture for aspen restoration.
- The yellow marker in Unit 49 identified an area where MMG participants saw a fledgling common nighthawk. The common nighthawk is not a species of concern, but it is rare. The USFS should identify if there are any special treatments needed to support the common nighthawk.
- In Unit 49, there are areas where the Douglas firs are healthy, and the ponderosa pines have a mistletoe infestation. Under these conditions, the prescription should focus on removing smaller ponderosa pine trees with mistletoe while retaining some Douglas firs and large ponderosa pines.
- Unit 49 contains areas of old-growth retention forests. In these areas, there are large snags interspersed among ponderosa pines. The USFS should evaluate the old-growth stands to determine whether they are functioning old-growth stands.
- Throughout Unit 49, there are rocky knolls. They were not delineated on the proposed prescription map, but any areas that are located on rocky knolls should follow the DN specifications and be excluded from treatment.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants asked several clarifying questions about the prescription in Units 23, 24, 49, 73, and 74. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding answers in plain text.

How large is the area for surface fuel treatment in Unit 23?

The area is small, roughly half an acre. The area is close to the proposed mixed conifer thinning in the Unit, so crews working on the mixed conifer thinning can feasibly implement the surface fuel treatment.

Why are the mixed conifer thinning treatment and surface fuel treatment in Unit 23 not combined into a single polygon?

The community proposed prescription chose to separate them because the two treatments are in different cover types. The surface fuel treatment is in a lodgepole pine stand while the mixed conifer thinning treatment is in a mixed conifer stand. The community members that put the proposed prescription together also thought they might need a 300-foot buffer between treatments.

How large is the proposed patchcut in Unit 23?

The patchcut is one acre.

Is the proposed patchcut in the northeast corner of Unit 24 in the defensible space buffer?

No.

Group Discussion

Meeting participants discussed the proposed prescription for Units 23, 24, 49, 73, and 74. Their comments are summarized below.

- Unit 49 is categorized as a ponderosa pine mixed conifer unit, but the step transect data suggests that the Unit is not a ponderosa pine unit. There is a mixture of ponderosa pines, lodgepole pines, and Douglas firs in Unit 49. The prescription should be responsive to the different cover types on the ground.
- The DN indicates that treatments can occur in mixed conifer old-growth forests but not in lodgepole pine old-growth forests.
- Units 49 and 73 are primarily on south-facing slopes. The Douglas fir trees have been encroaching into the area due to the absence of fire. Because the climate is getting warmer and drier, the prescription should focus on removing Douglas fir trees to maintain ponderosa pine trees, especially on south-facing aspects and ridges. The prescription should also remove infested ponderosa pine trees to the acceptable DBH limit. If many infested ponderosa pine trees are taken out, the MMG could consider re-planting ponderosa pine trees.
- The south-facing slopes in Units 49 and 73 historically would have had regular fires, especially with the presence of a nearby railroad. Removing the Douglas firs and lodgepole pines would make the area more resilient to fire.
- There are steep south-facing slopes outside of the Unit 49, 73, and 74 complex. The steep slopes lead into the South Boulder Creek. A fire in the area would generate more sediment that would flow into the South Boulder Creek.
- The Unit 49, 73, and 74 complex is a remote area with no homeowners in proximity. The USFS should look at potential old-growth areas in these units. There are several standing burnt snags. The area would benefit from treatment, but not too much treatment.

- There are surface fuels that will likely need to be managed so that the USFS can cut and pile trees.
- Aurelia DeNasha, USFS Wildlife Biologist, will need to examine the area of the common nighthawk sighting before any determinations are made on treatments. She will inform the MMG when she has assessed the area of the nighthawk sighting in Unit 49.
- The USFS added buffers around streams in Unit 74 during the first phase of treatment. The USFS will keep these same buffers in the second phase of treatment in Unit 74.
- If there is a sufficient number of snags in Unit 74, the USFS will assess the snags for removal and target the more damaged trees.

UNIT 44/45 DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the treatment in Unit 44/45. Their comments are summarized below.

- Unit 44/45 includes two overlaid units. Unit 45 is designated as the tree cutting unit, while Unit 44 is designated as the broadcast burning unit.
- There are concerns about the number of burn piles being created in Unit 45. Some of the burn piles are located close to live trees. The piles could scorch and kill the live trees when they are burned. The contracting crews should place the piles in more open areas.
- The USFS is preparing for a prescribed burn in Unit 44. They are prepping boundaries and control areas for the prescribed burn. They are creating burn piles in areas where they would like to see lower fire intensity. The piles are going to be burned before the broadcast burn.
- Unit 45 is primarily a lop-and-scatter unit, not a piling unit, except for areas of wildlife interest and areas where the fire intensity during the prescribed burn should be lower.
- The piling in Unit 45 should be counted as treatment acres for the USFS acreage targets.
- It seems like it will be difficult to control the scorching, considering the amount of fuels that have been piled. The USFS should make sure the piles are not going to scorch the live trees too much.
- Some of the piles are being placed near live trees because the prescription is not thinning heavily enough. Since more trees are being left on the landscape, there are fewer areas to pile activity fuels.

UNIT 43 DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed marking in Unit 43. Their comments are summarized below.

- The USFS crews marked all the small trees in the understory for taking. The USFS crews marked heavily in the Unit 43 understory because it is primarily composed of Douglas fir regeneration. Douglas firs are a concern because they are prolific seeders. Removing Douglas fir trees is more of a priority to help promote ponderosa pine trees. Ponderosa pine trees are better adapted to a drier and warmer climate and are more resilient to insects, disease, and wildfire.
- There are differing perspectives in the MMG on the effects of climate change in the project area. One perspective is that climate change will make the area warmer and drier. Another perspective is that climate change will create more extreme precipitation patterns.

WEST MAGNOLIA DISPERSED CAMPING DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the closure of dispersed camping in West Magnolia. Their comments are summarized below.

- There is a policy that is going to go into place to close dispersed camping in some areas of West Magnolia. Closing some areas of West Magnolia to dispersed camping will only move the dispersed camping to new areas.
- The USFS expects displacement from the dispersed camping closure and is monitoring for changes in recreation patterns. The USFS cannot implement widespread closures. Restricting public access is a difficult process. It requires approval from the USFS National Office. It also requires a collaborative stakeholder involvement process for each site-specific closure. A variety of jurisdictional boundaries also make it difficult to implement widespread closures.
- The USFS is implementing a closure in West Magnolia, so it unclear why they cannot close other areas to prevent dispersed camping from spilling over into new areas.
- The MMG will continue their discussion on the West Magnolia dispersed camping closures at a future MMG meeting.

NEXT STEPS

- The next MMG meeting will be a field trip on Saturday, August 22. The USFS will not be able to provide feedback on the community proposed prescriptions for Units 23, 24, 49, 73, and 74 until August 18. Kevin Zimlinghaus and Teagen Blakey will virtually exchange ideas to plan the field trip for Saturday, August 22.
- The MMG will revisit the discussion around the surface fuel polygons in Unit 29, the treatment in Unit 29 that extends from the area east of marker TB 26 to Track 16, and road closures and gates at a future meeting. They will also discuss the prescription for Unit 31 and the dispersed camping closures in West Magnolia.
- Other topics for future meetings include:
 - Perspectives on the criteria and critical components of a resilient forest at different scales
 - Wildlife pile contract specifications
 - Phase 3 contractor update
 - Updates on opportunities to join sales administrator to inspect during and after treatments
 - Evaluation of USFS internal procedures related to communications during the pre-work meeting
 - Boulder Ranger District's FY20 and FY21 program of work
 - Ongoing contract discussions between Denver Water and USFS
 - Treatment of existing surface fuels
 - Process for jointly flagging units/flagging aspen units
 - Shared stewardship day for re-shaping piles for wildlife (how, when, and who)
 - Big Springs egress road
 - Elk collaring study
 - Updates to the master list