

**Forsythe II Multiparty Monitoring Group (MMG)  
August 26, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM  
Virtual Meeting  
Meeting Summary – FINAL**

**ATTENDANCE**

*Participants:* Paul Alaback, Chad Buser, Karen Blakemore, Teagen Blakey, Marin Chambers, 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**

<b>Teagen Blakey</b>	Reach out to community members to determine whether they would like to schedule a site visit to discuss treatments on south-facing aspects in Units 49 and 73, and inform Kevin Zimlinghaus and Marin Chambers of their feedback.
<b>Marin Chambers</b>	Upload the map with the Phase 5 and 6 treatments for MMG participants to use in their Avenza maps.
<b>Kevin Zimlinghaus</b>	Send crews to re-mark the ponderosa pine tree in the middle of the meadow in Unit 52 for leaving.
<b>US Forest Service (USFS) Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the next steps regarding developing contracts for the September 9 meeting.</li> <li>• Discuss whether the MMG will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of the month moving forward.</li> </ul>

**UNITS 23, 24, 74, AND 49/73 PRESCRIPTION DISCUSSION**

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

- Before the meeting, the USFS received comments and suggestions from the MMG on Units 23, 24, and 74. Because the USFS and the community prescription were similar, the field trip to look at the Units was canceled. Instead, Teagen Blakey and Kevin Zimlinghaus met on Saturday to discuss the Units further, with a focus on Units 23 and 24.
- The USFS developed a map that includes most of the proposed treatments. The map is not perfect and does not include some of the proposed treatments. Marin Chambers will upload the map from today’s meeting with the Phase 5 and 6 treatments for MMG participants to use in their Avenza maps. The map will later be modified to make sure it accurately reflects the treatment areas.

*Unit 23*

- The proposed prescription identifies an area on the east side of Unit 23 for a mixed conifer thinning. Within the mixed conifer thin treatment, there is an area with a high concentration of squirrel middens that will not be treated.
- The diameter limit for the mixed conifer treatment has not been set yet. The focus of the mixed conifer treatment will be on removing lodgepole pines while retaining ponderosa pines and Douglas firs. Any lodgepole pines left on the landscape will be clumped.
- There is an area proposed for a patchcut just west of the mixed conifer thinning treatment.
- To the south of the patchcut, there is an area proposed for a surface fuels treatment.

- In the southwest corner of the Unit, there is an aspen stand and an old patchcut. There is a proposal to patchcut a half-acre area between the aspen stand and the old patchcut. The USFS will need to assess the area to determine the feasibility of treatment because it is rocky. The patchcut is not included in the treatment map because it has not been flagged yet.
- The four treatments (mixed conifer thinning, surface fuels, and two patchcuts) would be around 4.5 acres in size. The Forsythe II Decision Notice (DN) allows for treatment in 6.3 acres in Unit 23.
- Meeting participants indicated that they were in a good place for the prescription in Unit 23.

#### *Unit 24*

- The original USFS prescription for Unit 24 included mechanically implementing two patchcuts: one in the southwest corner and another in the northeast corner of the Unit. The community prescription proposal then identified areas in the southwest and northwest corners of the Unit for patchcuts and recommended not treating in the northeast corner of the Unit.
- During the discussion between Teagen Blakey and Kevin Zimlinghaus on Unit 24, they identified a new area in the southern half of the Unit to implement one patchcut. The area proposed for patchcutting contains dog-haired lodgepole pine trees. The new proposed prescription for Unit 24 is to implement the one patchcut in the southern half of the Unit.
- In Unit 24, the Decision Notice (DN) allows for the treatment of 4.8 acres. The proposed patchcut in the southern half of the Unit is 3.5 acres. The number of acres in the previously proposed patchcuts is unknown.
- The patchcut in the southern half of the Unit would be treated manually.
- The patchcut is going to go 20 feet into the defensible space buffer zone in some areas because the dog-haired lodgepole pine stand extends slightly into the buffer zone. If the treatment only went to the boundary of the defensible space buffer, then there would still be dog-haired lodgepole pine left in the area. Since the treatment area in the defensible space buffer is so small, the USFS is not requesting permission from the landowner. The small treatment in the defensible space buffer zone is acceptable in the situation, but it should not be considered a precedent for future treatments.
- The patchcut in the southern half of the Unit is further away from a road. The trees between the road and the patchcut will serve as a visual buffer to prevent recreators from going off-road into the patchcut area.
- On the eastern side of the patchcut, where the patchcut is closer to the road, it is important to have a visual buffer to not attract potential dispersed campers into the area. The area between the eastern boundary of the patchcut and the road is on an incline. The incline, in combination with the remaining tree stands, should be a good visual buffer to not attract potential dispersed campers.
- Meeting participants indicated that they were in a good place for the prescription in Unit 24.

#### *Unit 74*

- The USFS has not gathered GPS data for Unit 74 yet, so they have not mapped the proposed treatments. They have also not flagged the Unit yet or developed the specific treatment specifications.
- The community proposed prescription identified an area to exclude treatment due to a nearby drainage in Unit 74. The USFS will not treat in the identified treatment exclusion area with a proposed modification. The proposal is to shrink the exclusion area so that an

aspen stand just north of the trail in the area could be included for treatment. The proposed aspen enhancement treatment is about a half-acre in size.

- The DN allows for 37 acres to be treated in Unit 74. With the exclusion area removed from treatment and the added half-acre aspen enhancement treatment, the total treatment area in Unit 74 would be around 36.5 acres.
- Unit 74 is part of a two-stage treatment process. The first phase included making fuel piles and burning them. The second phase involves thinning the stand. Unit 74 was broken into two phases because there was too much fuel loading to add activity fuels from a treatment without first cleaning up the existing surface fuels. Now that the fuel piles have been burnt, the Unit is ready for thinning.
- The treatment prescription in Unit 48 will serve as a starting point for the treatment prescription in Unit 74, which is not finalized. Both Units are on the same ridge system and have a similar cover type.
- The USFS crews used a mixture of blue and orange markers to identify take and leave trees in Unit 48. They used blue take markings on north-facing aspects and orange leave markings on south-facing aspects. There were also some areas included as patchcuts in the Unit 48 contract as well. Unit 74 is on a north-facing aspect, so the USFS crews will use blue take marks to define the treatment.
- The blue take markings in Unit 48 were acceptable, but there were concerns about the orange leave markings occurring outside of the areas contractually defined as patchcuts. When the USFS crews were marking trees with orange leave markings, they only marked the trees they wanted to leave that had a diameter at breast height (DBH) less than 14 inches. The USFS did not have the time or capacity to mark the trees with a DBH greater than 14 inches, but the trees with a DBH greater than 14 inches are still being left on the landscape. The contract is being modified so that the contractor knows to leave the orange marked trees and trees with a DBH greater than 14 inches. The contracting officer's representative (COR) met with Kevin Zimlinghaus in Unit 48, and Kevin emphasized the importance of separating treatment rules between the blue marked and orange marked trees.
- On the south-facing slopes in Unit 48, the treatment prescription focused on removing lodgepole pines and Douglas firs, but not all of them were removed. In the pygmy ponderosa pine forests of Unit 48, the treatment focused on taking out smaller trees that are serving as ladder fuels and increasing the spacing between the remaining trees.
- The orange leave tree marking method is for areas with more severe treatments. From the perspective that the treatments should promote ponderosa pine regeneration, the more severe treatments make sense. From a resiliency perspective, leaving only a few large ponderosa pines will reduce species and age diversity, making the area more susceptible to insects and disease.
- The orange leave marking was meant to favor big trees and leave healthy ponderosa pine regeneration where it occurred. Leaving the larger and regenerating ponderosa pine creates structural diversity.
- The Unit 48 prescription, including the orange leave tree markings, is an acceptable prescription for Unit 74 if the more severe treatments occur in patches across the landscape.
- Meeting participants indicated that they were in a good place for the prescription in Unit 74.

#### *Unit 49/73*

- The USFS recently flagged the perimeter of Units 49 and 73. They still need to GPS the Units and add the small aggregations into a treatment map.

- There were differing perspectives on whether Douglas fir should be retained at all on south-facing aspects. One perspective was that some Douglas firs with a DBH under 14 inches should be retained in areas where they are not acting as ladder fuels or crowding out other trees. Retaining some Douglas fir trees will increase the species diversity and create shade for seedlings that would otherwise be trying to grow in excessively hot and dry soils. Another perspective was that Douglas firs with a DBH under 14 inches should not be retained at all on south-facing aspects because they will make it harder for ponderosa pine trees to grow. On north-facing aspects and in transition zones between south-facing and north-facing aspects, some Douglas fir trees should be retained, which will leave patches of Douglas firs on the landscape.
- The question for the MMG is not whether Douglas firs should be removed on south-facing aspects but to what degree Douglas firs should be removed.
- Douglas firs increase the risk of transferring fire from the ground into the canopy. They also spread seeds at a faster rate, which increases the rate of their regeneration.
- At lower elevations, ponderosa pines are the dominant tree, but Douglas firs are still present at lower elevations.
- According to topographical maps, there are not many areas in Units 49 and 73 on south-facing aspects. The Units are primarily composed of areas on east-facing aspects and flat hilltops. If the treatments changed to fit the cover type and aspect direction, then the differences in aspects and terrain in Units 49 and 73 would lead to patches of treatments with different degrees of severity on the landscape.
- When the USFS recently evaluated Units 49 and 73, they examined the boundary areas of the Units and stands on different aspects inside of the Units.
- The concerns around removing too many Douglas fir trees do not occur throughout the entire Units. There are some areas of specific concern where there are not many trees other than Douglas firs that would be heavily impacted if all the Douglas firs were removed.
- In general, nature involves complex dynamics. Not all the trees on south-facing aspects are naturally ponderosa pine trees. A prescription that treats south-facing aspects more intensely is more acceptable when there is a complex mixture of aspects on the landscape.
- Before the MMG determines whether to retain Douglas firs on south-facing aspects in Units 49 and 73, some participants should visit the Units. Units 49 and 73 are large, so a crew of MMG participants should look at the Units soon. Teagen Blakey will reach out to community members to determine whether they would like to schedule a site visit to discuss treatments on south-facing aspects in Units 49 and 73 and inform Kevin Zimlinghaus and Marin Chambers of their feedback.
- USFS crews can mark Unit 74 while MMG participants examine south-facing aspects in Units 49 and 73.

#### *Nighthawk Information*

- Nighthawks in Colorado are not rare, but they are rarely seen because they are ground nesters. They are often found in open areas in ponderosa pine forests.
- Nighthawks prefer to nest on stumps and rocks. Because of this preference, treatments will provide more and better habitat for them.
- For hunting, nighthawks prefer a more open habitat. They will often be found on south-facing slopes and the top of ridges.

## **UNIT 53 PRESCRIPTION DISCUSSION**

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

- The Unit 53 treatment map does not include the buffer, in which all conifer trees up to a 12-inch DBH will be cut, because the flagging keeps getting torn down. Next time the USFS flags the buffer, they will have someone with a GPS to map it. The buffer follows Magnolia Road on the southern boundary and extends to Road 321.1. The buffer area includes the campsites along the road but does not include the campsites on the bottom east side of Road 321.1. The buffer treatment area goes up to a small exclusion of Douglas fir.
- The decision for the Unit 53 prescription was set during the August 12 MMG meeting. The previous comments from that meeting still stand.

## **UNIT 29 AND 61 PRESCRIPTION OVERVIEW**

Kevin Zimlinghaus gave an overview of the proposed prescription in Units 29 and 61. His comments are summarized below.

- Unit 61 contains two yellow polygons. The area between the two yellow polygons was excluded for treatment because there are rocky outcrops and wet areas.
- The proposed prescription in Unit 29 includes treatment areas proposed by community members and the USFS. The prescription map includes all the treatment polygons. The prescription includes aspen restoration treatments (identified by yellow polygons) and lodgepole pine patchcuts (identified by brown polygons). There is a treatment on the eastern side of Unit 29 that involves a thinning in the interior forest (identified by a light green polygon). There is also a surface fuels treatment in the northwest corner of the Unit (identified by a green polygon). Lastly, there is a treatment along Emory Road (identified by a pink polygon).
- The patchcut on the far southeast side of Unit 29 was identified as an area to patchcut mechanically. However, the south side of the patchcut was excluded from treatment because the area is too rocky and steep for mechanical equipment. The USFS plans to manually treat areas in the far southeast patchcut.
- There is an additional patchcut to the west of the far southeast patchcut in Unit 29, which has a mixed conifer thin treatment on its northern boundary. To the north of the mixed conifer thin treatment, there is a mixed conifer thinning identified in a section of the interior forest. On the northern side of the eastern half of the Unit, there are two aspen restoration treatments, one of which is connected to a small lodgepole pine patchcut. All these treatments were identified in the community prescription proposal.
- The interior forest mixed conifer is on a north-aspect, so the treatment will not remove trees with a DBH greater than six inches. For every ten trees marked for removal, one tree was left. The USFS crews targeted lodgepole pines. This treatment is consistent with what was discussed on the field trip. The USFS crews have already flagged the interior forest treatment, and some of the MMG participants who have had the opportunity to evaluate the flagging have expressed the flagging is acceptable.
- The private landowner in the southeast corner of Unit 29 requested that the USFS treat in the defensible space buffer up to their property. The treatment in the defensible space buffer includes two aspen restoration treatments and a lodgepole pine patchcut.
- The neighbor to the west of the first private landowner requested that the USFS treat in their defensible space buffer. The forest in the private landowner's defensible space buffer is primarily old-growth lodgepole pine, so most of the area is excluded from treatment. The treatment on their property includes one half-acre lodgepole pine patchcut outside of the lodgepole pine old-growth forest.

- North of Unit 61, there is a lodgepole pine patchcut polygon, as identified in the community proposal. To the east of the lodgepole pine patchcut, there is an aspen restoration treatment that was laid out in the community prescription proposal. Adjacent to the aspen restoration treatment is a mixed conifer thin polygon. The mixed conifer polygon is expanded beyond the community's original proposal. The mixed conifer thin will not extend into the defensible space buffer. In the northwest corner of the Unit, there is a proposed surface fuels treatment.
- Overall, the proposed treatment in Unit 29 includes eight acres of aspen restoration, 13 acres of lodgepole pine patchcut, 11 acres of mixed conifer thin, 1 acre of interior forest mixed conifer thin, 10 acres of roadside fuel treatment, and 2 acres of surface fuels treatment. In total, the treatments add up to 45 acres.

### **UNIT 29 PRESCRIPTION DISCUSSION**

Meeting participants discussed the proposed prescription for Unit 29. Their comments are summarized below.

- The mixed conifer thinning in the western half of Unit 29 was expanded beyond the community proposal. The community proposal initially identified a section next to the aspen restoration treatment for lodgepole pine thinning. During the field trip, the field trip participants discussed expanding the lodgepole thin treatment to the north to treat a young, dense lodgepole pine stand. The current proposal for the mixed conifer thin has it expanding westward. The mixed conifer thinning is in a matrix forest.
- The proposed mixed conifer thinning treatment on the west side of Unit 29 is on north-facing matrix forest. The prescription would follow the diameter cap for matrix forests on north-facing aspects (seven inches).
- The goal of expanding the mixed conifer thinning to the west is to reduce stand density and remove ladder fuels. The area north of the proposed mixed conifer treatment has the potential to be designated as interior forest and old-growth, and the USFS is pursuing the option to classify the area accordingly. The mixed conifer thinning treatment on the west side of the Unit would reduce fuel loads and ladder fuels to help protect the adjacent old-growth and interior forests in the case of a northward moving fire. The treatments would also promote structural diversity.
- Ladder fuels are part of a natural forest. Given the other treatments in Unit 29 that reduce fire risk, the additional mixed conifer thinning is not needed, considering the treatment is in a healthy north-facing forest.
- If the mixed conifer thinning treatment was added on the western side of Unit 29, then aspen restoration treatments in the northeast corner of the Unit should be removed. There were concerns that using the road to access the northeast corner of the Unit will encourage unauthorized others to use the road.
- For the northeast corner aspen enhancement treatments, the contractors would not drive on the two-track road to get to the treatment area. They would park on Emory Road and then walk to the treatment because the treatment is manual and not mechanical. The USFS could add this specification into the contract. The USFS does not have the equipment or engineers to level the road to the northeast corner treatments to make it usable by vehicles.
- The aspen enhancement in the northeast corner of Unit 29 is valuable for creating resilience and modifying fire behavior because the treatment connects to a ridgeline that runs north-south. The mixed conifer thinning on the west side of the Unit is beneficial from the fire perspective because the treatment would slow down a fire coming from the dense forests in the surrounding areas.

- Fires can start anywhere, but they are less likely to start on north-facing aspects. The mixed conifer thinning on the west side of the Unit does not seem necessary because it is on a north-facing aspect.
- Fire is unpredictable. Selecting one treatment between the mixed conifer thinning in the west and the aspen restoration in the northeast will limit the options firefighters have in multiple different fire scenarios. There is not a clear answer to whether the mixed conifer thinning treatment to the west or the northeast aspen enhancement treatments are more advantageous for firefighting; it depends on the nature and direction of the fire. Statistically, it is less likely that a fire would start on the north-facing slopes on the west side of the Unit, but it is still possible to have a fire on a north-facing slope.
- There were differing perspectives on the ecological benefits of treatments. One perspective was that there needs to be a balance between maintaining the forest ecosystem and reducing fire risk. The mixed conifer thinning would slow down a fire, but the benefits from the fire risk reduction are outweighed by the impacts of the treatment on ecological and social values. Another perspective was that treatments are not necessarily a trade-off between fire risk and ecological values because treatments have ecological value. The mixed conifer thinning treatment on the west side of the Unit may not be socially accepted, but they are ecologically beneficial.
- Not including the treatments in the defensible space buffer, the proposed prescription treats 15% of the Unit, while the DN allows for up to 30% of the Unit to be treated. According to the DN, the total amount of treatment acres would be around 60 acres, which includes the maximum 30% allowed in the Unit plus the defensible space buffer treatments. As of now, the proposed treatments, including the defensible space buffer treatments, add up to 44 acres.
- In the past, the USFS committed to adding defensible space buffer treatments towards the 30% maximum allowed by the DN. The MMG still has the option to choose whether or not to add the defensible space buffers to the 30% maximum allowed in the DN. The MMG has also discussed that the 30% maximum is not a target in and of itself. The treated acres in the defensible space buffer are counted towards the USFS's targets.

*At this point in the discussion, MMG participants chose to caucus in two groups: one with community members and the other with USFS staff. Following the caucus, the meeting participants came back together to discuss the mixed conifer thinning treatment on the west side of Unit 29. Their comments following the caucus are summarized below.*

- Following the caucus, the community proposal was to keep the aspen restoration treatments in the northeast corner of the Unit and reduce the size of the mixed conifer thinning treatment on the west side of the Unit. The mixed conifer thinning treatment would include the area east of the adjacent aspen restoration treatment and the area immediately north.
- The USFS committed to treating 600 acres in Forsythe II. If they implemented Phase 5 and 6 prescriptions right now, the total treatment acres would be around 500 acres. If treatments are removed from Unit 29, there will need to be treatment acres added in another area.
- Prescribed burning was not included in the USFS's commitment to treat 600 acres because of the uncertainty surrounding whether prescribed burning will be allowed during FY21 due to COVID-19 concerns. Before Units 77 and 81 were postponed to Phases 7 and 8, the USFS's commitment was to treat 1,000 acres, and that commitment did not include burning either.
- There was a proposal to drop the T-shaped aspen enhancement treatment in the northeast corner and keep the mixed conifer thinning on the west side at its full size because the

mixed conifer thinning adds more treatment acres to Unit 29 and is ecologically beneficial. The concerns around access to the T-shaped aspen enhancement would be mitigated if the treatment was removed.

- Meeting participants agreed on a final proposal that involved not implementing the three treatments in the northeast corner of the Unit (two aspen enhancement treatments and a lodgepole pine patchcut) and keeping the mixed conifer thinning treatment on the west side of the Unit at its full size. Meeting participants that did not agree with the proposal expressed that they can live with the proposal.

### **UNIT 31 PRESCRIPTION DISCUSSION**

Meeting participants discussed the proposed prescription in Unit 31. Their comments are summarized below.

- The original proposal for the treatment in Unit 31 was two patchcuts on north-facing aspects. The community proposal suggested removing these patchcuts from treatment. The most recent proposal is to remove the two patchcuts on north-facing aspects and add a patchcut in the southern section of the Unit.
- The photo of the map with the new patchcut was sent to the Magnolia Forest Group (MFG) for comment. There may be more MFG comments, but as of now, people are supportive.
- Meeting participants were supportive of dropping the two patchcuts on north-facing aspects and adding the patchcut on the south side of the Unit.

### **UNIT 52 MEADOW TREE DISCUSSION**

Meeting participants discussed a tree located in the middle of a meadow in Unit 52. Their comments are summarized below.

- There is a ponderosa pine tree marked for taking in the middle of a meadow in Unit 52. The reason the tree was marked for taking is to enhance the meadow feature on the landscape.
- Unit 52 is a ponderosa pine mixed conifer unit, not a meadow enhancement unit. Although the Unit is not a meadow enhancement unit, there is a meadow aggregation in the Unit, so the aggregation is being treated for meadow enhancement.
- The tree marked for taking provides shade and has both aesthetic and social values. There are also very few regenerating trees in the meadow. Leaving the ponderosa pine tree could help provide opportunities for ponderosa pine to regenerate, one of the goals of other treatments in Unit 52.
- There are not many meadow features on the landscape. When meadow features do appear, the goal is to foster them as much as possible. The seedlings produced by the ponderosa pine would eventually change the meadow to a ponderosa pine stand.
- Meeting participants agreed to keep the ponderosa pine tree on the landscape. Kevin Zimlinghaus will have crews re-mark the ponderosa pine tree in the middle of the meadow in Unit 52 for leaving.

### **DISPERSED CAMPING IN WEST MAGNOLIA OVERVIEW**

Angie Gee gave an overview of policies related to dispersed camping in West Magnolia. Their comments are summarized below.

- The USFS has recently distributed a press release about restructuring the West Magnolia dispersed camping area. The plan for restructuring the dispersed camping area in West Magnolia will be phased in; the most immediate action will be a closure order going into effect after Labor Day. The closure order will restrict dispersed camping in 3,800 acres of USFS land and require people to camp in designated campsites only. The closure order will

also require that people have campfires only in established metal rings in the designated campsites. The campsites will be open for day-use only.

- The conversation around camping in West Magnolia has been ongoing since before Angie Gee was the Boulder District Ranger. The closure order came from a collaborative site visit in August 2018. It took around two years to put the closure order together.
- At the August 12 MMG meeting, meeting participants expressed concerns that closing dispersed camping in the West Magnolia area would displace dispersed campers. The USFS does expect to see displacement from the closure; when there is a closure in a localized area, it does move some activity into other parts of the forest. The USFS has initial thoughts on where the displacement will occur and will be monitoring the displacement.
- The USFS has proactive plans in place to manage displaced recreation activities. The USFS is working with the Boulder and Gilpin County Sheriff's Department to enforce rules and regulations. They also have plans for Stewardship Days to rehabilitate areas and break up homemade fire rings to keep dispersed camping to a minimum. Stewardship days can only do so much without broader landscape policy change.
- NoCo 2050 is a collaborative group that is discussing what recreation should look like along the Northern Front Range. This long-term planning effort will address concerns at a broader landscape policy level. That planning effort is underway, but it will take time to develop and implement solutions.
- There is a potential opportunity for a collaborative site visit to address site-specific concerns. Collaborative site visits involve getting stakeholders together to go to a site and talk about issues and solutions. MMG participants who are interested in working with Angie Gee on a collaborative site visit should reach out to her to start planning.
- The District Ranger does not have the authority to close an area but can make recommendations to the Forest Supervisor, whose signature is required to close an area. However, the Forest Supervisor cannot close an area alone. Closing an area requires talking with the USFS Regional Office, Washington Office, the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture. Restricting access on public lands gets put under scrutiny at the national level. Closing an area does not occur unless there is broad public support for the closure. The Boulder Ranger District demonstrated public support for the West Magnolia closure order through a collaborative effort that involved representatives from Boulder County, Town of Nederland, USFS, and community leaders. The collaborative effort has been ongoing for five years. The only closures that can happen quickly are emergency closures.
- The Town of Nederland has not committed to a partnership with the USFS related to camping in West Magnolia, but they have been discussing what a potential partnership would look like. The partnership would be phased in as the USFS potentially develops more facilities and designated campgrounds. If that partnership does come to fruition, the USFS will seek support from the community before they move forward.

### **DISPERSED CAMPING IN WEST MAGNOLIA DISCUSSION**

Meeting participants discussed the policies related to dispersed camping in West Magnolia. Their comments are summarized below.

- Some of the campsites of concern that are outside of the closure order include the campsites on Road 321. Those campsites are not only used by dispersed campers but also by homeless people who stay there for long periods. There are other areas where people exceed the 14-day camping limit. There are also issues on Roads 359 and 368j that have been ongoing for several decades.
- The temporary parking restrictions on Road 359 are a good strategy to reduce overnight camping. Stewardship days are not as good of a strategy because the USFS is essentially

asking community members to clean up the trash and dispersed campsites caused by other people. The goal should be to prevent the trash from collecting. Other strategies to consider to reduce illegal use include blocking access or increasing enforcement.

- The impacts of recreation displacement on Road 321 should not be underestimated. The solution to managing recreation displacement is not known, but there is interest in working with the USFS to develop solutions. It is important not to dismiss concerns. It also seems like the Town of Nederland is receiving preferential treatment because they are a collaborative partner and have an interest in pushing the recreation issues to other areas.
- MMG participants should report any illegal use on Road 321 or other areas to the USFS. The USFS cannot be everywhere at once, and it is helpful for the community members to report illegal activities when they see it.
- With the NoCo 2050 initiative in place, there is a process that is looking to develop long-term solutions to recreation issues, like dispersed camping. Until that process is further along in development and until there is clarity on a long-term management plan, it will be difficult to initiate any new closures. The NoCo 2050 process will likely take longer than is desired by some MMG participants.
- The West Magnolia Area has had serious issues with campfires on private property and drug use. The Town of Nederland has worked to develop solutions (e.g., the Presbyterian Church invited homeless people to come into town for food and information on available resources). There is a history related to recreation in West Magnolia that is long and complex.
- The closure is technically temporary because it expires in five years. The closure order will have to be reissued. It will likely be reissued unless there are changes from the NoCo 2050 planning processes.
- Most people and visitors use the terrain responsibly. There are likely only a small number of people that cause a majority of the problems.
- The area in Unit 53 along Road 321 is not an area that the USFS manages for camping, but it is used for dispersed camping. There is a possibility that one day that area will be closed for dispersed camping, but it will likely not happen soon.
- The USFS is talking with Boulder County to look at ways to address parking alongside roads. There has been extra stress on the recreation system this year with COVID-19.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- The next MMG meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, from 5pm to 8pm. The USFS will meet to discuss the next steps regarding developing contracts. The USFS will also discuss whether the MMG will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of the month moving forward.
- Potential topics for the September 9 meeting include:
  - Update on Phase 3 mechanical contracts
  - Noxious weeds (e.g., cheatgrass)
  - Wildlife piles in contracts
- Any MMG participants with other ideas for meeting topics for the September 9 meeting should reach out to Heather Bergman.