**Notes from SBEADMR Working Group Meeting**December 18, 2014

The fifth meeting of the SBEADMR Working Group was held on Thursday, December 18, 2014 in the Pioneer Room at the Montrose County Fairgrounds.

As part of the welcome and introductions, Susan Hansen, as facilitator, shared some concerns and potential solutions that were brought to her attention after the last meeting and asked for a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” on the suggestions.

A. A concern for how some discussions are cut short or cut off when some members may feel they are beneficial and should continue.

Possible solutions:

1) If the facilitator feels that a discussion is getting into the “weeds” or getting into a more technical level than intended for the stage or point of discussion that the group is at, she will ask for a time out for a process check to see how many feel they are benefiting from the discussion and would like it to continue. If a majority feel continuation is beneficial the group may elect to continue an “open dialogue” for a certain period of time. If only a few indicate that continued discussion is of value then the facilitator would ask that continuation of the discussion be deferred until another time. This does not diminish the importance of the discussion not imply that it would not be more appropriate when the group as a whole is further along in working together towards “zones of agreement” or at a more technical level of discussion. This would enable the meetings to remain focused on the specific agenda topic or issue.

2) Another suggestion is to provide for a longer break – 15 to 20 minutes - in the middle of the meeting to allow individuals an opportunity during the break to connect with others to continue the more technical discussion or arrange for another time to do so.

The group gave a “thumbs up” to both suggestions.

B. Status of 100% Consensus as Decision Making Model

Susan noted that at this point it is apparent that the group is not in agreement on the 100% consensus as the decision making model. She proposed that in the spirit of “consensus seeking” as was suggested at the previous meeting, that the group stick with the “thumbs up”, “thumbs down” process at this point to indicate general agreement with a point. “Thumbs up” would indicate that you agree with or “could live with” the point. “Thumbs down” means you do not agree or “could not live” with the point. If the group ends up with a 50/50 split or even a 60/40 split, the group would step back from the point to “peel back the onion” to the point it can agree or ask the question what it would take to close the gap.

The group gave a “thumbs up” to continuing with the “thumbs up”/”thumbs down” model for the time being.

**I. Overview of Adaptive Management Approach for SBEADMR Project**

FS Program Manager Clay Speas gave a PowerPoint presentation and facilitated an informal discussion on the Adaptive Management Approach proposed for the SBEADMR proposed action. The proposed action will use an adaptive management or implementation approach to determine which actions and treatments will be applied to the landscape and precisely where over the 10 year life of the proposed action. Clay outlined the tools that were being developed as part of the EIS to be used during the project design and implementation. He walked through the “Iterative Project and Monitoring Cycle” (refer to November 2014 Q&A, pg. 5) to point out where in the process, the public will be invited to participate in pre-implementation field trips to provide input on treatment design for a specific site and in post-implementation monitoring and annual project reviews. He reviewed the various regulations and standards that the proposed action must comply with and how the implementation will be monitored and accounted for. The PowerPoint presentation can be found on the PLP’s website at [www.publiclandspartnership.org/projects/sbeadmr](http://www.publiclandspartnership.org/projects/sbeadmr) under the12/18/2014 SBEADMR working group meeting agenda and attached materials. In addition, there is a brief description of the adaptive management approach in the November, 2014 Q&A.

**II. Forest Products Presentation**

Nancy Fishering, representing the Colorado Timber Industry Assn., gave a PowerPoint presentation and addressed questions on the state of the timber industry in Colorado, in SW Colorado and on the GMUG in particular. She highlighted the opportunities, challenges and threats to the timber industry in Colorado in general and to the Montrose mill in particular in terms of sustainability. This PowerPoint presentation can be found on the PLP’s website at [www.publiclandspartnership.org/projects/sbeadmr under the 12/18/2014](http://www.publiclandspartnership.org/projects/sbeadmr%20under%20the%2012/18/2014) under the SBEADMR working group meeting agenda and attached materials.

**III. Taking Stock of Where We Are and Where We Want to Go**

Given that the year was drawing to an end and the group had been sharing information and resources during the past five meetings, the facilitator introduced an exercise to “take stock” of the working group both as a group and individually and where the group wants to go in future meetings. To set the stage for the exercise, Susan highlighted some points as follows:

The issue(s) Before the Working Group:

* The Forest Service has proposed a multi-year, landscape scale management plan to respond to changing conditions in the spruce-fir and aspen stands on the GMUG;
* Over the course of 10 years, the proposed action has the potential of impacting up to 120,000 acres or 4% of the total GMUG land base;
* The proposed action provides for a mix of prescribed burning, commercial harvest and non-commercial mechanical treatments, i.e. approx. 4,000 – 6,000 total acres annually for commercial harvest of aspen, spruce and aspen/spruce mix and approx.. 3,000 – 6,000 total acres annually of a combination of prescribed burning and non-commercial mechanical treatments in aspen, spruce and aspen/spruce mix;
* The management plan will utilize an adaptive management approach to determine which treatments will be applied and where they will be applied over the life of the proposed action

to meet the stated goals and objectives;

* A DEIS analyzing three action alternatives is scheduled to be published mid-April, 2015

What the Working Group Accomplished To Date:

* Brought together a group of individuals with diverse interests to share information and resources to work together cooperatively toward agreement or “zones of agreement” on one or more issues related to the proposed action;
* Given the presentations and discussions over the five meetings, the group has a shared understanding of:
  + The need and purpose for the proposed action
  + The meaning of the goals and objectives in the context of the proposed action
  + The adaptive management approach that will be utilized to determine which treatments will be applied and where
* Agreed to certain ground rules
* Agreed to what constitutes the “core membership” and “alternates” to weigh in on any “formal suggestions or recommendations” the group may reach agreement on
* Reviewed a proposed research project to provide science-based information to aid the Forest in implementing the adaptive management approach in beetle infested spruce-fir stands
* Identified other issues/topics for further clarification and understanding
  + Socio-economic impacts of proposed action
  + Regeneration
  + Monitoring
  + Interactive GIS Mapping
  + Watersheds

Exercise: Taking Stock of the Group’s Zones of Agreement

The following fundamental questions were posed for the group to assess its current level of agreement:

Question Thumbs Thumbs Undecided

Up Down

1. Do you agree that as of today, the FS is charged with 17 0 0

managing the public lands within the boundaries of the FS?

2. Do you agree that active management - at some scope and 17 0 0

scale yet to be determined - is an appropriate response to the

changing conditions in the spruce-fir and aspen stands?

3. Do you agree that a mix of treatments is appropriate to 17 0 0

meet one or more of the stated goals?

4. Do you agree that commercial harvest, i.e. salvage logging - 15 1 1\*

at a scope and scale yet to be determined - is an appropriate

treatment for one or more of the stated goals?

5. Do you agree that commercial harvest is appropriate 16 0 1\*

within the WUI?

6. Do you agree that commercial harvest is appropriate 15 2 0

outside of the WUI?

\*After the meeting one individual reported that she had not indicated a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” as she was undecided pending more information.

Input for the DEIS

A brief discussion followed on whether or not the group felt it had enough information based on its understanding of the proposed action, goals and objectives to provide any suggestions or recommendations to the FS for further clarification or analysis in the DEIS. The FS is on target to publish the DEIS in mid-April and if the group wished to submit something to be further analyzed in the DEIS it should be submitted by the first week in February to ensure adequate analysis in the DEIS. This does not preclude the opportunity for the working group or individuals to submit comments after the DEIS is released.

Several members of the group commented that they felt they needed to see the information that would be contained in the DEIS before they could offer meaningful comment. One member reiterated that he did not believe that it was the intent nor task of the working group to recommend another alternative for analysis in the DEIS. There was no “thumbs up/thumbs down” action on this point.

How to Spend Time between Now and the Release of DEIS

The group expressed interest and willingness in continuing to meet at least monthly between now and the release of the DEIS to continue to share information and have discussion around some of the outstanding issues as information/resources were available. Specifically,

* Demonstration of Interactive GIS Mapping Tool - tentatively scheduled for 1/22/15
* Watersheds
* Regeneration
* Socio-economic impacts
* Monitoring
* Design Feature Criteria

**Follow-Up Items**

* Distribute draft copy of ground rules that have been agreed upon
* Review draft revision of first objective under the goal of recovery
* Revisit question on input to DEIS and determine if the group wants a “thumbs up/thumbs down” on that point
* Ask question of whether or not the group feels the proposed alternatives cover the “full range” of alternatives to be analyzed in the DEIS
* Map out meeting dates and topics for Jan – March, 2014

Susan Hansen

Facilitator