**Notes from SBEADMR Adaptive Management Group (AMG) Meeting**

April 6, 2017

The Public Lands Partnership (PLP) convened the organizational meeting of the SBEADMR Adaptive Management Group (AMG) on Thursday, April 6, 2017 in the Pioneer Room at the Montrose County Fairgrounds. Attached to the meeting notes are three documents that were distributed at the meeting:

* Appendix E: (Public Engagement in Adaptive Management (SBEADMR FEIS)
* Proposed Framework for Organizational Structure, Decision Making & Communication (FRAMEWORK)
* Notes from the 3/7/2017 Meeting with PLP Subcommittee and Forest Service

Attendees: Hilary Cooper, Enno Heuscher, Lexi Tuddenham (phone), Ralph Files, Phil Seligman, Wade Quaddy, Andy Goldman, Clay Speas, Jonathan Hauck, Jonathan Greenspan, Matt Quinn, Cindy Dozier, Mary Chapman, Roger Rash, Jamie Nagle, John Waschbusch, Craig Grother, Chris Jauhola, Mike Granoff, Norm Birtcher, Robbie LeValley and Chris Miller

**Introduction**

Hilary Cooper, Co-Chair of the PLP, welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order. After brief introductions by each attendee the meeting was turned over to meeting facilitator, Susan Hansen. Susan provided a brief historical background of how the group arrived at this point of formalizing a more structured collaborative group to assist the Grand Mesa Uncompahgre Gunnison NF (Forest)) in the implementation and monitoring of the multi-year SBEADMR project. The purpose of the organizational meeting was to bring persons who had either been nominated to have a “seat” at the table or who had expressed an interest in serving on the AMG “up to speed” on the purpose, role and function of the AMG going forward. She referred to the work of a subcommittee of the SBEADMR Working Group that had researched organizational structures and operational guidelines of other collaborative groups across the West to recommend a framework for organizational structure, decision making and communication for the AMG.

**Item No. 1: Overview of Purpose of AMGF and Review of Draft Framework for Organizational Structure, Decision Making Process and Communication (FRAMEWORK)**

The group proceeded to review the draft FRAMEWORK in detail to ensure that everyone understood the purpose and objectives of the AMG and there was a clear understanding of the proposed operating protocol, relationship of Forest to the AMG and expectations of individuals serving on the AMG.

a. Purpose and Objectives: The group reviewed the general purpose and objectives of the AMG as stated in the draft FRAMEWORK.

b. Opportunities for AMG to Interface with the Adaptive Management Process: Referring to the 3/7/2017 notes of a meeting with the PLP SBEADMR subcommittee and the Forest, Robbie LeValley reiterated the point that the AMG will function as an independent group (not a formal FACA advisory committee) and will serve in an advisory role providing input to the Forest leadership team and Science Team. The Public Lands Partnership (PLP) is convening the AMG and the Forest and Science Team will serve as resources to the AMG. She went on to articulate those opportunities within the Adaptive Management process that the AMG may interface with the Forest and/or Science Team as further outlined in the 3/7/2017 notes and referenced in Appendix E of the SBEADMR FEIS and ROD.

*Questions/Comments*:

* Norm Birtcher noted a conflict between a bullet under the Guiding Principles that stated that “projects will be selected that are of mutual concern and are agreed upon by the group” and the statement in Appendix E that “…the Forest retains the authority to make final decisions related to location, extend and types of treatments planned and completed…..” . The former statement implies that the AMG may have some authority in decisions whereas in its advisory role the AMG may only make recommendations. (*Note: this statement has been removed from guiding principles in final drafts)*
* Craig Grother noted that in addition to helping articulate monitoring questions for projects, the AMG may also provide input on the prioritization of specific treatment sites within the Priority Treatment Areas as described in the FEIS. Clay Speas allowed that an appropriate time for such input would be early on, i.e. the annual offseason workshop when the Forest is laying out plans for future years.

c. Organizational Structure: The group reviewed the list of persons either “nominated” by their entity or interest group or individuals who had expressed interest to fill either a regular of alternate position on the AMG. There was much discussion as to how to decide on the “community-at-large” representatives from each of the three timber zones given that there are overlapping counties within the timber zones. It was suggested in those situations where there are overlapping counties within a timber zone that they could “caucus” among themselves and designate a regular and alternate position. It was noted that an important factor in appointing “community-at-large” representatives is to be able to obtain the best information about that particular piece of ground – which could mean in some locations there could be more than one individual interested or qualified. In the end, the counties present agreed to “caucus” during the afternoon break and report back to the group.

After the afternoon break and “county caucus” – the counties reported out their recommendations for community-at-large representatives and alternates for each timber zone as follows:

* North Zone – regular seat: Mary Chapman, Delta County
	+ - alternate seat: to be announced
* East Zone – regular seat: Dianna Cooper, Hinsdale County
	+ alternate seat: to be announced
* West Zone – regular seat: Nancy Fishering, Montrose County

 alternate seat: Andy Goldman, Montrose County

The names of those individuals recommended will be taken back to the respective Board of County Commissioners to confirm their appointment.

There was also discussion on who or what entity was designated to approve the list or nominations or recommendation. PLP had discussed this and felt its only role was to determine that the group represented a diverse and balanced representation on interests in SBEADMR. It was the responsibility of the County Commissioners and/or specific interest groups to approve the specific individuals.

Since the Colorado State Forest Service (STATE FOREST) will be working with the Forest on some of these projects it was recommended that the STATE FOREST have a seat at the table. It was also recommended that someone representing livestock interests should have a seat. Robbie LeValley, representing an area ranching family, may fill that seat as well as representing Delta County.

d. Decision Making Process: Mary Chapman described in detail the subcommittee’s recommendation for a decision making process as outlined in the draft FRAMEWORK. The goal of the proposed consensus process is for the group to come to a decision that group members can support following a respectful hearing of all concerns.

*Discussion/Comments*:

* Chris Jauhola raised concern about the use of the word “decision” throughout this section on decision making in terms of conflicting with FACA and implication that the AMG makes decisions. She proposed that “recommendation” be substituted for “decision” in the final draft.
* Chris Jauhola also questioned the intent of the last paragraph in the section on “Inability to Reach Consensus”. She asked if that paragraph was suggesting that the AMG could in fact appeal if the Forest chose not to choose a recommendation of the AMG. Chris stated her understanding that the intent of this group was to work together collaboratively to reach consensus and therefore she felt it would be inappropriate for the AMG (as a group) to appeal. Clay interjected that the opportunity to either file an objection or appeal the decision is over; the only alternative is to litigate. Norm Birtcher offered that the decision making process does provide if there are significant divergent viewpoints on a recommendation that those parties may submit written comments on their views to the Forest for its consideration in making a decision. Mary Chapman clarified that the intent of that paragraph was to establish the “chain of command”, so to speak, should there be instances when the AMG is concerned that the Forest did not heed its comments or recommendation.

e. Monitoring: An expectation of the AMG is to play an active role in articulating monitoring questions/criteria in three specific areas:

* program implementation
* the adaptive management approach and public participation process
* socio-economic impacts of the projects

Tony Cheng of the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute suggested developing a set of questions that could be consistently applied to each project pre-treatment and post-treatment. Tony has offered to assist with the monitoring component.

f. Communication: Means of communication will include the Forest’s website @ www.fs.usda.gov/gmug and the PLP’s website @publiclandspartnership.org. The Forest website provides links to the SBEADMR NEPA documents and then another site specific to SBEADMR Implementation information and documents. The PLP will establish a separate webpage specific to the AMG, i.e. posting meeting agenda, meeting notes, relevant documents, etc. and will provide links to the Forest’s website as well. AMG members are encouraged to review those sites regularly to keep current.

Chris Miller, coordinator for PLP, will serve as the “point person” for communication to and with the AMG membership. She will send out notices to the group via email and will provide links to new information and/or documents regarding the projects

g. Expectations of individuals serving on the AMG were noted:

* be willing to sign an MOU formalizing the understanding of all parties to work diligently towards the stated objectives of the AMG,
* stay current and informed on the status of the SBEADMR project,
* attend meetings regularly, and
* provide a brief “bio” stating one’s interest in serving on the AMG and areas of knowledge or expertise relative to the SBEADMR projects.

h. Organizational Housekeeping Issues: It was agreed to ask for volunteers to help with drafting the MOU and finalizing the FRAMEWORK document to be presented at the next meeting of the AMG. Robbie LeValley, Hilary Cooper and Mary Chapman volunteered to work on the MOU. Chris Jauhola and Nancy Fishering (in abstentia!) volunteered to work on a final draft of the FRAMEWORK document based on comments from this meeting. The final document may be incorporated as an Exhibit to the MOU.

**Item No. 2: Forest Service Update on Implementation of SBEADMR Projects**

Clay Speas gave a detailed report on various aspects of the SBEADMR projects highlighted below:

* Salvage logging sales: The Forest has awarded three sales to date which are result of field work and inventories done in 2016. Info on sales is available on Forest website. The Little Cone project in San Miguel County will commence this year; work may begin on the other two projects later in fall, 2017 or early winter 2018.
* Good Neighbor Authority: Forest has entered into a Good Neighbor Authority Agreement with the STATE FOREST for projects within each of the timber zones. This means the STATE FOREST will oversee the sales subject to the terms of Forest’s NEPA (FEIS and ROD) for the projects. AMG will help keep the STATE FOREST accountable to the process.
* Science Team: Work continues with the Science Team and analysis of project impacts on lynx habitat. Have added hare pellet counts as a means of determining hare density for habitat. Also looking at impact of burn piles on soils and habitat. To honor its commitment to the “best available science”, the Forest has recently allocated another $50,000 for the Science Team which should enable continued work for 2 -3 more years.

 There was a brief discussion on other areas of interest/concern that the AMG might like the Science Team to work on. Regeneration issues for both aspen and spruce were high on the list. Upfront monitoring of soil conditions may help determine the more appropriate sites for regeneration. Clay reported that the Forest has contracted with a soils scientist to evaluate current soil conditions of specific treatment sites to help advise the layout of skid tracks and/or otherwise minimize adverse impacts to soils during treatments.

* Contract Modification to Continue Support for PLP and AMG. The Forest is preparing another modification to the contract with Unc/Com and PLP to provide education and outreach for SBEADMR. This modification includes funding to reimburse AMG members for travel mileage to and from AMG meetings and/or field trips.
* Summer Field Trips: Based on input from the January off season workshop, the Forest will host a field trip in each of the timber zones this summer. The field trips will be scheduled during the 30 day public comment period to provide an opportunity for the public to submit comments after participating in a field trip. Clay will work with Chris Miller to try and schedule trips during late July or early August. It was noted that AMG members are not expected to attend all field trips unless they so choose – it is recognized that some proposed treatment sites will be of more interest to members depending on location.
* Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation: Clay advised that the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has been mandated to designate habitat for Canadian lynx. This could mean the Forest will have to reopen consultation with the FWS on this project. No idea when this could occur – probably sometime within the next two years.
* Notice of Intent to Litigate: Clay shared that a national environmental group has indicated it was contemplating filing a Notice of Intent to Litigate. Both Clay and Jason Sibold of the Science Team have been talking with the group regarding its issues. The conversations have been positive to date so hopeful for resolution soon. *(Ed note: Since the 4/6/2017 AMG meeting the group has indicated it will not pursue litigation at this time)*
* Forest Plan Revision: Clay announced that the Forest would be launching the Assessment Phase of the Forest Plan Revision process in June, 2017. Purpose of assessment phase is to assess and identify the need for change within the Forest Plan.

**Item No. 3: Identify Specific Tasks/Activities that AMG Would Like to Address in the Future**

In the interest of time, this item was merely introduced and tabled for further discussion or deliberation for another meeting.

**Item No. 4: Opportunity for Public Comment**

Education/Outreach: Wayne Quade asked if there was an opportunity to provide in a “capsulated format” education for the general public on what the SBEADMR project is and potential impacts.

*Discussion/Comments*:

* It was noted that in addition to the Forest’s outreach efforts, i.e. public notices and public meetings, the PLP was responsible for assisting with public education and outreach. Another round of public information meetings hosted by PLP has been proposed for 2018 after the first year of implementation.

**Item No. 5: Schedule Next Meeting and Identify Items for Agenda**

The group discussed having another meeting in June prior to the summer field trips. Meeting date will be coordinated with the Forest and the Science Team. Agenda topics identified include, but not limited to:

* Schedule of Summer Field Trips and Field Trip Agenda
* Update from Forest on SBEADMR Implementation
* Update from Science Team on Lynx Habitat Analysis
* Discussion with Science Team about Monitoring and How AMG Interacts with Science Team
* Review of AMG MOU and Organizational Framework Document

**AMG “TO DO” LIST BEFORE NEXT MEETING**

* North and East timber zone counties to designate alternates for community-at-large positions
* Gunnison County to identify individual to serve as alternate for recreation
* Chris Miller to follow up for representative from State Forest Service
* Volunteer “subcommittees” to draft final documents for AMG MOU and Operational Framework
* Chris Miller to work with Clay or dates for summer field trip

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM

Notes compiled by Susan Hansen, Facilitator