**SBEADMR Adaptive Management Meeting Notes**

April 7, 2021

The SBEADMR Adaptive Management Group (AMG) convened a MS TEAMS virtual meeting on Wednesday, April 7, at 1:00 PM . Present and representing the various “seats” on the AMG were:

**Designated Seat**  **Regular Member** **Alternate Member**

Delta County absent absent

Gunnison County absent TBD

Hinsdale County absent TBD

Montrose County Justin Musser absent

Ouray County absent absent

San Miguel County absent absent

Environmental/Conservation Chris Jauhola absent

Environmental/Conservation Lexi Tuddenham Robin Nicholoff

Forestry Processor Tim Kyllo

Forestry Logger Molly Pitts TBD

Community at Large

East Zone TBD TBD

North Zone Mary Chapman TBD

West Zone Nancy Fishering Andy Goldman

Water Resources absent absent

Recreational User Groups Ralph Files TBD

Wildlife and Fish Craig Grother absent

Education TBD TBD

**Resource/Staff Present**: Clay Speas, Sean Ferrell, Carlyn Perovich, Kim Phillips, Cari Johnson, Nicole Hutt, and Stewart Robertson, GMUG Nat’l Forest; Tony Cheng, Mike Battaglio, Jarod Dunn, and Tyler Beeton, SBEADMR Science Team;

**Guests**: Cindy Dozier, Hinsdale County citizen

**Approval of October 1, 2020 AMG Meeting Notes**: M/S/*P Fishering/Kyllo*. Approve the meeting notes of the 10/01/2020 AMG meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

**Item No 1: Debrief of 2021 Annual SBEADMR/Taylor Park EA Combined Stakeholder Meeting**

* Positive feedback from AMG members on the virtual meeting format, attendance and combining the annual stakeholder meeting with the Taylor Park EA project.
* The introduction of the Story Map as a tool to display the proposed treatment projects and to provide the public an opportunity to comment electronically was deemed a great success.
* 2022 Combined Stakeholder meeting will be held in Gunnison at Western Colorado University (WCU).
* Group supported option of a hybrid meeting – providing for both in-person and virtual attendance. Carlyn will pursue that option further with WCU.
* Group supported two half day sessions instead of one full day – maybe an afternoon session first day and morning session second day.
* Closure of Hwy 50 between Montrose and Gunnison on weekdays through 2022 summer was mentioned as a challenge in scheduling the meeting; maybe host one session on a Saturday.

**Item No. 2: Review of Draft AMG Annual Report/Monitoring Matrix and AMG Recommendations for Adaptations**

As requested by the AMG membership and specified in the SBEADMR roles/timeline document, the AMG Monitoring Committee met with the Science Team, GMUG staff and resource specialists in March, following the February annual stakeholder meeting. The purpose of said meeting was to review in detail the findings and interpretations of various monitoring activities and to draft proposed AMG recommendations for adaptions to treatment design and/or implementation to present to the full AMG membership in April.

Given level of said review by the Monitoring Committee, the AMG began its review of the draft AMG report/monitoring matrix by first considering the three recommendations proposed by the Monitoring Committee for adaptions to a specific SBEADMR Goal or Trigger as highlighted in the monitoring matrix.

GOAL/TRIGGER: More locations from which firefighters can safely and effectively manage fires (*ROD Public Safely Goal #1*)

**PROPOSED AMG RECOMMENDATION**: Recommend that the GMUG actively seek ways to incorporate Public Safety Goal into SBEADMR treatments.

DISCUSSION:

* The recommendation is not based on the “results and interpretation” column per se but rather is a suggestion from the AMG that the Forest Service put more emphasis on this since public safety is a main goal of SBEADMR.
* Reference was made to the “comment” column where it is noted that the GMUG is currently in process of developing Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) to help guide placement of treatments and facilitate fire management efforts. This is a new and evolving model/tool in the field of fire management and was suggested to be a good topic for a subsequent symposium to fully delve into and understand.
* Opportunities for overlap of some Priority Treatment Areas (PTAs) in EIS with PODs; such opportunities may enhance but would not change the PTAs as they are fixed per the FEIS and ROD.

GOAL/TRIGGER: Promote aspen regeneration in live stands, with emphasis on those affected by Sudden Aspen Decline (ROD Resilience Goal 1.2)

**PROPOSED AMG RECOMMENDATION**: Recommend that GMUG staff find ways to prioritize non-commercial and commercial aspen treatments with SBEADMR (state funds, partnerships with CSFS, etc.)

DISCUSSION:

* *Commissioner Cooper* (San Miguel County) had commented that funds may be available in 2021 through various state initiatives that might help pay for non-commercial treatment; she prepared a handout of various funding/partnership opportunities (*refer to agenda Item No. 6*)
* Although to date no aspen sales have been implemented, commercial aspen sales are currently being prepared in the Norwood district.
* The Lone Pine timber sale has been incorporated with the Craver Creek Timber sale. It was determined neither sale was viable to stand on its own given various issues that were raised, merchantability, wildlife, etc.

GOAL/TRIGGER: Provide commercial forest products to local dependent industries at a level commensurate with the GMUG Land and Resource Management Plan direction and in harmony with other Plan goals (Recovery Goal #1, ROD, p. 4)

**PROPOSED AMG RECOMMENDATION**: Science team should continue to look at economic impacts beyond the *number* of producers. Further drill down into impacts of small-scale producers, secondary markets, and other topics with assistance of a proposed newly formed AMG subcommittee.

DISCUSSION:

* Discussion was deferred to a scheduled update from Jarod Dunn, Science Team Research Associate (*refer to agenda item 3c*)
* Consideration of establishing a separate Socio-Economic Committee to work with the Science Team on the socio-economic questions was deferred pending determination if such a separate committee would be helpful to the Science Team’s efforts.

A fourth possible recommendation was raised by AMG member *Craig Grother* during the general discussion of other questions/comments on any of the other goals or triggers as follows:

GOAL/TRIGGER: Ensure implementation of treatments is responsive to… public input. (FEIS Appendix

E, Public Engagement in Adaptive Implementation, Goal p. 2)

**PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION:**  Suggest that local ranger districts need additional outreach as each new project is firmed up with specific silviculture, design, and timelines.

DISCUSSION:

* The intent of the recommendation is to be proactive and to increase public awareness and education of treatments prior to “trucks rolling through town”!
* The Forest Service has encouraged people to contact local Rangers about more specifics on a proposed treatment; AMG comments reflect it should not be solely the responsibility of citizens to seek out information. The District Rangers and/or Timber Management Assistants could reach out to individuals in their district whom they know would/could have concerns.
* The recommendation/suggestion would be presented to the Forest Leadership Team and District Rangers would have the opportunity to consider what other ways they might reach out to local stakeholders when a project is proposed in their District.
* Increase efforts to get information on the Story Map and its value out to the public as a site to view proposed treatments and submit comments electronically.

**Other General Comments/Questions regarding the Review of the AMG Report/Monitoring Matrix**

* Recommendation “No Change Needed at this Time”: Given the nature of the SBEADMR project changes do not necessarily occur every year – it takes time (years sometimes) to see the results of treatments. The statement reflects the goal or implementation is not at a point at this time to recommend an adaptation from what had been prescribed in the FEIS/ROD.
* 2021 Revisions to AMG Monitoring Matrix (pgs. 8 – 11): *Carlyn* briefly highlighted the revisions/additions she had made to the matrix:
  + Lynx and Climate Change: At the end of matrix (pgs. 9 & 10), the addition of the Science Team’s questions regarding lynx habitat and climate change. Incorporating the questions in this format enables tracking of management changes in response to these specific questions/focus that were/was not specifically linked to earlier goals in the FEIS or ROD.
  + Public comments: Provided space to track any *adaptations* made because of public comments. This would not cover the full range of public comments but only AMG recommendations resulting from public comments.
  + Cross references: in the first two columns to track the goal/trigger or monitoring activity there are references back to the source documents, e.g., FEIS or Science Team monitoring matrix.
* Lack of Watershed Protection: *Ralph Files* raised concern that there was no mention of how water resources/watersheds would be protected given potential impacts of a large timber cut or wildfire.
  + Watershed risk assessments are part of the evolving models for fire management.
  + The GMUG is looking at watershed and watershed infrastructure in its development of the PODS.
  + There is a focus on protection of watersheds and water resources In the SBEADMR treatment design criteria and best management practices.
  + Suggested more discussion about watershed protection be part of a proposed separate symposium on PODS; additional peripheral questions around watersheds that were not asked in the EIS could be included in the monitoring matrix like the lynx and climate change questions.

There being no further questions/comments on the AMG monitoring matrix and proposed AMG recommendations for adaption, M/S/P *Fishering/Chapman*. Accept the recommendations of the AMG Monitoring Committee as presented and submit to the Forest Leadership Team for its consideration. This motion was later amended to include the fourth recommendation discussed above regarding improving public engagement/outreach as the Ranger District level. Amended motion was accepted unanimously.

**Item No. 3: Follow-Up Presentations Related to AMG Matrix**

a. Potential Operational Delineations – Stewart Robinson – Fuels Program Manager

*Stew Robinson* shared a PowerPoint presentation on Potential Operational Delineations (PODS) to provide context for the reference to PODS in the AMG matrix (first goal/trigger). PODS are a tool developed using a combination of local expertise and advanced spatial analysis. They identify the safest and most effective control lines, e.g., roads, ridges, to help assess fire suppression opportunities and inform how fire might be integrated into landscape planning and fuels treatment. They also can be used in conjunction with quantitative risk assessments to identify strategic response zones and quantitatively predict how values at risk, e.g., homes, watershed infrastructure, would respond to different levels of fire intensity. Currently GMUG staff and partners are developing PODS to help guide placement of treatments on the GMUG landscape and to facilitate fire management efforts.

Following the discussion and given the complexity and evolving nature of this model, it was again suggested that PODS would be a good topic for a separate symposium or workshop in the future. Keep on the agenda!!

b. Next Steps to Address Socio-Economic Questions and the Assessment of Adaptive Management Process

In the AMG Monitoring Committee meeting with the Science Team and GMUG staff, questions and comments were raised regarding how the socio-economic questions and the assessment of the adaptive management process were being addressed. The CFRI research associates working on those issues gave a report on where they are in the respective research questions.

* *Jarod Dunn*, CFRI Research Associate, reported on what steps he is taking to research the impact of SBEADMR on timber operations, large and small producers, as well as impacts on recreation. Over the past several weeks, he has been gathering information and having conversations with individuals representing those interests and industries. He plans to develop a survey to gather more information, conduct some site visits and review and incorporate findings from other similar surveys conducted in Colorado.

At the close of the meeting, Robin Nicholoff asked if anyone had noticed an impact on timber operators, the mill or Forest Service budgets given the significant raise in lumber prices over the past year. Nancy noted that would be a good question for Jarod to ask to provide context to his research efforts.

* *Tyler Beeton*, CFRI Research Associate, is focusing his research on an assessment of the adaptive management process. He is addressing the three questions posed in the monitoring matrix on adaptive management (i.e., is the collaborative adaptive management process functioning as it was originally intended/expected?; to what extent has stakeholder participation changed over the project timeframe?; and what adaptations have been made based on the results of administrative studies?). He is planning to conduct 7-10 key informant interviews in early summer to get feedback on major achievements, challenges, what outcomes have been met, etc. The results from those interviews will be used to develop a questionnaire that will be distributed to a larger group of stakeholders. Other tasks include: 1) developing a cumulative list of adaptations made over the life of the project; and 2) tracking attendance/participation in AMG meetings through life of the project.

c. Overview of Public Comments Received During the 30-Day Comment Period (March) - Nicole Hutt, GMUG Timber Program Manager

*Nicole* reported the GMUG received 20 comments specific to SBEADMR out-year projects on the Story Map. The comments were deemed to be valuable and would aid in planning the out-year projects. Most comments pertained to contract stipulations, e.g., haul routes, highway closures, timber operating seasons, how activities might impact wildlife and hunting seasons. She noted that the Story Map was a helpful tool for people to submit comments which are attached to a specific site.

**Item No. 4: Introduction to CFRI SBEADMR Website – Nancy Fishering, AMG Member**

AMG member *Nancy Fishering* shared the recently launched CFRI SBEADMR website online and walked through each of the tabs that contain AMG documents since SBEADMR was introduced in 2014. She acknowledged CFRI, Tony Cheng for offering to host this site and the CFRI staff who worked with Nancy and Susan in building this site.

The site is just being launched for public access and the link to it is: <https://cfri.colostate.edu/projects/sbeadmr>

*Nancy* encouraged members to review the site online and provide feedback to either her or Susan as the finished product still is still being “refined” and they have one more final call with CFRI. *Susan* noted that this site replaces the SBEADMR webpage on the Public Lands Partnership (PLP) website as the PLP is no longer active. The GMUG also has a SBEADMR website that contains SBEADMR NEPA and implementation documentation and data but not the AMG history and documentation.

**Item No. 5: Identify Potential SBEADMR Field Trips for Summer, 2021 – Nicole Hutt, GMUG Timber Program Manager**

*Nicole* presented potential sites for the summer field trips:

* (BMP) Field Trip: Cathedral Timber Sale in Gunnison Ranger District. This was the site of the 2018 pre-treatment field trip. The sale was awarded in 2017 and is now completed. This will offer opportunity to view implementation and post-sale work. Hwy 50 closure this summer may be a challenge in scheduling.
* Pre-treatment Field Trip for an Out-Year Project: Ground Hog Timber Sale in the Norwood District. *(Note: field trip site was later changed to a site near the Boomerang Road in Telluride)*
* North Timber Zone: If there is interest in a scheduled treatment in the North Timber Zone, individuals should contact Cari Johnson, Timber Management Assistant at the Paonia Ranger District.

Late July/early August have historically been good dates for the field trips. GMUG staff will try to have potential dates to send out around the first of June. COVID 19 protocol would most likely still be in place as last summer. GMUG will not be able to provide vans so individuals will have to travel on their own.

**Item No. 6: Overview of State Wildfire Funding and Legislative Initiatives for Wildfire Mitigation**

*Commissioner Cooper* (who was unable to join the meeting) prepared two summary documents on potential FY 20-21 supplemental funding bills for wildfire mitigation and 2021 wildfire mitigation-related legislative initiatives. The documents were sent out to AMG via email prior to the meeting. She thought they might provide opportunities for additional funding or partnerships for wildfire mitigation projects and would be worth tracking. *Nancy* *Fishering* suggested that the Monitoring Committee continue to track through the legislative session and alert the GMUG of opportunities. *Ralph Files* noted that most of the initiatives would be handled by committees. It is important to ensure there is broad and diverse representation on those committee so western slope interests are well represented.

**Opportunity for Public Comment**: There were no public comments.

**Non-Agenda Items**: Opportunity for AMG members to “toast or roast” Clay Speas in appreciation for his work with SBEADMR and the AMG and wish him well in his retirement.

**Next Meeting(s)** : The summer field trips in late July/early August will be the next opportunity for AMG member engagement. In the fall, there may be an AMG meeting to bridge the gap between this meeting and the winter, 2022 annual stakeholder meeting. Might be a good opportunity to convene the suggested symposium on PODS!!

Meeting adjourned: 3:50 PM

Notes compiled by Susan Hansen, Facilitator