**SBEADMR Adaptive Management Meeting Notes**

October 28, 2021

The SBEADMR Adaptive Management Group (AMG) convened a MS TEAMS virtual meeting on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 9:00 AM. Present and representing the various “seats” on the AMG were:

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

Delta County Robbie LeValley absent

Gunnison County absent TBD

Hinsdale County absent TBD

Montrose County Justin Musser absent

Ouray County Ben Tisdel absent

San Miguel County Hilary Cooper absent

Environmental/Conservation Chris Jauhola Enno Heuscher

Environmental/Conservation absent absent

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 absent absent

Education TBD TBD

**Resource/Staff Present**: Sean Ferrell, Carlyn Perovich, Kim Phillips, Kyle Melton, Regina Rone, and Robert McCann, GMUG Nat’l Forest; Jason Sibold, Mike Battaglio, Kevin Barrett, Jarod Dunn, and Tyler Beeton and Brett Wolk, SBEADMR Science Team and CFRI staff.

**Guests**: Cindy Dozier, Hinsdale County citizen; Chuck Carpenter, NWTF; Donna Shorreck, Ecologist, USFS Regional Office; Ben Katz, Conservation Center; Jamie Gomez, Colorado Wildfire Council;

**Approval of April 7, 2021 AMG Meeting Notes**: M/S/*P Fishering/Kyllo*. Approve the meeting notes of the 04/07/21 AMG meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

**Item No. 1: Review of the 2021 Summer Field Trips/Discuss Format for Future Field Trips**

*Carlyn Perovich*, GMUG Forest Ecologist, provided a brief overview of the 2021 summer field trips: Cathedral Salvage Sale on Gunnison Ranger District (post -treatment BMP review) and Boomerang Project between Telluride and Mountain Village (pre-treatment review). **NOTE *Complete summaries of both field trips may be found on the CFRI SBEADMR website at***  <https://cfri.colostate.edu/projects/sbeadmr> ***under the tab labelled “Field Trips****”.*

*Carlyn* noted that given the amount of time for planning and participating in field trips the GMUG staff would recommend that in the future only one field trip per summer be planned. Trips would alternate between the three timber zones. For instance, 2022 field trip would be in the North Zone, e.g., Paonia Ranger District. She asked for feedback from AMG members on proposed change.

*AMG Comments:*

* Consider the value of Science Team members’ presence when planning a field trip
* Try and plan trip so post-treatment site visits coincide with pre-treatment site visits
* Provide more information on how potential impacts on watersheds are taken into account in pre-treatment planning and how treatment impacted a watershed post-treatment; capture benefits to watersheds prior to project implementation
* Watershed protection has become a recurring concern/emphasis for AMG since SBEADMR was first developed; need to be able to adapt treatments to take watersheds into consideration
* Climate change is occurring more rapidly than anticipated and is impacting water resources and forest conditions; it has become very much a community concern in terms of wildfire mitigation and WUI areas
* Reference to the SBEADMR ROD and the need to work/adapt within the sidebars of the ROD.
* Public safety – managing wildfires - is one of the priority goals of SBEADMR; there are fuels mitigation treatments in the “pipeline” but not all the terrain is in a SBEADMR “priority treatment area” as delineated in the ROD and location of PTAs cannot be changed
* Strong interest expressed in exploring how SBEADMR might be adapted to address fuels mitigation, watershed protection; allow for more in-depth discussion at a future AMG meeting

**Item No. 2: Proposed Checklist Design Feature Change to Allow Use of PONSSE Equipment**

*Carlyn Perovich* distributed via email a handout on the proposed change and gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the “tethered cut to length” (CTL) timber harvesting technology (e.g., PONSSE). She noted that “While the upfront costs of this technology have precluded its widespread use in Colorado in the past, the current need for increasing the scope and scale of fuels mitigation treatments and an associated increase in available funding are expected to lead to more frequent use of tethered CTL harvest systems on Forest Service lands. GMUG staff feel that this technology will be an essential tool in effective forest management moving forward.” The presentation covered the need for adaption, the proposed changes in the SBEADMR Pre-Implementation Checklist and the potential effects.

*Carlyn* acknowledged that generally proposals for adaptions are presented to the AMG for its review and recommendation in the spring. However, given the USFS’s current emphasis on increasing the scope and scale of fuels mitigation, the proposal was put before the AMG now to consider what next steps are needed for the AMG to make a recommendation in a timely manner.

**Participants’ Comments/Questions**

* Concern with trade-off between getting product out but also creating “slash” mats. While they [“slash mats”] are protecting the soils, how does that contribute to higher surface fuel loads especially if used for fuel mitigation treatments?
* Concern for damage to advance regeneration given more area being impacted. How much damage to advance regeneration is acceptable?
* Concern for monitoring, e.g., What kind of fuels are being produced and how much? What to do if exceed the maximum? What are mitigation factors for that?
* Treatment looks very linear – how to address heterogeneity or similar issues that people bring up?
* Need for careful monitoring of slash mats and surface fuel loads.
* Premature to make recommendation without more information on where research occurred, what is acceptable for soil disturbance, impacts to watersheds, soil erosion on 60% slope, and wildlife corridors.
* Important to see operation on the ground – plan a field trip – invite Chuck Rhoades.
* Not all areas are suitable for CTL, e.g., CTL relies on presence of a road above the CTL treatment area to recover product.
* Things are changing more quickly than anticipated; seeing more intense rainfall events post-fire overall; getting on steeper slopes is a concern.
* Assessment on post-fire recovery across the West coming out this winter; looking at different regions, forest types, elevations, etc. Fire severity at soil level is critical to come back with post-fire regeneration.

**Next Steps:**

* Refer the issue back to the AMG Monitoring Committee to convene a meeting to further explore the issues/concerns, including but not limited to the following: regeneration capacity, impact on soils, watersheds and wildlife corridors, fire behavior and effectiveness in mitigating fire behavior, areas suitable for CTL, monitoring protocols. Schedule the meeting within the next month and send notice of meeting to full AMG membership.
  + Invite Science Team members
  + Invite Gina Rone, GMUG Soils and Hydro Specialist, to report on PONSSE monitoring in Oregon
  + Invite Chuck Rhoades, USFS Rocky Mtn Research Station, to report on Monarch Pass monitoring
* Reach out to water providers with reservoirs/water diversion/water supplies that may be at risk and the West Colorado Wildfire Council (Jamie Gomez) to engage in the discussion
* Plan a field trip to observe CTL operation on the ground (Monarch Pass site)

**Item No. 3: CFRI’s Risk Assessment Decision Support Model (RADS)**

*Brett Wolk, CFRI Asst Director, and Jarod Dunn, CFRI Research Associate,* gave a PowerPoint presentation on a Risk Assessment Decision Support(RADS) model designed to help communities identify, prioritize, and quantify community values that may be at risk with wildfires. Wildfire management decisions are becoming more complex as wildfires increase in frequency and scale. This model can assist communities to develop a framework to balance the values and resources in complex wildfire management decisions. CFRI has been working with Chaffee and Lake counties and the presentation gave examples of work done in Chaffee County. *Jamie Gomez* of the Colorado Wildfire Council spoke to the importance of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) to the RADS model in terms of creating a “shared ownership” of the problem. In terms of SBEADMR specifically, *Brett* noted that the “GMUG community” could use the SBEADMR PTA’s and adaptive management process to add value to a larger RADS framework.

In conclusion it was noted discussion of this opportunity should be placed on the April AMG meeting for further consideration in conjunction with the emphasis on watersheds and water resources. ***A copy of the RADS PowerPoint presentation is posted on the CFRI website at*** <https://cfri.colostate.edu/projects/sbeadmr> ***under the tab for “AMG Meeting History”***

**Item No. 4: A “5 Year Check-In” on SBEADMR and Adaptive Management Process**

April, 2022 will mark the 5th year since the SBEADMR AMG was formally organized. In anticipation of

looking back on the past five years and looking ahead to the future, *Tyler Beeton, CFRI Research Associate, and Tony Cheng, CFRI Director*, have designed a questionnaire to assess the SBEADMR monitoring and adaptive management process.  *Tyler* presented a PowerPoint to introduce the questionnaire which went “live” on Oct. 27th and was distributed electronically to the original SBEADMR working group, AMG membership, Science Team, GMUG FLT, resource specialists, partners and interested public to complete. *Tyler* reviewed the initial steps that were taken in developing the questionnaire and shared some “high level” findings, e.g., successes, challenges, and recommendations, from the initial interviews with 15 key informants representing the AMG, Science Team and GMUG FLT. The questionnaire will be accessible for a month and *Tyler* will send out weekly reminders to complete the questionnaire**. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is posted on the CFRI website at** [**https://cfri.colostate.edu/projects/sbeadmr**](https://cfri.colostate.edu/projects/sbeadmr) **under the tab for AMG Meeting History**. A full report of the results of the assessment questionnaire will be presented at the Annual SBEADMR/Taylor Park EA Combined Stakeholder Meeting in February.

Due to time constraints, further discussion of the assessment and a five-year “check in” were deferred until the April, 2022 regular AMG meeting.

**Item No. 5: Discuss Plans for the February , 2022 SBEADMR/Taylor Park EA Combined Stakeholder**

**Meeting**

Carlyn reported that the Annual Stakeholder meeting will be a virtual meeting like last year due to the Forest Service’s protocol with continued COVID concerns. The format will consist of two separate half day sessions to be scheduled the week of February 14th or 21st. The first day’s session will focus more on the work and findings of the Science Team and the second day’s session will focus on management issues.

**Non-Agenda Items**

Monarch Pass Field Trip: Ouray County Commissioner Ben Tisdel suggested a field trip for AMG members to visit the Monarch Pass site where PONSEE equipment is being would be beneficial. He encouraged inviting Chuck Rhoades to talk about the monitoring for the project.

**Public Comment**: There were no comments from the public

**Adjourn**: The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 AM

Meeting notes compiled by Susan Hansen, Meeting Facilitator