

SBEADMR Adaptive Management Meeting Notes

May 17, 2023

The SBEADMR Adaptive Management Group (AMG) convened a “hybrid” in-person meeting/ MS TEAMS virtual meeting on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 9:30 AM. The “in person” meeting was held at the GMUG Supervisor’s office in Delta. Present and representing the various “seats” on the AMG were:

<u>Designated Seat</u>	<u>Regular Member</u>	<u>Alternate Member</u>
Delta County	absent	absent
Gunnison County	absent	TBD
Hinsdale County	absent	TBD
Montrose County	Justin Musser	absent
Ouray County	TBD	TBD
San Miguel County	absent	Starr Jamison
Environmental/Conservation	Chris Jauhola	Enno Heuscher
Environmental/Conservation	Robin Nicholoff	Matt Reed
Forestry Processor	Aaron Shay	TBD
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	TBD
Recreational User Groups	Ralph Files	TBD
Wildlife and Fish	Craig Grother	absent
Education	TBD	TBD

Resource/Staff Present: GMUG Staff: Chad Stewart, Tony Edwards, Sean Ferrell, Carlyn Perovich, Kim Phillips, David Francis, Lauren Lomonoco, Regina Rone, Kate Dwire, Matt Vasquez; West Region Wildfire Council: Leigh Robertson; SBEADMR Science Team and CFRI Staff: Mike Battaglio, Tony Cheng, Jarod Dunn, and Tyler Beeton; Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Jake Ivan and Evan Phillips; Colorado State Forest Service: Tanya Banulis, Jeff Rainey and Jodi Rist

Guests: Oliver Wood, Wilderness Workshop (Carbondale), Cindy Dozier, interested citizen (Hinsdale County), Joe Lavorini and Eric Snow, National Forest Foundation

Approval of April 21, 2022 AMG Meeting Notes: M/S/P. Chapman/Musser. Approve notes of 10/24/22 meeting as submitted.

Item No 1: Debrief of Annual SBEADMR/Taylor Park Combined Stakeholder Meeting & Summer Field Trip Options – Carlyn Perovich, GMUG Forest Ecologist

Feedback on the Annual SBEADMR/Taylor Park Meeting: *Carlyn Perovich* noted that this was the first year to try a “hybrid” meeting offering the option of attending the in-person setting held at Western Colorado University (WCU) in Gunnison or joining via the virtual MS TEAMS platform. Despite some of the early technical issues syncing the PowerPoint presentations with the TEAMS platform, people like having the option to join either in-person or virtually and support continuation of the “hybrid” format in the future. Concerns expressed by virtual attendees centered around the difficulty hearing some of the speakers and particular difficulty in hearing the exchange between speakers and audience during Q&A times. Another point of confusion was the “breakout sessions” held in various rooms, e.g., seemed disorganized, how to access breakout sessions in different rooms, etc.

A more centralized location for the combined meetings was suggested for the future in consideration of travel time for attendees. The plan has been to alternate the combined annual meeting each year between Gunnison and Montrose. The 2024 annual meeting will be in Montrose. Some expressed that the “hybrid” format feels more impersonal, in part, due to the turnover in staff and AMG memberships over the years. The virtual option doesn’t lend itself to getting to know the “newcomers” personally as does the in-person settings.

Summer 2023 Field Trip: *Carlyn Perovich* proposed visiting the Rainbow Timber Sale site for the 2023 Summer Field Trip. This would be a post-treatment review of randomly selected design features on a green tree resiliency treatment that had recently been completed. She offered interested persons could suggest specific design features from the design feature checklist to be reviewed. GMUG staff and Science Team will put together some background information on the sale and site and make that available to AMG members. Tentative dates for the field trip are August 1st or 3rd. More information will be provided by the first of July.

Item No. 2: Pre-and Post- Treatment Monitoring Protocol for Assessing Soil Disturbance – Gina Rone, GMUG Soil Scientist

In response to a request from the AMG Monitoring Committee for more understanding/clarification of pre- and post-monitoring measures to determine soil disturbance levels on treatment sites, *Gina Rone, Soil Scientist*, gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the protocol for assessing soil disturbance. Her PowerPoint presentation may be accessed on the CFRI SBEADMR website at: <https://cfri.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2023/07/2023-GMUG-Soil-Monitoring-PowerPoint.pdf>.

Item No 3: Review of the Draft AMG Annual Adaptive Implementation Report/Matrix and AMG Recommendations for Proposed Adaptations – Carlyn Perovich and AMG Monitoring Committee Members

As requested by the AMG membership and specified in the SBEADMR roles/timelines document, the AMG Monitoring Committee met with representatives of the Science Team, GMUG staff and specialists in late April, following the 4/6/23 annual SBEADMR 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 adaptations to SBEADMR treatment design and/or implementation to present to the full AMG in May. Given the 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 specific SBEADMR Goals or Decision Triggers as highlighted in the monitoring matrix.

GOAL/TRIGGER: (pg. 5): Promote aspen regeneration in live stands, with emphasis on those affected by Sudden Aspen Decline (SAD) [ROD Resilience Goal #1.c]

PROPOSED AMG RECOMMENDATION: Recommend that treatments to regenerate aspen focus on low to medium SAD-impacted stands. AMG recognizes that some aspen treatments have goals beyond/in addition to spurring regeneration so other considerations will factor into treatment prioritization, e.g., wildlife, accessibility.

DISCUSSION: The recommendation was based on the Science Team’s findings from the 2022 resampling of the Terror Creek Adaptive Silviculture Assessment Timber Sale (12 years post-harvest). The findings suggest focusing on the low to medium stands of SAD mortality to initiate a high amount of sprouting to offset browsing. Balance of the discussion centered around Jason Sibold’s question of “...whether higher sprouting density is necessarily better in the context of climate change or perhaps SAD-impacted stands are adapting to climate conditions through lower regeneration density?” and Mike Battaglia’s comment: “keep in mind that browsing pressure is a factor; self-thinning will happen, good to start with more stems and thin from there”. Mike will visit with Jason more about his question and the matter could be revisited in the future.

AMG MOTION: M/S/P *Jauhola/Heuscher*. Move to accept the AMG recommendation as presented.

GOAL/TRIGGER: (pg.8)[Decision Trigger, FEIS, Table 6]: Maintain soil productivity, minimize human-caused erosion, eliminate, or minimize soil damage from machine pile burning, and maintain integrity of associated ecosystems.

AMG RECOMMENDATION: Defer recommendation pending Gina Rone’s presentation on pre-and post-treatment monitoring protocol for soil disturbance (*Spring, 2023 meeting*).

DISCUSSION: Following *Gina Rone’s* presentation on monitoring of pre- and post- treatment soil disturbance and concern that post-treatment monitoring may not occur for several years, the question was raised if there were mitigation measures that could be taken sooner to speed up restoration. Specifically, could sites with the potential that soil disturbance was near or could exceed the 15% disturbance threshold be revisited soon after treatment to consider what next steps might be taken to speed up restoration?

AMG MOTION: M/S/P. *Pitts/Musser*. Table this item pending GMUG specialists working with others to identify if and what other things could be helpful in restoring or minimizing soil disturbance in treatment sites close to exceeding the 15% disturbance threshold within a shorter timeframe.

GOAL/TRIGGER: Ensure implementation of treatments is responsive tonew scientific information: (pg. 10)[FEIS Appendix E, Public Engagement in Adaptive Implementation, Goal, pg. 2]

AMG RECOMMENDATION: Per Science Team interpretation, recommend that the GMUG explore options to mitigate impacts to dense horizontal cover.

DISCUSSION:

AMG Member Molly Pitts pointed out an apparent discrepancy between the research presented by Science Team member *Jake Ivan* (CPW biologist) at the Annual SBEADMR Stakeholder meeting and the Science Team’s interpretation that the GMUG explore options to mitigate impacts to DHC during salvage. The research presented indicated a good job was being done to avoid/mitigate the loss of Dense Horizontal Cover (DHC) during salvage. She questioned what “... explore options to mitigate DHC during salvage” meant given the research findings – a need for more specific design criteria? *Jake Ivan* responded that he didn’t see a need for more design criteria but rather to keep doing what has been done to mitigate impacts. *Science Team member Mike Battaglia* offered that the interpretation of the Science Team’s statement didn’t mean that mitigation wasn’t being done but that there is always room for improvement. Given the vagueness of the term “mitigate” in this instance, there was much back and forth discussion about what the term meant for the people laying out the next salvage sale and the need for more information and clarification for the term. *Colorado State Forester Jeff Rainey* noted the more specificity in design criteria would help foresters when laying out a sale. Rather than just saying “mitigate” – provide more specific guidelines, e.g., target specific stands, size of trees, number of acres, etc.

Other points relative to the discussion were:

- There are no more salvage sales on the horizon for SBEADMR Priority Treatment Areas (PTAs); they have already been salvaged or past the time for salvage given stand mortality; if beetles should expand that could change.
- Design criteria should also apply to green resiliency treatment.
- Integration of *Jake’s* research in Science Team’s interpretation would help clarify confusion.
- Value in further conversations with GMUG timber and wildlife specialists and Science Team to consider specific actionable recommendations at the Fall, 2023 AMG meeting.

AMG MOTION: M/S/P *Jauhola/Musser*: Per Science Team interpretation, recommend that the GMUG explore options to mitigate impacts to dense horizontal via discussion at the Fall, 2023 AMG meeting.

Item No 4: Follow-Up Document on Recommendations/Suggestions from the 10/24/2022 AMG Meeting

Susan Hansen reviewed the summary document and status of issues. The document is posted on the CFRI SBEADMR website under the 5/17/23 AMG meeting tab.

Item No. 5: Review Current Status of AMG Membership Roster – Susan Hansen

AMG members reviewed the status of current AMG membership and vacancies. Turnover in both GMUG staff and AMG members since 2017 was noted. Regarding an interest in adding “seats” or members, the AMG Operations Manual specifies that a vote of the membership is required to add “seats” to the membership and/or approving

individuals to fill existing vacancies. Concern was expressed as to how best to bring new members “up to speed” on a project that has been ongoing since 2017.

Item No. 6: Updates on Other State/Local Initiatives Addressing Watershed Protection & Wildfire Mitigation

Leigh Robertson, Colorado West Region Wildfire Council shared activities/projects the Colorado West Regional Wildfire Council was involved in: various collaborative groups in Delta, Gunnison, San Miguel and Ouray counties to assist in developing community wildfire protection plans and help with watershed protection planning.

Additions to the Agenda

- FOIA Request Submitted to GMUG from Conservation/Environmental Groups

AMG member Matt Reed of High Country Conservation Advocates (HCCA) disclosed that HCCA (Gunnison) had joined Wilderness Workshop (Carbondale) and Sheep Mountain Alliance (San Miguel) in filing a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request in November 2023 with the GMUG. The FOIC request sought more information on the change in SBEADMR design criteria to allow Cut-to-Length technology on steep slopes and NEPA review for such a change. Subsequently, the same groups followed up with a letter in April requesting a meeting with GMUG staff and outlining specific legal failures of the SBEADMR process. He prefaced his remarks by stating that in their view SBEADMR has turned out to be far different than what was originally communicated to the public in community meetings. The GMUG responded with a letter in May 2023.

- Recommendation for Appointment to Conservation/Environmental (C/E) Seat

Chris Jahoula announced her resignation as a “regular” representative of the C/E seat on the AMG. Other C/E members had caucused to nominate Robin Nicholoff to move up from an “alternate” seat to fill Chris’s vacancy. Mason Osgood of Sheep Mountain Alliance was nominated to replace Robin as an “alternate” . M/S/P Jahoula/Fishing Motion carried.

Matt Reed announced that he would be moving from the area this summer. The C/E members will caucus to nominate a replacement for his “alternate” seat.

Opportunity for Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM

Notes compiled by Susan Hansen, Meeting Facilitator