

SBEADMR Adaptive Management Meeting Notes

October 24, 2022

The SBEADMR Adaptive Management Group (AMG) convened a “hybrid” in-person meeting/ MS TEAMS virtual meeting on Monday, October 24, 2022 at 9:00 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	Jonathan Houck	TBD
Hinsdale County	absent	TBD
Montrose County	Justin Musser	absent
Ouray County	Ben Tisdell	absent
San Miguel County	Hilary Cooper	Starr Jamison
Environmental/Conservation	Chris Jauhola	Enno Heuscher
Environmental/Conservation	vacant	Robin Nicholoff
Forestry Processor	Tim Kylo	
Forestry Logger	absent	TBD
Community at Large		
East Zone	TBD	TBD
North Zone	Mary Chapman	TBD
West Zone	Nancy Fishing	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: Tony Edwards, Sean Ferrell, Michael Salazar, Carlyn Perovich, Kim Phillips, Regina Rone, Kate Dwire; West Region Wildfire Council: Leigh Robertson; SBEADMR Science Team and CFRI Staff: Jason Sibold, Mike Battaglio, Tony Cheng, Kevin Barrett, Jarod Dunn, and Tyler Beeton; Colorado State Forest Service: Tanya Banulis and Jodi Rist

Guests: Matt Reed, High County Conservation Advocates (Gunnison County); Oliver Wood, Wilderness Workshop (Carbondale), Cindy Dozier, interested citizen (Hinsdale County)

Approval of April 21, 2022 AMG Meeting Notes: M/S/P. Kylo/Grother. Approve notes of 4/21/2022 meeting as submitted.

Item No 1: Brief Update on Current SBEADMR Projects/Activities - Michael Salazar, GMUG Timber Program Manager and Carlyn Perovich, Forest Ecologist

Michael Salazar reported five SBEADMR sales were completed in calendar year 2022 and currently two other sales are in process. In the early years of SBEADMR timber sales focused on the “low hanging fruit” to salvage. Going forward SBEADMR timber sales will be fewer as the project layout to keep sales commercially viable is becoming more difficult because of steeper slopes, lower volume and CCFs per acre in SBEADMR Priority Treatment Areas (PTAs). During FY 24 and FY25 SBEADMR timber sales will be winding down to a couple of sales in FY24 and no new sales identified for FY25. Anticipate an increase in aspen timber sales around Paonia in the North Zone. He did note that 17,000 – 18,000 acres had been treated with commercial salvage sales under SBEADMR to date. To learn more detail about the sales, Michael referred to the out-year presentations given during the Annual

Stakeholder Meeting's breakout sessions and the Treatment Implementation Plans (TIDS) which are posted annually on the CFRI SBEADMR website and the StoryMap.

Carolyn Perovich provided a summary of current and future fuels projects under SBEADMR. Currently there are three projects for which checklists have been completed and contracts awarded: West Zone: Turkey Plot project (mastication followed by prescribed fire) in FY22; East Zone: Cold Spring project (prescribed fire for aspen regeneration) most likely in FY23; North Zone: Mesa Creek project (mechanical treatment) in spring FY22. A longer term look for each timber zone: East Zone: looking at non-commercial PTAs hoping to complete a checklist and possibly one treatment per year; West Zone: there are some potential PTAs for fuel treatment but other competing fuels projects; some PTAs in West Zone may be rolled into larger fuels projects; North Zone: beginning to look at non-commercial PTAs just north of Cedaredge, fuels manager plans to work with the Surface Creek collaborative stakeholder group to share his vision of treatment. There is plenty of fuels work under SBEADMR but anticipate a low progression of work – one or two projects per year.

Item No. 2: Debrief of 2022 Summer Pre-Treatment Field Trip – Carolyn Perovich, Forest Ecologist

Carolyn provided a brief overview of both the Aspen Muddy and the Terror Creek sites. She referred attendees to the CFRI SBEADMR website for more detailed notes of the field trip. AMG comments about the field trip were positive; very pleased with the turnout of 50 + participants. Suggestions for improvement were to be sensitive about having people stand for a long period of time in the hot sun; provide porta-potties; and provide road maps (or a pilot car) in the future to guide vehicle drivers to each site.

Item No 3: Follow up on AMG's Recommendation for Approval of CTL Technologies and Update on Telski Pilot CTL Project – Michael Salazar and Gina Rone, Forest Soil Scientist

- Follow-up on AMG's Recommendation for Approval of Cut-to-Length (CTL) Technology
In April, 2021, the AMG approved a GMUG proposed change to the design criteria in the SBEADMR checklist to provide for CTL technologies to be used on slopes greater than 40%. The AMG's recommendation for approval was subject to certain additional stipulations including that such use would be a pilot project to assess its efficiency and effectiveness in meeting project design standards since it is a relatively new technology in Colorado. Following that meeting, the GMUG issued a SBEADMR Supplemental Information Report (SIR) on CTL approving the change. *AMG member Chris Jauhola* pointed out that the original SIR did not include the AMG's recommendation for the use to be a pilot project subject to pre-and post- implementation monitoring to inform the use of such equipment for future projects. During discussion, *Renewable Resources Staff Officer Sean Ferrell* stated that it was the "intent" that the first CTL project would be such a pilot project. He acknowledged, however, that the "intent" was not documented in the SIR. He agreed the SIR should be amended to include the AMG's reference to the first SBEADMR CTL project be a pilot project with pre- and post-implementation monitoring. (*Ed Note: Since this meeting the GMUG issued an amended SIR which includes the AMG recommendation in the findings.*)
- Update of Telski Pilot CTL Project
The first SBEADMR project proposed for CTL technology is the Telski project located near Telluride. It was projected to get started in August 2022 but the use of CTL equipment has been delayed due to difficulties with the equipment. *Forest Soils Scientist Gina Rone* reported on her initial site visit to document existing conditions prior to disturbance as part of the pre-implementation monitoring. Gina will visit the site again once equipment is operational and will continue monitoring during the harvest and post-harvest. The monitoring will help determine if and where CTL is appropriate on other areas. She noted that good information on this technology will be forthcoming next spring from Chuck Rhoades based on experience with the Monarch Pass CTL project. This topic raised the following questions:
Q: Is the use of CTL on slopes greater than 40% consistent with the current Forest Plan?
A: *The Forest Plan provides for utilization of high floatation equipment on slopes up to 60%; the equipment used in CTL technology is considered "high floatation" equipment.*
Q: Was the use of CTL analyzed in the SBEADMR NEPA analysis?

A: *Appendix B of the SBEADMR FEIS provides for changes to design features through the annual Management Review process and without further scoping. The original SBEADMR NEPA allows for this change through the Management Review process.*

Q: What is protocol for determining exactly where on a specific sale the CTL can occur?

A: *It is identified through the NEPA analysis rather than by the sale (operational side). Any future proposed CTL projects/location outside of SBEADMR will be identified through a separate NEPA analysis.*

Q: When will trails that are closed during operation be open for public use?

A: *GMUG will work with Telski partners to make decision if they want to rehabilitate and bring back into active use.*

Q: When was it determined Telski was an appropriate location?

A: *The only SBEADMR locations considered to be appropriate for CTL were around the ski areas of Crested Butte and Telluride. The Telski project was introduced in the breakout sessions of the 2022 Annual Stakeholder Meeting.*

Q: What are the funding sources for the Telski project?

A: *In addition to Telski funding, the Forest Service is applying for funds from the federal "Bipartisan Infrastructure" bill that provides funding for projects that could be implemented if given a surge of funds; although PONSSE is expensive it is less expensive than the helicopter harvesting that is currently used by Telski.*

Item No 4: Follow-Up/Review AMG Annual Report/Matrix in Terms of Specific AMG Recommendations and FLT Management Decisions – Carlyn Perovich

Carlyn Perovich highlighted the Forest Leadership's Team (FLTs 's) conclusions/responses to the specific AMG recommendations for adaptations for implementation discussed at the April 2022 AMG meeting as follows:

- **AMG Recommendation:** *Provide AMG with update on where SBEADMR Potential Treatment Areas (PTAs) and Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) overlap and might provide treatment opportunities.*
Carlyn shared a preliminary spreadsheet that lists the overlapping SBEADMR PTAs and PODS, what timber zone they are in and the "strategic response zone" (Protect, Restore, Maintain and High Complexity) for each POD to help determine what fuels treatment would best meet the objective of the zone. It was requested to have the overlap map of PTAs and PODS added to the StoryMap for the Annual Stakeholder Meeting.
- **AMG Recommendation:** *Provide additional design criteria to ensure treatment impacts remain below the 15% disturbance limitations.*
Forest Soils Scientist Gina Rone responded by describing factors, e.g. roads, high water table, that could contribute to the limit being exceeded, criteria that is currently used to ensure the limit is not exceeded, and areas that will be improved to ensure future compliance with the existing design standard.
- **AMG Recommendation:** *Recommend presale analyses of Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU) to determine proximity to 30% threshold before the sale...*
Oliver Wood, Wilderness Workshop (Carbondale) asked, in the interest of transparency, if there was an opportunity for public comment on LAU's that might have the possibility of exceeding the threshold. Carlyn noted the opportunities to provide input during the Annual Stakeholder Meeting breakout sessions when out-year projects are presented and the 30- day comment period following the Annual Meeting. A suggestion was made to include the current percentage of lynx habitat in the project description as an indicator of the chance the threshold might be exceeded.
- **AMG Recommendation:** *Clarify what is/are the "legal" uses of a closed road.*
Michael Salazar shared the Forest Service Road Use Classification consisting of 5 different levels of roads. A Level 1 road is where a gate is installed to close the road from public use. Level 1 roads are for administrative use. Information on the road classification and respective attributes will be posted on the CFRI SBEADMR website.

Item No. 5: Review and Prioritize Suggestions for Improvement from the Adaptive Management Process Assessment Survey & Role of AMG Over the Next Five Years – Tyler Beeton, CFRI Science Team

Tyler Beeton introduced this discussion with a brief overview of the public participation/engagement assessment survey and process the Science Team conducted over the past year and a half. He introduced a matrix, “SBEADMR Adaptive Management Themes and Objectives”, that captured the four adaptive management themes for improvement, the steps that had been or were being taken to meet the theme objectives, and other recommendations for improvement raised during the assessment process. He asked the group to consider if there is interest in monitoring or quantifying any of the steps that have been taken to date and to be thinking ahead to the next 5-6 years in terms of out-year projects and AMG’s role. He proceeded to walk through the recommendations in each theme. Key points during discussions are noted below:

- *Theme: Increase public engagement and outreach:*
 - Make a conscious effort to re-engage Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) in SBEADMR meetings/activities. The agency would like advance notice and an opportunity to comment on sales or other Forest Service projects that will occur on lands CPW is responsible for managing the wildlife. Suggestion that District Ranger could reach out to Wildlife Officer in his/her district in advance of an upcoming project in that district.
 - Ask District Rangers to reach out to local groups/entities that would have an interest in an upcoming project in their district , e.g., recreational groups for trail closures; counties, tourism, chamber offices for road closures, etc.; at the Annual Stakeholder meeting when out-year projects are introduced, ask attendees to identify such groups or interests that should be contacted.
 - Begin tracking any special meetings, field trips or other outreach efforts by District to acknowledge the outreach/engagement efforts being made.
 - Create an index of definitions of acronyms to help communication with the public.
 - Consider adding or increasing seats on AMG to improve opportunities for collaboration and coordination, e.g., recreation, community wildfire mitigation collaboratives.
- *Theme: Shared learning, understanding and transparency*
 - Given a general misunderstanding of what is meant by “resiliency”, it is important to have a shared understanding of what resiliency means in the context of SBEADMR; have a presentation/discussion at the Annual Stakeholder meeting to clarify what treatments and why are they considered “resilient” and what are the desired future conditions. Helpful to connect the “dots” between work of the Science Team and “resiliency”.
 - Be more transparent about how science informs lynx management and mitigation, e.g., when lynx thresholds are exceeded what is the plan to mitigate that from happening in the future and how is “best available science” being used.
- *Theme: Collaboration throughout the process*
 - Provide opportunity for AMG members to attend the annual FLT meeting when it considers the AMG’s recommendations for adaptations.
- *Theme: Outputs and Outcomes*
 - Create an inventory of community wildfire collaboratives and forest health initiatives in the GMUG to understand their purpose/processes and if there are opportunities to collaborate – better communication and coordination.
 - Enhance the readiness to receive increased state and federal funding for wildfire mitigation; and increase the link to wildfire risk monitoring and decision-support tools, i.e., PODS.

Item No. 6: Updates on Other State/Local/Initiatives Addressing Protection and Wildfire Mitigation – AMG Members/Guests

- West Region Wildfire Council (WCWC): *WCWC Partnership and Collaboration Director Leigh Robertson* mentioned upcoming meetings with the Upper Gunnison Shared Stewardship Council, the San Miguel Watershed and Wildfire Mitigation Collaborative, and the Grand Mesa Watershed Resiliency Partnership. In terms of technical assistance, WCWC is helping Montrose County with its Community Wildfire and Watershed Protection Plan, writing grants for Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) for Gunnison and Ouray counties, and has submitted three Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation grants for

projects in the San Miguel basin , Delta County area and increased staffing levels. The Colorado Forest Collaborative Network has identified 120 different collaboratives in Colorado. It is trying to connect people in the various collaboratives to encourage communication and coordination. Finally, she noted most of the funding that is becoming available will be aimed toward wildland/urban interface (WUI) areas. Opportunities for SBEADMR would be projects that are located next to or near those areas.

- Colorado State Fire Commission, Ben Tisdell, Ouray County Commissioner, reported that for the past year the Commission has been working on a statewide building code to be implemented in WUI areas. The proposal will be before the State legislature in the coming year. The next topic for the Commission to tackle will be prescribed burns and questions surrounding the practice of prescribed burns.

Item No. 7: Appointment to Fill Regular and Alternate Member for the AMG Environmental/Conservation Seat – Chris Jauhola, AMG Member

Chris Jauhola, representing the caucus for the Environmental/Conservation interests, reported that Enno Heuscher has been nominated to move up from his current “alternate” position to fill the regular seat recently vacated by Lexi Tuddleman. Matt Reed, Public Lands Director, High County Conservation Advocates (Gunnison County) has been nominated to fill Enno’s alternate seat. M/S/P Jauhola/Heuscher . Accept the nominations as presented. There being no show of hands in opposition to the motion, the motion carried unanimously.

Item No. 8: Review Plan and Agenda Topics for Annual Combined SBEADMR/Taylor Park Stakeholder Meeting - Carolyn Perovich

Carolyn reported that the proposed plan for the Annual Combined SBEADMR/Taylor Park EA Stakeholder meeting is to have a one-day, “hybrid” meeting in Gunnison. The “hybrid” meeting will enable participants the option of attending the in-person meeting or join the ZOOM virtual meeting; both meetings to be hosted by Colorado Western University in Gunnison. Rather than the two half-days’ format of the last couple of years, it is proposed the more technical sessions by the Science Team be in the morning and the more general and break-out sessions for out-year treatments be in the afternoon. The meeting is typically held in February and Thursday, 2/23/2023 was the proposed date. One of the agenda topics will be on “resiliency”.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM

Notes compiled by Susan Hansen, Meeting Facilitator