

SBEADMR Pre-treatment Field Trip Notes

Muddy Aspen Timber Sale, Paonia RD 8/12/2022

SBEADMR Updates

Fuels

On the East Zone, the Coldsprings Rx fire checklist was completed early this summer and is slated to be burned this fall (up to 1500 acres aspen regeneration). This will be the first prescribed fire under SBEADMR NEPA

Timber

Moving forward, more sales may need to move to winter logging operations due to resource concerns – may see more conflicts with winter recreation. Interested in AMG thoughts on ways to deconflict this

AMG/Process updates

In May, GMUG Forest Leadership Team (FLT) reviewed and made decisions based on AMG recommendations for changes to SBEADMR. Results of that review have been shared with the AMG email list. The biggest change this year was the update of the checklist to allow for use of tethered cut-to-length equipment on slopes up to 60%; we really appreciate everyone's engagement in that process.

Muddy Aspen Stop

Area History and Overview – Levi Broyles

- In 1905 the Battlement, Grand Mesa, and Gunnison National Forests were designated.
- Much of the Grand Mesa burned in 1879 (big fire year in general)
- The corridor that we will travel today (265 and Stevens Gulch Rd) is one of the main areas of timber management focus on the Paonia RD.

Forest Health Update – Brad Lalande

- Most pathogens that occur on the GMUG NF are native; in many stands we see “normal” background mortality of up to 5%. Additionally, many insect populations, especially defoliators and bark beetles (mountain pine beetle, spruce beetle, and roundheaded pine beetle) have periodic outbreaks where they cause higher levels of mortality.
- Recent high wind events demonstrated the extent of root disease (specifically Armillaria root disease); these diseases are ubiquitous in most forests but become evident when we see it on the root ball of a down tree.
- Recent spring/summer moisture in 2021 and 2022 exacerbated needle casts in Gunnison area/SW Colorado forests, as foliar pathogens thrive following wet years.
- Western spruce budworm has been chronic in Colorado for the last ~20 years. This is concerning because it is normally cyclical (7-8 years on, 20-30 years off). WSB doesn't usually kill trees, but it can; makes trees susceptible to other diseases.
- Not yet sure of the effects of the big 2019 avalanche cycle on spruce beetle; beetle populations spurred by those down trees would have flown in 2021, and new areas of SB mortality will show up on this summer's (2022) Aerial Detection Survey flights.
- White pine blister rust (non-native) is now known to occur on the San Juan NF; not yet found on the GMUG but it's only a matter of time.

Sudden Aspen Decline (SAD) – Brad Lalande

- Sudden aspen declines (SAD) is described as landscape level rapid branch dieback, thinning, and mortality of aspen.
- The 2004 rapid mortality in Colorado's aspen forests was preceded by an extreme drought event in 2002. Initial research suggested that the rapid mortality was attributed to a complex of secondary agents including Cytospora canker, aspen bark beetles, poplar borer, and bronze poplar borer (Worrall et al., 2008; Marchetti et al., 2011). These agents in combination with predisposing (stand maturity, low density, southern aspects and low elevations) and inciting (drought in conjunction with high temperatures, i.e., 2002 conditions) factors have resulted in widespread aspen mortality that is referenced as sudden aspen decline (Worrall et al., 2008; Worrall et al., 2010).
- Forest Health Protection (FHP) established SAD monitoring plots in the early 2000s, and revisited many on the San Juan NF and the GMUG this summer. Overall, SAD affected aspen stands are showing good aspen regeneration, though lower elevation aspen stands on south or southwestern aspects may fully convert to shrubland as a result of SAD mortality.

Muddy Aspen Treatment Objectives, Prescriptions, and Design Features - Christie LaDue & Valerie Horncastle

- 176 acres to be treated with coppice cuts
- Leave 10-20 tons/acre of slash
- Objective is to remove some older aspen to spur regeneration; develop mosaic of age & size classes
- Treatment sizes will be at least 30 acres to overwhelm ungulates
- Reserve islands for redbtail hawk; purple marten colonies in/near the project area have been mapped
- Timber projects buffer riparian, wetland, and fen areas
- Situate skid trails and landings to minimize impact to regeneration

Terror Creek Stop & Science Team Updates

Jason Sibold

- Since the February meeting, we've done some updates on the landscape-scale dense horizontal cover model for the GMUG, and it is ready to use.
- This model is useful as a hypothesis and guide, but not the end-all answer to lynx habitat.
- Will be helpful to compare results of this model with Squires & Ivan approach; they are coming at this question from a different angle.

Mike Battaglia & Kevin Barrett

- Terror Creek Applied Silvicultural Assessment was designed to look at the impacts of coppice cuts on aspen stands with different levels of SAD impact. Study design and initial sampling led by Dr. Wayne Shepperd (now retired from RMRS) in partnership with Paonia RD.
- CFRI crew (under Kevin's leadership) resampled these plots this past summer – results will be ready to share at February 2023 SBEADMR meeting.
- Initial observations show that treated plots show greater stems/ac than control plots; control plots have more of a groupy/clumpy pattern of aspen regeneration

- Some newer papers coming out looking at genetic diversity in aspen (both genotypic and cytotypic/ploidy) and potential implications for aspen management and adaptation to climate change; consider seed sources in aspen management (leave patches for raptors may cover this in some cases)

Jarod Dunn

- Beginning work on a case study on SBEADMR & the AMG. More info to come on that.

Attendee List

Name	Affiliation/Interest	Position
Forest Service Staff		
Levi Broyles	Paonia Ranger District	District Ranger
Valerie Horncastle	Paonia Ranger District	Wildlife Biologist
Brad Lelande	Forest Health Protection	Forest Pathologist
Amy Lockner	Forest Health Protection	Forest Entomologist
Christie LaDue	West Zone Timber	Forester
Carlyn Perovich	GMUG SO	Forest Ecologist
Gina Rone	GMUG SO	Soil Scientist
Lauren Traylor	GMUG SO	Watershed Technician
Adrianna Weickhart	GMUG SO	Renewal Resource Staff Off
Sean Ferrell	GMUG SO	Renewable Resources Staff Officer
Matthew Vasquez	GMUG SO	Wildlife Program Manager
Bryan Gaines	GMUG SO	Deputy Fire Staff Officer
Kate Vassal	Paonia Ranger District	Rangeland Mgmt Specialist
Lacie Allen	Paonia Ranger Distrct	Rangeland Intern
Tony Edwards	GMUG SO	Deputy Forest Supervisor
Josh Schutz	Ouray Ranger District	Timber Crew Lead
Casey	Ouray Ranger District	Timber Crew
SBEADMR Science Team		
Mike Battaglia	Rocky Mt Research Station	Research Forester
George Woolsey	CO Forest Restitution Inst.	CSU Student/GMUG intern
Jason Sibold	Colorado State University	Associate Professor/Geography
Brynn Colby	Colorado State University	Student
Kevin Barrett	CO Forest Restitution Inst.	Forest Inventory Program Specialist
Jarod Dunn	CO Forest Restitution Inst.	Research Associate
Other Attendees		
Craig Grother	Wildife/Fisheries	AMG Member
Chris Jauhola	Environmental/Conserva	AMG Member/Monitor Com
Robin Nicholoff	Environmental/Conserva	AMG Member
Justin Musser	Montrose County	AMG Member
Molly Pitts	Intermtn Forest Assn	AMG Member/Monitor Com
Tim Kylo	Montrose Forest Products	AMG Member
Enno Heuscher	Environmental/Conservation	AMG Member
Hilary Cooper	San Miguel County Commissioner	AMG Member/Monitor Com
Cindy Dozier	Hinsdale County	Interested Citizen
Josh Hansen	Montrose Forest Products	Forester
Joe Lovarini	Nat'l Forest Foundation	Stewardship Coord/Gunnison Cty
Mason Osgood	Sheep Mountain Alliance	Director
Peter Hart	Wilderness Wkshp/Carbondale	Attorney
Chris Cox	Crawford Landowner	Interested citizen
Eli Smith	High County Conservation Advocates	Stewardship Director

Dave Sitton	Aspen Wall Wood - Dolores	Owner/Operator
Peter Morin	CO State Forest Service	Forester
Dylan Elmerly	CO State Forest Service	Forester
Kamie Long	CO State Forest Service	Forester
Trevor Lawrence	CO State Forest Service	Intern
Jodi Rist	CO State Forest Service	Supervisory Forester
Jeff Rainey	CO State Forest Service	Forester
Tanya Banulis	CO State Forest Service	Forester
Sam Pankratz	CO State Forest Service	Forest Program Specialist
Ben Katz	West Slope Conservation Ct	Public Lands Program Director
Alison Elliot	West Slope Conservation Ct	WSCC Public Lands Comm
David Shishim	West Slope Conservation Ct	WSCC Public Lands Comm
Russ Zuck	West Slope Conservation Ct	WSCC Public Lands Comm
Melisa Flower	West Slope Conservation Ct	WSCC Public Lands Comm
Susan Hansen	SBEADMR Project	Meeting Facilitator