

SBEADMR AMG Meeting Summary

Date: December 12, 2025

Primary Focus: Reflection on the 2025 summer field trip and planning priorities for field trips, monitoring, and learning in 2026

1. Purpose of the Discussion

The meeting centered on:

- Reflecting on what was learned from the **summer 2025 field trip** (Crane Timber Sale on the Grand Mesa).
- Evaluating whether the field trip met AMG and Forest Service learning needs.
- Identifying **future field trip themes and formats** that better support adaptive management and decision-making.

Overall, participants agreed the conversation itself was valuable and should inform both **winter presentations** and **summer field trip planning**.

2. Reflections on the 2025 Summer Field Trip (Crane Timber Sale)

General feedback

- The trip was viewed as a **useful post-treatment experience**, allowing participants to see outcomes 2–3 years after implementation.
- Attendees felt treatments generally looked **thoughtful and well-executed**, particularly road mitigation and overall site condition.
- Differences between the **Grand Mesa** and other districts (e.g., Gunnison) were noted as important context for interpreting treatment effectiveness.

Key learning points

- Seeing post-treatment sites helped participants better understand how prescriptions translate on the ground.
- Roads, access control, and site rehabilitation were recurring points of interest.
- Aspen/spruce-fir management and wet or marshy areas prompted discussion about site-specific decision-making.

3. Identified Gaps & Follow-Up Issues

Feedback loop concerns

- Several participants noted that while AMG feedback was documented and sent to the Forest Service, **explicit feedback back to AMG** on how comments influenced decisions was limited.
- Desire for clearer closure: *What changed (or didn't) because of AMG input?*

Specific technical topics needing clarity

- **Planting prescriptions:**
 - Concern that fixed spacing requirements may limit planters' ability to use microhabitats (logs, shelter, cattle avoidance).
 - Forest Service staff clarified that prescriptions are intended to allow flexibility, but this may not be clearly communicated in contracts.
- **Access / road closures:**
 - Questions about how road blockages function for different users (e.g., ATV access).

4. Public Information & Data Access

- Participants flagged that **ArcGIS Online viewers and story maps** appeared to be broken or taken down.
- Forest Service staff acknowledged ongoing website and platform transition issues.
- CFRI website remains live but **out-of-date**, partially due to staffing transitions.
- New staff are stepping in to update public-facing content, and follow-up was committed.

5. Field Trip Strategy Going Forward (Key Discussion Topic)

General agreement

- Field trips remain valuable, but attendance is declining.

- The group questioned how field trips can best support:
 - AMG decision-making
 - Public transparency
 - Learning across the Forest Service, science teams, and stakeholders

Pre-treatment vs. post-treatment

- Default approach has been to **alternate pre- and post-treatment trips**.
 - Many participants expressed **less concern about strict alternation** and more interest in visiting sites that answer meaningful management questions.
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6. Strong Interest Areas for 2026 Field Trips

Participants proposed several high-value themes:

- 1. Long-term post-treatment sites (8–10+ years out)**
 - Especially planted or salvaged sites approaching project maturity.
 - Interest in simply asking: *Does this look like a functioning forest again?*
- 2. Comparative treatments**
 - Different silvicultural approaches side-by-side (e.g., Bald Mountain treatments).
 - Sites where design features were changed based on AMG feedback.
- 3. Intermediate & non-commercial treatments**
 - Pre-commercial thinning, fuels treatments, and fire-risk reduction work.
 - Recognition that resilience outcomes depend on more than just timber harvests.
- 4. Habitat-focused sites**
 - Areas where dense horizontal cover, wildlife habitat, or design-feature tradeoffs were a concern.
- 5. Salvage vs. unsalvaged comparisons**

- Acknowledged as less directly relevant to current SPEED/SBEADMR decisions, but still valuable for long-term understanding.
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7. Science, Monitoring & Visualization

Existing assets

- The science team maintains ~70 “intensive plots” with:
 - Pre-treatment photos
 - Immediate post-treatment photos
 - Follow-up photos (some as recent as 2023)

Suggested improvements

- Use **photographic time series** more deliberately in meetings.
- Employ **drone imagery** to provide landscape-scale context alongside plot data.
- Recognize that visuals often complement (or outperform) graphs for shared understanding.

Participants emphasized that much of this material could be:

- Presented at the **winter AMG meeting**
 - Used to inform **summer field trip site selection**
 - Shared more broadly beyond AMG if packaged well
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8. Key Takeaways

- The field trip program should prioritize **learning value over tradition**.
- Longer-term outcomes, intermediate treatments, and design-feature effectiveness are high priorities.
- Better closure on AMG feedback and stronger use of visuals would improve trust and learning.
- Strong opportunity exists to more tightly link **winter science presentations, summer field trips, and adaptive management decisions**.

9. Implied Next Steps

- Coordinate between AMG leadership and the science team ahead of the winter meeting.
- Identify candidate sites with existing long-term monitoring data.
- Improve public-facing data access and website clarity.
- Use winter discussions to intentionally shape the 2026 summer field trip agenda.