



LEFTHAND WATERSHED
oversight group

Board Meeting Minutes 6/19/2018

Attendees

Chris Smith (with proxy for Kathy Peterson)
Sean Cronin
Ken Lenacic
Monica Bortolini
Julie McKay
Sue Schaffler
Jessie Olson
Maya (4 mile)
Mark Schueneman
Jim Bryant
Julie Trumpler (LHWD board)
Daniel Bowker (forester for the Longmont and Boulder Valley Conservation Districts)
Rick Kauvar
Gabe Tuerk
Meg Parker

Welcome and Introductions

Chris S called the meeting to order at 2:05, and led a round of introductions.

Public comments on items not on the agenda

None

Presentation of NRCS EQIP cost share program for forest stand improvement - Daniel Bowker

Front range CO concerns, wildfires. We are in a bad fire season. It's felt like 2012. Dan was brought on board to get a fire program with the NRCS. Cost share programs with the county. Forest fire mitigation projects, center pivots, etc. he has a year to make the case to Boulder County to get them to move from small landowner projects to a larger scale more landscape scale treatments. Identify neighborhood associations, and larger groups to do projects. With that you get into economies of scale. Showed photos from NPR piece. A lot of research post European settlement – results of frequent low intensity fire (every 5-10 years).



Sue question – how much of the stuff was cut down from Europeans versus through fire suppression. The same conditions were open during the time of exploration. Open stand condition. Ponderosa pines with fire scars on multiple occasions of low intensity fire. Low intensity if there are more open (with open stand). Increase density of pines, increase the possibility of ground fires not low intensity fires. Photos from general technical report from Rocky Mountain Research Station. Generally, the past was a lot more open than it is today. Sean asked about pilot programs happening in Arkansas – USFS advocating better management of fires. Question, Is the USFS moving back to management? Yes, there is a lot of new techniques, we're moving away from Smokey the bear fire suppression. Not doing those block clear cuts like they used to do. Bring us back to a state where could have a low intensity fire move through.

Too dense forest – mountain pine beetle. Forests that are too dense and too thick are breeding grounds for insects and fire. Fourmile fire was 6,000 acres but if we saw an 80,000 acre fire it would be devastating. Several years of below normal precipitation was can't expect fewer fires. What we would like to do, not enable the crown fire. 13 acres after Hayman fire it is still very devastated.

Gabe question - At what scale is the management recommended? Does it have to be forest level management plan or can it be more like adopt a trail? "Random acts of conservation work" but we need more of a directed effort. 3-5 mile gap between the urban/forest interface is desired, we are looking for that interface. Wildfire Partners in Boulder County does good things for saving homes but not the landscape. It needs to be on a landscape scale.

Challenge in Boulder County – because land ownership is all over the place. Larger ownerships are in tiny pieces. NRCS conservation districts have had a challenge because you need to work across borders. They are looking for landowner groups, watershed groups where they can treat landscape size treatments.

Jim – when you say landscape scale, what do you mean? Hundreds of acres at a time, thousands are better. If we could write a management plan for a whole community under one contractor, it would be better.

Sean - Is there a market for the product? Pines here don't pay its way out of the woods. This is a main challenge. Morgan timber in Ft. Collins – when they can get larger products they can find ways to market poles and posts and chips. In Colorado we important 90% of our wood products. We need to find ways to utilize this stuff, and we can with economies of our scale. NRCS and the conservation districts (he works for the CD but they work with NRCS) – right now they have 163 acres (12 contracts), hoping to have more contracts in the Zones of Concerns. They need more contracts. If they are doing forest management, they are paying the full cost. There is a huge need for larger products to treat the resource concern. There is a potential for outside grant funding, they can match EQIP funds.



Jessie – the contacts are directly with the landowner groups? In BOCO landowners sign the contact with EQIP and the landowners agree to do the work. The contract they are signing is for reimbursement of the cost.

Rick- do the insurance companies incentivize this? Yes, they do certain risk ratings.

Dan went over how the EQIP Process works. Reiterated that no landowners are going to make money off this program. Dan went over what forest treatment looks like.

EQIP is all private landowners. Treatment maintenance needs to happen every 10-15 years whether mechanically or with prescribed burns

Approval of Minutes

Ken moved, Monica seconded, to approve the minutes from the May meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Monthly Financial Report

Jessie reported that notable revenue source was from the Gates Family Foundation \$42,500. They've paid for everything in advance of the work.

3 reaches- we are submitting an invoice currently. Same for 63rd Street, we're well into the construction phase. Capacity grant – we are waiting on reimbursement. Grant closes out at the end of this month. Stewardship Grant – handbook and citizen science phase 2 is wrapping up, we have the extension through March to match the Gates Family Foundation grant for tools and website. CWCB – fundraising portion of our salary, we have been up to date. We got revenue from SVLHWD and LHDC. And BOCO is working on getting us money. Monitoring and Stewardship have a balance of \$52,000. Sean asked on the CWCB (page 22) that's the 10% for fundraising, how well has that worked? Jessie said it's been excellent. Is 10% enough? No but it is adequate. Motion to accept May financials. Sue moved, Monica seconded, to accept the financial reports. Motion carried unanimously.

Fourmile/Lefthand Partnership Discussion

Jessie wants to check in about Maya and her discussion about what a partnership would look like. We have a need to build and grow our watershed science program and could offer services on a fee-for-service basis and/or work across watersheds. We need to see if the tools we are developing are transferable. Maya has amazing outreach and education skills; she has built a volunteer program. We could have a single watershed educator across watersheds to share expertise and costs. Operating costs are also pretty significant – Audit, bookkeeper, etc. to be able to share those operational costs would be significant. She discussed four potential ways to share expertise across the watersheds.

Chris – Fourmile might not exist post March 2019 because of DOLA contracting. Fourmile is looking to expand to Boulder Creek because they are too small currently. There is energy and



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momentum in the Boulder Creek Watershed. Some of Boulder Creek is in the Urban Drainage. We don't want the presence of Left Hand to be diluted but Chris is on board.

Gabe – would be interesting to see restoration needs in Boulder Creek because it would be different than Left Hand. He doesn't want to impact the fishery. We don't know what has happened in Boulder Creek. We need to reach out to all the stakeholders and see what they want.

Sue thinks it's a good idea to continue with the discussion. Explore what the options are. Not sure what the end result will be and whether it will ultimately make sense for Fourmile to join LWOG or for LWOG to join a new Boulder Creek watershed group.

Jessie says we shouldn't worry about an organizational name change at this stage, this is a pilot.

Monica – for grant writing is it doable to share? Yes, applying for grants together saying we are already partners will be more powerful.

Sean – all for growing LWOG. Cautioned that there is an extra energy of politics around Boulder Creek. There could be greater connection for St. Vrain Creek and should be considered. The Boulder Creek politics might be too much? Denver Water would be part of the equation.

Ken- what is in it for Fourmile? Maya – we've maxed out stream restoration. It isn't fiscally sustainable as an organization. It would take all the education and skills as a staff they would still be able to offer that to their neighbors. She wants to monitor the projects completed. It would be beneficial to the greater watershed.

Monica mentioned partnering with St. Vrain may be a better option than Boulder from the City of Longmont's perspective.

Chris, we need to look at where we can do the greatest good. We can't accomplish things that would benefit the whole area, once the grants are gone, the money is gone.

The board suggested to come back with more details on the pilot, while also looking for opportunities for partnership at the St. Vrain too, and then come back to the board.

DOLA close out and Policy discussion

Jessie has been working with lawyer to bring memos to file regarding sam.gov checks and contracts for professional services using our Capacity grant funding. One change to our policy – when a formal contract is required for professional services. Anything that is an ongoing service needs a contract. The board discussed the two options provided by the lawyer. Consistency versus flexibility. The board voted to approve the second option – Services greater than \$1,000 and those that continue longer than a month would require a contract. Ken moved. Mark seconded. Unanimously approved.

EWP/DOLA Stewardship/Adaptive Management Update

Weed control is taking place at some of our project sites this summer. The cost is under \$15,000 threshold and we got cost estimates from multiple sources. We are going to work with AloTerra. Starting up some site monitoring once we finalize our protocols.



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Legacy Project Update

Pre-bid meeting today and proposals are due July 10.

Fundraising Update

We heard back from the South Platte Basin Roundtable the committee is recommending funding and they have asked us to revise that to be a \$25,000 request and then request \$25,000 from the state. SVLHWCD voted to contribute \$5,000 to the fish passage study.

Stream Management Plan

2 proposals to be interviewed. LWOG doesn't know if we are on all four proposals.

Adjournment

The regular meeting was adjourned at 4:37 pm.