

Meeting Notes

St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership
10:00-12:00 pm, November 6th, 2020
Zoom Meeting

Update on Calwood/Lefthand Fire Recovery

Boulder County/USFS

10:00 AM

- Stefan and David, Boulder County Update on Fire Recovery
 - County decided to be local sponsor for EWP
 - Working with NRCS to determine how to move forwards
 - Burn severity map is ready but not shared yet
 - Will be lead sponsor on stabilization efforts that entail non-USFS lands
 - Next step with NRCS is damage survey to address critical threats to values
 - Jessie added info about phases of recovery, noting that NRCS EWP addresses short term recovery needs, and after that we will need to address longer-term recovery needs as a partnership with additional funding sources.
 - David explained that bulk of the EWP money gets spent on mulching. Could also be used for seeding or other erosion control measures.
 - Jessie added that burn area impact includes Geer Creek sub-watershed (flows into Left Hand) and Central Gulch sub-watershed (flows into the South St. Vrain)
 - David Batts asked if the County could elaborate on how fire treatments influenced fire behavior. Stefan responded that treatments changed fire behavior but didn't necessarily stop it. Did see some survival around treatment areas. More research is needed but there's some promise of more tree survival in treatment areas. Natalie asked for lessons learned for landowner engagement tools. Stefan said definitely. Jim added that there are lots of questions from homeowners about mitigation from communities around Heil.
 - Angie noted that USFS is working with County and others across boundaries on recovery.
 - Jessie concluded that there will be future updates, there's a recovery subgroup, and feel free to reach out for information. Also, a data team will start additional separate meetings and there's more to come on that as well.

Review Partnership Plan & Approach

Jessie Olson

10:20 AM

- Jessie provided history about county-wide MOU and showed map of general St. Vrain Watershed focus area for the partnership (see slide)
- Jessie described 2020 activities, vision/mission meeting in Feb, and steering committee that developed partnership plan. Described partnership structure and approach (see slides).
- Jessie reviewed tasks outlines in the partnership plan and reviewed status. Next step is defining the desired future conditions statement but projects may be on-going.

- Sally asked if project implementation include post-fire treatments. Angie and Jessie agreed that yes this will be included and will make it more transparent in description.

Review of Existing Plans and Resources in Planning Area

Chad Julian

10:40 AM

- Chad provided overview of plans, resources, studies, and analysis that have occurred in the St. Vrain Watershed. Wants to ensure that everything is included. Started master list that will be shared and should be filled out by partners. Noted that we need to find a way to build on existing post-fire plans. Noted needs as identifying landscape boundaries and obtaining additional social/cultural info to inform desired future conditions.
- Jessie noted that next step is to update the word document that Chad put together with links to materials and ask all to review it.
- Steve P. (Lyons FD) asked where in the process do we talk about mitigation efforts? Chad responded that this would be part of desired conditions discussions.

Introduction- Discussion on Desired Conditions

Chad Julian & Jessie Olson

11:10 AM

- Jessie started discussion with a question: What do you need from this group to achieve your goals related to desired future conditions?
 - Chad (Boulder Longmont Conservation District) discussed using the past to inform the future. Showed existing examples and resources (see slides).
 - Stefan (Boulder County) emphasized importance of planning but also doing on the ground work now and across jurisdictions.
 - Ken (City of Longmont) echoed scale and urgency in North St. Vrain, and importance of protecting against cross watershed fires and ridgeline protections.
 - Jessie (Watershed Center) noted that jurisdictional, community, or watershed fire breaks are of interest to others and can be a topic of discussion for a future meeting.
 - Sally (Allenspark Resident) emphasized that community support is critical and has seen it working well in Bend area. Emphasized importance of reaching landowners early and often. Suggested sharing information/press in appropriate venues (e.g. articles in Allen's paper newspaper) to reach as many landowners as possible.
 - Jonas (NRCS) emphasized that importance of a shared understanding between current and desired conditions – being very specific and articulate. Once we know that, managers can have some flexibility with management.
 - Yana (Watershed Center) provided overview on outreach tools and adaptive management tools that Watershed Center is using and would be helpful to have for this effort.
 - Ben Pfohl (Colorado State FS) emphasized importance of identifying specific goals related to desired future conditions.
 - Tony (CFR) noted importance of defining clearly what we expect treatments to do in terms of defining goals and where. Also noted that there are many unknowns in terms of treatments and their other impacts on holistic watershed health.
- Jessie asked for community feedback.
 - Steve P. (Lyons FD) noted idea of using fire breaks to separate specific areas.

- Angie B. (Cal-Wood) noted that funding and cost per acre must be considered in the desired future conditions.
- Bill E. (Raymond-Riverside Resident) noted this is a good time to reach out to private property owners and he overall likes what he hears, expressed concern about fuel breaks.
- Seth S. (Jamestown Rep) called attention to two drainages that community lost access to after the flood and noted that he wants to offer support and help. Can also connect this to effort to the mountain recreation community including ultra-runners and mountain bikers.

Next Steps & December Meeting

Jessie Olson

11:55 AM

- Jessie noted that next meeting will be desired conditions workshop rather than field meeting.
- Chad added concluded thoughts related to considering timing, wind, and scale.

Adjourn

12:00 PM