



Board Minutes – October 20, 2020

Attendees

1. Chris Smith (with proxy for Sue Schauffler)
2. Monica Bortolini
3. Jessie Olson
4. Kathy Peterson
5. Barbara Luneau
6. Mark Schueneman
7. Chuck Oppermann
8. Jeff Sickles
9. Lauren Duncan
10. Audrey Butler
11. Gabe Tuerk
12. Sean Cronin (joined at 3:10)

Welcome and Introductions

- Chris S called the meeting to order at 3:05 and introduced Jeff Sickles as TA from EWP Recovery Team.

Fire and Drought (Recovery and Response)

- Jessie opened up discussion about Left Hand Watershed Center's role in recovery and response, noted that we've been getting out info via Facebook, and that we are continuing to collect water quality data at all of our long-term monitoring sites (will access sites in evacuation zones once evacuation orders are lifted).
- Chris S commented that fire retardant shouldn't have impact to drinking water.
- Chris S commented that we need to get out there when there's a rain event.
- Jessie added that we are reaching out to other groups (e.g. CFRI, Poudre) for recommendations and are also learning about other responses, including the BAER team.
- Chuck asked Chris S for summary of what he observed on-site at the fire. Chris S described that he saw houses lost and noted that many of the homeowners are not planning to re-build. Added that Allen's Lake was completely spared and that they had their own insurance-sponsored fire-fighting team. Haldi lost power as a precaution but got power back today.
- Jessie commented that "Rocky Mountain Team Black" is not expecting a huge increase in the fires. And the Left Hand Canyon fire is contained at the road.
- Jessie commented that we plan to help coordination and response through out St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership and will shift the focus of our upcoming Nov 6 meeting to recovery.

- Jessie commented we also need to discuss fundraising approach to support watershed health monitoring and recovery work, and asked for feedback.
 - Kathy said that she likes the plan of staying in our lane but using existing partnerships to help coordinate, including pursuing fundraising.
 - Chris S said that we should first develop a plan or framework of what the fundraising needs are. Then asked who did the buyout programs from the flood? Audrey responded that it usually starts in Land Use and also goes through Parks and Open Space. Chris S asked what federal dollars ran the buyout program? Audrey said BOCO could help sort that out. Sean added that FEMA doesn't work with the private individual on the buyout. Kathy added that it's a huge process of funneling FEMA money through the state and then through local government.
 - Chris S asked what kind of public assistance would be available. Jeff responded that he wasn't sure if buyout program would include fire, usually focuses on flooding.
 - Jeff introduced himself – contractor for CWCB that leads technical team that supports fire and flood recovery. Technical team includes 15 subconsultants that offer variety of expertise to support fire recovery. They are also working with Poudre. Jeff asked who would lead recovery effort. Sean said that we don't know but discussions are currently in progress.
 - Jeff commented that he has been working on the Spring Creek fire and note that a key lesson learned is that stakeholders need to get together early, work together, and leverage funds for cross-jurisdictional efforts.
 - Jeff added that completing modeling and evaluations quickly and upfront is important.
 - Jeff also added that stakeholders should should prioritize problems and hazards at risk through a watershed recovery plan post-fire. Also, early action get data collected is important.
- Jessie said that's based on Jeff's response a key takeaway is the we need to plan for long term recovery and we don't currently have funding for that. Asked for Board's feedback.
 - Sean suggested reaching out to Community Foundation to consider us for long term fundraising.
 - Gabe suggested categorizing fundraising between individual vs public assistance.
 - Chris S emphasized importance of having a set plan, role, and goals. Noted that Watershed Center has strengths in being able to tie together the entire watershed across jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Monica emphasized the importance of getting organized first and suggested leveraging St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership.
 - Jessie agreed that this is a good place to start coordination. Sean agreed that this approach makes sense. Sean also suggested that additional representatives might need to be added since focus is shifting on recovery rather than long-term planning. Chris S emphasized the importance of continuing both recovery and long-term planning efforts, noting that it's important not to lose the long-term planning component. Jessie said there's also discussion worth having about how the Partnership's vision of desired conditions and effectiveness of thinning treatments may have changed given what we saw with this fire.

- Sean added this it's helpful to have different people thinking about emergency response, short term planning, and long-term planning to make sure that we are resilient as community. Discussion ensued about how accomplish this.
- Kathy emphasized the importance of checking back in with our mission.
- Monica asked for clarification about how soon the Watershed Center would get involved post-emergency response and Jessie indicated that we are involved as a lead coordinating entity though the St. Vrain Partnership.
- Lauren offered to help with monitoring via Tu volunteers.

Preble's Site Conservation Team

- Jessie gave update on Preble's Mouse Planning Process and noted concerns related outreach approach and lack of funding. Asked for feedback on what role Watershed Center should have in this planning process.
- Board members discussed and agreed that Watershed Center should participate by having a seat at the table to stay up to date on what's going on.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.