

Notes

St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership
1:00-2:30 pm, March 10, 2022
Zoom Meeting

- Angela Gee, USFS
- Jessie Olson, Watershed Center
- Jonathan Markovich, USFS
- Erin Fried, The Boulder Watershed Collective
- Mac Kobza, BCPOS (for Susan Spaulding)
- Jonas Feinstein - NRCS West Region
- Nick Stremel, Stefan Reinold, and Shane Milne from Boulder County
- Katie Fialko, USFS
- Kimberly Mihelich, Northern Water
- Chad Buser, USFS
- Chris O'Brien Lefthand FPD
- Susan Stewart, Community Conversations
- Barbara Luneau, St. Vrain Trout Unlimited Chapter
- Maria Pezza, Watershed Center
- Bill Ellis, Raymond resident and property owner
- Scott Golden, BCPOS
- Kevin Zimlinghaus, USFS
- Ethan Chutkow, landowner/area captain, Conifer Hill Rd
- Pam Sherman, IMA
- Ben Pfohl, Colorado State Forest Service
- Ken Huson, Longmont
- Sean Cronin, SVLHWCD
- Paul Orbuch, Boulder County Fireshed, USFS Contractor
- Tucker Bowman, USFS
- Ken Lenarcic, Town of Jamestown
- Angie Busby, Cal-Wood
- Monica Bortolini, City of Longmont
- Doug Watry Rocky Mt. National Park
- Denise Lord, EVRJP/Community Conversations
- Sue Schauffler, Watershed Center and LHFPD
- Reid Armstrong - Public Affairs, Arapaho and Roosevelt NF
- Vanessa McCracken, Boulder Valley and Longmont Conservation Districts
- Matt Bitters, Watershed Center
- Frank Falzone, NRCS
- Chief Zick-Lyons Fire
- Tim Griffin SZ FMO USFS
- Seth McKinney, FMO Boulder County Sheriff's Office

- Kristen Westhoff TOL Wildfire Task force
- Mike Cousineau Allenspark Fire
- Gary Maguire Allenspark Fire
- Matt Jones, Boulder County

SVFHP Update (see slides)

- Partnership distributed mailer, Story Map for information and commenting, Social Media tools available for partners to use, Upcoming webinar will go over the scoping process, consider op-ed. All should be considering other ways we can provide updates and who to engage.
- Chief Zick asked about tables and AV for the meeting on the 5th. Chiara will check in about details and expects 35 attendees.
- Stefan noted that the burn window for the Nelson Loop prescribed fire is open and target is 400 acres. Still looking at Hall and developing MOU with City of Longmont.
- Chiara introduced Maria, new staff at the Watershed Center.
- Ben P. provided update on finishing up management plans on 500 acres around Glacier View and Riverside area. Putting in additional application for 50 acres next to Raymond.
- Angie added that it would be great to add ongoing partner work into the story map. Chiara will add Jamestown and Button Rock projects to this.

USFS St. Vrain Forest Health Project NEPA presentation

- Jonathan shared presentation (see slides)
 - Introduced common terms. Highlighted term “conditions-based management” and showed how a conditions-based management project is different from the usual NEPA process. Noted that understanding this term is important because it is what is in this NEPA includes. See slides for definitions.
 - Shared NEPA process flow chart which described how NEPA determines categorical exclusions.
 - Described St. Vrain Expected NEPA process. Expect final decision on the St. Vrain NEPA in summer/early 2023.
 - Angie noted that someone cannot come in at the end of the process to object. In order to object there must be participation at previous formal comment periods, so it is important to engage early in the process. People who support the project should engage early in the process too to share their comments.
 - Described elements of the proposed action (see slides for list of components).
 - Described project background with map which 65% of land within the Partnership boundary.
 - Described why conditions-based management approach was selected and what the benefits are. Implementation guide will help describe how projects will be developed and implemented on the ground. Noted this is a newer term but it is not the first use of this term. Three regional National Forests have successfully used at multiple levels of NEPA.
 - Described how work of the SVFHP is included in the NEPA. Noted that the Science Team has provided helpful feedback that is being analyzed, addressed, and discussed. Will meet again with the science team in April to discuss how

comments were incorporated. Showed examples of how community values and desired conditions from SVFHP were used to inform the project purpose and need. Document was formatted to have concise purpose and need statements supported by rationale. See slides for examples. Noted any treatment would have to follow design treatment from the appendix.

- Provided example of how management action could happen and how condition-based management guide would be used. Noted that appendix on biophysical gradients and zones will be a reference during implementation.
 - Described five-step cyclic process. See slides for details about five steps.
 - Partnership or NGO may be asked to help and/or develop management action proposals. Does not necessarily need to be the USFS. Also noted that USFS envisions many partnership opportunities for monitoring.
 - Shared Public Information Materials that are available now and coming soon.
- Jonathan responded to questions.
 - Sean asked when the conditions-based process comes into play – it is specific to maintenance? Jonathan responded that it could come into play at various stages from planning to monitoring. This is the benefit of conditions-based management: it buys us flexibility to adjust at the implementation phase as opposed to the usual process.
 - Jonas noted the importance of calling things what they should be called for the sake of consistency. Wanted to make sure we are consistent in terminology as it related to silvicultural practices. Science team should make a glossary of terms. Jonas added question about FACA and Jonathan responded that this project does not meet the three criteria which would require FACA.
 - Sean asked for clarification about when work will happen after the decision. Angie noted that the limitation is when the final decision actually happens relative to the field season – e.g. could start work if decision is in July but not if decision is in November. Sean also asked about Joint Chief’s Funding. Angie noted that they did not get Joint Chief’s Funding this year, but she expects that the funding will be there. She is less concerned about the funding piece and expects it to fall into place. Sean asked about funding distribution across a larger landscape – e.g. the west. Angie noted that generally we are in a good position. Sally noted top 3-4 areas may be funded with the infrastructure bill and this area aligns with those priorities.
 - Angie noted that it’s critical that the Partnership is supportive of the project and providing feedback so they can continue to incorporate it.
 - Sally noted that we need to be careful about falling back on old terminology that may be misleading to the public and that may not be relevant in a restoration world. Chiara noted that this is a great next task to bring to the science team.
 - Chiara asked for clarification on USFS monitoring plans. Jonathan noted watershed disturbance tracking tool. Angie noted that there will be times during the process that we determine what we monitor and why, notable to mitigate adverse impacts. But also an opportunity for the partnership to monitor related to DFCs.
 - Susan Stewart asked what kind of power do community members actually have to influence choices about where to work and what treatments will be used. Jonathan answered that a proposal with a lot of support would proceed and a proposal with opposition would be carefully considered. Angie added that intent is to work collaboratively with community to define the treatment. There’s a formal process through NEPA but the bulk of the collaboration will be working with community members through the partnership. Chief Zick reiterated the importance of involving the

whole community. Susan asked what ability a community could have to influence USFS to come to their area sooner. Angie responded that prioritization will happen comprehensively including multiple priorities (e.g. what other projects are in the area) that community members can contribute to this process to provide their priorities.