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Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI) February 26, 2020 American Mountaineering Center 710 10th St, Golden, CO 80401

ATTENDANCE: Samantha Albert, Angela Boag, Christina Burri, Steve Donovan, Patt Dorsey, Greg Felt, Rachel Franchina, Vaughn Jones, Tim Kylo, Jason Lawhon, Mike Lester, Paige Lewis, Tim Mauck, Frank McCormick, Jamie Nogle, Emily Olsen, Molly Pitts, Mike Preston, Kelle Reynolds, Mark Shea, Greg Shoop, Travis Smith, Tom Spezze, Jodi Stemler, Diana Trujillo, Cindy Williams, Scott Woods, and Peter Wyrsh

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Mike Preston

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- Discuss with the Southwest project steering committee on how to manage inquiries from masticator operators and loggers about opportunities to work in the Southwest project proposal area.
- Update the Southwest partners about the RMRI meeting.
- Prepare to discuss ongoing projects that Southwest partners are planning and implementing during the April 2* meeting. **Christina Burri**
- Send a link to the Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP) website to Jason Lawhon to include on the RMRI website.
- Send information to Jason Lawhon on the composition and goals of the newly formed USPP biomass subcommittee.
- Identify a representative from the USPP biomass subcommittee to serve on the biomass/workforce capacity subcommittee.
- Send the video on the Denver Water-Mile High Youth Corps partnership to Jason Lawhon.
- Organize the USPP orientation of RMRI partners to occur in May with assistance from Scott Woods.
- Identify a representative from the USPP to be on the communications/social license subcommittee.
- Update the USPP about the RMRI meeting. **Angela Boag**
- Identify a representative from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to be on the governance subcommittee.
- Determine if there is a representative from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) who can attend RMRI meetings. **Jason Lawhon**
- Organize the governance subcommittee (other participants are listed under the *Next Steps* section).
- Organize the funding subcommittee (other participants are listed under the *Next Steps* section). **Matt Lindler**
- Organize the communications/social license subcommittee (other participants are listed under the *Next Steps* section). **Greg Felt, Molly Pitts, Cindy Williams**
- Work with the Envision Forest Health Partners to set a date for the Upper Arkansas orientation in July or August.
- Work with NWTF and USFS staff to develop an orientation agenda for the Upper Arkansas in July or August.

- Update the Upper Arkansas partners about the RMRI meeting.

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Molly Pitts Organize the biomass utilization/workforce capacity subcommittee (other participants are listed under the *Next Steps* section).

UPDATES ON RMRI FROM THE NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION (NWTF)

CONFERENCE Tom Spezze and Jason Lawhon provided updates from the NWTF conference in Nashville. Their comments are summarized below.

- RMRI partners presented on RMRI at the NWTF conference in Nashville in mid-February. US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Sonny Perdue, US Forest Service (USFS) Chief Vicki Christiansen, and NWTF CEO Rebecca Humphries discussed RMRI during a “fireside chat” which over 2,000 people attended. They also presented RMRI partners with a certificate of accomplishment to celebrate the work and collaborative efforts of RMRI around the shared values of water protection, forest health, recreation opportunities, and safe and resilient communities. The certificate will be in the USFS Regional Office and the NWTF office, but it belongs to all of the RMRI partners.
- The topic of RMRI was frequently raised during the conference, which was attended by over 57,000 people, and national leaders took the time to highlight RMRI as an example in presentations and personal conversations. RMRI partners talked with the USFS Chief and Deputy Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) leaders, and the Secretary of the Interior, who said they want to continue to support the project. The USFS is expected to provide funding for RMRI this year and next year, and some private sector companies are interested in funding RMRI as well.
- The certificate of accomplishment and attention on RMRI during the conference demonstrate that there is support for RMRI across the nation. With this level of support, RMRI partners can work towards implementing projects on the ground.

Clarifying Questions RMRI partners asked clarifying questions about the updates from the NWTF conference. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding answers in plain text.

Did the USFS Chief, Secretary of Agriculture, or the NWTF CEO voice any expectations for RMRI during the conference, or did they want to congratulate and highlight RMRI? There were many unspoken expectations. RMRI is setting the example for what shared stewardship could look like across the nation, but it is not the only model for shared stewardship. They did not discuss any expectations for acreage targets.

In preparation for next year’s NWTF conference, how do RMRI partners expect to report on RMRI and keep people engaged? Are there quarterly reports to national partners or annual updates at the conference? RMRI partners will be making quarterly updates to the USFS-NWTF Making Tracks Initiative, which will help distribute information across the country. RMRI partners are expected to give updates on RMRI at next year’s conference. There are no reporting requirements at the national level, so

RMRI partners will have to determine what outcomes they want to report.

SOUTHWEST PROJECT UPDATE Representatives from the Southwest Colorado project and RMRI partners shared updates on the Southwest RMRI project. Their comments are summarized below.

- The current primary task of the Southwest Colorado project partners is to develop an organizational structure. They have developed an initial draft charter and established a Southwest project steering committee composed of local partners. The charter is based off a

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responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed (RACI) charter model. In the draft charter, the steering committee is the primary body for guiding project activities.

- The steering committee involves a network of local Southwest Colorado partners, which include participants from the local collaboratives and other key stakeholders, like the BLM who manages land in Southwest Colorado. These partners will help identify opportunities, determine priorities, and coordinate action.
- There will also be a project manager, science team, and a communication channel between the Southwest partners and the RMRI as a whole to help make decisions and vet projects. The governance system is essential to make all these relationships work.
- There are already three collaboratives in Southwest Colorado, and Southwest partners are working on linking them together in a science and monitoring platform and developing a science and monitoring team.
- The Southwest partners are also determining what outcomes they want to measure and how they want report on them.
- The Southwest partners are looking at what projects can be implemented in 2020. Most of the opportunities are on the west end of the San Juan National Forest around McPhee Reservoir where there are already environmental assessments (EA) in place. There is also a growing wood products business in Southwest Colorado, which will play a key role in implementing projects.
- The challenge will be creating a structure for projects on non-federal lands, which will involve partners like the Colorado State Forest Service, NRCS, Montezuma Land Conservancy, and Wildfire Adapted Partnership.
- The Southwest partners presented at the Southwest Basin Roundtable and received a lot of support.
- Another important stakeholder in the region is the Southwestern Water Conservation District. They host an annual seminar, and this year's seminar will focus on watershed health, restoration, and fire impacts. The event will culminate in a RMRI-focused panel on Friday, April 3.
- On Thursday, April 2*, there will be a RMRI meeting with the Southwest partners in the

Durango area, and there is an open invitation to all RMRI partners to attend. During the April 2* meeting, Southwest partners should prepare to present on the projects they are planning and implementing.

Clarifying Questions RMRI partners asked clarifying questions about the Southwest project update. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding answers in plain text.

What is the composition of the science team?

- The composition of the science team is a work in progress. The Mountain Studies Institute, a local group that guides stakeholders through monitoring activities, is working with the Southwest partners on the science.
- The Mountain Studies Institute have submitted an extensive vegetation management monitoring plan. Many local partners also are interested in how to monitor water quality and quantity in relation to the vegetation management treatments, which is complicated and requires more discussion.
- The Southwest partners want to connect local scientific efforts to other larger scientific institutions, like Colorado State University (CSU), to advance monitoring primarily in the ponderosa pine zone.
- There will be more detailed answers at the April 2* meeting.

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Is the charter going to be for the local Southwest partners or for the broader RMRI group? The charter is for the Southwest partners, who need a local structure based around the steering committee and network of partners. Once they complete the local charter, they will define a governance structure to link the steering committee and local efforts to the larger RMRI group and the other two focal areas in the Upper Arkansas and the Upper South Platte.

Some newspapers and magazines have reported that there is \$50 million available in the Southwest for forestry treatments. How should RMRI partners handle requests from masticator operators and loggers who are interested in becoming involved?

- The newspapers and magazines reported on \$50 million because that is the total amount of funding requested in the Southwest RMRI proposal, but it does not accurately reflect the amount of funding that has been secured for the project.
- There needs to be a cautious approach to the wood markets and operators as the biomass is available, but there are other considerations for vegetation management as well.
- One of the benefits of the Southwest project steering committee is they can discuss how to manage inquiries from masticator operators and loggers. Mike Preston will discuss with the Southwest

project steering committee on how to manage inquiries from masticator operators and loggers about opportunities to work in the Southwest project proposal area.

- There may be an opportunity to direct inquiries and interest to other places in the state that could use more industry.

OTHER RMRI PARTNER UPDATES RMRI partners discussed updates from other partners.

Their comments are summarized below.

- At the beginning of the RMRI process, partners focused their conversation around their shared values and aspirational accomplishments rather than funding. The next steps for RMRI include determining how to bring resources to Southwest Colorado.
- Resources are already being allocated based on the work of RMRI. The CSFS has dedicated staff to work with RMRI. The CSFS, American Forest Foundation (AFF), and NRCS also hired two new foresters for Southwest Colorado. The CSFS also allocates funding through their grant programs, and they are planning to devote a significant portion of that funding (around 75%) to the Southwest, Upper Arkansas, and Upper South Platte.
- State departments and agencies are also mobilizing resources around RMRI. The Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Southwest partners invited various agency representatives, including representatives from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW), Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety (DRMS), CSFS, and Colorado State Land Board, to discuss how to dedicate resources to the Southwest RMRI project. Staff from the DNR are putting together a contact list to help facilitate coordination between the Southwest partners and the state agencies.
- There was an educational component at the state agency meeting to make sure all the agency representatives understood the concepts of forest health. There was excitement and energy around the opportunity to work at the landscape level. There also were auxiliary benefits of bringing this diverse group of agency representatives together. For example, the DRMS indicated that they may be able to utilize biomass material for mining clean-up.
- During the state agency meeting, there were questions about communication that arose, including how to discuss shared stewardship and RMRI as a nationwide initiative versus RMRI as a statewide initiative.

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- RMRI partners are also talking with other states with shared stewardship memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to determine how other state governments are engaging in shared stewardship

strategies.

- The BLM is dedicating additional funding and resources to treating fuels in the Southwest. In 2019, the BLM implemented fuels treatment on over 800,000 acres, and in 2020, the Secretary of Interior wants 1 million acres treated. The BLM can leverage the RMRI brand to receive more funding to expand fuel treatments in Southwest Colorado.
- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) along with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Gates Family Foundation, DNR, CPW, and CWCB have released the ReStORE grant. The grant guidelines request grant applications from the three RMRI-selected project areas to fund forestry treatments.
- The NRCS is also looking to support the Southwest project by aligning funding from their Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for private land treatments. They will present at the Southwest and RMRI partners meeting on April 2* to figure out how to align funding and submit applications for NRCS' 2021 funding cycle.
- The Washington Office of the USFS is contributing \$3 million to RMRI in FY20. These allocations are in addition to the regular allocations to Regional 2. The USFS Regional Office is working to allocate these funds to the forests to best meet RMRI goals.
- RMRI partners are not deciding how the different agencies will spend their money; instead, the discussion is about how to focus and incrementally allocate resources to a focal project to achieve transformational change. If RMRI partners can make incremental changes at different levels (county, nation, and state) and direct funding strategically, then they will be able to achieve the scale and pace to transform the selected landscapes.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND REPORT OUT In addition to the Southwest project, RMRI partners recommended that RMRI support two other projects in the Upper South Platte and Upper Arkansas and four cross-cutting issues (wood utilization and biomass, broad-scale funding, capacity and workforce, and prescribed fire and social license). Prior to the meeting, RMRI partners received a survey on how RMRI should support these other initiatives. Based on the survey results, they developed worksheets on eight topics (governance, communication, Upper South Platte, Upper Arkansas, funding, workforce capacity, prescribed fire and social license, and biomass). RMRI partners broke into small groups to discuss their highest priority topics. Facilitators at each station reported out the outcomes of their discussions. The comments from the facilitators and worksheets are summarized below.

Governance

- The governance topic is related to the governance model for the broader RMRI group and not for the governance structures in the individual project areas
- There are already several groups within RMRI. There is the "Core 40," which represents the 40 partners of RMRI across Colorado. There is the RMRI Evaluation Team, which is a subset of the Core 40 who evaluated the RMRI project proposals, and the Southwest steering committee.
- When constructing the governance entity for RMRI, small group discussion participants said that the RMRI Evaluation Team, which was purposefully constructed to represent multiple interests, could serve as the primary representatives of the broader RMRI partnership.
- Small group discussion participants said that each selected project landscape should have its own

governance structure that aligns with the RMRI governance structure. For example,

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if there is a local representative from the CSFS on the local governance structure, the RMRI team should also have a representative from the CSFS.

- Participants said that it is important to have experts, local representatives, and funders on the broader RMRI governance entity as well.
- There was a recommendation against formalizing a governance structure, in part because it becomes tedious to write formal MOUs and written agreements. There needs to be purpose and value for an MOU if RMRI partners decide to write and sign one.
- The overall roles and responsibilities of the larger RMRI group are to:
 - Discuss big concepts and funding
 - Help with strategic funding by filling funding gaps
 - Determine how to measure progress by setting outcomes and helping local groups decide how to measure and track metrics across projects
 - Consistently and strategically fill communication gaps
 - Provide information sharing and assistance from region to region
 - Tell the stories of the local landscape
 - Provide inspirational support
- RMRI's role is to fill the gaps and provide support in a way that complements the structure and needs of the local groups. Local groups should create their annual work plans and bring the gaps and needs in their work plans to the statewide RMRI group to help develop solutions.
- The Southwest could follow this model where the local Southwest steering committee would prepare a work plan and share the work plan with the statewide group to ensure that they are still meeting RMRI values and identify opportunities for alignment to fill any gaps. The RMRI governance entity could also help the Southwest partners formulate local funding proposals.
- In the Upper South Platte and Upper Arkansas, the RMRI governance entity could build and expand on existing structures by sharing the worst and best practices from region to region. The RMRI core leadership could also inform and provide resources to the two groups.
- For the cross-cutting issues, the RMRI governance entity could take the lead on addressing the issues and facilitate information exchange from landscape to landscape, not necessarily limited by the selected project areas. They could also develop a chain of communication between the local groups and the RMRI Core 40 to highlight pilot projects, different models, and lessons learned from different project areas.
- Small group participants considered several names for the governance entity, including the RMRI steering committee, advisory committee, "RMRI Colorado" (with the local projects being named "RMRI Southwest," "RMRI Arkansas," or "RMRI South Platte"). Some RMRI participants said that

“steering committee” may be too prescriptive and “advisory committee” may have legal implications under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

- The proposed next steps for establishing a governance entity are:
 - Organize meetings for the RMRI governance entity to meet quarterly or every other month via phone calls (with video conference options) or in person
 - Define an organizational structure for the different teams and greater listserv
 - Assign roles and responsibilities
 - Rotate meetings across the three selected project areas and the Front Range
 - Publish and distribute the time and location of team meetings, how to engage with them, and a summary of their activities and progress
 - Use RSVPs to plan meetings

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Communications

- A communication strategy and the governance structure are closely tied as there needs to be a structured network through which parties communicate with each other and tell the local landscape story.
- RMRI partners should build upon the existing partnerships to help disseminate information and coordinate how partners tell RMRI stories to generate support and apply for funding.
- RMRI should to be public facing. RMRI partners should know what type of information they need to capture and collect as work gets completed. They also should better define who the internal and external audiences are. Lastly, there should be a communication “director” or person of contact to help RMRI and each project organize and direct communications.
- The tools that are needed for the RMRI team to help tell stories at all levels include:
 - An elevator speech for different audiences
 - Consistent national, state, and local messaging
 - Website and public presence with information and resources
 - Fact sheet that can be adjusted to different areas and groups
 - A media toolkit with videos, list of accomplishments, and project focuses for the next phase of RMRI
 - A frequently asked questions document
 - Clear method and metrics to track accomplishments consistently and report successes
 - Tools to support all landscapes
- The NWTF already has handouts, documents, and timelines on RMRI, but RMRI partners may need to build on these documents. Other communication assets that RMRI already has include published stories, a website and social media presence, a public affairs staff, and a RMRI communications team, which will include USFS staff and a permanent communication position.

- Having links on the RMRI website to the websites of project area partners would be helpful.
- There needs to be a RMRI brand to which each partner can connect themselves when they tell their part of the RMRI story and a consistent message for all partners to use. The focus of the RMRI brand should be the partnership rather than RMRI as a single entity, and each partner needs to take ownership of the brand. Jodi Stemler, Mule Deer Foundation, and Jim Neiman, Montrose Wood Products, could provide guidance in developing the identity and branding for RMRI as a whole.
- There are several key partners missing, including local fire departments, Forest Health Advisory Council (FHAC), Colorado Fire Commission, Coalitions and Collaboratives, Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC), Department of Corrections, power cooperatives (e.g., Tri-State) and wholesalers, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Colorado Outfitters Association, and recreation collaboratives. Some energy companies, like Xcel Energy, are already partners, and others, like Tri-State, have been invited.
- There are talented communication specialists in the USFS Region 2 Regional Office and in the San Juan region who can write communication plans and disseminate information. The communication plans need to align with those who have local knowledge expertise (i.e., identifying a local expert on water, forest, recreation, etc.) and are trusted by the community. It would be helpful to develop a contact list of these local experts.
- Any communication directors will have a big role in determining and tracking metrics.
- RMRI partners need to coordinate how they are communicating and reporting successes, particularly related to grant funding, to ensure that they are not double counting treated acres and matching funds.
- Science communication is an important part of the communication strategy.

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Upper South Platte

- The biggest need for the Upper South Platte is funding at scale and developing a creative funding strategy. In order for land managers to prepare treatments and start to develop industry, there must be a predictable source of funding; working with grantors to help set consistent grant priorities over a ten-year project can help set a consistent source of funding.
- The cross-cutting issue that could be uniquely address in the Upper South Platte is biomass utilization. There are barriers to establishing a biomass industry, including state law, utility costs, power sales agreements, lack of a mill, and a need for non-federal timber. Workforce and social license related to prescribed fire are also relevant issues in the Upper South Platte.
- The Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP) has a governance structure in place, which includes a Management and Science Team (MST) and the Goals, Strategies, and Funding Team (GSFT). The CSFS are willing to help through leadership/partnership and with grants. The Jefferson County Wildfire Task Force can help with coordination, and Blue Forest and other financing consultants can

help with the creative funding strategy. The DFPC and other local agencies can help with burn planning, prescribed fire, and building social license. Additional research can help inform building social license and prescribed fire planning.

- RMRI partners could help develop the creative funding strategy. There is a new bill moving through the legislature to create a grant to enhance public education on prescribed fire, for which the USPP could apply. Another idea is for RMRI to organize an opportunity for RMRI partners to meet with USPP partners in a “speed dating” event or for RMRI to directly connect organizations with the USPP to develop solutions.
- The USPP recently established a biomass subcommittee. There are industry representatives who are interested in opening mills and biomass facilities, but there are barriers, such as developing a power sales agreement, which makes it more difficult for industry to establish itself. The biomass subcommittee is a new committee and open to anyone. Christina Burri will send more information to Jason Lawhon on the composition and goals of the USPP biomass subcommittee.
- The CSFS Forest Action Plan is a good resource, and partners can connect landscape needs in the Upper South Platte with the activities and priorities presented in the Forest Action Plan.
- The proposed next steps for the Upper South Platte are:
 - Orient and engage with the NWTF and RMRI partners
 - Strengthen a biomass subcommittee with RMRI partners
 - Reach collective agreement and alignment on priorities to coordinate how the USPP pursues funding and project opportunities rather than competing with each other for grant funding
 - Engage industry and other partners to address data needs and develop a plan for creative funding

Upper Arkansas

- The biggest needs that RMRI can address in the project area are related to a 30,000-acre, multi-use project that is already approved and underway on Methodist Mountain adjacent to the Decker Fire burn scar. One challenge for the Upper Arkansas is that, while they have projects and willing landowners, they do not have the funding and capacity to implement the work.

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- The Upper Arkansas partners also want to expand the Chaffee County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to Lake County and develop a community resource and recreation plan for Chaffee County and then the broader Upper Arkansas.

- RMRI partners can help address needs around building leadership support among water officials and elected officials to break down silos, change the culture, and clarify priorities around forestry work.
- Upper Arkansas partners also want to work with the BLM on fuels projects to reduce fire risk and improve recreation and wildlife habitat opportunities. The funding in the BLM is to reduce fire risk, but there are auxiliary benefits as well.
- The cross-cutting issues that can be uniquely addressed here include industry development and growth, considering the forest types in the area tend to have low market value. Other cross-cutting issues include developing projects collaboratively (e.g., planning, implementation, etc.), identifying collaborative funding for multipurpose projects, contracting for public and private projects, and applying for the NRCS' RCPP.
- The Upper Arkansas can showcase the lessons they have learned about social license and prescribed fire; partners have been successful at achieving an 85% support rate among of community members for prescribed fire in a survey.
- There are already governance structures in place, including the Envision Forest Health Partners which is a council composed of 18 groups. County commissioners from Lake and Chaffee County are also involved. Groups that are not yet involved include the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District, lower basin partners who could be recruited at the Arkansas Basin Water Forum, and recreation representatives at the state level.
- The Small Business Development Center could help develop industry or business opportunities, particularly in biomass; Colorado Mountain College–Salida could be approached to potentially reestablish a forestry program; CSFS can help with planning and implementation; RMRI leadership team can help with planning; the NWTF and Blue Forest Conservation can help with creative financing mechanisms for implementation; and there may be opportunities for grants through DNR and DOLA.
- RMRI partners can also help identify opportunities to develop corridors for big game potential in pinon-juniper and sagebrush habitat and apply for grants and fundraise to increase administrative and facilitation capacity.
- RMRI can continue to emphasize the Upper Arkansas as a priority landscape on their website and in their communication materials. Emphasizing the Upper Arkansas as a selected project area can create opportunities for funding. RMRI can develop a creative funding strategy and organize a “speed dating” event for the Upper Arkansas partners as well.
- The proposed next steps for the Upper Arkansas are:
 - Implement the Methodist Front Project with an emphasis on private lands
 - Develop the Lake County CWPP
 - Explore opportunities for Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) and RCPP to bridge private and public land treatments
 - Expand the use of the Chaffee County Chip program, which is a countywide program for all landowners to treat forests on their property using a large grinder, chippers, and volunteer sawyers to accelerate treatment

Biomass Utilization

- RMRI has a unique role in addressing biomass utilization as they have already brought in partners who are interested in creating solutions. The Core 40 could collectively identify needs and the potential capacity across the state to utilize biomass. They can invite the right

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people to the room, like Tri-State, to lead conversations around changing the biomass mandate at the state level or the federal tax credit policy on renewable energies.

- RMRI could also engage policy makers on how biomass utilization ties into forest health and water. RMRI has a unique role in storytelling and sharing credible information with people so that they can make their own decisions.

- RMRI could provide information on how biomass utilization as a fuel source connects to the carbon cycle and on the differences between prescribed fire, wildfire, and controlled biomass burning impacts on the carbon cycle. RMRI could also be involved in the State Climate Action Plan.

- Specific ideas for advancing this issue include:

- Lead the conversation to show that biomass is a green power source
- Lead the conversation to add biomass to the federal guideline incentives program
- Engage with state agencies, like the CDPHE and DNR, especially with biochar
- Share information on how biomass utilization could reduce treatment costs in

places where the state and federal budget will not be able to sustain treatments at \$3,000/acre

- Explore the potential of wood straw power generation through the Department of

Transportation

- Address transportation issues to make biomass a more viable industry

- The Upper South Platte is a landscape where they cannot move forward in an effective manner until they have developed solutions to improving biomass utilization. They have data needs related to quantifying biomass availability. There could be a wood supply analysis conducted in the area to fill in data gaps.

- The proposed next steps are to:

- Convene a meeting with state-level representatives to discuss opportunities for biomass utilization and understand the complete issues before expanding the invitee list to state policy makers and legislatures
- Identify currently available statewide data and data gaps (e.g., forest inventory analysis data, power supply gaps, etc.)
- Engage with the USPP biomass subcommittee

Workforce

- RMRI’s unique role in addressing the workforce issue could be to raise awareness that there is a workforce shortage and a need to have a ready workforce in place.
- Truck drivers are in high demand, but there are fewer people receiving their commercial driver’s license in Colorado because of the drug testing requirement.
- The goal is to fill the gaps in the workforce for project planning, project financing, contract development, contract execution, and monitoring. RMRI could engage with non-profits or state agencies to offer hiring flexibility.
- Forestry is a high technology industry that requires a highly skilled workforce to operate expensive equipment. Specific ideas for advancing this issue include engaging high schools (e.g., Future Farmers of America programs) by attending local school board meetings, higher education institutions, trade schools, Department of Corrections, and Job Corps. Trade schools are one opportunity to get people to become fire certified to create a workforce to burn piles.
- It is difficult to build workforce capacity if there is no certainty in the industry, but it also is difficult to build the industry if there is not a reliable workforce. GNA agreements may provide some certainty on the landscape to build a workforce.

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- The issue of workforce capacity can be explored in the Southwest, Upper Arkansas, and Upper South Platte. In these areas, there is a gap in private land treatments, which makes it more difficult to build a workforce, and permit issues. Denver Water worked with the Mile High Youth Corps to conduct forestry treatments, and by the end of their tenure, many of the youth had Red Card certifications and had secured jobs with the USFS. Christina Burri will send the video on the Denver Water-Mile High Youth Corps workforce program to Jason Lawhon.
- The proposed next steps are to:
 - Identify existing industries and those who are training a reliable workforce
 - Organize a meeting with those who are implementing programs to discuss workforce capacity
 - Engage with the new Office of Just Transition to re-train people who no longer have a job in the coal industry

Social License/Prescribed Fire

- The small group participants discussed both prescribed fire and active management treatment methods.
- Social license and prescribed fire are closely tied to communication strategy. RMRI could develop a positive statewide message and communication platform to facilitate shared knowledge across

landscapes. RMRI could also highlight the successes in the Upper Arkansas on how they developed social license to such a degree that citizens were willing to tax themselves.

- RMRI could leverage teachable moments to demonstrate how treatments, including logging, benefit communities. TNC and the USFS are the main entities who are burning at scale and could serve as partners to highlight teachable moments.

- RMRI could partner with insurance agencies to manage and develop educational materials. RMRI could also take on the role of rebuilding trust with the public about using prescribed burning as a tool. There is also a need to increase education about smoke management and the short-term and long-term impacts of prescribed fire.

- RMRI PowerPoints already exist, which can be used for education efforts.

- Specific ideas for RMRI to advance the social license/prescribed fire issue are to:

- Host a prescribed burning workshop to discuss best practices and community outreach methods, including how to use social media effectively, and share positive examples of prescribed fire efforts
- Utilize social media to share factual information and positive examples (the NWTF

and others already have large followings on their Instagram and Facebook page) ○ Meet with the Prescribed Fire Council ○ Connect burning and active management with wildlife habitat benefits ○ Engage with local governments (e.g., fire chiefs, sheriffs, and commissioners) to

share information and communication materials and invite them to area-specific meetings ○

Utilize teachable moments from recent wildfires and prescribed fires where things

may not have not gone perfectly ○ Develop consistent messaging on active management and tie the importance of

active management to living in fire-prone areas ○ Educate homeowners on defensible space

- There is value in exploring social license/prescribed fire in a unique way in the Southwest and Upper South Platte where using prescribed fires faces different challenges and where messaging might need to be different. Monte Williams, Arapaho-Roosevelt National Forests

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and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) Forest Supervisor, has been successful at using prescribed fire on steep terrain near communities, and the ARP could serve as an example area for how to build social license successfully. The Upper South Platte may be interested in building social license, and the area could become a pilot project partner to increase social license.

- The proposed next steps for the social license/prescribed fire topics are to:

- Host a prescribed fire workshop, potentially in the Southwest
- Utilize social media to highlight the benefits of all active management
- Engage with the Prescribed Fire Council
- Potentially apply for grant funding through the CSFS for wildfire risk mitigation
 - education if the legislative bill that establishes the grant is passed through the Colorado legislature

Funding

- Funding is a central issue that relates to all the cross-cutting issues. There should be a subcommittee to discuss big picture funding. There will need to be a governance structure if RMRI becomes a group that decides how to allocate funding with a pooled funding source or if RMRI becomes a recipient of funds.
- RMRI could play a unique role by:
 - Developing a funding guide with information about funding opportunities, timelines for submitting applications, and key elements and requirements of an application, which could include the CSFS grants and available research grants
 - Creating RMRI as a center for grant funding opportunities
 - Developing a broad-based funding resource approach (i.e., Chaffee County)
 - Serving as a matchmaker to connect organizations to funding opportunities, fiscal sponsors, and partners to help research, apply, report, and manage grants
 - Developing a document with information about what has been done across landscapes to recognize progress
 - Developing a grant writing team or point of contact with RMRI
 - Being a catalyst to pass local funding measures
- RMRI could also develop a broad funder/partner base to collaborate on funding needs, activate already existing funding programs from each agency (e.g., RCPP, EQIP, etc.), and maximize funding from other grant programs (e.g., ReStORE grant). It would also be helpful to identify organizations that can serve as fiscal agents.
- A specific idea to advance the funding issue is to use conservation financing mechanisms, which have been developed by groups like Blue Forest Conservation and Quantified Ventures, to pool resources in one place; resilience bond investors want to invest more in larger landscapes. Blue Forest Conservation could potentially provide a “Forest Resilience Bond” presentation for RMRI across all landscapes.
- RMRI should also clarify their role in matching contributions in grant applications. Grant applicants may start using RMRI as a match source, which may lead to double-counting of acres and funding. There are federal grant requirements that restrict the use of federal dollars to match federal dollars, so it is important to know the different sources of funding to ensure that match is not being categorized incorrectly.
- A project area in which the funding issue could be explored in a unique way is Chaffee County where they had success in passing a ballot measure.
- The proposed next steps for funding are to:

- Develop a fundraising strategy and opportunities to increase capacity
- Establish a fundraising subcommittee

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- Develop a database of grants
- Discuss organizations that could serve as fiscal agents
- Develop a Blue Forest Conservation training for resilience bond opportunities

NEXT STEPS RMRI partners discussed next steps for each topic discussed in the small groups. The next steps are summarized below.

Governance

- Jason Lawhon will organize a subcommittee focused on governance. The subcommittee will include a representative from DNR (to be identified by Angela Boag), Samantha Albert, Emily Olsen, Scott Woods, Christina Burri, and Tom Spezze. Jason Lawhon will be the primary organizer of the governance subcommittee.
- The governance subcommittee will continue the discussion about governance and develop a visual model of the organizational structure. The governance subcommittee will also discuss whether there is a need for an executive team composed of high-level officials, and if so, what their role would be.
- The governance subcommittee will report to the RMRI partners at the April 2* meeting in Durango. If possible, the governance subcommittee should share a report or recommendations to the RMRI partners prior to the April 2* meeting.

Communications/Social License

- Matt Lindler will organize a subcommittee focused on communications/social license. The communications subcommittee will include Rachel, Franchina, Jodi Stemler, Tim Kylo, Mike Preston, and a representative from the USPP (to be identified by Christina Burri).
- The communications/social license subcommittee will discuss whether the topics of communications and social license should be combined into one subcommittee or if it should be two separate committees. They will also develop a communication strategy, identify products and resource needs, including updates to the website with information on the project areas, and work on the identity/brand for the RMRI. They also will discuss hosting a workshop on lessons learned from those who have experience building social license, such as Monte Williams of the ARP, to stream across the state.
- The Upper Arkansas can present on their successes and lessons learned on their efforts to increase social license during their orientation in July or August.

- The communications/social license subcommittee will present updates at the May RMRI meeting in the Upper South Platte.

Upper South Platte

- There will be an orientation for RMRI partners on the Upper South Platte to start to build a relationship and share information between the Upper South Platte and RMRI. The USPP should identify needs that RMRI can support during this orientation.
- Christina Burri will be the lead to organize the orientation in May with assistance from Scott Woods.

Upper Arkansas

- There will be an orientation on the Upper Arkansas project in July or August. The orientation will involve both the Upper Arkansas partners identifying their needs, such as biomass utilization, as well as RMRI sharing what they can do for the Upper Arkansas partners. The orientation can serve more as a dialogue and matchmaking opportunity.

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- The Upper Arkansas can present on their successes and lessons learned on their efforts to increase social license during their orientation in July or August.
- Greg Felt, Cindy Williams, and Molly Pitts will work with the USFS and NWTF to develop an agenda for the orientation.

Biomass Utilization/Workforce Capacity

- Molly Pitts will organize a subcommittee focused on biomass utilization/workforce capacity. The biomass utilization/workforce capacity subcommittee will include Tim Reeder, Mike Preston, Mark Shea, Laura Wolf, and a representative from the USPP biomass subcommittee that Christina Burri will identify.
- The biomass utilization/workforce capacity will have an initial scoping discussion to determine what the need is for a biomass utilization subcommittee and identify barriers with the intention of hosting a workshop or panel with statewide biomass-related stakeholders (e.g., Tri-State). They could later discuss how to incorporate policymakers and state officials further into the conversation if appropriate.

Funding

- Jason Lawhon will organize a subcommittee focused on funding. The funding subcommittee will include Angela Boag, Tom Spezze, Christina Burri, Peter Wyrsh, and Scott Woods.

- The funding subcommittee will develop a funding guide and strategy. They will also develop a workshop on building local ballot initiatives, like the one in Chaffee County, and developing conservation financing mechanisms. The funding subcommittee will also discuss how to manage the “pot of funding” to make sure there is no double counting of funding or treatment acres. If the funding subcommittee starts to discuss how to manage funding, they should connect with the governance subcommittee.

FINAL REMARKS AND UPCOMING SCHEDULE

- RMRI subcommittees will meet over the following months to discuss their topic areas. There may be an opportunity to host workshops to identify gaps and opportunities in each of the cross-cutting issues.
- The USFS is determining how to allocate funding based on the feedback from RMRI partners. They want to use their resources in the best way possible and make sure they are informed in how they prioritize funding allocations.
- The upcoming RMRI meetings will rotate through the project areas. The schedule for the upcoming RMRI meetings is as follows:
 - April 2*: RMRI meeting in Durango to discuss the Southwest project and updates from the governance subcommittee
 - May: Orientation in the Upper South Platte to discuss the Upper South Platte project and updates from the communications/social license subcommittee.
 - July/August: Orientation in the Upper Arkansas
 - Fall: Receive subcommittee updates and identify outcomes to move forward
- Representatives from the local collaboratives will communicate the next steps to their local groups. The local collaboratives will continue to move forward on their work.
- It would be helpful to have a representative from CPW at RMRI meetings. Angela Boag will determine if there is a representative from CPW to attend RMRI meetings.
- RMRI partners should reach out to Tom Spezze and Jason Lawhon with any questions or information.
- RMRI partners said that they are comfortable with RMRI leadership sharing their emails with other RMRI partners.

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