

Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
May 21, 2020, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee
Meeting Summary - FINAL

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Cindy Dozier, Jason Lawhon, Emily Olsen, Molly Pitts, Mike Preston, Tim Reader, Nathan Van Schaik

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Tim Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to workforce center representatives to join the June 10 virtual meeting. • Reach out to the private sector training center in Colorado Springs to join the June 10 virtual meeting. • Reach out to Dr. Kurt Mackes to join the June 10 virtual meeting.
Mike Preston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to Kate Greenberg, Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA), to ask about their internship program and, more broadly, how the CDA can help assist the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. • Update Ellen Roberts on the June 10 virtual meeting and get her input on the plan for the meeting. • Work with Ellen Roberts to reach out to Colorado Mountain College to join the June 10 virtual meeting. • Reach out to David Sitton to join the June 10 virtual meeting. • Reach out to local community college representatives to sit in on the June 10 virtual meeting.
Molly Pitts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to Tim Kylo to join the June 10 virtual meeting. • Follow up with Jamie Nogle to see if she has a contact list of RMRI partners who are interested in or are offering training programs.
Heather Bergman	Reach out to a representative at the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to see if someone from the Office of Just Transition can join the June 10 virtual meeting.
Samuel Wallace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate the Workforce Capacity and Biomass Utilization Subcommittee into two separate subcommittees in the RMRI governance charter. • Add information on how local landscapes can come to subcommittees for support to the governance charter. • Work with Molly Pitts to prepare a Doodle for the week of June 15 for a one-hour Workforce Capacity Subcommittee call.

ACTION ITEM UPDATES

Meeting participants shared updates on their action items. Their updates are summarized below.

- Molly Pitts, Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA), will follow up with Jamie Nogle, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), to see if she has a contact list of RMRI partners who are interested in or are offering training programs.

- Kelle Reynolds, US Forest Service (USFS), pulled contractor information from the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and is working on pulling a contractor list for the entirety of National Forests in Colorado.
- Tim Reader, Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), put together a table of currently available job training and hiring programs. The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should identify how they want to use and promote existing job training programs and select which programs they want to support. Among the available job training programs, some examples include:
 - Colorado First – Colorado First is a program that awards grants to individual businesses for training. The program is beginning to accept applications, and the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could bring this program to the attention of hiring contractors and sawmills.
 - Environmental Development Administration (EDA) grants – EDA grants are administered by the US Department of Commerce. These applications are more complex and would require creating a partnership with an economic development district to write an application.
 - Office of Just Transition – the Office of Just Transition is providing guidance to Governor Polis on how to provide training resources for displaced coal workers. The timber industry is potentially a good fit for these workers.
- Molly Pitts and Tim Reader have had good conversations with Dr. Kurt Mackes, Colorado State University, about the resources needed to develop and distribute a survey to logging and fuels mitigation contractors. After they gather the currently available data on the logging and fuels mitigation industry, they will identify the cost of distributing surveys.

SOUTHWEST COLORADO WORKFORCE CAPACITY UPDATE

Mike Preston, Southwest Basin Roundtable, provided an update on workforce capacity developments in Southwest Colorado. His comments are summarized below.

- Mike Preston, Southwest Basin Roundtable, provided two documents to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. The first document details all the forestry products and services that have historically been available in Southwest Colorado. The second document had information on workforce needs in Southwest Colorado as identified by the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forests (DWRF) Collaborative timber industry subgroup.
- Ellen Roberts, Ellen Roberts Consulting, organized a meeting with industry and educational institution representatives in Southwest Colorado to identify training needs and available educational resources. From that meeting, workforce development and transportation were identified as the two largest barriers to building industry capacity. The types of jobs needed in the workforce include truck drivers, millwrights, electricians, welders, wood graders, foresters, and heavy logging equipment operators among others. There are also skills needed in safety and business services.
- Addressing workforce capacity issues is going to require localized efforts. In Southwest Colorado, they have pressing employment needs. They have willing institutions (e.g., high schools, community colleges, etc.), but those institutions need a curriculum to develop job training programs. It would be helpful to identify what training programs already exist for the 10 to 12 skill areas that local Southwest industry representatives have identified as needed skills. The people and businesses who will use the labor should be involved in developing training programs to ensure that trainees receive the proper skills for the job.
- The Region 9 Economic Development District is aware of the workforce development discussions in Southwest Colorado and is interested.

RMRI WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE STRATEGY DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed strategies to approach the workforce capacity issue. Their comments are summarized below.

- RMRI is not a legal entity, so they cannot apply for grants. The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could support RMRI partners who are applying for grants but should not actively fundraise money themselves. Partners, like CTIA, would have to determine whether any given project aligns with the goals of their organization before applying for grant money. They would also need to develop the capacity to apply and administer the grant.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should not try to solve every workforce-related issue. They should select some issues to address before they begin developing job training programs and applying for grants.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could look at existing programs and curriculums and use that information to strengthen local efforts. Once they have more information, local groups could write grant proposals to fund local initiatives.
- Front Range Community College has a forestry workforce training program that has a curriculum for heavy equipment operation.
- There are organizations, like Future Farmers of America, that could serve as a good model on how to raise awareness about forestry jobs among high schoolers.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could gather information from people who have recently been hired and who are hiring to identify what training recent hires had and what training they still needed to identify training gaps.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could explore already existing training and trade programs for needed skills (e.g., electricians, truck drivers, diesel mechanics, etc.) to identify if there are opportunities to introduce any forestry-related curriculum. They could also explore providing internships at logging companies or sawmills for students in those trade programs.
- One way to increase workforce capacity is to let those who manage or are enrolled in trade programs know that there are jobs in forestry. For example, students of a truck driving training program should be made aware that there are job opportunities in the forestry sector. Educating students in trade programs on job opportunities in the forestry sector is a "low-hanging fruit" opportunity for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.
- One reason a truck driver may choose to work at a logging company is that logging truck drivers work in the local area and do not spend as much time away from home. That is important for young people in the workforce that may have young families. A part of educating the potential workforce includes promoting the benefits of working at a logging company or other forestry-related business.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should talk with trade schools to figure out what types of resources they would be interested in to promote forestry-related jobs (e.g., curriculums, education on available job opportunities, internships, etc.).
- The CDA has a program that funds internships in agricultural businesses. The program is not offering internships right now. Sawmills, forest product businesses, and logging companies may be eligible for this program considering that they are defined as agricultural industries. The manager of this internship program should be made aware that there is a potential for internships in forestry-related work. Mike Preston will reach out to Kate Greenberg, CDA, to ask about their internship program and, more broadly, how the CDA can help assist the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.
- State agencies will be reducing programmatic functions as a result of the financial impacts of COVID-19. Even with a decrease in funding, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should

lay the groundwork to promote forestry in training programs and trade schools so that they can be prepared when funding returns.

- The Farm Bill may include funding for forestry-related training programs. The discussion about high-level policies should occur after the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has addressed the "low-hanging fruit" opportunities.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY VIRTUAL MEETING DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the upcoming Workforce Capacity Subcommittee virtual meeting on June 10. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee virtual meeting will occur on Wednesday, June 10, from 9am to 11am.
- The purpose of the virtual meeting is to invite representatives from industry and training programs to gather information and exchange perspectives on the needs and opportunities for workforce development in forestry. Another goal of the meeting is to learn more about what programs (e.g., workforce training centers) are available, how those programs operate, and how they are funded. It is not a webinar for the general population.
- The meeting should be informal. Those who join the call can but are not required to give a presentation to share information about their programs.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should not invite every workforce training center to participate; instead, they should invite the centers that helped local forestry industries in the Southwest hire their staff. Workforce training centers provide basic skills training but are more of a resource for hiring than for training. Workforce training centers could provide information on their programs. Tim Reader will reach out to workforce training center representatives to join the June 10 virtual meeting.
- There may be an opportunity to look at programs in New Mexico or Arizona that provide training in the broader Four Corners region.
- Ellen Roberts should be involved in the discussion because she has been working on workforce development in Southwest Colorado. Mike Preston will update Ellen Roberts on the June 10 virtual meeting and get her input on the plan for the meeting.
- Junior colleges (e.g., Delta Technical College) are statutorily responsible for providing jobs training, but they do not have the resources to integrate new programs into their curriculum. Colorado Mountain College might have the resources to implement new programs as they have stood up a forestry program in the past. Mike Preston will work with Ellen Roberts to reach out to Colorado Mountain College to join the June 10 virtual meeting. Mike Preston will also reach out to local community college representatives to join the June 10 virtual meeting in a listening capacity.
- There may be an opportunity to look at the private sector training model. Tim Reader will reach out to the private sector training center in Colorado Springs to join the June 10 virtual meeting.
- Industry representatives should be involved in the June 10 virtual meeting to have a broader conversation about industry needs. Mike Preston will reach out to David Sitton, Aspen Wood Products, to join the June 10 virtual meeting, and Molly Pitts will reach out to Tim Kylo, Montrose Forest Products, to join the June 10 virtual meeting.
- It would be helpful to have a representative from the Office of Just Transition on the call. Heather Bergman will reach out to a representative at the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to see if someone from the Office of Just Transition can join the June 10 virtual meeting.
- Dr. Kurt Mackes, Colorado State University, knows about industry needs through his research. Tim Reader will reach out to Dr. Kurt Mackes to join the June 10 virtual meeting.

GOVERNANCE CHARTER DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee in the governance charter. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee's roles and responsibilities should be separated from the roles and responsibilities of the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee in the charter.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is pursuing strategies and solutions to address workforce capacity issues at the statewide and local landscape level.
- One role of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is to address workforce capacity issues in the RMRI priority landscapes to help them increase the pace and scale of their work.
- The Subcommittee does not have specific outcomes or targets related to workforce capacity development in the local landscapes. It would be helpful to have specific outcomes or reporting requirements for the Subcommittee. Identifying the specific outcomes for priority landscapes is an ongoing discussion and will evolve as RMRI continues to move forward.
- If local landscapes identify a specific need that is related to one of the subcommittees, they should approach the subcommittee to request support. There should be a statement in the governance charter that specifically outlines that priority landscapes have the option to reach out to subcommittees for support. Samuel Wallace, Peak Facilitation Group, will add to the governance charter that local landscapes can come to subcommittees for support.

NEXT STEPS

The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee will have a follow-up call to debrief the June 10 virtual meeting. Samuel Wallace will work with Molly Pitts to prepare a Doodle for the week of June 15 for a one-hour Workforce Capacity Subcommittee call.