

Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
April 30, 2020, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
RMRI Workforce Capacity Team
Meeting Summary - FINAL

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Cindy Dozier, Jamie Nogle, Molly Pitts, Mike Preston, Tim Reader, and Kelle Reynolds

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Jamie Nogle	Send a contact list to Molly Pitts of RMRI partners who are currently offering training or would be interested in doing so.
Mike Preston	Share the data and information that has been collected on industry needs in Southwest Colorado with the Workforce Capacity Team.
Kelle Reynolds	Contact that US Forest Service (USFS) Region 2 Regional Office to obtain their list of contractors.
Tim Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a one-pager with information on existing training program opportunities, grants, and cost-share and loan programs. • Gather information on what resources are needed to develop and distribute a survey to industry partners.
Samuel Wallace	Send out a Doodle to schedule a date for the webinar between industry and training program representatives during the week of June 8.

EXISTING WORKFORCE RESOURCES DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed existing workforce development and training resources. Their updates are summarized below.

- There is a cost-share program for job training that the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (COEDIT) administers. Industry partners have utilized the program to train employees, and COEDIT will be accepting applications for that program starting on July 1.
- Workforce training centers are another available resource to industry partners. Workforce training centers are more helpful when it comes to hiring rather than training. Industry representatives have reported varying results on the effectiveness of workforce training centers.
- There are a variety of other training centers and programs. Junior colleges are statutorily responsible for job training, but they may not have the resources to develop a rigorous curriculum for timber industry job training. There is a workforce training center in Colorado Springs that trains students in secondary wood product manufacturing; they are a for-profit center and have a globally recognized certification program. The Colorado Springs training center may have more resources to help develop a curriculum. There is another college in Maine that developed a 12-week program on how to operate forestry equipment. There is also a heavy-equipment training program in Pueblo that does not currently teach how to operate forestry equipment, but they may be interested in doing so.
- Northern Arizona University (NAU) Ecological Restoration Institute recently received a grant to create a three-state wood utilization team in partnership with the restoration institutes at Colorado State University and New Mexico Highlands University. Part of the grant funding is for workforce development, but there is not a specific work plan for

workforce development yet. They may use some of the funding to identify how to transition people who were working in coal-fired power plants to forestry. NAU is interested in supporting RMRI partners and the collaboratives with this grant funding.

- The State of Colorado has created the Office of Just Transition. A contact for the Office of Just Transition has not been identified yet, but they may be a good resource for the Workforce Capacity Team.
- The RMRI-Southwest Colorado (RMRI-SW) Steering Committee is interested in this topic. Ellen Roberts, Ellen Roberts Consulting, is leading the RMRI-SW effort on workforce development and may join the Workforce Capacity Team, depending on her availability. She is convening meetings with Fort Lewis College, high school counselors, and industry partners. In Southwest Colorado, the industry partners have identified their training needs, including the need for high-technology equipment training. Most of the data on industry needs in Southwest Colorado is from Montezuma County because that is where large-scale treatments are occurring and because there is a historic forestry industry there. RMRI-SW is interested in exporting commercial capacity from Montezuma County into La Plata County to treat forests in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). To treat in the WUI, there needs to be enough land to make the work profitable for contractors. Mike Preston can share the data and information that has been collected on industry needs in Southwest Colorado with the Workforce Capacity Team.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY GOALS DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the goals and objectives of the Workforce Capacity team. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Workforce Capacity Team should reach out to businesses in the priority landscapes to raise awareness about job training and workforce programs, such as COEDIT's jobs training cost-share program and workforce training centers. A one-pager that identifies the existing training opportunities, grants, and cost-share and loan programs would be a helpful resource. Tim Reader can develop a one-pager with information on existing training program opportunities, grants, and cost-share and loan programs.
- The Workforce Capacity Team should learn from the high-performing workforce training centers in the timber industry and use them as a model to develop other high-performing workforce training centers.
- The Workforce Capacity Team should research and contact the various job training programs to develop a workforce training curriculum. From each of these training centers, it would be helpful to learn how they train people, for what skills they are training, and what their curriculums look like. They could serve as a model for developing training efforts throughout Colorado.
- The Workforce Capacity Team should identify the industry needs for workforce training (e.g., what type of training, skills needed, number of employees needed, etc.), particularly at the statewide level, to help the Workforce Capacity Team set priorities and objectives. For example, there is a need for truck drivers across the state, but the number of truck drivers needed has not been quantified. It is important to identify current needs but also consider future needs in the timber industry. There is anecdotal evidence that workforce training and retention continues to be a challenge for industry partners. There may be an opportunity to identify these needs through the NAU grant.
- The biomass industry is a subcategory of the timber industry that could use workforce development. The Workforce Capacity Team should think about the overall workforce capacity of the timber industry, including exploring industry from the logging, milling, and

manufacturing perspectives as well as specialized products (e.g., industrial pellets, cross-laminated timber, biomass energy, etc.).

- A survey would be a helpful tool to identify the current and future needs for workforce development, especially for logging companies and fuels contractors for which there is not a lot of workforce data. The University of Montana surveyed sawmills and manufacturers in the state, but they did not survey logging companies or fuel contractors. Colorado State University also surveyed hazardous fuel contractors, but it was a small survey and collected only general information, like the size of the business and number of employees. CSFS maintains a list of contractors and wood businesses in the state, and each National Forest also maintains a list of contractors. Kelle Reynolds can contact that USFS Region 2 Regional Office to obtain the list of contractors with support from Jamie Nogle if needed. Tim Reader will gather information on what resources are needed to develop and distribute a survey to industry partners with a focus on logging companies and fuel contractors. The USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station may be able to help with surveys, but the Workforce Capacity Team will wait until they have developed their scope further to contact them.
- The Workforce Capacity Team should organize a webinar to bring together industry and training program representatives. A goal of the webinar would be to hear from those who are trying to develop the workforce, identify their needs, and determine what types of questions the Workforce Capacity Team should ask via a survey. The Workforce Capacity Team should use the information from the USFS's list of contractors, the one-pager on existing training opportunities, and data collected in Southwest Colorado to discuss what information already exists, what is needed, and where they are information gaps before the webinar.

NEXT STEPS

- Dr. Han from NAU will be meeting with the RMRI-SW Steering Committee in the middle of May to share NAU's past experiences and future goals related to biomass utilization. It is uncertain whether he will be discussing the NAU grant.
- Jamie Nogle will send a contact list of RMRI partners who are currently offering training or would be interested in doing so in the future.
- Samuel Wallace and Heather Bergman will prepare slides for Molly Pitts to give an update on the Workforce Capacity Team during the full RMRI meeting on May 1. The Workforce Capacity Team will provide updates on their current efforts, but they will wait until they have developed their scope of work further before they make any requests of the RMRI partners.
- The next Workforce Capacity Team meeting will be on May 21 from 9am to 11am. Samuel Wallace will send out a Doodle to schedule a date for the webinar between industry and training program representatives during the week of June 8.