

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
December 7, 2020, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
RMRI Social License Subcommittee
Meeting Summary - FINAL**

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Rob Addington, Daniel Beveridge, Cindy Dozier, Tim Kylo, Matt Lindler, Nathan Van Schaik, Tara Umphries, and Kirk Will

Facilitation: Patt Dorsey and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Kirk Will	Share stories and photos that display how the Cameron Peak Fire was impacted by prescribed fires in the Poudre Canyon in the success stories database.
Patt Dorsey and Samuel Wallace	Develop a calendar for the Social License Subcommittee meetings for 2021.

RMRI LEADERSHIP TEAM DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed social license topics that need to be elevated to the Leadership Team. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Leadership Team is meeting on Monday, December 14. The Leadership Team will be discussing needs from the landscapes and subcommittees. Since the Leadership Team meets once a year, this is an opportunity for the Social License Subcommittee to elevate any needs they have to the Leadership Team.
- The role of the Leadership Team is to annually evaluate RMRI, provide recommendations, and internally direct their staff. The RMRI Stakeholder Group is the primary decision-makers of RMRI, not the Leadership Team. The subcommittees role is to complete work that is not particular to a single landscape.
- The Leadership Team should be reminded of the risk that watersheds face from wildfires, particularly after the 2020 fire season. The need for forest management to protect water supplies for municipalities and communities should be elevated to the Leadership Team. There is not necessarily an action item related to this topic other than making sure the Leadership Team receives the message.
- A discussion of the 2020 fire season during the Leadership Team is timely. There was a recent Denver Post article about logging in the era of megafires and the importance of being proactive with fire management. Following the 2020 fire season, it is important to capitalize on discussions about forest management before the general public forgets.
- There is a need to discuss the method of delivery for the social license messages in each landscape. The RMRI Stakeholder Group will likely be a better fit for that discussion than the Leadership Team.
- Some collaborative groups around the state have said that they are not receiving information about RMRI. There is a general lack of information, transparency, and clarity around RMRI that needs to be addressed. One challenge is that RMRI distributes a large amount of information, so it is difficult to keep up with RMRI updates. The Leadership Team should discuss these communication challenges during their meeting.
- Some people have said that they are having trouble contacting RMRI representatives via email and phone calls. The RMRI website is a good source of information, and the link to the website should be shared more frequently.

- One challenge for the Leadership Team to discuss is how to get information from RMRI partners to the Communications and Social License Subcommittees. The Communications Subcommittee will release a social media plan, which will rely on the creation of communication channels between the subcommittees and RMRI partners.

SOCIAL LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Social License Subcommittee work plan outlines that the next several steps for the Social License Subcommittee are to 1) complete key messages, 2) begin collecting forest treatment and fire behavior success stories, 2) develop an outreach/implementation strategy to advance RMRI's social license goals, and 4) develop school programs and curriculums. There is not a timeline for the last step of the work plan. Social License Subcommittee members agreed on the work plan.

FOREST RESTORATION DEFINITION DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the definition of "forest restoration" to include in the social license key messages document. Their comments are summarized below.

- Nathan Van Schaik developed three definitions for forest restoration. Two definitions are one sentence in length, while the third definition is in paragraph form. The two one-sentence definitions are:
 1. "Multi-partner, cross-landscape management leading to desired outcomes for water, communities, wildlife, and recreation"
 2. "A process of assisting the recovery of forest landscapes to more resilient, resistant and multi-use conditions, leading to desired outcomes for water, communities, wildlife, and recreation"
- The second definition focuses on desired outcomes for water, communities, wildlife, and recreation because those are the four values of RMRI. The four values are what make this second definition unique to RMRI and should be kept in the definition.
- The second definition is the better version of the two definitions because it is broad and incorporates the concepts of resiliency and multi-use. The second definition is also similar to the Society for Ecological Restoration's definition, which defines restoration as a process.
- The language "desired outcomes" in the second definition should be changed to "positive outcomes." The general public would not understand the verbiage "desired outcomes," which may lead to confusion and uncertainty. One benefit of using "desired outcomes" in the definition is it allows the definition to fit a wide variety of landscapes and projects.
- Meeting participants agreed that the definition of forest restoration should be "a process of assisting the recovery of forest landscapes to more resilient, resistant, and multi-use conditions that lead to positive outcomes for water, communities, wildlife, and recreation."

SOCIAL LICENSE KEY MESSAGES DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the social license key messages. Their comments are summarized below.

- Kirk Will provided messages about prescribed fires. The messages focus on the fact that although prescribed fires are risky, it is still possible to plan, conduct risk assessments, and minimize risk for prescribed fires. With wildfires, firefighters do not have the same options to manage risk. The idea of using prescribed fire is to ultimately reduce risk and manage the landscape in comparison to wildfire. Meeting participants supported adding these messages to the key messages document.
- There is a message that states that prescribed fire is a risk but that not taking action is a bigger risk. The word "not" in that statement should be bolded and underlined to emphasize the riskiness of doing nothing.

- Patt Dorsey added key messages related to the cost-benefit of forest mitigation. The cost-benefit analysis cited in this message should be attributed to the Fire Adapted Communities Coalition. This message should also highlight that this cost-benefit analysis is one of many examples.
- There is an added economic message on how for every dollar generated by cutting timber, that dollar is turned over seven times in a community.
- The figure that says that for every dollar spent on forest mitigation results in three dollars saved in wildfire suppression and management is complicated because it depends on the values of houses in a community. The message will need to be fact-checked before it is finalized. The message will be included at the end of the document as a potential future message.
- Some unfinished messages were added to the end of the document. These messages are still in development and are not ready to be sent to the Communications Subcommittee. However, the Social License Subcommittee can continue to develop these messages at a future date. Meeting participants agreed to add unfinished messages to the end of the document for future consideration.
- Meeting participants supported finalizing the key messages document and starting to develop a strategy for the distribution of the messages.

SUCCESS STORIES DATABASE DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed a database to collect success stories. Their comments are summarized below.

- Nathan Van Schaik developed a database to collect success stories. The idea of the database is to share and highlight stories on the benefits of forest mitigation projects. Stories can be an especially powerful messaging tool.
- The database only asks for a small amount of information from people to make the barriers to submitting stories low. The information requested to post a story in the database includes when the story took place, a short description that answers the 5 w's (who, what, when, where, and why), a link to the story, and contact information.
- The success stories database will give the Communications Subcommittee a starting point to leverage success stories in their communication channels. Ultimately, the goal of communications is not only to provide information but also to inspire behavior change.
- Meeting participants supported the success stories database in its current form.
- The Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) and Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) are monitoring the fires in Northern Colorado. As more information is collected by RMRS and CFRI on the efficacy of treatments, it will be good to include them into this database. It will still be a while until there is data available.
- Kirk Will has pictures that show how a prescribed fire slowed down the Cameron Peak Fire in the Poudre Canyon and can share it in the success stories database.
- The Social License Subcommittee should discuss whether they should be open to people submitting stories on the RMRI website to include in the database. The stories would be truly anecdotal, so it may be difficult to confirm and validate the stories.
- Many of the success stories in the database come from other sources, like the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network webpage. The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network has a staff member in Boulder that could talk to the Social License Subcommittee about partnering to share stories.

KEY MESSENGER DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed who the key messengers should be for different audiences. Their comments are summarized below.

- In the past, the Social License Subcommittee began identifying audiences and defining who the messengers should be and what the messaging medium should be for each audience.
- In addition to defining key audiences, the Social License Subcommittee could begin to reach out to landscapes to have them define their key audiences and select messages.
- Different audiences for the social license key messages and their associated potential messengers include:
 - Forest collaboratives (e.g., Dolores Watershed Forest Resilient Forest Collaborative):
 - People with a connection to both the collaborative RMRI
 - Recreators (e.g., hunters, mountain bikers):
 - Organizations/people connected with a specific recreation type (i.e., hunters and Colorado Parks and Wildlife, mountain bikers and trail organizations, and local snowmobile groups)
 - Department of Natural Resources
 - Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office
 - Ski Conservation Fund under the National Forest Foundation
 - National Wild Turkey Federation
 - Mule Deer Foundation
 - The Nature Conservancy
 - US Forest Service
 - People with little/no knowledge of forests
 - Firefighting community
 - Public officials and representatives (e.g., commissioners, mayors)
 - County administrators and public information officers
 - Visitor information centers
 - Colorado Department of Transportation's highway signs
 - Law enforcement
 - Ages 18-34
 - Authority and known figures (e.g., Greta Thunberg)
 - Ages 35-50
 - Firefighting community
 - Realtors insurance
 - Victims of forest fires
 - Ages 50+
 - Private landowners
 - Decision-makers and policy leadership
 - Water community
 - Funding sources/donors (private and public)
 - Livestock associations/agricultural community
 - Urban/WUI communities
 - Colorado Counties, Inc. and Colorado Municipal League
 - Youth/school programs
 - Real estate and insurance
- For people in the age 18-34 age group, potential messaging media includes podcasts and social media. For people in the ages 35-50 age group, potential messaging media includes podcasts, public service announcements (radio, TV), and public meetings.

NEXT STEPS

- Meeting participants agreed to schedule the Social License Subcommittee regularly. They supported scheduling the meeting once a month on Mondays at 1:30 pm. Samuel Wallace and Patt Dorsey will develop a calendar for 2021 for the Social License Subcommittee meetings.
- The next full RMRI meeting will be on Tuesday, January 12 at 1 pm. Someone from the Social License Subcommittee will give an update during that meeting.
- Topics for the next Social License Subcommittee meeting are:
 - Whether to have members of the public submit anecdotal stories to include in the success stories database
 - Identifying key audiences, messengers, and messaging media