

Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
January 12, 2021, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Virtual Meeting
Meeting Summary - FINAL

ATTENDANCE:

Participants: Samantha Albert, Brian Banks, Eugene Backhaus, Alan Bittner, Jacque Buchanan, Kristin Cannon, Kara Chadwick, Pat Donovan, Patt Dorsey, Cindy Dozier, Clint Evans, Jeff Gainey, Allen Gallamore, Timothy Gilloon, Aaron Green, Andrea Harbin Monahan, Aaron Kimple, Tim Kylo, Damon Lange, Jason Lawhon, Mike Lester, Paige Lewis, Matt Lindler, Mark Loveall, Tim Mauck, Susan Matthews, Frank McCormick, Mike McHugh, Pat Mercer, Erin Minks, Tricia O'Conner, Emily Olsen, Paul Orbuch, Jim Pitts, Molly Pitts, Mike Preston, Kelle Reynolds, Lauren Ris, Marcus Selig, Mark Shea, Travis Smith, Tom Spezze, Jodi Stemler, Amy Titterington, Jeff Todd, Diana Trujillo, Tara Umphries, Nathan Van Schaik, Josh Voorhis, Chris West, Amanda West Fordham, John Whitney, Cindy Williams, Scott Woods, Peter Wyrsh, and Chris Yuan-Farrell

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Heather Bergman	Send out the contact information for Senator Bennet's staff and information on the US Forest Service Wood Innovations grant applications for any RMRI partners who want to write letters of support on behalf of their organization or as an individual.
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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Patt Dorsey, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), and Tricia O'Conner and Jacque Buchanan, US Forest Service (USFS), gave introductory remarks. Their comments are summarized below.

- There were many challenges in 2020, but 2021 represents a new opportunity to accomplish work on the ground.
- Tricia O'Conner, the current acting regional forester, will be in the position for a couple of more weeks. Tammy Angel will be acting regional forester once Tricia O'Conner leaves the position. Jacque Buchanan will continue to be the primary USFS Region 2 Office contact for RMRI.
- Jacque Buchanan was on detail for five months but has returned to the Region 2 Office and is working with RMRI. The USFS is committed to continuing work on critical priority areas. The Region 2 Office is also in conversation with the Washington Office to secure RMRI funding.

INTRODUCTORY POLLING QUESTIONS

Meeting participants were polled on three questions. The polling results can be found in Appendix A of this document.

RMRI ROADMAP OVERVIEW

Patt Dorsey, NWTF, gave an overview of RMRI's progress over the past one and a half years. Her comments are summarized below.

- In February 2019, a small group of people met during the NWTF convention and proposed increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration in the Rocky Mountain region.

- In May 2019, a group of stakeholders met in Colorado to discuss the concept of RMRI. They outlined four values for forest restoration: water, wildlife/forests, communities, and recreation.
- In July 2019, a larger group of Colorado stakeholders met and agreed on the four values. From there, they identified three focal regions to potentially conduct work: the I-70 Corridor, Southwest Colorado, and the Front Range.
- In September 2019, RMRI partners outlined the process for accepting project proposals, the proposal criteria, and the timeline for submission. They then held meetings in all three focal areas to share information about RMRI with potential stakeholders.
- In October/November 2019, eight collaborative groups submitted project proposals, and seven presented their proposals to RMRI partners.
- In December 2019, RMRI partners chose to focus efforts in Southwest Colorado and selected the Upper Arkansas and Upper South Platte as additional priority landscapes to support. They also identified four cross-cutting issues to address.
- Since December 2019, subcommittees have been meeting and getting work done. RMRI partners also heard presentations from Southwest Colorado in April, the Upper South Platte in June, and the Upper Arkansas in July. In their presentations, the landscapes identified their goals, needs, and challenges.
- The Leadership Team has met twice: once in October 2020 and once in December 2020. Before the Leadership Team meeting, the RMRI Support Team reached out to the priority landscapes and subcommittees and asked what needs they would like to elevate to the RMRI Leadership Team. The Leadership Team used those needs to develop recommendations for the RMRI Stakeholder Group, subcommittees, and landscapes.
- In 2020, RMRI partners shared investments and accomplishments:
 - RMRI partners aligned values across Colorado and identified priority landscapes.
 - Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), Gates Family Foundation, and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) aligned Restoration and Stewardship of Outdoor Resources and the Environment (RESTORE) funding with RMRI landscapes. The RESTORE program granted \$150,000 for restoration work in Southwest Colorado and \$350,000 for restoration work in the Upper Arkansas.
 - Agencies, like the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), and DNR, aligned agency capacity and operational funding with the landscapes
 - The Southwest Ecological Restoration Institute's (SWERI) received a 2020 Wood Innovations Grant to help increase forest restoration capacity in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico.
 - The Innovative Finance for National Forests grant program awarded funding to the Southwest Wildfire Impact Funding in Southwest Colorado to fund private land projects.
 - The USFS received \$4 million in end-of-year funding for the Pike and San Isabel National Forests and Comanche and Cimarron Grasslands (PSICC) and the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) because RMRI partners were able to identify statewide priority landscapes.

SOUTHWEST COLORADO POLLING QUESTIONS

Meeting participants were polled on questions related to the Southwest Colorado update. The polling results can be found in Appendix B of this document.

SOUTHWEST COLORADO UPDATE PRESENTATION

Jason Lawhon, USFS, presented updates on the Southwest Colorado landscape. His comments are summarized below.

- RMRI is different than the Collaborative Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) and Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Program. In the CFLRP and Joint Chiefs' Programs, partners put together a proposal and either receive funding or not. RMRI and Shared Stewardship are about how partners plan together and collectively invest into a landscape.
- The Southwest Colorado update is meant to tell the collective story about how partners are coming together to achieve shared accomplishments on the ground
- The presentation is framed through the elements of Shared Stewardship: joint prioritization, cross-boundary strategy, outcomes at scale, and investments at scale.

Joint Prioritization

- The Southwest Colorado partners began working on projects over a year ago. While RMRI partners were setting up a process and holding meetings, Southwest Colorado partners were collecting priorities and identifying areas where treatments could make the most impact.
- The joint prioritization efforts facilitated cross-collaborative learning and brought partners together around a shared vision in Southwest Colorado. Partners identified a 750,000-acre landscape as a high priority for treatment.

Cross-Boundary Strategy

- Once partners identified a high-priority landscape, there were questions on how to generate funding and align programs to accomplish work on-the-ground. The RESTORE program is a great example of Shared Stewardship because agencies and foundations pooled resources, identified priorities, and aligned priorities with Southwest Colorado. Southwest Colorado partners also developed the Southwest Wildfire Impact Fund as a private lands funding strategy to increase the pace and scale of private lands treatment in Southwest Colorado. Southwest Colorado partners can use the Southwest Wildfire Impact Fund to align private land treatments with public land treatments. In the Forest Action Plan, the CSFS included RMRI landscapes among their highest priorities. Lastly, Southwest Colorado partners submitted a CFLRP grant and had their proposal ranked as a top-three project in the country. All these programs come together to form a landscape-scale strategy.
- There are other ways partners are aligning to achieve collective accomplishments in Southwest Colorado:
 - By selecting Southwest Colorado as a priority landscape, RMRI partners have indicated to the USFS and state agencies that Southwest Colorado is a priority for investment.
 - The San Juan National Forest is working with the timber industry to align product development and operations with forest health treatments. In return, Montrose Forest Products invested \$20 million into their facilities, and other industry partners invested \$45 million. As a result of the alignment between industry and the USFS, the San Juan National Forest is one of the nation's top producers and has helped build the local economy and develop jobs. It also reduces the costs of treatments.
 - The CSFS and NRCS worked with American Forest Foundation (AFF) to increase forester capacity. The increased forester capacity allowed Southwest Colorado partners to develop six private land management plans and treat 1,300 acres of private land treatments.

- The Southwest Colorado Impact Fund received initial funds from water conservation districts, local foundations, and banks. They then secured funding from the Walton Family Foundation, Gates Family Foundation, and the Innovative Finance for National Forests federal grant program to fund private land treatments.
- The San Juan National Forest received a RESTORE grant through the GOCO, NFWF, Gates Family Foundation, and DNR partnership.
- Local collaboratives, such as the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative, and the Four Rivers Collaborative, helped develop the CFLRP proposal and move partners forward on consensus-based decisions.
- The NWTF used its channels to invest in multiple positions, communication support, and facilitation services. The USFS generated an additional \$3.2 million for Southwest Colorado.

Outcomes at Scale

- Through joint prioritization and cross-boundary strategies, Southwest Colorado partners were able to achieve outcomes at scale.
- Southwest Colorado partners have used their selection as an RMRI priority landscape to apply for grants and highlight collective accomplishments, shared values, and shared priorities. A shared vision helps partners to tell one collective story. Southwest Colorado partners have reached better outcomes as a result of developing a shared vision.
- In 2020, multiple groups invested in private land treatments, totaling 2,100 acres on 135 different properties:
 - Fire Adapted Colorado completed five projects, totaling over 40 acres.
 - The City of Durango treated 10 acres with the CSFS, benefitting 55 landowners.
 - The CSFS completed 350 acres through Good Neighbor Agreements.
 - NRCS worked with private landowners, completing over 16 projects on 400 acres.
 - Montrose Forest Products completed a project that treated 1,600 acres of private land.
- The USFS was able to complete 22 vegetation management projects on 25,000 acres. They also conducted seven recreation projects to improve trails, decommission roads, and install signage in high-use areas.
- In outcomes, Southwest Colorado partners treated over 20,000 acres to benefit communities, 4,800 acres to benefit water, 14,000 acres to benefit wildlife and forests, and seven recreation projects. In total, they treated 26,000 acres, which represents 84% of their 2020 goal.

Looking Ahead

- Southwest Colorado partners are refining their collaborative strategic planning process. They are using different planning tools, from potential operational delineations (PODs) to fire risk assessments, to prioritize treatments based on the RMRI values. Southwest Colorado partners are aggregating and weighing the different data sets from existing priority planning tools to develop a priority map to further inform decisions and prioritize treatments. They are continuing to refine this planning tool for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning and project identification in 2022 and 2023.
- Southwest Colorado partners are reaching out to 130 stakeholders to provide input on their new prioritization process. They will use the results from that outreach to generate near-term and long-term priorities.
- COVID impacted the ability of the USFS to use prescribed fire, which delayed some project treatments.

- In 2020, Southwest Colorado partners relied on one big project for most of their private land treatment acres. In future years, there may not be one large private land project to contribute to acreage totals. Southwest Colorado partners will need help to increase their private land treatment capacity to reach private land acreage targets in the future.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants asked several clarifying questions about the Southwest Colorado update. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding answers in plain text.

Can Jason Lawhon give the Southwest Colorado update presentation to other groups?

Yes. RMRI partners can reach out to Jason Lawhon privately if they want him to present at other meetings.

Is the Southwest Colorado update presentation on the RMRI website?

Yes.

What is the prioritization tool, and when will it be finished?

- The prioritization tool is called Transparent Choice. The tool is not a projection or model; instead, it will be aggregating and weighing different data sets to identify areas of the highest priority.
- The RMRI-Southwest Colorado Steering Committee has been developing the tool over the past several months. Stakeholder partners and the Southwest Colorado Advisory Group have been providing input on the values. So far, 130 people have provided feedback on the tool, and the deadline for input is on Friday, January 15. It will take the Steering Committee a month to roll-up the results of the community input. They should be ready with outcomes from their prioritization effort in late spring/early summer.

BIOMASS UTILIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE POLLING QUESTIONS

Meeting participants were polled on questions related to the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee before and after their update. The polling results can be found in Appendix C of this document.

BIOMASS UTILIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Molly Pitts, Colorado Timber Industry Association, gave an update on the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee's 2020 accomplishments and 2021 work plan. Her comments are summarized below.

- The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee is a large group. RMRI partners recognize the importance of biomass utilization in increasing the pace and scale of treatments.
- In 2020, the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee connected with the Colorado Energy Office to talk about overlapping priorities. They also met with the Colorado Department of Agriculture to promote the use of Colorado wood products and biochar applications. The Subcommittee also hosted a biomass energy webinar, during which representatives from USFS Region 5 and the Gypsum biomass power plant shared their lessons learned on developing biomass energy. The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee used information from these meetings to build a framework on the challenges and opportunities for biomass utilization in Colorado.
- In 2021, the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee will work with the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to identify opportunities to use Colorado wood products, like wood straw, for post-fire rehabilitation. They are also planning on creating an informational framework for biomass capacity in each of the three landscapes. They are also working on

spreading awareness and promoting Colorado wood products via the Colorado Proud program and developing factsheets to highlight the true value of biomass. Lastly, the Subcommittee continues to explore credible biomass energy opportunities.

- The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee is organizing pilot projects to use Colorado wood products for post-fire rehabilitation on the Grizzly Creek Fire and biochar for agricultural applications.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE POLLING QUESTIONS

Meeting participants were polled on questions related to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee before and after their update. The polling results can be found in Appendix D of this document.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Molly Pitts, Colorado Timber Industry Association, gave an update on the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee's 2020 accomplishments and 2021 work plan. Her comments are summarized below.

- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is much smaller than the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee, with five regular members. Anyone interested in joining the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should reach out to Molly Pitts and Tim Reader.
- In 2020, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee connected with Colorado workforce centers in the San Luis Valley and Southwest Colorado to share information on the forest and resilience industry. Workforce centers are a resource for forest businesses when they are hiring people. One goal of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee in 2021 is to host a webinar for workforce centers across the state. The webinar would focus on teaching workforce centers about the forest and resilience industry and identifying opportunities to train and hire people.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee worked with Northern Arizona University (NAU) to distribute surveys to logging companies and stewardship contractors to collect data on their workforce capacity and needs. The University of Montana has previously collected data on manufacturing businesses in Colorado, but there is not much data on contractors and loggers. The survey response rate has not been great so far, but they expect to have a greater number of responses moving forward.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is currently working with Honnen Equipment to acquire a forestry equipment simulator for training in Southwest Colorado. Real forestry equipment is expensive, and it is a big liability to have a new employee operate the equipment without training. There is the potential for a simulator to be used for training across the state to teach people how to operate forestry equipment and recruit people to join the forest and resilience industry.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is working on getting the forestry and resilience industry recognized as a growth industry in the 2021 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report. Getting recognized as a growth industry in the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report will help forest businesses access state programs. The information being collected by the NAU survey will help the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee develop the pitch to the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report authors to include the forest and resilience industry as a growth industry.
- Workforce Capacity Subcommittee members have been researching logging and forestry equipment curriculums. They will use that information to work with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) to develop curriculums for two-year and four-year colleges in 2021. The Subcommittee invited administrators of training programs across the United States, including a Shasta College program that trains students in forestry equipment

operations and maintenance, forest ecosystems, and trucking, to participate in a webinar on January 27.

- A work item for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee in 2021 is to develop materials for high school students participating in Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H programs to introduce them to the forest and resilience industry.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants asked clarifying questions about the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee update. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding answers in plain text.

What are the skillsets and workforce capacity needs to support the forest industry in Colorado?

- The average age of a logger is 69, and the average age of a trucker is 70. The workforce is aging, and young people are not entering the industry. Colorado forest companies will not be able to support themselves as employees begin to retire. Forest industry jobs are tough, and not many people want to live in a trailer in a forest.
- The capital investments to start a forestry business are high, and not many people can get the loan necessary to launch a business. As the pace and scale of forest health treatments increase in Colorado, the forest industry workforce will also need to increase in capacity, or Colorado will need to recruit individuals from other states.

Comments and Feedback

Meeting participants provided feedback on the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee's work plan. Their comments are summarized below.

- Other aspects of the forestry workforce will be necessary to improve forest health, such as recreation planners and firefighters. As the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee develops, they should explore opportunities to increase the size of other aspects of the workforce.
- The USFS job corps is a good place to recruit and build a workforce.

SOCIAL LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE POLLING QUESTIONS

Meeting participants were polled on questions related to the Social License Subcommittee before and after their update. The polling results can be found in Appendix E of this document.

SOCIAL LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Cindy Dozier, Club 20, and Tim Kylo, Montrose Forest Products, gave an update on the Social License Subcommittee's 2020 accomplishments and 2021 work plan. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Social License Subcommittee is focused on how to get people to understand and accept smart forest policy.
- The Social License Subcommittee contains 14 individuals. In 2020, the Subcommittee added partners from the CSFS, Fire Adapted Colorado, and the Division of Fire Protection and Control (DFPC).
- The Social License Subcommittee developed three themes for their social license messaging: prescribed fire, fire adapted communities, and active forest management. For each theme, the Subcommittee developed key messages.
- In 2021, the Social License Subcommittee is focused on finalizing key messages and posting them on the RMRI website. RMRI partners can also use the RMRI website to follow what subcommittees are doing and discussing. The Subcommittee will also focus on collecting examples of forest treatment success stories to help people understand the necessity and value of being proactive in treating and maintaining forests. The Subcommittee will develop

an outreach/implementation strategy and dovetail work with the Communications Subcommittee to distribute messages. Lastly, the Subcommittee has discussed partnering with local schools and youth organizations to introduce a forest health learning curriculum.

- The communication materials that the Subcommittee develops will be important in distributing key messages. The Subcommittee is discussing how to get information to the general public and maximize the effectiveness of communication tools in a changing media landscape.
- In the 2021 season, the Social License Subcommittee wants to be involved in specific projects, like the Salter Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment, to distribute messages to the broader community before the projects begin.

UPPER ARKANSAS UPDATE

Cindy Williams, Envision Chaffee County, provided an update on the Upper Arkansas landscape. Her comments are summarized below.

- In February 2020, the Upper Arkansas partners signed and finalized their Next Generation Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which identified 5% of the landscape that needs to be treated to reduce 50% of the wildfire risk towards community-identified assets. The Upper Arkansas partners are looking to get that work completed by 2030, and they are on track. The Envision Forest Health Council is helping to lead the effort.
- Upper Arkansas partners are implementing the Chaffee Chips program. The Chaffee Chips program involves educating landowners on how to treat their land and providing county trailers to take the slash from treatments to county grinders. In the first year 185, landowners participated in the program, generating 485 piles and creating two firewise communities. The Upper Arkansas partners are looking to expand the program into Lake County.
- The Envision Forest Health Council is coordinating cross-jurisdictional projects to treat high priority areas. Projects are occurring throughout Chaffee County, but the marquee projects are the Methodist Front, Coyote Valley Road, and Railroad Bridge projects.
- The Methodist Front Project is a cross-jurisdictional treatment that extends from the Decker Fire perimeter across private lands and state lands and connects with National Forest lands. The project represents a ten-mile long fuel break and 8,000 acres of treatment. The treatment will help protect firefighters' lives, water resources, including drinking water for one million users and 60% of the gold medal trout habitat in Colorado, power and communication infrastructure, homes in Poncha Springs and Salida, and recreation assets. It will also enhance wildlife habitat through aspen regeneration. Local producers involved in the project will thin treatments on their agricultural lands to expand grazing opportunities and protect infrastructure, such as irrigation ditches.
- The Upper Arkansas partners have funded 500 acres of treatment on private lands in the Methodist Front Project with funding and support from the CSFS, RESTORE grant, the Chaffee Common Ground ballot initiative, and the City of Poncha Springs and Salida. Citizens provided \$800,000 to fund the project.
- The Chaffee Treats program aims to treat private lands, representing 30% of the priority acres in Chaffee County. Through the Chaffee Treats program, partners distributed flyers with information on why landowners should treat their property. The program targeted landowners in high-priority treatment areas to create a landscape-scale fire break and enhance forest health. In the first three months, the program has signed up 161 landowners. The next step is for partners to work with private landowners to implement treatments.
- The Upper Arkansas partners and many stakeholders are developing the Chaffee Recreation Plan, a county-wide all-lands plan with the goal of maintaining exceptional recreation

experiences while sustaining natural resources and the economic impact of recreation. Based on the Colorado Tourism Office, recreation in Chaffee County grew by 14% each year between 2015 and 2019. At the same rate of growth, Chaffee County would expect 8 million visitors per year by 2026. The Chaffee Recreation Plan will evaluate the current conditions of recreation impact and identify ways to enhance recreation opportunities while enhancing wildlife and forest health.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants asked clarifying questions about the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee update. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding answers in plain text.

What is the anticipated timeline for completing the Methodist Front Project?

The 500 acres of private land treatments are expected to be completed by 2021. The entire 8,000-acre project is on a longer timeline.

What is the ballot initiative that funds the Chaffee Common Ground initiative?

In 2018, Chaffee County passed a ballot initiative to increase the sales tax by 0.25% to generate funds to manage the impacts of outdoor recreation and improve forest health. In two years, the tax has generated \$2.4 million, and the Upper Arkansas partners have been able to match those funds 4:1.

Can the Upper Arkansas presentation be shared on the website?

Yes.

UPPER SOUTH PLATTE UPDATE

Brian Banks, USFS, provided an update on the Upper South Platte. His comments are summarized below.

- The PSICC hired Jake Todd to be the new partnership coordinator. He will help manage partnerships for the PSICC, including RMRI partnerships in the Upper Arkansas and Upper South Platte priority landscapes.
- The Pike Ranger District continues to work with Denver Water to implement treatments, including in Denver Water's zones of concerns in the Upper South Platte.
- The Upper South Platte Partnership (USPP) will be implementing a Good Neighbor Authority agreement in a project area known as Deer Creek. The most recent phase of the treatment will include 155 acres on non-federal lands. This project is the first one that the USPP has managed under a Good Neighbor Authority agreement. They hope to learn from this experience to become more effective and efficient in managing Good Neighbor Authority agreements in the future. They expect to complete the agreement by spring.
- The USFS is laying out treatments on National Forest land in the Jerome Miller project area. They are looking to get that project into a contract by late summer or early fall of 2021. Some of those projects abut private lands, so partners are looking at the opportunity to reach out to landowners to identify potential areas for another Good Neighbor Authority agreement.
- The USPP executed a 2021 agreement with the Mile High Youth Corps. They had 20 members of the youth corps working and burning piles on the Upper South Platte, which will increase more opportunities for prescribed fire.
- The USPP is implementing a noxious weed contract.
- The USPP is working with Colorado Forest Restoration Institute and The Nature Conservancy to conduct a landscape-scale NEPA analysis. They are working with other

Front Range entities, like the Front Range Roundtable Landscape Restoration Team, to launch that project.

- Individual partners in the Upper South Platte are making progress on various programs. The Forest Stewards Guild is creating informational videos on prescribed burning. The Elk Creek Fire Protection District received a grant to support their chipping program. The Jefferson Conservation District is working with Denver Mountain Parks and Jefferson County Open Space to apply for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant.
- Several projects are being developed with future potential funding mechanisms. The CSFS with the Jefferson Conservation District submitted applications for the Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) grant program.
- The USPP submitted a Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Program application, and they are waiting to hear back on the results.
- The USPP's greatest need is a watershed coordinator. They are requesting funding to help support that position to coordinate grant efforts and assist with project planning in the Upper South Platte.

UPPER SOUTH PLATTE AND UPPER ARKANSAS POLLING QUESTIONS

Meeting participants were polled on questions related to the Upper South Platte and Upper Arkansas updates. The polling results can be found in Appendix F of this document.

LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE AND RMRI STAKEHOLDER GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Tara Umphries, USFS, provided updates from the RMRI Leadership Team meetings and shared information on their recommendations to the RMRI Stakeholder Group. Her comments are summarized below.

- The RMRI Leadership Team's role is to help raise awareness and act as a liaison for RMRI, direct staff internally, provide recommendations to RMRI partners, and evaluate RMRI.
- The Leadership Team had two meetings: one in October and the other in December. In the December meeting, they identified stretch and minimum goals for 2021.
- Before the December meeting, members of the RMRI Support Team requested that landscape partners and subcommittees share their needs to elevate to the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team used those needs to develop recommendations for RMRI partners, subcommittees, and landscapes.
- There were three broad themes of the needs identified by landscapes and subcommittees: communications, leadership and governance, and funding and capacity.
- The communications theme included needs related to communicating goals externally and internally, sharing information about partner actions with the Communications Subcommittee, celebrating partner accomplishments, and increasing transparency.
- The governance and leadership theme was about removing barriers through legislation, tying priority landscapes into the State Water Plan and Shared Stewardship, increasing engagement from the recreation community and Bureau of Land Management, and increasing awareness of RMRI at the governor's level.
- The funding and capacity theme was about developing a sustainable source of funding for projects on private lands, cooperatively developing funding strategies, aligning the timing of various funding opportunities, developing funding opportunities for community planning efforts, increasing capacity for education and planning, and securing funding for additional support from the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute.
- The Leadership Team discussed these needs and developed recommendations for the priority landscapes, subcommittees, and RMRI Stakeholder Group. The four recommendations that the Leadership Team had for the Stakeholder Group were to:

- Bring USFS and DNR representatives to present during an RMRI meeting once the Shared Stewardship plan is released
- Determine whether they want to advocate for policy and, if so, define a process for policy advocacy (i.e., who advocates and how)
- Act as a matchmaker to align available funds with projects and use existing money to leverage more funding
- Elevate and shine a light on the landscapes that are accomplishing work on-the-ground, including landscapes beyond the three priority landscapes

OUTDOOR RESTORATION FORCE ACT OVERVIEW

John Whitney, Pat Donovan, and Erin Minks from Senator Michael Bennet's Office provided an overview of the Outdoor Restoration Force Act. Their comments are summarized below.

- After this past fire season, Senator Michael Bennet toured forest health projects occurring around Colorado. Following these discussions with on-the-ground stakeholders, Senator Bennet worked with his staff to draft the Outdoor Restoration Force Act.
- The Outdoor Restoration Force Act would provide \$20 billion to state and local governments, tribes, special districts, and non-profits to build capacity for on-the-ground projects. An additional \$40 billion would be allocated towards federal agencies, like the US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency, to fund existing and successful programs (e.g., CFLRP, Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration program, etc.).
- The Outdoor Restoration Force Act provides funding for forest treatments, but it also provides funding for other restoration efforts, such as mine reclamation and invasive species management.
- The bill establishes an advisory council and creates a public input mechanism to inform where funding should be directed.
- The Outdoor Restoration Force Act could help provide the funding to get ahead of the backlog of forest health treatments needed to reduce wildfire risk.
- RMRI partners can reach out to John Whitney, Pat Donovan, or Erin Minks with questions or feedback. Heather Bergman will send out the contact information for Senator Bennet's staff.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants asked clarifying questions about the Outdoor Restoration Force Act. Questions are indicated in italics with corresponding answers in plain text.

How does the Outdoor Restoration Force Act relate to legislation being proposed by Colorado Representative Joe Neguse?

The legislation proposed by Representative Neguse is about using funding for a civilian conservation corps. The Outdoor Restoration Force Act provides funding for a broader approach to conservation and restoration. The Outdoor Restoration Force Act includes funding to expand existing partnerships and collaboratives and make them eligible for stimulus funding. There is a growing coalition of western members of Congress that are interested in committing funding to forests.

RMRI STAKEHOLDER GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the Leadership Team recommendations from the RMRI Stakeholder Group. Their comments are summarized below.

- There have been several opportunities for advocacy since the Leadership Team meeting in December. The first opportunity for RMRI was to advocate for the Outdoor Restoration

Force Act. The second opportunity for RMRI was to provide letters of support for specific grant applications. In particular, RMRI was approached by Tim Reader, CSFS, to provide letters of support for two USFS Wood Innovations grant applications: one for a business in Ault to commercialize a process for using small-diameter timber and another for a business in Salida.

- There is no process for RMRI partners to advocate for legislation or submit letters of support on behalf of RMRI. Any RMRI partners interested in submitting letters of support for the USFS Wood Innovations grant applications or the Outdoor Restoration Force Act can write a letter of support on behalf of their organization or as an individual. In those letters of support, RMRI partners can say they are a member of RMRI so long as they make it clear that they are not writing on behalf of RMRI. RMRI partners should decide whether they want to develop a process to make it possible to advocate for legislation or write letters support on behalf of RMRI.
- The Outdoor Restoration Force Act aligns well with RMRI. The Act provides funding for capacity building for local governments and collaboratives. One challenge for many partners is a lack of resources. The Outdoor Restoration Force Act can help increase resources to accomplish work on-the-ground.
- RMRI should determine a process to advocate for legislation while recognizing that some federal agencies and RMRI partners are limited in their ability to advocate. Having the RMRI brand support legislation could be an important way to build resources.
- RMRI would be in a good position to apply for funding if the Outdoor Restoration Force Act passed. RMRI should prepare for additional funding by developing the instruments to get work done on-the-ground.

FULL RMRI POLLING QUESTIONS

Meeting participants were polled on questions, asking them to prioritize the RMRI Leadership Team recommendations, indicate whether they think RMRI is on the right track, and indicate their preference for the frequency of meetings in 2021. The polling results can be found in Appendix G of this document.

NEXT STEPS

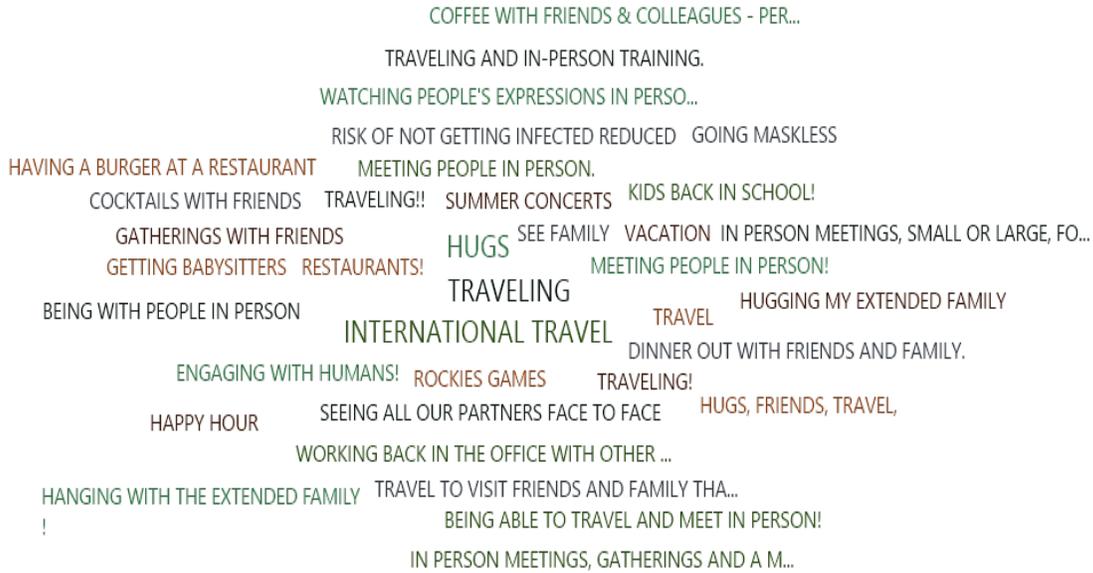
- The RMRI Support Team can use the prioritization results of the Leadership Team's recommendations to develop a work plan for RMRI in 2021.
- There was a preference among RMRI partners to meet quarterly. The next full RMRI meeting will be in April. In the meantime, the RMRI Support Team will convene a group of RMRI partners to discuss the Outdoor Restoration Force Act and the potential mechanisms to advocate for that legislation.

APPENDIX A – INTRODUCTORY POLLING QUESTIONS

Overview

Meeting participants were polled on three questions. The results of the polling questions are shared below in word clouds and tables. The box highlighted green indicates the correct answer for questions with correct answers.

What are you most looking forward to in post-COVID life?



Responses	Responses
Hugs	International Travel
Traveling	Being able to travel and meet in person!
Being with people in person	Cocktails with friends
Coffee with friends and colleagues – personal connection	Dinner out with friends and family
Engaging with humans!	Gathering with friends

Which of the following do you think are the roles and responsibilities of the RMRI stakeholder group? (select one)

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Provide leadership and staff subcommittees	0	0%
Work to fulfill identified support needs of RMRI-Southwest Colorado	0	0%

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Work to fulfill identified support needs of RMRI-Upper Arkansas and RMRI-Upper South Platte	4	10%
Build broad partnerships that bring political support and build potential funding and tools to achieve RMRI goals	7	17%
Provide a diverse cadre of subject matter experts to help overcome obstacles, fill gaps, and provide critical feedback	5	12%
All of the above	25	60%

What are you most looking forward to in RMRI in 2021?

GREATER LEVEL OF PARTNERSHIP INVESTMEN...
 ENGAGING WITH PARTNERS TO GET WORK DON...
 TREATING EVEN MORE LANDSCAPES
 VIEWING ON-THE-GROUND PROJECTS GETTING THINGS BACK TO NORMAL TO MOVE ...
 VISITING A PROJECT LOCATION. BEING ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE ON THE GROUND...
 ACRES ACCOMPLISHED ACROSS JURISDICTION... ON THE GROUND PROGRESS INSPIRING ACTION
 NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE RESOURCE...
 BEING ABLE TO VISIT ACCOMPLISHED WORK ... PROJECTS STARTED WORKING ON THE GROUND
 SEEING SW CO PROGRESS ON THE GROUND HEARING SUCCESS STORIES WITHIN OUR LAN...
 FUNDING REGIONAL WORK PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLARITY
 GOOD FIRES OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE W/ MEMBER... ACCOMPLISHING WORK ON THE GROUND
 IMPROVED FOREST HEALTH ON THE GROUND WORK ON THE PIKE ACTION
 STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION!! LEARNING WORKING TOGETHER
 GETTING WORK DONE ON THE GROUND ON THE GROUND IMPLEMENTATION WORK IN-PERSON MEETINGS!
 WORKING WITH CUTTING EDGE IDEAS GAINING MOMENTUM
 SUBSTANTIAL ACRES OF TREATMENT ACCELERATED IMPLEMENTATION
 THE INITIATIVE CONTINUING TO DEVELOP C...
 IMPROVED METHOD TO TRACK OUTCOMES AND ...

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Gaining momentum	Learning
Substantial acres of treatment	Action
Working together	On-the-ground implementation work
Funding regional work	Accelerated implementation
Improved forest health	Viewing on-the-ground projects
Project accomplishments	Treating even more landscapes
Getting things back to normal to move items forward to progressively attain our goals	Greater level of partnership investment and engagement, leading to robust accomplishments on the ground

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Acres accomplish across jurisdictional responsibilities	Improved method to track outcomes and accomplishments
Projects started	Working with cutting edge ideas
Continuing to develop collaboration and success	On-the-round work on the Pike National Forest
Inspiring action	Hearing success stories within our landscapes
Seeing Southwest Colorado progress on the ground	A collaboration of public and private forest champions
Good fires	Opportunities to collaborate with member organizations
New opportunities to leverage resources (funding/capacity) to increase pace and scale	Completing high priority work
Clarity	Demonstration of on-the-ground accomplishments
Expanding RMRI partnerships	

APPENDIX B – SOUTHWEST COLORADO POLLING QUESTIONS

Overview

Meeting participants were polled on four questions related to Southwest Colorado: three before the Southwest Colorado update presentation and one after. The results of the polling questions are shared below in word clouds and tables. The box highlighted green indicates the correct answer for questions with correct answers.

What percentage of their acreage targets do you think RMRI-Southwest Colorado partners achieved in 2020? (select one)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
36%	5	15%
58%	4	12%
84%	14	42%
103%	10	30%

Who do you think is doing the work in Southwest Colorado?



<i>Responses</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Timber industry through USFS contracts	Agencies and stewardship partners
Multiple/all partners	Federal and local forest service
RMRI partners	Contractors
Counties	CSFS in cooperation with NRCS on private lands
Jason Lawhon	Local businesses
USFS	San Juan National Forest through direct funding

Who do you think is paying for the work in Southwest Colorado?

FEDERAL AND PRIVATE PARTNERS MULTIPLE PARTNERS
 ALL PARTIES INVOLVED A BUNCH OF US, LED BY THE USFS
 ALL OF THE PARTNERS PARTNERS AND COLLABORATIVES
 JASON TAXPAYERS AND NON-PROFITS MANY PARTNERS.
 USFS, CSFS, FEDS AND STATE TAXPAYERS THE FOREST SERVICE
 USFS, CSFS GRANTS, NRCS TAX PAYERS THE STATE USFS EVERYONE!!
 USFS, NFWF, GOCO PARTNERS NRCS TIMBER INDUSTRY
 FOREST SERVICE TAXPAYERS THROUGH FS FUNDS ALL PARTNERS
 TAX PAYERS AND NUMEROUS PARTNER ENTITIES
 EVERYONE IS CHIPPING IN
 A BUNCH OF DIFFERENT SOURCES
 FOREST SERVICE, LOCAL PARTNERS

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Responses</i>
USFS	NFWF and GOCO
Multiple/all partners	Federal and private partners
Partners and collaboratives	The State
NRCS	Taxpayers through USFS funds
Taxpayers and non-profits	Many sources/everyone is chipping in
CSFS grants	Industry

Do you think RMRI-Southwest Colorado is on the right track?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Yes	28	90%
No	1	3%
Unsure	2	6%

APPENDIX C – BIOMASS UTILIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE POLLING QUESTIONS

Overview

Meeting participants were polled on four questions related to the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee: two before the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee update presentation and two after. The results of the polling questions are shared below in tables. The box highlighted green indicates the correct answer for questions with correct answers.

How many RMRI partners do you think participated in Biomass Utilization Subcommittee meetings in 2020? (select one)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
10 Partners	4	14%
14 Partners	8	29%
20 Partners	9	32%
25 Partners	7	25%

Which of the following agencies do you think joined Biomass Utilization Subcommittee meetings in 2020? (select all that apply)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Colorado Energy Office	22	31%
Colorado Department of Agriculture	22	31%
USFS Region 5	15	21%
US Department of Energy	13	18%

Do you think the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee is on the right track?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Yes	23	79%
No	1	3%
Unsure	5	17%

Of the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee's 2021 work plan items, which do you think should be the highest priority? (select one)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Advocate for the use of Colorado wood products and rehabilitation products in postfire recovery settings	8	29%
Create an informational framework on biomass industry capacity in the three priority landscapes	11	39%

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Compile and develop informational handouts on the true values of biomass utilization	1	4%
Continue the exploration of credible energy applications with local energy providers, including small scale power, thermal power, and biofuels	8	29%

APPENDIX D – WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE POLLING QUESTIONS

Overview

Meeting participants were polled on four questions related to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee: two before the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee update presentation and two after. The results of the polling questions are shared below in tables. The box highlighted green indicates the correct answer for questions with correct answers.

Which of the following projects do you think the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is working on? (select all that apply)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Acquiring a forestry training simulator	15	22%
Connecting established forestry equipment training programs with Colorado colleges	21	31%
Organizing field trips to take students to forestry treatments	13	19%
Increasing internship opportunities for forestry businesses	18	27%

In partnership with Northern Arizona University, how many Colorado forestry-related businesses do you think received surveys to collect information on their workforce capacity and needs? (select one)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
102 Businesses	6	25%
131 Businesses	6	25%
168 Businesses	8	33%
217 Businesses	4	17%

Do you think the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is on the right track?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Yes	21	84%
No	0	0%
Unsure	4	16%

Of the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee's 2021 work plan items, which do you think should be the highest priority? (select one)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Get the forest and resilience industry recognized as a growth industry in the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report	2	7%
Work with the Colorado Department of Higher Education to develop	8	29%

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
curriculum for two- and four-year colleges, including hands-on equipment operations		
Produce written material that could be used during career days at schools	0	0%
Educate Small Business Development Centers, Workforce Centers, and Colorado Department of Agriculture about the forest and resilience industry	18	64%

APPENDIX E – SOCIAL LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE POLLING QUESTIONS

Overview

Meeting participants were polled on three questions related to the Social License Subcommittee: one before the Social License Subcommittee update presentation and two after. The results of the polling questions are shared below in tables.

What do you see as a barrier to "social license" in using prescribed fire on the landscape? (select all that apply)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Smoke	18	31%
Fear – loss of control	23	40%
Aesthetics	8	14%
Cost	2	3%
Wildlife	3	5%
Other (provide in chat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of public understanding on why prescribed fire is important and how it is implemented</i> • <i>Uncertainty of whether smoke is from a wildfire or prescribed fire</i> 	4	7%

Do you think the Social License Subcommittee is on the right track?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Yes	26	93%
No	1	4%
Unsure	1	4%

If yes, which of these steps do you think are most important for developing an implementation strategy? (select one)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Identify specific needs in each landscape and statewide	11	38%
Identify targeted audiences & messengers	10	34%
Identify best communications tools and/or media for distributing messages	8	28%

APPENDIX F – UPPER SOUTH PLATTE AND UPPER ARKANSAS POLLING QUESTIONS

Overview

Meeting participants were polled on two questions related to the Upper South Platte and Upper Arkansas landscapes after their updates. The results of the polling questions are shared below in word clouds and tables.

Knowing that funding and bandwidth are limited in the Upper South Platte, what information would you like to see in future updates from the Upper South Platte?

MAPPING OF HOW TREATMENTS ARE LAYING O...
 GREATEST IMMEDIATE NEED(S) FROM RMRI P...
 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL COLLABORAT...
 TOTAL ACCOMPLISHMENT IN LANDSCAPE BENE...
 WHICH PARTNERS DID WORK ON THE GROUND
 OUTCOMES
 SUMMARIES AND RESOURCE NEEDS, WHEN DEE...
 SMALL, DISCRETE THINGS WHERE WE MIGHT ...
 WHAT PERCENTAGE OF USP WORK IS BEING D...
 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERS TO PROVIDE ...
 HOW THE GROUP IS WORKING WITH PARTNERS...
 NEEDS FROM PARTNERS AND STRATEGIES TO ...
 IDENTIFY TARGET AREAS FOR PROJECT IMPL...

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Needs from partners and strategies to address	Outcomes
Summaries and resource needs, when deemed necessary	Identification of potential collaborative projects
Percentage of Upper South Plate work being done within the RMRI landscape	Small, discrete things where RMRI might be able to help
Total accomplishment in landscape benefiting four RMRI values	Opportunities for partners to provide support to achieve Upper South Platte objectives
Mapping of how treatments are laying out and costs per acre	How the group is working with partners to treat non-federal lands
Which partners did work on the ground	Information on their wins
Greatest immediate need(s) from RMRI partners	Identify targets areas for project implementation

Knowing that funding and bandwidth are limited in the Upper Arkansas, what information would you like to see in future updates from the Upper Arkansas?

KEY SOCIAL LICENSE EFFORTS TO SHARE AR...

IMMEDIATE NEEDS FROM RMRI

IDEAL PROJECT TIMELINES TO FACILITATE ...

SUMMARIES OF PROJECTS FUNDED BY ENVISION

TOTAL INVESTMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENT OF...

SHARE THEIR AWESOME WINS OUTCOMES

SMALL, DISCRETE PIECES WHERE WE CAN HELP

SCIENCE NEEDS TO SUPPORT WORK?

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS AND LEVERAGE O...

TARGETED PROJECT AREAS AND FUNDING NEEDS

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL COLLABORAT...

A VISUAL LAYOUT OF THE TOTAL PROJECT A...

LAKE COUNTY PROGRESS OF ADOPTING CHAFF...

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Outcomes	Summaries of projects funded by Envision
Identification of potential collaborative projects to amplify outcomes	Small, discrete things where RMRI might be able to help
Lake County progress in adopting the Chaffee model	Immediate needs from RMRI
A visual layout of the total project area and what the current projects are	Total investment and accomplishment of projects/investments/things benefiting four RMRI values
Share their awesome wins	Science needs to support work
Ideal project timelines to facilitate project support	Successful partnerships and leverage of resources
Key social license efforts to share around the state	Targeted project areas and funding need

APPENDIX G – FULL RMRI POLLING QUESTIONS

Overview

Meeting participants were polled on three questions related to the full RMRI partners. The results of the polling questions are shared below in tables.

What is the highest priority for work by the RMRI partners? (rank all four recommendations)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Weighted Count</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Bring USFS and DNR representatives to present during an RMRI meeting once the Shared Stewardship plan is released	72	18%
Determine whether they want to advocate for policy and, if so, define a process for policy advocacy (i.e., who advocates and how)	114	28%
Act as a matchmaker to align available funds with projects and use existing money to leverage more funding	115	29%
Elevate and shine a light on the landscapes that are accomplishing work on-the-ground, including landscapes beyond the three priority landscapes	91	23%
Other (provide in chat) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bring more financial resources to address needs identified</i> 	11	3%

Overall, do you think RMRI is on the right track?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Yes	24	96%
No	0	0%
Unsure	1	4%

How frequently do you think the full RMRI partnership needs to meet in 2021 to fulfill our purpose? (select one)

<i>Response</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Percentage of Responses</i>
Every month	2	7%
Every other month	8	28%
Quarterly	13	45%
Twice a year	6	21%
As needed/no preference	0	0%