

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
October 21, 2021, 10-11 a.m.
Communications Subcommittee Meeting Summary - FINAL**

ATTENDANCE: Cindy Dozier, Tim Kylo, Kate McIntire, Teddy Parker-Renga, Rebecca Robbins, Christina Sukach, Tara Umphries, Nathan Van Schaik

10/21 ACTION ITEMS:

Nathan Van Schaik	Using RMRI messaging feedback, revise and craft updated messaging. Send to RMRI Communications Subcommittee
Comms Subcommittee members	If interested in supporting the RMRI Accomplishments/Outcomes workshops, contact Nathan at Nathaniel.vanschaik@usda.gov or at 720-584-6571.

AGENDA

- RMRI communications update
- Discuss accomplishments/outcomes workshop
- Input on RMRI messaging

RMRI COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

- Nathan will release October 'RMRI Monthly Update' Fri, Oct. 22, 2021. Send submission to Nathan no later than close of business Oct. 21.
- The RMRI newsletter, 'The Source', is with USFS editors. Once Nathan receives, he will release.
- The next issue of 'The Source' will come out in December and focus on RMRI Subcommittees. The issue after that will focus on RMRI outcomes/accomplishments in February 2022. We can use data from RMRI accomplishments/outcomes workshops in November to feed the February issue.

RMRI OUTCOMES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS WORKSHOPS

- Based on [presentations](#) and [conversations](#) at the Sept. 1, 2021, RMRI Leadership Team/Partnership meeting, the RMRI Support Group will arrange workshops to assist each of the three RMRI landscapes in yarding up its respective outcomes and accomplishments. Workshop facilitators would have the baseline quantitative data, but would use the workshop to listen to stories. Aim is to track outcomes and accomplishments in a consistent manner, but use the workshops as listening sessions. Workshops should capture both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Workshops are tentatively scheduled Nov. 8 or Nov. 10 for RMRI-SW; Nov. 9 or Nov. 10 for RMRI-Upper South Platte; and TBD for RMRI-Upper Arkansas.
- Are any RMRI Communications Subcommittee members willing to volunteer for and/or support the workshops? Cindy Dozier indicated she can help with stories.

INPUT ON RMRI MESSAGING: WHAT ARE RMRI'S COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS?

- Cindy Dozier: When I explain to people what RMRI is I need to explain details as basic as what a National Forest is. Public does not understand wilderness designations. We need simplified messaging. This is different messaging for when discussing with forest managers.
- Tim Kylo: The main messaging behind RMRI needs to answer the question, *Why?* To the southwest, the answer is the pine beetle. Let's continue talking about the tools we have to address the pine beetle problem (thinning, prescribed burning, etc.). From the perspective of the logging industry, we provide a resource to the U.S. Forest Service. Big issue right now is drought and watersheds. At RMRI we're trying to protect our forests, so we should communicate tangible issues like past successes.
- Teddy Parker-Renga: We need to clarify the goals of RMRI. Is it to improve our brand? Is it to support social license to affect public opinion? Guidance from RMRI leadership would help.
- Rebecca Robbins: RMRI draws many organizations to do important work. We need to communicate that we're now working together and we now have more *capacity*.
- Christina Sukach: We need to figure out how we tie RMRI into local outlets without RMRI becoming just another part of the alphabet soup. We need to figure out what differentiates us, as opposed to more talking points. Secondly, we need to be able to provide the average person something to do, something to contribute toward improving forest health.
- Tim Kylo: We need to better define what is/isn't an RMRI project—perhaps it all comes down to funding.
- Jason Lawhon: RMRI has struggled since its formation to define exactly what it is. RMRI's original intent came out of the [Shared Stewardship Strategy](#):
 - Joint Prioritization
 - Cross-Boundary Strategy
 - Outcomes at Scale
- Jason Lawhon: RMRI as a pilot is not necessarily focused on funding, which was always intended to serve as seed money. The question is, *how do we tell our story?* because whatever we've been doing is not working. When drafting talking points, we need to provide TP's geared toward a range of audiences (i.e. leaders, public, internal, industry).
- Teddy Parker-Renga: On behalf of the public, we need to better understand *how* RMRI is increasing pace and scale. On the local level we have already been doing cross-boundary work to increase pace and scale—and at RMRI we need to respect that. Therefore, we need to show how RMRI is relevant to our local communities and illustrate how we are helping them.
- Jason Lawhon: We need some wins. Local communities need to be able to say, "We got this because of RMRI." For example, CSFS state forester Mike Lester announced that 75% of discretionary funding goes toward RMRI landscapes, but local foresters don't know that. CSFS, USFS, NWTF and others need to be unified better. Problem is that the projects currently in progress were planned five years ago. Any projects planned under the RMRI umbrella won't get underway for another five years.
- Teddy Parker-Renga: If projects planned under the RMRI umbrella won't get underway for another five years, perhaps RMRI just provide resources for local communities and RMRI Partners. **Bottom line is this: How is RMRI making a difference? Are we adding to the noise or are we helping on the ground?**