

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)**  
**March 8, 2022, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**  
**RMRI Social License Subcommittee**  
**Meeting Summary – FINAL**

**RMRI SOCIAL LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE**

**ATTENDANCE:** Rob Addington, Dan Beveridge, Patt Dorsey, Cindy Dozier, Jason Lawhon, Danny Margoles, Paul Orbuch, Molly Pitts, Kelle Reynolds, Rebecca Samulski, Nathan Van Schaik

**ACTION ITEMS**

<b>Patt Dorsey and Nathan Van Schaik</b>	Find a regular meeting time that works for Social License Subcommittee members to meet every other month.
<b>Patt Dorsey</b>	Update the Social License Subcommittee 2022 goals using the feedback from the Social License Subcommittee members.

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Debrief of Dr. Sarah McCaffrey’s Presentation on Social License at RMRI Partners Meeting

- Discussion Points:**
- Some of the takeaways from Dr. McCaffrey’s presentation include:
    - Most of the public does buy into and understand the concepts and principles of forest management
    - Social license is built on relationships and one-one conversations
    - The public can understand complex information, so partners should not simplify messages to gain public buy-in
    - A good messaging campaign understands the highest priorities of the target audience, and that priority might not be directly related to forest management
    - Partners need to listen to people and understand their specific interests
    - People understand the risk and want more information, not only on how forest management mitigates risk but also on how forest management can benefit wildlife
    - Messaging should focus on solutions, not scaremongering
    - There are better terms to use than social license, such as social acceptance
  - Partners should consider working with authority figures and decision-makers to deliver nuanced messages. Sometimes, decision-makers are unwilling to support an action or program because they are worried about what the public may think. If the public has a more nuanced view than partners and decision-makers give them credit for, then there is an opportunity to work with decision-makers to make progress on forest-related challenges. The Social License Subcommittee should consider decision-makers one of their target audiences.
  - The Social License Subcommittee needs to acknowledge the difficult issues, including the sometimes conflicting science. The Subcommittee should communicate the nuances of science and what that means for the forest.
  - The messaging needs to go beyond a simple binary. Messaging needs to flesh out the nuances in forest management.
  - The majority of the public accepts forest management, but a small vocal minority pushes against forest management. The majority needs to put out more pro-forest management messages to show support. Partners need to think about how to develop positive arguments proactively instead of responding to negative criticisms.

- The Social License Subcommittee needs to consider the tone, framing, and audience when generating messages. Having your partners tell your story rather than you can be helpful.

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Communications Subcommittee Update by Nathan Van Schaik, US Forest Service (USFS)

**Discussion Points:**

- The Communications Subcommittee is looking for people who are experts and a touchpoint for their organization to help develop stories to share through RMRI channels. The goal of storytelling is to amplify partner efforts.
- The Communications Subcommittee wants to increase its reach by 100% in 2022. The way to increase the reach of RMRI is to develop good content.
- Nathan Van Schaik and Kate McIntire, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), are developing a communications work plan. The Communications Subcommittee will plan to meet every other month. They plan on bringing in speakers and subject matter experts to help improve the Communications Subcommittee’s efforts to reach a larger audience.
- The goals of the Communications Subcommittee are to tell the broader story and support partners at the landscape level. The Communications Subcommittee plans to keep releasing monthly updates and The Source to share stories. They want The Source to be functional and strategic and something that landscape partners can use to send to decision-makers and the public.
- The Communications Subcommittee needs both more information and capacity to elevate stories. The Communications Subcommittee needs to develop the channels to pull information in and push information out. It is easier to push information out than pull it in.
- A column in The Source should be dedicated to a community ambassador or leader, like a county official. This column could help build the cabinet of elected leaders.

**DISCUSSION TOPIC:** Social License Subcommittee Work Plan and 2022 Goals

**Discussion Points:**

- The Social License Subcommittee does not need to meet monthly. The Subcommittee should aim to meet every one and a half to two months. Patt Dorsey and Nathan Van Schaik will find a regular meeting time that works for Social License Subcommittee members to meet every other month.
- Before the meeting, Patt Dorsey reviewed past meeting summaries to develop draft goals for review by the Social License Subcommittee. The goals are:
  - (LANDSCAPES FOCUS) Coordinate with each of the three RMRI priority landscapes quarterly regarding subcommittee support that will help decrease barriers to, and increase the pace and scale of forest restoration work.
  - (PARTNERS FOCUS) Provide reliable, accurate information to RMRI partners so that they feel more prepared to facilitate better stakeholder involvement and generate local support for forest restoration activities.
  - (EXTERNAL FOCUS) Work with the Outdoor Recreation Industry Office, priority landscapes, and other RMRI partners to develop a strategy to identify the landscape needs, audiences, and outreach to recreation communities regarding forest restoration activities by September 30, 2022.
- Accomplishing all three goals may not be doable in 2022, so the Social License Subcommittee should consider choosing one or two goals for 2022.
- In the partner-focused goal, it is unclear what “generating local support for forest restoration activities” looks like. An alternative phrase could be that partners “provide reliable, accurate information... to generate approaches that incorporate local values, interests, and needs.”

- The externally focused goal should be broadened to include working with the various agencies and their messaging campaigns, such as the Colorado State Forest Service's Wildfire Awareness Campaign.
- The Social License Subcommittee should focus less on internal communications and more on external communications. The external communications goal should be to create more positive forest restoration stories and share that with people. Partners need to understand what projects are being planned so that they can develop a messaging strategy in the future. Future projects may include RMRI landscape projects under the Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP).
- The Social License Subcommittee and Communications Subcommittee should consider combining into one committee to help amplify and distribute positive partner stories.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Patt Dorsey will update the Social License Subcommittee 2022 goals using the feedback from the Social License Subcommittee members. At the next Social License Subcommittee meetings, partners will develop strategies to help reach their goals.