

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
 April 28, 2022, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
 RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee
 Meeting Summary – FINAL**

| RMRI WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE | |
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| ATTENDANCE: Samantha Albert, Heather Houk, Molly Pitts, Tim Reader, Scott Segerstrom, Tara Umphries | |
| ACTION ITEMS | |
| Samantha Albert | Coordinate with Angela Boag and Molly Pitts to schedule a workforce capacity presentation at the next CFHC meeting. |
| Tim Reader | Send the NAU regional study on the timber industry needs to Heather Houk. |
| Molly Pitts | Continue to work with Nick Olsen to develop a survey on future career interests for Colorado youth corps members. |
| Nathan Van Schaik | Add an item to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee 2022 Work Plan that indicates that the subcommittee will "prepare and consolidate data on industry needs to help prepare a presentation for decision-makers at Pueblo Community College and the Colorado Forest Health Council." |
| MEETING SUMMARY | |
| DISCUSSION TOPIC: Action Item Updates | |
| <p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly Pitts, Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA), talked with Xcel Energy about their funding needs to develop a woody biomass energy facility. Xcel Energy is able to finance the project if they decide to pursue it and does not need to apply for additional grants at this time. • Molly Pitts and Tim Reader, Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), met with Front Range Community College to learn about their forestry equipment simulator. The simulator is a great training tool with training modules for students to gain simulated but realistic experiences operating forestry equipment. The simulator is not mobile, so it would be difficult to transport it to Southwest Colorado or career fairs. It will be helpful to elevate this issue to the state and tie in the US Forest Service Region 2 Office and the Society of American Foresters to support the existing program at Front Range Community College and expand the use of simulators across Colorado, including Southwest Colorado. | <p>Decision/Action Items: None.</p> |

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Legislative and Programmatic Updates

Discussion Points:

- House Bill 1166 (HB22-1166) is a bill in State Legislature that would create an internship program specific to the timber industry. Businesses could apply to the program to receive funding to pay 50% of an intern's position up to \$10,000. The bill would also extend the sales and use tax exemption for the use of wood harvested in Colorado and create a state income tax credit for the timber production equipment purchases. There is broad support for the bill in the House Energy and Environment Committee. The bill has bipartisan support.
- Molly Pitts testified at the State Legislature and talked about workforce capacity issues in the timber industry.
- HB22-1389 will provide an additional \$2 million to the Colorado Wildfire Strategic Action Program (COSWAP). The whole bill provides \$20 million for wildfire mitigation efforts.
- The Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) Program may receive \$13 million this year, which the CSFS will distribute via grants.
- The Colorado Forest Health Council (CFHC) is discussing ways to support forest restoration efforts in Colorado. One of the topics they have discussed is increasing workforce capacity. Members of the RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should meet with the CFHC to discuss workforce challenges in the forest restoration and timber industry.
- RMRI set up a speakers bureau. If any RMRI partners are interested in incorporating RMRI into a future conference or meeting presentation, they can reach out to Nathan Van Schaik, who will work with requesters to tailor a presentation on RMRI to the respective audience.

Decision/Action Items:

- **Samantha Albert:** Coordinate with Angela Boag and Molly Pitts to schedule a workforce capacity presentation at the next CFHC meeting.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Pueblo Community College Prospective Forest Operations Program

Discussion Points:

- Heather Houk, Pueblo Community College, and Tim Reader have toured timber mills in Southwest Colorado to discuss workforce opportunities associated with launching a forest industry program in Pueblo Community College – Bayfield.
- Heather Houk has been able to collect narrative data on the industry need. It would be helpful to

Decisions/Action Items:

- **Tim Reader:** Send the NAU regional study on the timber industry needs to Heather Houk.

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| <p>have more quantitative data on the industry need to make the case to the Pueblo Community College decision-makers that a forestry industry training program would result in successful job placements for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Arizona University (NAU) recently conducted a regional study of industry needs. Their study is a peer-reviewed journal article that may help provide some of the quantitative needed. • Dr. Kurt Mackes at Colorado State University (CSU) may have relevant information on workforce capacity needs in Colorado. • Pueblo Community College could model its program after the Front Range Community College program. They would also be interested in developing a Society of American Foresters (SAF) program. • A one-month intensive program that results in a certificate in forestry operations rather than a full associate's degree would help quickly develop a workforce with the necessary skills and experience. | |
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DISCUSSION TOPIC: Conservation Corps Programs

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| <p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) has been managing a forestry training program for SCC participants. Their training program includes how to estimate the number of trees per acre and how to write a management plan. SCC participants who participate in this program receive an educational award. • Molly Pitts is working with Nick Olson, who manages the forestry training program for SCC, to develop a survey for youth corps members. The survey aims to identify who is interested in continuing their career in forestry and industry. The goal is to get youth corps members interested in continuing their careers in forestry exposure to different types of jobs, such as logging and mechanized operations. • It would be beneficial to distribute the survey to corps members around the state. About 1,000 adult members serve in the Colorado corps each year. An additional 400 to 800 young adults serve in the youth corps specifically. • Colorado Youth Corps are doing well at recruiting people to fill open positions. They have gaps in the number of open positions and applicants but not many. | <p>Decisions/Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly Pitts: Continue to work with Nick Olson to develop a survey on future career interests for Colorado youth corps members. |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most corps members participate in the program for one year to receive the education award. Some also participate in the program to gain experience between junior and senior year of college. • The Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) tries to track how many members go into the conservation field, but it is difficult. | |
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| Discussion Topic: 2022 Workforce Capacity Subcommittee Work Plan | |
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| <p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Van Schaik developed a draft 2022 Work Plan for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee based on their discussion at the last meeting. The work plan identifies the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grow industry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Track the infrastructure bill and other state and federal legislation to identify opportunities to address workforce development in Colorado ▪ Track the workforce development strategy being developed in Southwest Colorado, and identify opportunities to support it ▪ Obtain a forestry equipment simulator for use in Southwest Colorado, particularly in the training programs being developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, American Forest Foundation, and Southwest Conservation Corps ○ Target education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Invite a speaker from the CalFire Workforce Program to learn about their workforce development grant program and what lessons can be applied in Colorado. ▪ Continue to work with Pueblo Community College to scope out a forestry operations program ▪ Generate and manage a centralized clearinghouse of internship opportunities on the RMRI website (have a standing agenda item about internship opportunities to add to the RMRI website) ▪ Continue the conservation with higher education ○ Support education | <p>Decision/Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathan Van Schaik: Add an item to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee 2022 Work Plan that indicates that the subcommittee will "prepare and consolidate data on industry needs to help prepare a presentation for decision-makers at Pueblo Community College and the Colorado Forest Health Council." |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider ways to engage and raise awareness among Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA) volunteers about for-profit jobs through summer field trips and other educational efforts • The immediate next steps for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare and consolidate data on industry needs to help prepare a presentation for decision-makers at Pueblo Community College and the Colorado Forest Health Council. • The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should wait to contact CalFire about their workforce program until they have had a chance to review and evaluate applications. Once they have reviewed applications, there may be lessons from that program based on who is applying to the program and what type of projects they are applying for. • The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should consider engaging tribal partners in workforce development discussions. SCC partner Conservation Legacy has an Ancestral Lands Program that engages with tribes on corps initiatives. Part of the NAU Economic Development Administration grant involves engaging with tribes in Arizona to help facilitate their transition from coal. The San Juan National Forest is also working with tribal communities to manage a firewood program. | |
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Next Steps

- Samuel Wallace will send out a Doodle to schedule the next Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting in June. At the next meeting, participants will finalize their 2022 work plan and prepare for the CFHC meeting in July.