

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
 November 4, 2022, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee
 Meeting Summary – FINAL**

RMRI WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE

ATTENDANCE: Chris Brown, Dennis DeLong, Heather Houk, Jason Kravig, Audrey Miles-Cherney, Molly Pitts, Tim Reader, Tara Umphries, Nathan Van Schaik, LeErica Warren, Kyle Weber

ACTION ITEMS

Molly Pitts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with LeErica Warren to plan a field trip for Power Technical skills to learn about forestry and equipment operations. • Send Samuel Wallace a list of forestry workforce-related bills to send to the Subcommittee. • Continue to try to reach out to someone to present on the USFS recreation workforce challenges.
Molly Pitts and Tim Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the University of Montana’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research 2020 Colorado timber industry data once finalized in the spring.

MEETING SUMMARY

PRESENTATION TOPIC: State Wildland Inmate Fire Team (SWIFT) Program, presented by Chris Brown

Presentation Points:

- The SWIFT Program is part of Colorado Correctional Industries (CCI). CCI’s purpose is to provide jobs to incarcerated adults while in prison and give them the skills for their life post-prison. They focus on reintegration and rehabilitation.
- CCI programs are broken into the northern and southern sectors. The northern sector includes job training in garment and flag making, leather working, highway cleanup, fence repair, and coffee roasting. The southern sector includes job training in metalworking, promotional item creation, license plate manufacturing, SWIFT, horse management, and heavy equipment operation.
- The SWIFT Program involves firefighting, trail building, and fuels mitigation. There are a few year-round SWIFT crews, but most are available in the summer only.
- Inmates must apply for jobs, and there are strict criteria for applicants to qualify to join a SWIFT crew. An inmate must be incarcerated for a non-violent offense, be within three years of their release time, and meet certain standards of behavior. They also must pass a physical test carrying a backpack for three miles.
- While on the SWIFT crew, an inmate will receive the S130 firefighter training, L180 human factors in wildland fire service training, S190 introduction to wildland fire behavior training, and S232 wildland fire chainsaws training. These classes provide official certification.
- The SWIFT program works with the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide services across Colorado. Through the Colorado Strategic Wildlife Action Program (COSWAP), partners can apply to hire SWIFT crews to complete work. If DNR accepts the application, DNR pays for the SWIFT crews to implement the work. SWIFT crews are currently booked out for the next two years of work.
- There are two SWIFT crews, one in Canon City and the other in Rifle. There are roughly 15 members on each crew.

- The SWIFT program has been trying to hire a supervisor rank for the past six months. They cannot grow the program until they hire a new supervisor.
- The criteria of who qualifies to be on a SWIFT crew has also become stricter. The strict criteria are because the crews will be camping in the woods for a week or more, so CCI wants to ensure crew members will be responsible and follow guidelines.
- The crews primarily use hand tools and chainsaws. The crews do not use any heavy equipment, like masticators, but there is interest in acquiring one.
- SWIFT crews work on projects organized by other agencies and organizations, such as Evergreen Fire Rescue and Colorado Parks and Wildlife. These projects often include implementing defensive space and improving evacuation routes. The crews work with US Forest Service Wildland Fire Crews.
- Recent legislation (SB22-50) changed CCI's mission from profit-driven to providing opportunities to benefit incarcerated workers and created a mandate to meet minimum wage requirements. CCI is a cash-funded agency, so they must charge for the services provided to stay operational.
- Inmates that participate in CCI programs have a much lower recidivism rate. Participating in the program also allows inmates to earn money they can use once released.
- One of the barriers that prevents SWIFT crew members from getting a job as a firefighter after release is parole conditions. Parole conditions often require checking in a certain number of times per week and restricting travel out of the state. These conditions can make it impossible to spend two weeks fighting a fire. Some steps have been taken to address barriers to accessing firefighter jobs. Last year, the state legislature passed a bill that made it so the Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) cannot exclude someone from joining a wildland fire crew due to past felonies.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: SWIFT Crews

Discussion Points:

- Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA) has been in conversations with Colorado Mountain College and Pueblo Community College to start forest operations/heavy equipment programs. There may be an opportunity to offer these types of programs to those who went through the SWIFT program.
- Colorado Mountain College has slowed down the evaluation of whether to initiate a forest operations certificate program.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should think about how to offer forestry operations programs to SWIFT members.

Decision/Action Items:

None.

PRESENTATION TOPIC: Power Technical Early College, presented by LeErica Warren

Presentation Points:

- Power Technical Early College is a James Irwin Charter School. The mission of Power Technical is to prepare students to enter the workforce with the skills necessary to be successful in a trade while also having the character and work ethic to become the most valuable members in their chosen trade.
- Some students who attend Power Technical will go to four-year colleges, but most students will go into a technical trade.

- Power Technical provides a traditional curriculum (mathematics, science, English, history) and trade classes. Trade classes include an introduction to tools and hammering, welding, manufacturing, construction, and woodshop. Older students also have the opportunity to build a home with their peers with oversight professionals.
- Students get to choose their pathway. Options include machining, welding technology, construction technology, and principles of engineering and technology.
- Students also have the option to enroll concurrently at Pikes Peak State College and receive credit. By the time students graduate high school, they can complete 30 to 70% of an associate's degree.
- Power Technical allows seniors to get a job in their focus area. Insurance companies will not provide insurance for anyone younger than a senior in high school.
- Power Technical focuses its curriculum on building character in addition to teaching technical skills. The student body is 80% boys. They have classes on personal finance, business management, leadership, and citizenship. Students are required to have three years of character classes to graduate.
- Students are required to have one or two certifications by the time they graduate. All students are expected to receive Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) certification. At this time, Power Technical does not offer first aid/CPR certification, but administrators have talked about teaching those skills to students.
- Power Technical works with SkillsUSA and National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). They have also received Career Development Incentive Program (CDIP) funding from the state.
- There are currently 400 students enrolled at Power Technical. Their maximum enrollment numbers are close to 800.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: Power Technical Early College

Discussion Points:

- Power Technical has explored the option of teaching wood processing. They are moving into a new facility next year, which may provide the space to include wood processing in their curriculum.
- Power Technical is considering opening up new facilities, including one in Pueblo. Southwest Colorado is another region that could use a technical school like this.
- Power Technical needs to generate funding to start new programs to purchase equipment and tools. To consider a program in forestry and forestry operations, Power Technical would need to figure out how to pay for equipment.
- It would be beneficial to explore whether Front Range Community College could offer credits for their forestry operation program to Power Technical graduates, should a forestry program be stood up.
- There is an opportunity to bring Power Technical students on field trips and give presentations on the forestry industry. It would be helpful to have a

Decisions/Action Items:

- **Molly Pitts:** Work with LeErica Warren to plan a field trip for Power Technical skills to learn about forestry and equipment operations.

list of jobs and skills needed by employees to be in the forestry industry.	
DISCUSSION TOPIC: Partner and Action Item Updates	
<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Colorado State Legislature is considering bills on workforce capacity in the forestry sector. • Molly Pitts is working to connect with someone at the USFS to talk about the recreation workforce. She will continue to try to reach out to someone to present on the topic. • Molly Pitts and Tim Reader will share the University of Montana’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research 2020 Colorado timber industry data once finalized in the spring. Once the data is available, Nathan Van Schaik will incorporate it into the forest industry brochure. • Nathan Van Schaik would like to focus on the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee in the next issue of The Source. He also updated the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee work plan and will continue to work with Tim and Molly to update it. • Tim Reader connected with Dr. Kurt Mackes to cross-reference Dr. Mackes’ draft forestry operations curriculum with course numbers in the community college system. Only three courses were topically similar to courses offered by Front Range Community College. Dr. Mackes’ curriculum specifically focuses on operational and design aspects of timber sales and harvesting. Ultimately, it is easier to incorporate these topics into existing community college courses than trying to create a new class. 	<p>Decisions/Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molly Pitts: Send Samuel Wallace a list of forestry workforce-related bills to send to the Subcommittee. • Molly Pitts: Continue to try to reach out to someone to present on the USFS recreation workforce challenges. • Molly Pitts and Tim Reader: Share the University of Montana’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research 2020 Colorado timber industry data once finalized in the spring.
NEXT STEPS	
Samuel Wallace will send a Doodle to schedule the next Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting in December. The meeting will be an hour long and focus on reviewing draft legislation.	