

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN RESTORATION INITIATIVE (RMRI) SOUTHWEST COLORADO MEETING
October 4 - 6, 2022
Partners Meeting, Field Trip, and Industry Tour
Meeting Summary - FINAL**

**RMRI PARTNERS MEETING
Tuesday October 4, 2022, from 11:30 am to 4:00 pm
2700 Main Ave., Durango, CO**

POLICY, FUNDING, AND IMPLEMENTATION PANEL

Patt Dorsey and Tara Umphries interviewed panelists about recent policies, new funding opportunities, and lessons learned from project implementation. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

The panelists included:

- Trevor Balzer (Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW))
- Jacque Buchanan (U.S. Forest Service (USFS))
- Dana Guinn (Mountain Studies Institute (MSI))
- Jason Lawhon (USFS)
- Alison Lerch (Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR))
- Mark Loveall (Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS))
- Matt McCombs (CSFS)
- Tim Mauck (DNR)
- Kirstin Neff (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF))
- Cody Robertson (Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS))
- James Savage (Bureau of Land Management (BLM))
- Erik Skeie (Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB))

With several forthcoming funding opportunities, what barriers still impact the USFS' ability to accomplish its goals?

One of the critical barriers to accomplishing USFS goals is workforce capacity. The USFS intends to use funding to support additional internal positions and build partner capacity. The USFS is determining the number of personnel needed first and then will identify opportunities for partners.

What are NFWF's most substantial challenges?

NFWF's most substantial challenge relates to the parameters of funding opportunities. In particular, it can be challenging to communicate funding opportunities to implementors and direct implementors to the most appropriate funding source based on funding criteria.

How have DNR and the CSFS contributed to wildfire mitigation and forest health policies and opportunities?

- DNR provided the CSFS with funding and established the Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP). DNR intends to find mechanisms that will provide ongoing support for wildfire mitigation and forest health.
- The CSFS, with funding set aside from the USFS, will focus on competitive hiring for implementation and preparation and planning roles. The CSFS completed a salary study to better understand how to be competitive within the interior West. Additionally, the CSFS

nursery received funding from the federal and state government to support reforestation efforts.

How does water management relate to forest health and wildfire mitigation?

Forest health and watershed health are directly related, an increasingly acknowledged concept by water management and forestry practitioners alike. From 2009 to 2020, Colorado Watershed Restoration Grants have funded local projects for watershed restoration and wildfire mitigation. The 2023 Colorado Water Plan update includes several actions relating to forest health. Through the Wildfire Ready Watershed Program, CWCB is conducting wildfire susceptibility mapping to support the connection between watershed resiliency and forest health/wildfire mitigation. The mapping should be available towards the end of 2022.

What is working for implementors in the Southwest?

- Implementors and the RMRI Southwest Steering Committee have created a priority area map, strengthened existing partnerships, and established new partnerships. This work has created a foundation to implement priority projects now that funding is available. Southwest Colorado partners continue to demonstrate RMRI values and participate with trust.
- Secured funding for critical positions has increase the ability of agencies in Southwest Colorado to implement projects. RMRI also provides partners with a framework that supports partner capacity. Increased partner capacity leads to increased implementation rates.

What does the COSWAP program need from the “top” and the “bottom” to be successful?

COSWAP will be successful if it continues to have a dynamic structure that can provide flexible funding to match federal or other funding sources. It is valuable for the COSWAP program to learn about how treatments impact values on the ground.

With several collaboratives in the Southwest (e.g., RMRI and the Southwest Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP)), what are the challenges to coordinating implementation?

The local collaboratives are key to implementation by convening and facilitating the stakeholders in their local geography. They provide services through coordination and communication (e.g., phone calls and emails). They can also help with stakeholder fatigue.

The BLM has different implementation-related opportunities compared to the USFS. How does the BLM fit within the collaborative landscape of the Southwest?

The BLM has a significant amount of acreage within the RMRI boundaries. The BLM relies on partnerships with the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) and Wildfire Adapted Partnership (WAP) to implement their Timber and Community Assistance Programs. RMRI created many partnership opportunities for the BLM. Partnerships are critical to the BLM’s work on Animas City Mountain as well.

What are the BLM’s plans for work on Animas City Mountain?

Animas City Mountain is a mesa in northwest Durango. The BLM conducted fuel reduction projects on the top of the mesa in the 2000s. The BLM plans to treat over 600 acres with prescribed fire in the future, pending the appropriate weather conditions, resources, and partners.

Recreation is one of RMRI's four values. What is happening with recreation in the Southwest RMRI area?

The SJNF, National Forest Foundation (NFF), and Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office are developing a recreation strategy on the Columbine Ranger District and other public lands. Local RMRI partners like the San Juan Mountain Association (SJMA) support recreation through its ambassador program (a program that places trail ambassadors at popular trails to provide educational material), community outreach, and trail maintenance. Due to the landownership patterns and high recreation use in the Southwest, partnerships are critical for managing recreation.

How can RMRI support wildlife habitat work through NFWF grant programs?

The Restoration and Stewardship of Outdoor Resources and the Environment (RESTORE) Grant is a funding opportunity specifically for fish and wildlife restoration. RESTORE provides funding for forestland projects in the RMRI priority landscapes. Competitive applications for RESTORE funding identify how projects would deliver the greatest benefits to wildlife with co-benefits for water, forest health, and wildfire mitigation.

Is there anything RMRI partners should note when applying for the RESTORE Grant?

Working across state borders could increase grant applicants' competitiveness. The RESTORE Grant has some flexibility. NFWF encourages grant applicants to call them with questions about funding opportunities, such as the RESTORE Grant.

How can RMRI support the CSFS in shared stewardship efforts?

The CSFS is reimagining its role and how the agency views the landscapes. Planning and executing at scale is a critical component of successful shared stewardship efforts. CSFS can help provide funding through their grant programs to use as match. Additionally, CSFS staff is participating in collaborative efforts to support the implementation of cross-boundary projects through Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreements.

What would leadership like to share with implementors?

Implementors have accomplished a lot over the last several years, especially through challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and workforce capacity. New funding and policy opportunities are coming, but there is more legislative work to do. Leadership would like to hear ideas and needs from implementors to stay dynamic, including projects that combine recreation and wildlife with forest health and wildfire mitigation.

What ideas and needs do implementors currently have?

- Stable and consistent funding provides agencies with the ability to execute long-term planning.
- Most agencies continue to apply for funding opportunities, sometimes losing focus on priority efforts. Coordinating with other agencies to increase project coordination and reduce grant competitiveness could be a solution to that.
- Requests for proposals (RFP) and grants are inefficient and time-consuming, and grants with requirements like inter-state coordination make it difficult to apply for funding.
- Understanding where to focus efforts and broadening perspectives could open doors for implementors. Additionally, sharing lessons learned and success stories could be helpful.

How can RMRI help agencies use prescribed fire on the landscape in the face of burn bans, reduced burning windows, big game closures, smoke permitting, and more?

The Colorado Fire Commission (CFC) is addressing prescribed fire barriers, such as liability, staffing, smoke permits, and burn bans. A CFC recommendation on this topic will potentially mitigate key issues to using prescribed fire as a tool.

Clarifying Discussion

- Developing a statewide map that highlights collaborative efforts and funding sources could be helpful in cross-boundary and statewide resource coordination. A map like this could indicate priority areas for investments to increase local capacity and make progress across landscapes. The Colorado Forest Collaboratives Network could potentially merge maps, collaborative boundaries, application of funds, and planning documents into a map or tool.
- Some landscapes, like Northwest Colorado, need additional capacity to access statewide resources. A map could provide transparency for resource coordination. It would need to be inclusive of areas that have received less funding historically and of groups and organizations conducting work at the landscape levels.
- The Wildfire Ready Watershed Program is developing a map similar to the discussed conceptual map. That map will be available in mid-to-late December. The program offers funding and a guidance document for landscapes and/or collaboratives to conduct analyses.
- The Wildfire Awareness Month Bill allocated funding to elevate the Wildfire Awareness Month Campaign. The CSFS, USFS, and Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) will use the additional funding to promote messaging around defensible space, home hardening, and wildfire mitigation.
- In 2021, policymakers had the opportunity to sign several bills to fund watershed restoration and forest health projects. Policymakers hope to continue this momentum despite increasing inflation rates and decreasing Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) funding pools.
- Since the Lower North Fork Fire in 2012, many residents of Colorado have opposed prescribed fire, partially contributing to the lack of understanding of the connection between healthy watersheds and healthy forests. As state, federal, and nonprofit agencies continue to collaborate, opportunities for forest health and wildfire mitigation tools are becoming more widely accepted amongst the public and decision-makers.
- Mapping across state boundaries, especially Colorado and New Mexico's watersheds and big game habitat, could provide a better understanding of landscape connectivity.

BIOMASS UTILIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Tim Reader, CSFS, provided the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee update. Below are key points.

- The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee works to understand challenges for policies, economics, and industry conducting treatments and utilizing biomass.
- Over the past year, the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee focused on understanding state and federal legislation from 2021, increasing collaboration with other communities and groups focused on this topic, and learning from the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) and CAL FIRE.
- Currently, the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee is conducting outreach on upcoming state and federal assistance, discussing investments in the industry, focusing on opportunities to promote mass timber and biochar, and coordinating biomass utilization from state and federal wildfire mitigation projects.

- Going forward, the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee plans to act on 2022 state and federal legislation, learn from biochar production demonstrations, and make progress with investing in the industry to scale with biomass supply.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Molly Pitts, Colorado Timber Industry Association, provided an update on the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. Below are key points.

- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee works to grow the forestry industry, target educational efforts, and support recreation. One focus of the Subcommittee is to increase workforce capacity and provide information and access to those newly entering the workforce.
- Over the last year, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee presented to the Colorado Forest Health Council (CFHC) about workforce challenges, worked with the Wildfire Matters Review Committee to create a workforce development bill, and reviewed lessons learned from CAL FIRE's Workforce Development Grant Program.
- The Subcommittee has worked with Pueblo Community College (PCC) – Bayfield and Front Range Community College (FRCC). PCC – Bayfield is considering establishing a forestry program, and the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has taken lessons learned from FRCC's Forestry Technology program to inform the ongoing discussion to establish a new program at PCC – Bayfield. FRCC also uses a training simulator, and the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is interested in purchasing a similar simulator for other programs around the state. The Colorado State University (CSU) SPUR campus is one potential host for a simulator.
- The Subcommittee partners with the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA). Currently, the Subcommittee is working with CYCA to distribute a survey to gauge the interest of CYCA graduates in the timber industry. The Subcommittee is also developing a forestry industry brochure with the help of Nathan Van Schaik, USFS.
- Going forward, the Subcommittee will seek to support Colorado legislation that promotes workforce capacity, develop a timber industry curriculum with higher education institutions, build social license around the outdoor recreation industry, and obtain an equipment simulator.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

What is the cost of the simulator?

The simulators cost \$140,00.

Has the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee discussed developing capacity through immigration opportunities?

The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has not discussed that option yet; however, it will discuss the topic in the future and determine how it could support the industry through that process.

Is there a need to conduct outreach to high school-aged or younger individuals to generate interest in college-level programs in the industry?

The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has discussed reaching out to high school-aged students. The level of outreach needed likely depends on community awareness of topics, like forest health and wildlife mitigation. For example, Colorado Mountain College (CMC) - Leadville works with

RMRI and Envision Chaffee County. Members of those communities are aware of forest health and wildfire mitigation topics, so a program at CMC Leadville would likely fill up with students. Outreach is likely required in other communities. Future Farmers of America (FFA) has a forestry path and is a potential audience for outreach.

Are there opportunities to partner with the USFS Forestry Job Program?

In the past, there was a Subcommittee member who participated in the program; however, there is not currently a member who does. It would be helpful to have another program representative join the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.

COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Nathan Van Schaik provided an update on the Communications Subcommittee. Below are key points.

- Over the last few years, the Communications Subcommittee focused its efforts on writing The Source (the RMRI newsletter that comes out quarterly), developing monthly updates, running RMRI social media (e.g., Facebook and Twitter), and developing other communications materials for other subcommittees. Many Communications Subcommittee members attend other subcommittee meetings, too.
- Currently, the Communications Subcommittee is improving the RMRI monthly update to focus more on updates within RMRI landscapes. To improve the monthly updates, the Communications Subcommittee is working to gather more information and stories from the RMRI partners. There will be communication materials about the efforts at Lake County in the Upper Arkansas RMRI area.
- In addition to its current efforts, the Communications Subcommittee is merging with the Social License Subcommittee.
- In the future, the Communications Subcommittee will continue developing the RMRI website and supporting the RMRI landscapes.

SOCIAL LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE

Patt Dorsey provided an update on the Social License Subcommittee. Below are key points.

- Over the last several years, the Social License Subcommittee hosted Dr. Sarah McCaffrey from the Rocky Mountain Research Station to discuss her research on social license, developed key social license messages to complement USFS, CSFS, WAC, DFPC, and other partners' messages, and created a resource library of success stories, communication images, wildfire mitigation cost/benefit information, fire-adapted communities, and prescribed fire resources.
- In addition to the Social License Subcommittee and Communications Subcommittee merger, the Social License Subcommittee continues to develop strategies to increase social license using the 2023 Work Plan, which identifies three audiences (e.g., landscapes, partners, and the public) and topics to communicate (e.g., success stories, technical expertise, adaptive forest management, industry role, Wildfire Awareness Month, recreation community, and decision-makers).
- In the future, the Social License Subcommittee will work with the Communications Subcommittee to distribute success stories and messages while also supporting RMRI partner campaigns (e.g., Wildfire Awareness Month). Once merged, the Subcommittee will work with local landscapes to develop custom materials.

Clarifying Questions

Meeting participants had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the Social License Subcommittee. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

Has RMRI spoken on public radio?

RMRI was featured on some podcasts and has been represented on speaker panels. Tim Reader has some contacts at Colorado Public Radio (CPR). Other RMRI members with contacts are encouraged to pursue opportunities like this.

Is it possible to proactively develop misinformation-busting messaging to address critical views of forest management work?

The Social License Subcommittee discussed the recent articles with misinformation about common forest management practices. One challenge to developing universal messaging is that social license is different across Colorado's various landscapes. There may be opportunities to develop proactive messaging; however, reactive messaging might be necessary, too.

Clarifying Discussion

- A recent Colorado Sun article about Jefferson County's forest health work included misinformation about forest management practices. There are concerns about this article, along with a similar one published in the Denver Post. Sharing success stories about forest management by tapping into communication specialists could be one way to address misinformation and develop social license.
- RMRI partners can share messages and stories about successful forest health and wildfire mitigation work. Hearing information from practitioners and leaders in the field alike could elevate messages about the importance of forest health and wildfire mitigation projects.

RMRI SOUTHWEST OVERVIEW

Jason Lawhon provided information about the RMRI Southwest effort as context for the field trip on October 5. Below are key points from his overview.

- The RMRI Southwest effort intends to treat 20,000 acres of private lands and 290,000 acres of USFS lands via shared stewardship.
- The RMRI Southwest Steering Committee engaged with many stakeholders to assess the relative priority of values (e.g., recreation, water, forests and wildlife, and recreation and tourism) across the landscape. The Steering Committee broke the landscape into potential operational delineations (PODs) and asked stakeholders to weigh in on the values associated with each one. The stakeholder engagement effort resulted in approximately 1,800 comments and a map displaying the stakeholders' identified priority values and PODS.
- To complement the identified priority areas, the Steering Committee also assessed feasibility by accounting for several opportunity criteria, such as the likelihood of success, NEPA readiness, and existing partnerships. The information indicated which high-priority PODs were most prepared for planning and implementation. This assessment informed which PODs to focus on for near-term implementation.
- The field trip locations are some of the identified near-term priority PODs that also highlight a convergence of RMRI partners working together on planning and implementation.
- In addition to RMRI, the Southwest has several other initiatives, including CFLRP, COSWAP, the Wildfire Watershed Protection Fund (WWPF), and the Wood for Life program.

RMRI Field Trip
Wednesday, October 5, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

STOP #1: POWERLINE TRAIL, DURANGO

Overview of the Area and Fire History

Jason Lawhon provided an overview of the area and the reasons for its high-priority rating. Below are key points from the overview.

- The Powerline Trail is located in the Columbine 1 POD, which received high ranks across all four RMRI values. There are 20,000 people living in the area, a high density of popular recreational trails and areas, and the Florida Watershed is nearby.
- There were several fires this spring, including the Perins Peak Fire, the Twin Buttes Fire, and the Ute Pass Fire. The Perins Peak Fire was a human-start fire, which is common in the Durango area due to the high volume of recreation trails and infrastructure in the area.
- The 416 Fire and post-fire mudslides impacted most residents of Durango and generated support for fuel treatments in the community. RMRI sustains the support for continued fuel treatment even when the memory of a fire subsides.

City of Durango

City of Durango Natural Resource Manager Amy Schwarzbach provided an overview of the City of Durango's fuel treatment work. Below are key points from her overview.

- Durango has over 3,000 acres of open space, 100 miles of trail, and 15 trailheads. It can be challenging to conduct treatment work on City land due to the recreational use patterns and proximity to neighborhoods. Durango has a trail tax that generates funding for grant matches and for land purchases. The tax is set to sunset this year, and its extension is on the ballot.
- The Powerline Trail is one of the longest recreational trail connections in the City of Durango and reflects the patchwork landownership consistent throughout the area.
- After the 416 Fire in 2018, Durango established a partnership with the BLM, DFPC, SJNF, Durango Fire Protection District (DFPD), La Plata County, and other local, state, and federal groups to address wildfire mitigation in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- The field trip site is the City's first treatment project, with the goal to reduce the gamble oak in an area with 80 adjacent properties, high voltage powerlines, and stormwater mitigation ditches funneling into the Animas River. Partners like DFPC, La Plata County, SJNF, and other groups provided sawyer crews, chippers, dump trucks, and excavators to treat approximately 9 acres. The treatment area also has stormwater mitigation ditches to reduce the risk of basements flooding.
- Before conducting the treatment, the City and its partners engaged nearby residents, which generated support for the treatment work, interest amongst residents to conduct treatment work on their property, and an understanding that wildfire mitigation work is part of living in the WUI. Additionally, La Plata County provided home assessments for about 30 homeowners in the area due to the engagement work.
- The City conducted fire mitigation work at the base of Animas City Mountain and the backside of Perins Peak with funding from a FRWRM grant and in-kind support. Over the summer, the City had five sawyer crews working and created about 600 burn piles. Once the BLM conducts broadcast burns at Animas City Mountain, the City hopes to pile burn and broadcast burn some of the previously treated areas of City land on Animas City Mountain.

WWPF

WWPF Coordinator Alison Layman provided an overview of fire mitigation and watershed protection projects throughout La Plata County. Below are key points from her overview.

- In 2021, La Plata County, the City, and DFPC created an inter-governmental agreement (IGA), establishing the WWPF and WWPF coordination position. The WWPF Coordinator oversees project implementation and engages private landowners.
- The WWPF Coordinator obtained funding for projects through the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act) and COSWAP to support projects in the Florida Watershed. The Florida Watershed is a high-priority area in the County for wildfire mitigation and watershed protection, as it provides water to over 20,000 people and subdivisions. When applying for grants, it is impactful to mention RMRI and CFLRP.
- Both funding sources are supporting wildfire mitigation work to reduce the risk of wildfire to the watershed and the homes in the area. The project will remove dense fuel in the area and reduce sedimentation into the river. Through partnerships with MSI and the State, La Plata County is collecting water samples to monitor sediment and water quality.
- In addition to the WIIN Act and COSWAP, La Plata County also has a COSWAP Workforce Grant. A Southwest Conservation Corps and a State Wildland Inmate Fire Team (SWIFT) crew will help with roadside clearing to improve egress/ingress routes in the Edgemont subdivision this fall and next summer.
- Through targeted landowner outreach, the WWPF aims to increase landowners' awareness of wildfire risk and mitigation. For landowners that conduct wildfire mitigation work on their property to CSFS standards, the WWPF will provide a 50 percent match.
- COSWAP funding will fund work on almost 370 acres of HOA land along the 240 County Road (CR) corridor. HOAs will be involved throughout the implementation phase to learn about mitigation maintenance to maximize the treatment's effectiveness in the future.
- With treatment work planned for the next several years in the area, ensuring that contractors have access to updated standards is critical for the success of contractor businesses.
- The BLM chipper is a critical resource for wildfire mitigation work throughout La Plata County, as it is challenging to get equipment in this area. Often, implementers must go to Grand Junction to purchase or rent equipment.

BLM

BLM Supervisory Fuels Specialist James Savage provided an overview of the BLM's fire mitigation projects in the area. Below are key points from his overview.

- The BLM plans to conduct burns on Animas City Mountain when the timing, weather, and resources align. When the BLM is able to conduct broadcast burns on Animas City Mountain, the area could serve as a base for future fire suppression efforts, as the area is surrounded by WUI communities.
- There are piles on Animas City Mountain from 2008 and at other sites that need to be burned.
- The BLM is currently conducting treatment on a pinyon-juniper stand behind the hospital. The next BLM project is on Skyline Drive, an area with poor access. The BLM often partners with the CSFS to access land-locked units.
- While there are several wildfire mitigation projects in progress and treatments that partners recently completed, continued mitigation maintenance must occur to ensure treatment effectiveness in the long term. Monitoring and maintenance support is critical for mitigation projects completed by the various partners in the area.

National Forest Foundation (NFF)

Rocky Mountain Region Director Emily Olsen provided an overview of the NFF's work in the area. Below are key points from her overview.

- The NFF is supporting local and state agencies in developing an approach to an all-lands recreation strategy on the Columbine Ranger District and other public lands. Thus far, the project examined assets across the landscape to identify hot spots for resource investments by all agencies. This strategy will provide a roadmap for agencies to invest resources as they become available. Snow Engineering Group (SE Group) is contracted to analyze the lands and develop maps for the strategy. In the next phase of this work, community and stakeholder engagement will be a major focus.
- Recreational managers have observed increased recreation and decreased understanding of leave no trace (LNT) principles per land ownership, making management increasingly challenging.
- Small-diameter wood from projects NFF is involved with goes to the Wood for Life Tribal Fuelwood Initiative, which provides home heating sources to members of the Navajo Nation. The Initiative provides heating resources to Tribal neighbors, supports local residents with job opportunities, and addresses small-diameter timber waste.
- The NFF, BLM, SJNF, and CSFS are also working on implementing Grassy Mountain project. These entities have land within the project boundary that they treat. Some of the areas are adjacent to WUI subdivisions, recreational trails, and water resources. Additionally, the Missionary Ridge Fire burned through this area, establishing a new vegetation pattern of gamble oak where there was once a healthy ponderosa pine forest.
- The Grassy Mountain project showcases that partnerships help execute cross-boundary treatments through various agreement tools. For example, the CSFS will treat land throughout the project area, the USFS will design the layout, and the BLM will conduct the burning. This winter, the team will finalize the project plans, with the intention to begin the work next summer or fall. The NFF is able to manage the funding to make cross-boundary work on this project possible.

CPW

CPW Habitat Coordinator Trevor Balzer provided an overview of CPW's wildlife habitat enhancement and wildfire mitigation projects in the area. Below are key points.

- CPW manages Perins Peak and other state wildlife areas. Plans for treatment on Perins Peak were created in 1978. Treatments for wildlife habitat and fuels mitigation have been occurring since 1980. CPW began a focused treatment effort in the area with support from the BLM in 2003 and 2006, focusing on ponderosa pine fuel treatments. In 2023, CPW will treat 300 acres on Perins Peak to expand on previous treatments. Additional prescribed burn work is being proposed as well.
- CPW utilized funding from the 2008 Recovery Act to initiate additional treatments on Perins Peak through an IGA with the SJNF, the City, NWTF, and the BLM, treating over 3,000 acres from 2009 to 2011. In 2021, CPW re-entered the area for age and class diversity work.
- CPW's treatments focus on canopy integrity, age diversity, class diversity, and structural diversity to support wildlife habitats. It is beneficial to all the agencies when wildlife habitat and wildfire mitigation treatment work overlap. The area is most likely prepared for fire re-introduction due to several prescribed burns over the years.
- In 2011, CPW partnered with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and other agencies to conduct additional treatment work. The NEPA process took nine years. It was thought to be important to allow partners to conduct implementation at their own pace, when NEPA has not been completed.

STOP #2: CHICKEN CREEK RECREATION AREA, SJNF

Partners provided overviews of projects at three sites within the Chicken Creek Recreation Area. Below are key points from the overviews at each site.

USFS Forest Treatments at Chicken Creek

At the first stop, Dolores District Ranger Derek Padilla, Jason Lawhon, and USFS Assistant Fire Manager Patrick Seekens provided an overview of recently completed USFS treatments at Chicken Creek.

Overview

- Treatments in this area focus on the ponderosa pine belt, re-introducing fire to the landscape, and developing a seed source in the soil. The Dolores 14 POD is a high-priority area due to its recreation values, nearby WUI communities, water sources, and the adjacent location of the Dolores 15 POD, which is the highest-priority wildlife area across the landscape. The opportunities for adaptive management in this area also make it a high-priority site where the USFS can conduct large-scale treatments. Without the local timber industry, the USFS would not be able to conduct treatments at this scale.
- Approved in 2018, a landscape-scale NEPA decision facilitated prescribed burning in the area in 2019. The NEPA decision is flexible, allowing the fire managers to coordinate burns after the timber managers conduct mechanical treatments in an area. The USFS will burn the piles at this site this winter and will likely conduct a broadcast burn to target the understory in two years. The fire and forestry teams have a three-to-five-year plan. Removing gamble oak is another treatment goal for this area. Without prescribed fire, gamble oak dominates an area.
- Along the southern boundary of Chicken Creek, the USFS created a 200-to-300-foot fuel break near the WUI neighborhoods that serve as a control line.
- Ponderosa pines have an eight-to-ten-year fire return interval. Historically, re-introduction has been every 15 years. Harvesting timber every 20 to 30 years is ideal. Foresters reassess thinning treatments based on the structure of the stand. Regeneration is critical to ponderosa pine's resiliency to insect infestations.
- Sharing information about the role of forestry and fire-related work in promoting forest health is important to combat any misinformation.
- The WUI in this area differs from Durango's WUI as there are fewer HOAs, making engagement and outreach more challenging.

Clarifying Questions

Field trip participants asked clarifying questions about the treatment work at the first site. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

How soon should fire come onto the landscape after gamble oak removal?

It is ideal to burn in an area as soon as removal is complete.

When will broadcast burning occur?

Broadcast burns will occur in the winter. Ideally, there will be re-entry burns in the years to come.

How does the USFS protect ponderosa pine regeneration with frequent burning?

Fire can help with regeneration in many cases. For critical regeneration, the USFS will protect the ponderosa pines.

What is the average cone crop?

Ponderosa pines have a two-year seed process. Cone crops align with preceding high moisture years.

How did the escaped prescribed burns in New Mexico impact the San Juan National Forest's ability to burn?

The USFS has guidance to adjust aspects of prescribed burning programs. While the NEPA covers several thousand acres, implementation occurs at smaller scales over several years. This allows for greater control over prescribed burning in the area. The USFS uses aerial admission (e.g., drones or helicopters) for burns over 1,000 acres. Drones are an excellent tool for their mobility and reduced risk to personnel.

How does the scale of prescribed burning on the SJNF compare to other national forests in the State?

Most of the national forests throughout the State implement burns around 300 acres to 800 acres in size. The ponderosa pine landscape provides advantages to burning that other forests do not have.

How many acres did the USFS burn in 2019?

The USFS burned almost 20,000 acres across the SJNF with prescribed fire.

What is the acreage goal for prescribed burns each year?

The goal is anywhere from 8,000 to 10,000 acres a year. Utilizing nontraditional burn windows in April, May, and June facilitates larger-scale burning on the SJNF.

What led to the consideration of prescribed burning during the spring?

A shift in perspective and support from leadership created opportunities for burning during nontraditional windows. Previously, Patrick Seekens worked in the Southeastern U.S., and he brought what he learned to Colorado.

How is the San Juan National Forest adjusting public outreach and education after the escaped prescribed burns in New Mexico?

Aside from additional outreach and discussion with the public, the SJNF did not need to change much because it had already conducted outreach and education with the public. MSI and the SJMA support additional public outreach and education.

How does the cost of prescribed fire re-entry compare to the initial costs of forest treatments?

Mechanical fuel breaks cost about \$600 to \$800 an acre. Prescribed fire costs about \$30 to \$60 an acre. In addition to being less expensive, prescribed fire also takes less time.

Private Land and NRCS Treatment Adjacent to USFS Land

Mr. Brown, Cody Robertson, NRCS, and Joel Lee, NRCS, provided an overview of forest treatment work conducted on private land supported by NRCS adjacent to the SJNF land. Below are key points from the overview.

- Mr. Brown's property is surrounded on three sides by SJNF land. Mr. Brown and the previous owners of the property conducted forest treatment work over the years, evidenced by stumps of different heights throughout the property. Mr. Brown and NRCS received support from a Technical Service Provider (TSP) Short Forestry, a local company who wrote the property's forest management plan and implemented the treatment.
- NRCS completes the federal paperwork for projects while TSPs develop the design and implement the project. NRCS relies on TSPs for forestry work in Southwest Colorado.

- NRCS prioritizes its relationships with private landowners and works with all private landowners who apply for support. NRCS works with private landowners up front to support initial treatment work. The responsibility is then on the landowner. NRCS creates larger openings for regeneration, a model that decreases canopy fire potential.
- Partnerships like this one increase the opportunity for burning on private land, which is typically an obstacle to private landowners looking to conduct forest treatments.
- Support from the USFS and momentum from RMRI allowed NRCS and Mr. Brown to conduct a Targeted Conservation Project (TCP) on Mr. Brown's property.
- GNAs are another tool that allows the CSFS to work with partners, including the USFS and NRCS, to perform or assist with cross-boundary treatments in priority areas. GNAs also provide timber companies with the opportunity to harvest and utilize the wood coming off the treatment area.

Engaging Landowners on Wildlife Mitigation with Wildfire Adapted Partnership (WAP)

Wildlife Adapted Partnership Executive Director Ashley Downing and Montezuma County Coordinator Samantha Torres provided an overview of WAP's work with homeowners in nearby WUI communities.

- WAP focuses on education and outreach about wildfire mitigation work and preparedness in the Durango area. Through its neighborhood ambassador program, WAP works with 150 volunteers, ten communities, and five counties. In addition to its education and outreach focus, WAP offers a mitigation incentive program. The program provides services like cost-share programs and a chipper rebate program.
- Almost 90 percent of homes in Southwest Colorado are located within the WUI, and many communities face challenges with evacuation routes. For many community members in the area, COSWAP opened doors for wildfire mitigation action.

Forest Treatment Work along Nordic Skiing Trails

Derek Padilla provided an overview of the collaboration between the SJNF and the local Nordic skiing club. Below are key points from his overview.

- After forest thinning projects in the late 2000s, the local Nordic skiing club expressed concerns about the increased sun exposure on Nordic ski trails. After discussions with the local skiing club, the SJNF adjusted future treatments to Nordic skiing trails by leaving more trees on the south side of the trails to preserve snowpack.
- Chicken Creek's popularity for recreation led the SJNF to transition to more condensed trail systems that concentrate use in the same places. Changes in the area required public outreach and messaging. The Mancos Trail Group, with support from RMRI, helped install interpretative trail system signage at high-use trailheads.

SJMA's Ambassador Program

Executive Director Stephanie Weber and Stewardship Director Mike Wight provided an overview of the SJMA's ambassador program. Below are key points from their overview.

- Over the last 30 years, SJMA has provided interpretative support to the SJNF. SJMA also conducts education and outreach programs with the community and with local schools.
- Over the last two years, SJMA hired seasonal forest ambassadors through RMRI to provide information about responsible trail use, conservation, and forest health projects. Ambassadors set up tables at busy trailheads to provide and collect information from recreational users. They also monitor the area and provide observations to the SJNF.

Clarifying Questions

Field trip attendees asked clarifying questions about SJMA. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

When ambassadors establish connections with recreational users, do they collect data?

Ambassadors collect data about where users come from, outdoor readiness, and other similar data points. SJMA now has two years of baseline data.

Snowtopography Site

DWRF Coordinator Danny Margoles and General Manager of Dolores Water Conservancy District (DWCD) Ken Curtis provided an overview of the snowtopography site in the Chicken Creek Recreation Area. Below are key points from their overview.

- In 2021, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) connected with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Tucson, Arizona, and DWCD to establish snowtopography sites to monitor snowpack and soil moisture. Snowtopography sites monitor the impact of changes in forest structure on snow moisture and persistence.
- To kick off the process, organizations involved hosted sessions to outline the monitoring process. The initial installation of the monitoring sites includes tools like wildlife cameras and transects. On a consistent basis, individuals from the groups involved visit the sites and record measurements. In 2022, two additional monitoring stations were installed in the area. The three sites monitor impacts on ponderosa pines, spruce, and areas with exposure to prescribed fire.
- Information gathered from these sites could inform long-term forest management across collaborative groups in the area as the site observe the effects and consequences of treatments.
- Many water managers would like to learn more about the impacts of wildfire on watersheds. DWCD is interested in this project to better understand how forest health treatments impact water quality and quantity. DWCD is committed to helping with the installations.

Clarifying Questions

Field trip attendees asked questions about snowtopography monitoring. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

Will there be sites monitoring areas exposed to wildfire? There are some sites monitoring the area impacted by the Cameron Peak Fire.

In the future, having sites that monitor areas exposed to wildfire would be ideal. At this point, the effort has limited resources and does not have a site monitoring an area with wildfire exposure.

When will the monitoring results be available?

Initial monitoring results should be available next spring.

What are the water priorities for downstream beneficiaries in this area?

Hydrology changes are extreme in Southwest Colorado. Water managers come together to understand the impacts of forest health treatments and influence long-term forest health treatments. DWCD provides raw water to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe for agricultural and drinking water.

STOP #3: WILDFIRE MITIGATION TREATMENTS AND ADAMS RANCH FOREST TREATMENT, SUMMIT LAKE WUI AREA

Montezuma County

- Making connections with communities in the area is challenging due to the small number of organized HOAs and community organizations. On-the-ground connections with landowners through local partnerships in the area are critical in generating support for forest health and wildfire mitigation treatments.
- Montezuma County recently finished updating its Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
- The Summit Lake area is a high-priority area. Summit Lake is a recreational and agricultural reservoir. Wildfire is the greatest risk to water in Summit Lake. Forest health treatment projects enhance the health of the forests and the quality of the water. For communities like the ones surrounding Summit Lake, this work is critical to protecting their agricultural and municipal water supply. COSWAP funding in this area will support forest health project implementation.

Summit Lake WUI BLM Treatment Project

Mark Atwood, BLM, provided an overview of the BLM's fuel treatment project on BLM and adjacent private land. Below are key points from his overview.

- The BLM conducted treatment at this site, which is a mix of BLM and privately owned land. The treatment work occurred between 2002 and 2006. In 2009, the BLM masticated the pinon junipers in the area and cut gamble oak. During the winter of 2021, the BLM pile burned in the area. Future treatment work will include re-piling material, pile burning, and broadcast burning.
- Although this treatment area is small (about 200 acres), the values at risk in this area make Summit Lake a high priority.
- The BLM can conduct fuel treatment on properties adjacent to BLM land, such as the treatment work conducted at Summit Lake. The BLM had agreements with the private landowners in this area to conduct this work. There are about ten other projects like this throughout the State.
- When more private landowners hear that the BLM conducts treatment work on some private properties adjacent to BLM for no cost, the BLM will need to prioritize which areas fit within the BLM's scope of work. Private landowners looking to conduct treatments on their land should contact local collaboratives first for support rather than the BLM.
- There are creative ways to organize several smaller projects in an area across BLM, CSFS, and private land through mechanisms such as the GNA.

Mancos Conservation District

Mancos Conservation District Executive Director Gretchen Rank provided an overview of the Mancos Conservation District and its role in the COSWAP funding for this area. Below are key points from her overview.

- Mancos Conservation District is the fiscal agent for the COSWAP Summit Lake priority area. WAP is the implementation partner. Other COSWAP partners for Summit Lake include the DWRP Collaborative, NRCS, and the Ute Mountain Ute at Adams Ranch.
- The Mancos Conservation District encourages land stewardship through education and by providing technical assistance to landowners in the area. In addition to COWSWAP funding, the Mancos Conservation District obtained a RESTORE grant through a partnership with MSI to construct Beaver Dam Analogs (BDA). Landowners in the area value sustainable

agriculture, some had beavers on their land in the past and hope they return, and others support forest health treatments and wildfire mitigation work.

Clarifying Questions

Field trip attendees asked clarifying questions about the work occurring around Summit Lake. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

With a recently updated CWPP, will Montezuma County apply for a Community Wildfire Defense Grant?

Yes. Montezuma County is working with the DWRF Collaborative to apply for that grant.

Do the private landowners have to pay for the treatment work the BLM conducts on their land?

The private landowner does not need to pay for the treatment work.

Does the BLM advertise that it will do treatment work at no cost on private lands, or is that through direct outreach to private landowners?

The BLM conducts direct outreach to private landowners when there is an opportunity to conduct treatments on land adjacent to BLM land that fits within the BLM's program of work.

Adams Ranch

Ranch Manager David Stone and CSFS staff provided background information about Adams Ranch and an overview of the treatment work occurring at the Ranch. Below are key points from the review.

- In 1956, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe purchased Adams Ranch. Located on the other side of Summit Lake, Adams Ranch is adjacent to the SJNF. Forest treatment work on Adams Ranch complements the treatment work conducted on the Forest. This area showcases landscape-level treatments, as the BLM conducted treatment work on the other side of the reservoir as well. COSWAP will also tie the treatments along the boundary of the Ranch with work in the other surrounding communities together.
- In 2017, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe began conducting forest treatments on the Ranch. One of the issues that led to treatment work was the insect infestation in the forest on the Ranch. Through some funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and partnering with the CSFS, the treatment work continues. Between Adams Ranch and some of the other ranches that the Ute Mountain Ute own, the Ute Mountain Ute has treated 120 acres.
- The Ute Mountain Ute employs a local contractor for the forest treatment work. They have loggers and firewood sellers from local Navajo crews taking the harvest off the Ranch.

RMRI Industry Tours

Thursday, October 6, 2022, from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm

278 Sawyer Dr., Durango, CO, and 901 West Grand Av., Mancos, CO

TIMBER AGE SYSTEMS, DURANGO

Industry tour attendees visited the Timber Age System shop. Founder and CEO Kyle Hansen and Co-founder and Business Development Lead Andy Hawk provided an overview of what Timber Age Systems does and the product they create. Below are key points from their overview of Timber Age Systems and their product.

Overview

- Timber Age Systems started in 2018 with the support of a Wood Innovations Grant from the CSFS to see if Timber Age Systems could create cross-laminated timber (CLT) with small-diameter ponderosa pines. Designed in Europe to replace concrete and steel in low-carbon buildings, there are many structures, some even 20 or more stories tall, made from CLT across the world and the U.S.
- Timber Age Systems is the smallest producer of CLT and builds high-efficiency modular housing with small timber products. Ponderosa pine CLT yields smaller boards than most companies produce.
- Timber Age Systems receives most of its wood from private lands. RMRI is important to the company because it helps them identify partnerships, such as the ones they have with NRCS, CSFS, private landowners, and subdivisions/HOAs to source its wood from fire mitigation and forest health projects.
- Timber Age Systems built logging trucks for its nontraditional harvests. Typically, they use one truckload of timber a week.
- The company's manufacturing shop is by the Durango Airport. They are building a larger shop to increase their processing time and capacity. The Innovative Housing Incentives Program (IHIP) will fund the shop's improvements because Timber Age Systems will produce affordable workforce housing, a stipulation of IHIP funding. Timber Age Systems will build affordable workforce housing in Ignacio this year. This project could open doors for Timber Age Systems, as there are many additional affordable workforce housing needs and projects.
- Collaboration is more challenging when the needs of producers and provisions of the forests do not align. However, collaboration is less challenging when producers utilize the forests' provisions, such as small-diameter ponderosa pine. Additionally, working with ponderosa pine requires attention to detail, so smaller operations suit the material better.
- Through the Wood Innovations Grant, Timber Age Systems has an internship program with Fort Lewis College students in the Engineering Department's senior seminar. Through the internship program, students and Timber Age Systems conduct wood testing to generate custom engineering sheets to distribute to Colorado engineers.
- There is no wood fiber manufacturing company for insulation in the United States.; although, the University of Maine is close to developing the first. GUTEX, based in Europe, makes wood fiber insulation.

Clarifying Questions

Industry tour attendees asked several clarifying questions about Timber Age Systems. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

How many trees does Timber Age Systems process monthly?

Currently, Timber Age Systems processes eight cubic feet (ccf) a week, or about 32 ccf a month.

What is Timber Age System's radius of supply?

Timber Age Systems receives supplies from a 40-mile radius and is not interested in going beyond a 50-mile radius in the future. They want to create a replicable model utilizing local Colorado wood and focusing on small-scale facilities.

Can lodgepole pine, spruce fire, or other species be utilized to create CLT?

As long as a material meets the standard of 0.35 density, it can be used to make CLT. It is possible to create CLT with lodgepole pine. Timber Age Systems and Fort Lewis College are studying white fir to see if it could be a usable material.

How does the cost of CLT compare to other materials from the consumer's perspective?

Timber Age Systems estimates their cost is around the County's average price of \$450/square foot. Incentives and subsidies for building passive and/or high energy efficient homes, which Timber Age Systems sells, only make the costs more competitive. Additionally, the speed of construction and lack of trades required on the job site reduces the cost.

How do Timber Age System's structures compare to fire codes?

In addition to being standard with the 2021 Energy Code, structures made of CLT are up to American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards. CLT performs better than drywall and wood stuffed with insulation. Timber Age Systems conducted fire panel tests with Oregon State University at the joints between the CLT wall and flooring. The panels outperformed a one-hour and two-hour burn test. There is very little oxygen in the walls, so fire peters out. Timber Age Systems hopes to build a house and burn it in a burn room with Durango Fire Protection District in the future.

What is Timber Age System's Community of Practice (CoP)?

Timber Age Systems attended the International Mass Timber Conference in Portland, Oregon, this March, which had 300,000 attendees and 1,100 architects. In 2019, the Conference had 1,500 attendees. As of 2021, there were over 500 mass timber starts. In contrast, there were about 14 in 2008 in the U.S. There is slower growth in the number of manufacturing facilities in the U.S. There is a lot of interest at this moment. For example, Timber Age Systems is working with individuals from KL&A Engineers and Builders and Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) to strengthen their products and business.

Is there a national association or cooperative association for CLT?

There is no specific association for CLT. However, some existing timber organizations have arms focused on CLT and other wood products.

Who are the national leaders of CLT and other innovative wood products that State policymakers could engage in discussions about the 2023 Farm Bill?

Softwood Lumber Board (SLB) would be a good leader to engage in those discussions.

Attendees had the opportunity to talk with Kyle and Andy to learn more about Timber Age Systems and look around the shop before leaving to visit Aspen Wood Products.

ASPEN WOOD PRODUCTS, MANCOS

Founder Dave Sitton provided an overview of Aspen Wood Products, the history of the facility, and Aspen Wood Products' current products. Below are key points from his overview.

Overview

- In 2016, Dave and his business partners started Aspen Wood Products by purchasing a small aspen timber company. Originally built during the 1930s, Aspen Woods Product's facility served as a matchstick factory and an excelsior factory over the years. In 2017, Western Excelsior owned the facility, and the facility burnt down. At the end of 2017, Dave

and his partner purchased the property's assets. In 2018, reconstruction began, and in the one building left standing, they began making excelsior.

- During the first year of excelsior production, Aspen Wood Products became the leading supplier of excelsior bails to Mexico. Since 2018 Aspen Wood Products has started selling excelsior for A/C and cooler pads, erosion and sediment control, packing material, decorative material, bedding material, and other uses like animal bedding or acoustic tiles. In addition to plastic netting for pads and erosion control logs, Aspen Wood Products has a cotton-based biodegradable netting material for areas with plastic restrictions.
- Aspen Wood Products is the largest aspen manufacturer in the U.S. Aspen Wood Products ships nationally, and one of their customers has international sales. With a typical harvest radius of 120 miles, Aspen Wood Products harvests most of its timber products in-house. Most harvests occur on the San Juan National Forest through an agreement with the USFS, with some coming from state land through a GNA contract with the CSFS, and the rest coming from ranches and private land. Aspen Wood Products manufactures 7,000,000 pounds of wood excelsior annually and about 1,000,000 cooler pads.
- With 66 employees and growing, Aspen Wood Products has plans to build a pellet mill line in the facility, too, with a Wood Innovations Grant from the CSFS. The pellet mill can use the facility's waste products, which currently serve as firewood and cattle feed supplement. Equipment to build the pellet mill line is coming in slowly due to supply chain wait times. In the meantime, Aspen Wood Products is reaching out to potential customers.
- Aspen Wood Products purchased a mill with a pellet machine in Dove Creek from a biofuel company that made pellets from sunflower seed hulls. However, the equipment is not suitable for aspen pellets.
- In addition to aspen products, Aspen Wood Products began harvesting beetle kill ponderosa pine north of Dolores to manufacture and sell paneling. Beetle kill events led the USFS to conduct treatments on the Forest, increasing Aspen Wood Products' supply of beetle kill ponderosa pine. Currently, Aspen Wood Products makes paneling with "blue" and "green" beetle kill ponderosa pine. There is more competition in the beetle kill ponderosa pine market than in the aspen market. Aspen Wood Products will also use ponderosa pine to make pellets.
- Once the wood is dried to the appropriate moisture percentage, it can be used to create a product. Aspen Wood Products makes its excelsior equipment and has two on-site mechanics. The excelsior assembly line begins outside, where logs are cut into 18-inch sections. The logs run inside the conveyor belt through the machines to create the wood fiber. At the end of the conveyor built, water is added back to the excelsior for certain products. Additionally, there are various cuts to generate several excelsior product types.
- Transportation is a challenge due to distances, road conditions, and safety. Additionally, logging trucks and chipping vans have different specifications. Aspen Wood Products is considering hauling more short logs because trucks with the specifications for that product are available. There should be more investment in transportation once there are more opportunities for the timber industry.
- The existing collaborative efforts, partnerships, and resources available through RMRI help support Aspen Wood Products. USFS leadership is another critical component of this operation. Across the industry, leadership is the most critical ingredient to a successful business.
- Aspen Wood Products works to support the industry's growth through bidding on various projects; however, lately, prices increase due to inflation are creating barriers to growth.
- Industry tour attendees are welcome to direct any additional questions about the industry to Molly Pitts.

Clarifying Questions

Industry tour attendees had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about Aspen Wood Products. Questions are below in italics, and corresponding answers are in plain text.

Is the blue paneling beetle kill ponderosa pine?

The paneling tinted blue is beetle kill ponderosa pine.

What is the market for pellets?

Aspen Wood Products is confident that selling in the area will be successful, as there are few local at-scale manufacturers. When Aspen Wood Products started, they quickly received calls about interest in excelsior. Now, there are companies in Europe, and exporters in the U.S., that have already called about pellets. With the war in Europe, there is a demand for biofuel for fuel sources like pellets.

Are there any concerns that 90 percent of Aspen Wood Products comes from the USFS?

There are concerns related to turnover, Wilderness Area designations, and Inventoried Roadless Areas designations on the Forest. However, most concerns are related to community support for forest treatments. However, wildfire impacts help with community social license.

What is "red dye" in aspens?

Sometimes referred to as "red dye," "red stain," or "water core," the condition relates to aspen trees that look good from the exterior, but that crumble and ooze red once cut. Foresters are not sure what causes the phenomena. Aspen Tree Products hypothesizes that the aspens are drawing iron into the tree.

Are there other mills or producers of aspen products in Colorado?

There are no other mills or producers of aspen products in Colorado. There is a company in Wisconsin that uses low-elevation aspen for wood pulp.

Could the aspen excelsior be used for post-fire erosion prevention?

It is possible to use excelsior for post-fire erosion prevention.

Does Aspen Wood Products work with CDOT?

CDOT is specified to use Aspen Wood Product's erosion logs for any project that requires the material in Colorado.

Does Aspen Wood Products package its products on-site?

Yes, Aspen Wood Products packages its products on-site. Industry tour attendees had the opportunity to see the packaging line.

Is it possible to use dead wood to make pellets?

As long as wood holds together enough to form a pellet, it can be used. Aspen Wood Products will likely mix dead wood with green wood to create pellets.

Could the Southwest CFLRP provide transportation support?

The Southwest CFLRP could potentially address road conditions through road work projects.

Dave provided attendees with a tour of Aspen Wood Products' facility. Attendees saw the packaging line, soon-to-be pellet mill line, the excelsior assembly line, and the log yard. Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to feel the wood excelsior.