



Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership

January 18, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Minutes

Member & Partnership Updates:

- Scott Hass (CC District Ranger, USFS) – Successful pile burning operations are ongoing throughout the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, communities are in a better state of awareness of the pile burning happening so less concern when they see smoke in the air. Will continue to do that if safe snow weather remains.
- Diane Kielty – Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA) request for having their webpage on the CCWFHP website. Potential benefit for both organizations and capitalizing on economies of scale. Website development is built in the UCCWA 2023 budget, ready to move forward whenever. General agreement the CCWFHP connection to UCCWA is there and it makes sense, but we need more information on what the CCWFHP website ongoing costs are since we haven't talked about ongoing financial support for the organization. UCCWA page maintenance would be covered by UCCWA, and Diane would do ongoing maintenance. Postpone request to be reviewed/voted on at March meeting.

Presentation:

- Inaugural Airborne Snow Observatories Surveys in the Upper South Platte Basin - Scott Griebing, [Colorado Airborne Snow Measurement \(CASM\)](#) and St. Vrain and Lefthand Water Conservancy District

USFS Coordination:

- MOU Process Update (Leah Fine, USFS) – setting up new MOU between members of CCWFHP and the USFS. USFS is interested in formalizing and writing down what their relationship with the CCWFHP looks like. Options for the formalization of our relationship are below. USFS is prepared to pursue either option depending on Partnership feedback.
 - 1) MOU with all the individual entities of CCWFHP and the USFS. Advantages include it being a collaborative process, developing a shared vision. New MOU process also allows other entities (like the CSFS) that didn't sign the original MOU, to sign this one. Even with MOU in place, for future projects there will need to be separate, individual agreements for each project, but if an MOU is finalized with language already crafted of shared vision and objectives, it could streamline the process of developing those project specific agreements. Disadvantages of the MOU option is that it can be complicated and

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burdensome to negotiate the boiler plate pieces of language each entity needs in the MOU. USFS is ready to support this process though.

- 2) Letter of Commitment from the USFS to CCWFHP – unilateral letter expressing the USFS’s support and intent to collaborate, support for the vision and mission of CCWFHP. USFS could draft and finalize this letter without going through the extensive MOU process. Disadvantage is that it is unilateral, not the same opportunity for our communities to work and agree on shared language and sign one document together.
- Comments from the Partnership:
 - Why doesn’t current MOU establishing the CCWFHP work for USFS to sign? MOU eligibility criteria excludes federal agencies from becoming a Partner or signatory. Current MOU states any local government, county, state agency, Front Range water provider or other stakeholder is eligible to become a member. That is something the CCWFHP can consider updating when the original MOU effective date ends September 2027. Also, MOU doesn’t include boiler plate legal language that USFS needs to be able to sign.
 - Is this one document we can all sign, or does each entity need to sign an individual agreement with the USFS? Everyone would sign one document with the USFS, very similar to CCWFHP MOU.
 - Is the letter of agreement option a strong enough document that we could fund projects on USFS lands without additional agreements? How does it impact funding mechanisms? With either an MOU or Letter of Commitment, there will need to be separate agreements to fund projects. Advantage of the MOU is that collectively, we will work through the language of shared visions and objectives, and we can then pull from that language to craft these separate agreements.
 - Indemnification language can sometimes be a sticking point, but other regions of Colorado have been able to work through that (i.e., [Boulder County MOU](#)).
 - With the two options, MOU might be more burdensome but there is strong value in going that route and that was the consensus of members at the November 2022 meeting. Good to open the opportunity for other entities to sign the MOU who didn’t sign the original (CSFS, and those talks have started).
 - Consensus that moving forward with the MOU process is best option, can keep the Letter of Commitment option in our back pocket.
 - It would be beneficial to have a cover memo with this draft MOU about how it is different from the MOU establishing the CCWFHP and why members should advocate within their communities for this MOU.

Grants Update

- Missouri Creek Restoration – outreach workshop planning, Healthy Rivers Fund plans
- WSRF Project Scoping – update from Diane ([Project Scoping PDF](#): please review prior to the meeting and come with questions or reach out [Diane](#) in advance). Project scope PDF will be sent to the CWCB as our midway report for the WSRF funds.
 - [ElephantFish Historic Stream Corridor GIS Desktop Analysis](#)

10:30 AM Adjourn

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