



## Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership

Organizational Board/Stakeholder Meeting  
January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 12:00 - 1:30 PM MT

### Meeting Goals & Key Notes:

- Identify concrete steps to finalize the MOU for signatures
  - Carol Ekarius of Coalitions & Collaborative in attendance to answer attorney questions regarding MOU needs and COCO affiliation. COCO exists to facilitate groups that are informal in their own right. Neither the MOU nor the COCO affiliation obligates any monies and neither is binding, so any partner can back out at any time.
  - Discussion concluded with a good understanding of the exact MOU goals/needs, and attorneys returned to re-drafting. Plan to circulate next version prior to Feb. 2 meeting.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Jessica Morales will redraft the MOU with the new understanding from Carol's info today, and circulate to attorneys. Will aim to circulate to full group 1 week before next meeting
- Update partners on ongoing coordination & strategic planning efforts
  - Strategic Planning committee has met several times over the fall/winter and are working on a draft strategic business plan for partners to review in early spring. Some details expected to change with MOU, COCO affiliation, and formalization of organizational structure.
  - Will be sharing a project prioritization input request in Q1 with info on top 12 projects from Matrix study.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Continue discussion at Mitigation & Implementation subcommittee meeting next week.
- Mobilize Mitigation & Implementation Subcommittee to identify projects ripe for early/mid 2022 implementation grants
  - Gilpin and Clear Creek Counties have both prioritized updating their CWPPs this year; Gilpin still needs funding for the update. Subcommittee will meet next week to discuss this and other projects for grant pursuit.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** Mitigation & Implementation subcommittee to discuss how best to support partners updating CWPPs at action meeting next week, regional vs re-upping county plans.
- Clarify COCO affiliation signatory requirements
  - The chairperson of group formed by MOU can sign affiliation agreement.

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## Notes:

- Mike McHugh, representing our newest partner Aurora Water, was in attendance and shared his years of experience successfully affiliation with COCO in the Coalition for the Upper South Platte and other organizations. He enumerated the benefits of COCO's network, experience, cost-sharing, and billing procedures. Mike also recommended that the Partners connect with other partnering groups including Watershed Health Investment Partners and the Watershed Wildfire Protection Work Group. Both these groups have worked collectively to develop effective mitigation partnering agreements with the USFS.

## Agenda

### **12:00 PM Welcome, introduction of new attendees, & member updates**

- Intro to Ready, Set, Go! Fire safety program – training Feb. 9 from CO Dept of Fire Prevention & Control. [Info & Registration here.](#)
- Strategic Planning Update – see summary in 'Meeting Goals'
- CSM Senior Design Challenge – Missouri Creek basin project
  - Expo/pitch to students next Thursday, CEEN students over the next 2 semesters. 1<sup>st</sup> semester field data collection, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester 30% design. Field data will look at basic 'reference reach' parameters to inform appropriate restoration activities. The upper drainage is USFS land, with some Gilpin County Schools lands closer to Highway 119; the lower reaches are where the pre-wildfire planning study sited stream channel projects.
- Grant opportunities and implementation –
  - [COSWAP](#) fund has an early winter 2022 deadline (still not specified by DNR). Jeffco was only county within the watershed picked for the Strategic Focus Areas, which are eligible for Conservation Corps crews and a Landscape Scale Fuels Reductions fund. Gilpin and Clear Creek counties are eligible for the State Wildland Inmate Fire Teams (SWIFT) crews available for "projects must significantly reduce wildfire risk to life, property and/or infrastructure."
  - Other funding opportunities we can use too - utilize those to get work done on the ground. Who are our implementation partners.
  - **JeffCo Open Space update from Steve Germaine:** Very active in upper south platte watershed - outlying suburbs of Denver there, large WUI population makes them high priority. For strategic partnering opportunities in grant pursuits, where do JeffCo Open Space priorities overlap with the Matrix study? White Ranch, Lookout Mountain, Elk Meadow parks are all high priorities that fall within upper Clear Creek watershed. JCOS has projects planned in each area through 2025 & is interested in partnering on grant applications.
- There is a need expressed today by all three counties to update Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

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- Option discussed for developing a regional CWPP with each county as a section and community level as subsections within. The 2017 Woodland Park Forest Health Initiative Plan ([link](#)) is a regional CWPP example.
- Update from Clear Creek County Commissioner George Marlin: CC County also needs to update the CWPP/CWPIP, it's from 2016ish.
- Update from Gilpin County Commissioner Sandy Hollingsworth: Gilpin is in final draft of our HMP, and a CWPP update is on the list for 2022. Our OEM partnered to do private property mitigation last year with our Fire District in part using Ready, Set Go grant and we gave more funding to that this year.

**12:20 PM      MOU/Formalized Agreement for COCO Affiliation**

- Discuss remaining attorney concerns around signing the MOU: Concerns right now around powers granted to the organization (hiring, using the funds, etc.)—not sure the result of MOU will be able to achieve objectives?
  - This concern addressed by Carol's explanation of the purposed & mission of the COCO affiliate support program; COCO is the contracting body, manages HR & payroll, invoices partners for contributions, general liability for contracts (workers comp, unemployment, general, environmental), and holds a Money Market account for each affiliate.
- Further Discussion
  - Cost of COCO affiliation was raised as a concern. All costs (e.g. HR, payroll, liability) are % costed monthly to affiliates based on how much you're spending. E.g. insurance based on your share of payroll and project contracting. If you don't use any COCO services, that month has 0% costing.
  - Question of other fiscal agents was raised; partners pointed to early 2021 process of selecting COCO affiliation as the preferred means of fiscal agency.
  - Partnership coordination needs the attention of an employee/contracted person to keep things moving forward. This was part of the early conversation—do we want to have a base amount of money we want to contribute? This can't be done through the MOU, but a sliding annual partnership fee is planned to fund coordination/operations, which are estimated at \$30,000 annually. Still need to determine sliding fees, but this will be funded through non-binding contributions from partners on an annual basis.

1:15 PM      Next Steps & Action Items  
 1:20 PM      Comments & Discussion  
 1:25 PM      Adjourn.

**NEXT MEETING February 2, 2022 12pm - 1:30pm**  
 [All meetings will be virtual until further notice]

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