

Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
May 26, 2020, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
RMRI Social License Subcommittee
Meeting Summary - FINAL

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Rob Addington, Paul Amundson, Patt Dorsey, Cindy Dozier, Tim Kylo, Matt Lindler, Kelle Reynolds, Nathan Van Schaik, and Kirk Will

Facilitation: Heather Bergman and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Patt Dorsey	Edit the key messaging document based on the Subcommittee’s feedback.
Kelle Reynolds	Contact the Rocky Mountain Research Station to discuss opportunities for them to host graduate students to research social license.
Heather Bergman and Kirk Will	Discuss opportunities for the Division of Fire Prevention and Control to host graduate students to research social license.
Heather Bergman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the local priority landscapes to receive feedback on the key messages document and which communication tools would be most useful to them. • Send the key messages to the Communications Subcommittee for them to help develop a strategy and toolbox for disseminating the messages. • Create the slides for the Social License Subcommittee update for the next full RMRI meeting and distribute them to the Social License Subcommittee before their next call.
Samuel Wallace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute the governance charter language, The Truth presentation, updated messages, social license input document, and work plan to the Social License Subcommittee. • Send a Doodle for a one-hour call the week of June 15.

COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

Participants from the Communications Subcommittee (Matt Lindler, Tim Kylo, and Nathan Van Schaik) gave an update on the activities of the Communications Subcommittee. Their comments are summarized below.

- Five members from The Truth, a branding and marketing firm, gave a presentation during the last Communications Subcommittee meeting. During their presentation, The Truth members discussed their strategy and approach to developing a brand using the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) branding effort as an example. They also shared in detail the amount of research that goes into identifying audiences and developing messages to create a brand.
- One takeaway from The Truth presentation is that they are coming into RMRI with fresh eyes and a non-biased approach to developing a brand.
- The Truth will be able to assist in branding and overall content creation for RMRI as a whole. The Communications and Social License Subcommittees can continue to identify key audiences and produce talking points for those audiences. The Truth can then take those

messages and test them with focus groups and surveys to further refine the messages based on audience research.

- The Truth has not been retained yet. They are the branding and marketing firm of choice for the NWTF because of their ongoing partnership.
- The Truth presentation was recorded. Samuel Wallace, Peak Facilitation Group, will distribute The Truth presentation to the Social License Subcommittee.
- The Communications Subcommittee is aware that the Social License Subcommittee is developing key messages. They are ready to help as needed to refine the messages and create creative content.

ACTION ITEM UPDATE

Meeting participants gave updates on their action items from the 5/11 Social License Subcommittee. Their comments are summarized below.

- Rob Addington, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), reached out to Daniel Godwin of the Prescribed Fire Council to see if they have any accessible talking points. The Prescribed Fire Council did not have talking points, but they do have helpful information under the “Resources” tab on their website.
- Rob Addington reached out to the Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative to request their talking points, and they sent him their talking points. There is consistency between the Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative’s talking points and the Social License Subcommittee’s key messages in terms of main themes.
- Kirk Will, Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC), will be discussing the Subcommittee’s key messages with the Prescribed Fire Council at their next meeting.
- Heather Bergman, Peak Facilitation Group, and Kirk Will will follow up on their 5/11 action item and discuss opportunities for the DFPC to host graduate students to research social license.
- Kelle Reynolds will follow up on her 5/11 action item and contact the Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) to discuss opportunities for them to host graduate students to research social license.
- Samuel Wallace sent out a strategy table and an updated work plan to the Social License Subcommittee based on their 5/11 discussion. The strategy table has not been filled out yet.

KEY MESSAGING DISCUSSION

Following, the 5/11 Social License Subcommittee meeting, a group of Social License Subcommittee participants edited their key messages based on the Subcommittee’s feedback. Meeting participants discussed the updated key messages. Their comments are summarized below.

- Some of the changes that were incorporated into the key messages document included using the US Forest Service’s (USFS) definition of wildland fires and using “prescribed fire” consistently throughout the document. The key messages were also updated to stress the importance of prescribed fire in an accurate way. The Social License Subcommittee subgroup also simplified messages that were too complicated.
- Key messages were added to the document to describe how prescribed fire can help improve wildlife habitat and water quality. The messaging on the relationship between forest health and water quality was compared to the Peaks-to-People Water Fund talking points to create consistency among messages.
- The key messages should include the idea that prescribed fires help reduce hazardous surface fuels *and* ladder fuels.
- There is a key message that describes how prescribed fires can reduce insect populations and invasive species. This message should be removed from the document because it is not

scientifically accurate. Prescribed fires can sometimes increase beetle infestations by weakening trees. Additionally, some invasive species may enter an area after a prescribed burn, and it would take repetitive prescribed fires to eradicate them. These key messages will be removed from the document.

- There should be information on how prescribed fire improves nutrient cycling and successional habitat for wildlife in the key messages.
- The message that prescribed fires are scheduled to protect wildlife is accurate because they are scheduled around nesting birds.
- The key messages include points about the visual impact of prescribed fires. These messages were included in the document because the Social License Subcommittee identified that the visual impacts from a prescribed fire (e.g., blackened trees and ground) might be a social barrier for using prescribed fires. The Subcommittee wanted to be proactive about communicating what the near-term impacts of prescribed fire would be. The message should not assign any judgments to the visual impact of prescribed fire (i.e., whether someone will like it or not like it). Instead, the message should communicate that there will be a near-term visual impact as a result of prescribed fire, but the area will green up over time.
- A bullet was added to describe that forest managers need a complete toolbox, including prescribed fire, mastication, lop-and-scatter, etc., to keep the forest healthy.

UTILIZATION OF KEY MESSAGES DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the next steps for using the key messages to produce communication materials. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Social License Subcommittee can take the key messages and begin to create videos, industry banners, handouts, pamphlets, brochures, and public events to promote the messages.
- The Subcommittee could prioritize developing industry banners.
- The Subcommittee could prioritize creating social media material. RMRI has a Twitter and Facebook account through which they can publish messages. Partners can then share those messages on their accounts. Social media content would likely generate the highest level of engagement among the public.
- The Truth could test the messages first to make sure they would resonate with the intended audience before a collection of communication materials are developed. The process of audience testing may take some time. The Social License Subcommittee could miss opportunities this fire season to distribute the messages, considering that treatments will begin shortly in Southwest Colorado.
- The next step for the key messages should be to send them to the local landscapes for their review. A review of the messages by the local landscapes could help the Social License Subcommittee produce communication materials that the local landscapes will use. Local landscape partners also have their talking points and communication materials, and it would be beneficial to align their talking points with the Subcommittee's key messages.
- Participants in the Social License Subcommittee from the local landscapes helped craft the key messages. The local landscapes identified social license as a cross-cutting issue, which is the reason for the formation of the Social License Subcommittee.
- Once RMRI has a developed brand and communication strategy, the key messages can be aligned with the needs of the local landscape and promoted through a variety of mediums (social media, newspapers, etc.).
- One option for the key messages is to use them to build a public outreach campaign on a specific topic. It is challenging for local landscape partners to plan and roll out a public

campaign for the purposes of building social license. A public campaign looks different at the statewide level than it does at the local level. Local RMRI partners may need different messaging for a local area campaign that is context-specific.

- The key messages and a public outreach campaign should be tied to specific RMRI projects. One RMRI project that is occurring this summer is timber sales on the San Juan National Forest.
- It would be helpful to have a calendar with upcoming RMRI projects so that the Social License Subcommittee can prepare to promote messages to build social license for upcoming work. The Social License Subcommittee could promote messages for on-the-ground treatments as well as environmental assessments and decisions around which local partners need to build community support. RMRI-Southwest Colorado (RMRI-SW) is developing an all-lands strategy over the next 10 years and could develop a calendar of projects. The Upper South Platte could also potentially develop a schedule for projects.
- The RMRI Social License Subcommittee could comment on the upcoming environmental assessments (EAs) on the Salter and Lone Pine projects. Commenting on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) projects is not a listed role and responsibility of the Social License Subcommittee. Because the Social License Subcommittee cannot submit comments on behalf of RMRI, there would need to be a mechanism in place to encourage partners to comment and allow partners to opt out if they do not want to comment. Commenting on EAs and other NEPA assessments should not be a role of the Social License Subcommittee at this time.
- The key messages are more conceptual than they are precise messages. The themes from the key messages can help inform the creation of a catalog of content to create mini-campaigns.
- Local fire districts would be interested in using videos and publications. Agencies would have to internally determine how they plan to use any produced messages or communication materials.

VETTING OF KEY MESSAGES DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the process to vet the key messages with RMRI partners. Their comments are summarized below.

- The talking points of RMRI partners helped inform the key messages. RMRI partners may not need to provide input on the specific messages as it would take time and effort to wordsmith each of the messages. Instead, RMRI partners could provide feedback on the plan to develop communication materials and the concepts of the key messages.
- The Social License Subcommittee could provide the key messages to the whole RMRI partnership and ask the RMRI partners if they support the messages in concept. The next full RMRI meeting is on June 23. The Social License Subcommittee can update the full partnership that they are developing key messages, and they can ask during that meeting if the concepts resonate with them.
- The Communications Subcommittee could help refine the messages. The Communications Subcommittee could also help identify the audience, key messages for that audience, and the primary method of communication to reach those audiences through mini-campaigns. The Communications Subcommittee would not rewrite the key messages. Heather Bergman will send the key messages to the Communications Subcommittee for them to help develop a strategy and toolbox for disseminating the messages.
- The key messages should be sent to the local landscapes for their review and input on what communication materials would be most helpful to them. Heather Bergman will contact the

local priority landscapes to receive feedback on the key messages and which communication tools would be most useful to them.

NEXT STEPS

- Samuel Wallace will distribute the governance charter language, The Truth presentation, updated messages, social license input document, and work plan to the Social License Subcommittee.
- Heather Bergman and Samuel Wallace will create Social License Subcommittee update slides for the RMRI June 23 meeting that they will share with the Social License Subcommittee for their review.
- The Social License Subcommittee will have a one-hour check-in call during the week of June 15. Samuel Wallace will send a Doodle to schedule the next meeting.