

Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
August 5, 2020, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee
Meeting Summary - FINAL

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Mo Bookwalter, Patt Dorsey, Tim Reader, Kelle Reynolds, Ellen Roberts, and Nathan Van Schaik

Facilitation: Molly Pitts and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Nathan Van Schaik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the idea of incorporating job listings into the RMRI website with the Communications Subcommittee at a future meeting.
Tim Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a document that helps direct wood businesses to the relevant resources on the workforce center website. • Send the Northern Arizona University (NAU) article that mentions RMRI to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee for them to determine how to announce the grant projects to RMRI partners. • Send the report that the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative (DWRF) produced on the socio-economic impacts of the restoration economy to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. • Send a draft of the NAU survey questions to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee once they are ready to be distributed.
Molly Pitts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send Ellen Roberts' email on the Southwest Colorado workforce meeting and information on a new logging workforce training program at Shasta College to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. • Develop a draft Workforce Capacity Subcommittee work plan with assistance from Mo Bookwalter and Samuel Wallace.

JULY 16 ACTION ITEM FOLLOW-UP

Meeting participants discussed their action items from the August 16 Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting. Their comments are summarized below.

- Nathan Van Schaik had the task of exploring the idea of incorporating job listings into the RMRI website with the Communications Subcommittee. He will bring this topic up to them at a future Communications Subcommittee meeting and ask how the website can best help recruit a new workforce and list job opportunities.
- Tim Reader had the task of reaching out to the workforce centers to request a factsheet on their services. He reached out to the workforce centers, and they responded that they do not have a brochure or handout on their services. The website for the workforce centers is comprehensive. Since the workforce centers do not have a brochure, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should develop a document that helps direct wood businesses to the relevant resources on the workforce center website. Tim Reader will create this document.
- Molly Pitts had the task of reaching out to someone at the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) to participate in a workforce capacity workshop. She learned that

someone from the CDLE was going to talk at the Southwest Colorado workforce capacity meeting. She decided to wait to see their presentation before she reached out to them.

SOUTHWEST ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION INSTITUTES (SWERI) GRANT DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed updates on the SWERI grant program. Their comments are summarized below.

- In the past, the US Forest Service (USFS) helped fund statewide wood utilization teams. NAU applied for a grant to develop a multi-state wood utilization team with Colorado State University (CSU) and New Mexico Highlands University. These three universities host the three ecological restoration institutes that make up SWERI. The goal of the multi-state wood utilization team is to help coordinate biomass utilization efforts and develop technical assistance capacity. The project is overseen by a steering committee that includes the directors of the three ecological restoration institutes.
- NAU is hosting a kick-off meeting during the week of August 3 to launch their effort. They do not have a specific work plan yet. They are discussing organizing educational and professional webinars and conferences and workshops on biomass utilization. They are also looking to identify a potential rails project to lower transportation costs. The SWERI partners and multi-state wood utilization team may also conduct a spatial analysis of industry clusters to identify why industry clusters exist in some areas and not others.
- The multi-state wood utilization team will conduct a survey of the wood industry this fall. The survey will ask businesses about the skills they need (e.g., truck driving skills, etc.). The grant is geographically focused on Southwest Colorado, Central-Northern Arizona, and Northern New Mexico. The SWERI partners are discussing conducting the survey across the entire state of Colorado rather than only in the Southwest Colorado region.
- It would be helpful for SWERI partners to expand the geographic area of the survey to include all of Colorado, considering that conducting an industry survey across Colorado would cost about \$7,000.
- The survey was originally intended to focus on logging businesses. If possible, the survey should expand beyond logging businesses to include fuels mitigation contractors, mastication contractors, truck drivers, and biomass facility operators to include as much of the industry as possible. There are areas in Southwest Colorado where mastication may be a treatment method if prescribed burning is not an option. NAU and the grant team is considering adding these additional businesses to the survey contact list.
- The survey will be sent out in December. The SWERI partners are currently in the process of narrowing down the list of businesses that will receive the survey. Tim Reader and Dr. Kurt Mackes of Colorado State University will be helping identify businesses across Colorado that will receive the survey. They are trying to make sure that they do not over-survey industry representatives.
- The data from the survey will likely be compiled during the first half of 2021. The data compilation should be completed by mid-year.
- The questions for the survey have been finalized, except for questions related to forest mitigation contracting work. Tim Reader will send out a draft of the NAU survey questions once they are ready to be distributed.
- It would be helpful to share information on the SWERI grant with RMRI partners. NAU wrote an article that mentioned RMRI that could be included in RMRI's newsletter The Source. Outside of the survey, most of the grant activities in Colorado will focus on Southwest Colorado. Any information from the grant will be transferrable to other areas, but it may not be as relevant now to the other RMRI priority landscapes. Tim Reader will

find the NAU article and send it to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee for them to determine how to announce the grant to RMRI partners.

- There are opportunities to learn from other states through the multi-state wood utilization team. For example, in New Mexico, over 50% of restoration is completed manually with chainsaws. In Colorado, loggers are much more mechanized. As more treatments are conducted on private lands, there are lessons to be learned from New Mexico on how they authorize chainsaw certifications and manage workers' compensation insurance. Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA) offers continuing education opportunities for loggers.
- The timeline for the grant is two years. It may be possible to request a grant extension for an additional year. The SWERI partners are in their first quarter of implementing the grant.

SOUTHWEST WORKFORCE CAPACITY MEETING DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed a workforce capacity meeting that occurred in Southwest Colorado. Their comments are summarized below.

- The La Plata County Economic Development Alliance and the Southwest Colorado Environmental Impact Fund (EIF) partners co-hosted a meeting to discuss workforce development in the timber and restoration industry in Southwest Colorado. The two entities co-hosted the first workforce development meeting in December before RMRI selected Southwest Colorado as the primary priority landscape. This most recent meeting was the follow-up to the December meeting. People from the local communities in Southwest Colorado and state agencies participated in the discussion.
- The EIF team only has five people on it, and they are working on local issues. They do not have an individual dedicated to workforce development on the team, so they are happy to dovetail with the work of the RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee moving forward.
- Ellen Roberts took notes at the Southwest Colorado meeting on workforce development. Molly Pitts will share Ellen Roberts' notes from the Southwest Colorado workforce development meeting with the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.
- From the Southwest Colorado workforce development meeting, there were thoughts and suggestions on how to develop a stronger workforce. One idea from the meeting is to contact Clarke Becker, Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium Director, to help bring together local workforce centers to address workforce capacity issues in the timber and restoration industry.
- There may be opportunities to bring together people from higher education institutions to work on curriculum development for Colorado. It may also be possible to transfer credits for students in NAU's training center to Colorado higher education institutions if the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) approves any such transfer programs.
- RMRI could help highlight the statewide need for timber and restoration industry workforce development and promote opportunities across Colorado for workforce development, including in all three priority landscapes. It would be helpful to have the state recognize forest health and forest-related careers as a growing industry.
- It would be helpful to define a phrase that describes the full range of forest-related workforce opportunities, from ecosystem services to wood products to forest mitigation work. Often, people outside of the forestry sector do not understand the workforce opportunities available in the sector. Creating common and consistent language could help people outside of the forestry sector better understand the opportunities to develop a timber and restoration workforce. RMRI could help develop the common language to talk about workforce development in the timber and restoration industry.
- One term that could potentially be used to describe the range of forest-related job opportunities is the "restoration workforce." The term "restoration workforce" includes a

variety of jobs in its definition, from traditional timber and logging industry and forestry jobs to those who implement other restoration efforts, such as replacing culverts.

- Oregon State University has a promotional video for the forestry industry that uses language that is inclusive and modern. Other national trade associations have also used specific language in their outreach efforts. Those videos and promotional materials could help inform the language used to describe the available workforce opportunities.
- Part of workforce development also involves building social license. The available jobs include positions where people cut down trees, but it also includes air and water quality monitoring. Young people may be attracted to the workforce if the messaging focuses on how forest restoration has long-term impacts on climate change, carbon sequestration, and forest health.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should determine how they can be most helpful in and outside of the Southwest Colorado footprint.

COLORADO TALENT PIPELINE REPORT AND EXISTING DATA DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the opportunity to include the timber and restoration industry into the Colorado Workforce Development Council's (CWDC) *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) produces an annual report titled the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*. The report explores strengths and opportunities in Colorado's workforce. The report also identifies whether an industry is a growth industry.
- It would be helpful if the timber and restoration industry was recognized in the report as a growth industry. Being recognized as a growth industry opens up opportunities for college interns to gain college credit while working at a business in an identified growth industry. It also creates opportunities for businesses to hire young trainees that they could not afford to hire otherwise and give them experience.
- Qualitatively, the timber and wood industry know that they need to grow their workforce, but the quantitative data will not be available until after the SWERI industry survey is completed. It may not be necessary to complete a quantitative assessment to begin to reach out to the CWDC to convince them that there is a statewide interest for a timber and restoration workforce. There is a lot of activity and interest in Colorado around forest restoration. RMRI, the Southwest Colorado EIF, and Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) projects, along with an increased interest in water utilities to implement forest treatments, all demonstrate the opportunities for a growing workforce.
- The CWDC's *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report* is a policy administration document and does not include any funding. The report, in its current form, tends to focus on technology and commerce sectors along the Front Range. The CDHE was excited about the opportunity to expand the report to include industries in rural Colorado so that students in higher education institutions can gain experience in the sector while earning college credits.
- A workforce capacity assessment could help set baseline data on the existing timber and restoration workforce, forest product industry, and needs within the industry. The SWERI industry survey is attempting to collect some of that baseline data. There are older industry surveys from 2016 that only surveyed loggers as well as an annual survey of sawmills that can help set baseline data too. However, that data is limited because it does not include all the service providers that would be considered a part of the "restoration workforce."
- The Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest Collaborative (DWRF) is conducting a socio-economic analysis and may have information on the forest restoration economy. The report may have some helpful metrics on the restoration economy, including information on

workforce employment and ecological monitoring impacts. Tim Reader can send the report to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.

- The USFS may have information that could help frame a narrative to encourage the CWDC to include the forest restoration industry as a growth industry in their report. The San Juan National Forest may also have recently conducted a workforce capacity survey. Their data may not be ready for distribution.
- It is easier to convince the CWDC to include the forest restoration industry as a growth industry if they hear there is a need for workforce development from multiple areas across the state. RMRI is a great vehicle to deliver the message to state administration that the opportunities for the timber and restoration workforce is growing across the state and needs support. Reaching out to the state administration from RMRI partners across the state will demonstrate that there is a need for a workforce to restore Colorado's forests and watersheds while also creating jobs and developing rural economies.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE ROLE DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the potential role of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. Their comments are summarized below.

- The RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could help organize the effort to promote the timber and restoration industry as a growth industry and develop terms and definitions to help describe the forest restoration workforce. Some of the work also overlaps with the work of the Social License Subcommittee.
- The RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could research into community college representatives to explore curriculum options.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should develop a work plan that contains a list of tasks for the Subcommittee to accomplish. The list of tasks could identify the amount of support needed from the members of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to complete the task.
- In the future, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could request help from RMRI partners when it is needed. RMRI partners have issue expertise and resources that could potentially support the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.
- A cross-cutting issues table was developed that outlined strategies for workforce development. The information in the cross-cutting issues table was populated from the February full RMRI partner meeting discussions and priority landscape proposals. That document may help provide specific tasks for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to consider and prioritize.
- Molly Pitts will draft a Workforce Capacity Subcommittee work plan using information from Ellen Roberts' email identifying Southwest Colorado workforce needs and strategies, the cross-cutting issues table, and past Subcommittee summaries. Mo Bookwalter and Samuel Wallace can assist Molly Pitts as needed.

NEXT STEPS

- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee will meet in a month to discuss the draft Workforce Capacity Subcommittee work plan. The Subcommittee will then prioritize work and begin organizing specific tasks to implement.
- Molly Pitts will send out information on a new workforce training center that is being developed as a part of Shasta College.
- Samuel Wallace will send out a Doodle to schedule a Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting at the beginning of September.