

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
September 9, 2020, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM
RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee
Meeting Summary - FINAL**

ATTENDANCE

Participants: Mo Bookwalter, Cindy Dozier, Tim Reader, Ellen Roberts, and Nathan Van Schaik

Facilitation: Molly Pitts and Samuel Wallace

ACTION ITEMS

Nathan Van Schaik	Provide the RMRI Communications Subcommittee meeting summary to Molly Pitts to distribute to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee when it is ready.
Molly Pitts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to a small business development center representative to discuss how the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee and small business development centers could partner to develop the forest restoration and timber industry workforce. • Write the draft template of the work plan and send it out to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee for their review.
Molly Pitts and Tim Reader	Write a letter to inform the Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA) members why it is important to fill out the Northern Arizona University (NAU) industry survey.
Tim Reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send the two-page handout on the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's (CDLE) training cost-share program to distribute to RMRI priority landscapes. • Reach out to Dr. Kurt Mackes to determine if the webinar he is putting on in the fall will be open to workforce center participation. • Reach out to a Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) representative to discuss how the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee and CDA could partner to develop the forest restoration and timber industry workforce.
Tim Reader and Nathan Van Schaik	Research existing curriculums and training programs to prepare for a webinar with Colorado higher education institutions to discuss curriculum development.
Ellen Roberts	Coordinate with Molly Pitts to reach out to Clarke Becker of the Colorado Rural Development Council to discuss how to get the timber and forest restoration economy into the next edition of the <i>Colorado Talent Pipeline Report</i> . They will also discuss how the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee and workforce centers could partner to develop the forest restoration and timber industry workforce.
Samuel Wallace	Prepare a Doodle for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to meet in October.

RMRI WEBSITE SUBCOMMITTEE WEBPAGE DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee webpage on the RMRI website. Their comments are summarized below.

- At the previous Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting, Nathan Van Schaik had an action item to discuss opportunities to develop a job/workforce capacity section on the RMRI website with the Communications Subcommittee. The Communications Subcommittee responded that it is possible to put a job/workforce capacity section on the RMRI website. Nathan Van Schaik will provide the RMRI Communications meeting summary to Molly Pitts to distribute to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee when it is ready.
- Nathan Van Schaik has been helping develop a new website for RMRI with input from the Communications Subcommittee. The newly structured website is a reformatting of the old website. There is also not a developed brand or logo to integrate into the restructured website yet.
- The new RMRI website will include a webpage for each subcommittee and a calendar for partners to display upcoming subcommittee meetings. The Zoom information will not be included on the RMRI calendar. Any interested participants will need to request to join a subcommittee meeting by emailing restoretherockies@gmail.com (managed by Nathan Van Schaik and Matt Lindler). Nathan and Matt will then forward any requests to the respective subcommittee chair.
- The new website is being developed internally, and it is being designed through WordPress. Matt Lindler and Nathan Van Schaik are the only ones with administrative rights to edit the website.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has space dedicated to them on the website. The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee can determine what they would like to add to their section of the website, such as upcoming job opportunities.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee webpage is a way to share information on the activities of the Subcommittee and recruit RMRI partners to join the Subcommittee.
- The timeline for publishing the website is to publish it during the week of September 14, along with the latest edition of RMRI's newsletter, The Source.
- Currently, the RMRI WordPress account is free, so there are fewer options for website analytics. Analytics, such as page views, word searches on the website, and whether people access the website through mobile phones or computers, are important to understand how people are using the website.
- The RMRI website is not a US Forest Service (USFS) website because it is meant to represent RMRI partners, not the USFS. There is also more flexibility with updating a non-USFS website than there is with updating a USFS website. The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) is paying for the current RMRI website. Nathan Van Schaik is determining whether, as a USFS employee, he can edit non-USFS websites. If not, Matt Lindler will be the primary website editor.

ACTION ITEM UPDATES

Tim Reader and Molly Pitts discussed their action items from the August 5 Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting. Their comments are summarized below.

- Tim Reader distributed the NAU draft industry survey. The draft version is going to be finalized and sent out to businesses throughout Colorado soon. Tim Reader also distributed the article on the NAU Wood Innovations Grant and the report on socio-economic restoration metrics.
- The NAU Wood Innovations Grant article can be distributed through The Source. The partners in the NAU project are working on a document that emphasizes Colorado's involvement in the project and RMRI. The new document will be ready in the next couple of weeks and should be added to the website when it is complete.

- Regarding the NAU survey, Molly Pitts can write a letter to include with the survey that informs CTIA members why it is important to fill it out. Tim Reader and Molly Pitts will work together to write a letter to inform CTIA members on why it is important to fill out the NAU industry survey.
- Following the August 5 Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting, Molly Pitts distributed Ellen Robert's email on workforce capacity challenges and solutions in Southwest Colorado and information on the Shasta College logging training program to the Subcommittee.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE WORK PLAN DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the strategy to develop a work plan for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. Their comments are summarized below.

- The goal of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee work plan is to identify three or four tasks to prioritize moving forward. The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee work plan is meant to be a dynamic document that can be updated as tasks are completed and priorities shift.
- Once priorities are defined in the work plan, the Subcommittee can identify who has the capacity and expertise to implement different tasks and establish a timeline for completing the tasks. There are some tasks that Molly Pitts and Tim Reader can do as part of their daily jobs, but there are some potential tasks, like researching logging training program curriculums around the state, that any subcommittee member could do.
- One of the benefits of RMRI is that messages can be elevated to high-level stakeholders and communicated across the state to make changes. Many people do not know there is a workforce challenge across the state, so communicating that message is important. RMRI creates the opportunity for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to continue to elevate messages around workforce issues across the state.
- Once the work plan is finalized, it will be published on the RMRI website for partners to stay informed on the work of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee. It also might help recruit RMRI partners to join the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee and provide additional capacity.

WORKFORCE NEEDS IN SOUTHWEST COLORADO DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed workforce needs in Southwest Colorado. Their comments are summarized below.

- Workforce capacity is not an obstacle for Southwest Colorado, but it is a challenge. The Southwest Colorado partners are still identifying what is needed in terms of capacity based on the full extent of their treatment plans.
- In the short term (zero to five years), Southwest Colorado is likely going to have hire workers from out of state, but it would be preferential to train and hire a local workforce. The long-term vision is to have young people from the area have the pathways to work in the forest restoration economy. Helping interns gain college credits through employment in timber businesses can help to build that long-term workforce.
- Southwest Colorado partners have asked the local industry what skills they are looking for in their hiring processes. They responded with a variety of skill sets, from truck drivers to heavy equipment operators to office workers and financial services to foresters who can help private landowners plan treatments on their property. The needed workforce skill sets extend beyond wood product development and forestry; it also includes the clerical work that often leads private foresters to feel overwhelmed.
- People interested in a career in forestry tend to go to the USFS because that is who hires. Southwest Colorado is developing innovative ways to treat non-federal lands, such as the

Environmental Impact Fund initiative. Potential workers should be made aware of all the opportunities in Southwest Colorado in both the public and private sectors. They are looking for more entrepreneurs to start small businesses.

WORKFORCE CAPACITY SUBCOMMITTEE POTENTIAL WORK PLAN TASKS DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the potential tasks that the RMRI Workforce Subcommittee should prioritize in their work plan. Their comments are summarized below.

- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should do something new and different. One way to do that could be to create innovative opportunities within timber and logging businesses.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should work to get forest restoration economy jobs recognized in the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*. By having forest restoration economy jobs recognized in the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*, it can create opportunities for students in four-year colleges, trade schools, and high schools to receive higher education credits for internships. The power of RMRI is that RMRI can demonstrate the growth of the forest restoration and timber industry across the state to those who write the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report* and encourage them to add it to the Report.
- The term “forest restoration economy” is meant to capture the spectrum of forest restoration jobs, including the traditional timber industry, environmental sciences, wood product development and marketing, reforestation, etc. The term “forest restoration economy” is supposed to get people to think more broadly about job opportunities in the industry and help them recognize that the end goal of these jobs is restoring forest health. Jobs in the forest restoration economy requires skills in marketing, computer software, heavy equipment operation, and more. It might also help get young people interested in forest restoration and timber careers.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could help develop or identify a relevant Colorado-focused curriculum for four-year and community colleges with input from industry and other partners. This curriculum could then be run through higher education channels.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could organize a webinar to discuss curriculum development with community college representatives and industry partners. The Subcommittee could invite college programs, like the ones out of Maine and Shasta College, to present on the risk, liability, and cost of starting a new program. It could also include Colorado community colleges, like Front Range Community College and Colorado Mountain College, that already have forest technician programs. Generally, smaller community colleges will have less capacity to incorporate new curriculums into their programs.
- As the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee develops a curriculum for higher education institutions, they could also create a pamphlet. The pamphlet could provide information on the pathways to obtain a job in the forest restoration and timber industry. The handouts could be used during career days to help provide direction to two-year and four-year higher education students.
- The pamphlet could be taken to high schools as well. High school programs, like 4-H, teach students about forestry jobs, but the amount of engagement could be expanded. These pamphlets may help encourage young people to join the field. One question to ask to make the pamphlet as effective as possible is what makes someone choose a forestry or timber job over other careers.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could leverage RMRI partners to communicate workforce needs to state agencies, such as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), workforce centers, and Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE). Reaching out to state agencies could help facilitate a statewide conversation on building workforce capacity. Workforce center representatives at the state

level could then encourage workforce centers to develop local programs to recruit for timber and forest restoration businesses, with assistance from experienced workforce centers, like the Alamosa Workforce Center.

- There is the potential to form a timber and logging sector partnership with local economic development districts. Sector partnerships have to be industry-driven. The timber industry businesses may not have the capacity to form a sector partnership at this time.
- Most job opportunities are spread by word-of-mouth. Other than workforce centers, it is difficult to recruit people into the workforce. Many timber industry businesses in Colorado advertise outside of the state because that is where people have the desired skill set that they are looking for. The CDLE has cost-share programs for businesses to train new employees, and that program has been helpful for some sawmills. There is a two-page informational sheet on the program that the Workforce Capacity subcommittee could send to businesses in RMRI landscapes. Tim Reader will send the two-page handout on the CDLE's training cost-share program to distribute to RMRI priority landscapes.
- Small business development centers could assist people who have expertise in forestry but not in business management. They could potentially hold workshops on how to write a business plan, obtain financing, etc. Mary Sheperd of the Southwest Colorado Small Business Development Center and Clarke Becker of the Colorado Rural Development Council are interested in these types of efforts. They are looking for opportunities to develop businesses and industries in rural Colorado. They need to be made aware that there are enough partners and stakeholders across the state that want to develop opportunities for timber and forest restoration businesses in rural Colorado.
- There is an opportunity to contact the CDA, which has funded a small business internship program. Timber and forest restoration businesses could take advantage of that program, considering that wood products are recognized as agricultural products.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee could develop a job board for the RMRI website. The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is not in a position to develop a forestry job board for the state at this time. Developing a job board should be considered a long-term task. There are also existing job boards, like one on the [Forestry Works webpage](#). If and when the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee develops a job board, it should focus on the entire state.
- There are short-term and long-term action items for each of the prioritized tasks.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee identified the four following tasks as their priorities:
 - Get the forest restoration economy recognized in the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*.
 - Organize a webinar with two- and four-year schools to discuss curriculum development.
 - Produce a pamphlet to show higher education and high school students the different pathways to get into the forest restoration and timber industry.
 - Identify ways to partner and promote the timber and forest restoration industry with small business development centers, workforce centers, and the CDA.

PRIORITY TASK ACTION ITEMS DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed the action items associated with each of the priority tasks. Their comments are organized by the prioritized task in the work plan and summarized below.

Get the forest restoration economy recognized in the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report.

- The earliest to get the forest restoration economy into the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report* is 2021.

- Once the forest restoration and timber industry is recognized in the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee can develop new internship programs. For now, the Subcommittee should remain focused on getting recognition of the industry in the report.
- One challenge to developing internship programs will be housing. It is often difficult to find housing opportunities for temporary interns in rural Colorado.
- Ellen Roberts will coordinate with Molly Pitts to reach out to Clarke Becker of the Colorado Rural Development Council to discuss how to get the timber and forest restoration economy into the next edition of the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*. The meeting with Clarke Becker will occur after October 1.

Organize a webinar with two- and four-year schools to discuss curriculum development.

- Potential invitees to a curriculum development webinar could be training program representatives from Maine and Shasta College. It should also include Colorado community colleges, like Colorado Mountain College, Front Range Community College, and Pueblo Community College. Kim Poast of CDHE is interested in career development and can serve as a contact to reach out to Colorado community colleges. John Panches of Oregon State University (OSU) would also be a good participant because he has experience using OSU's extension services to connect with the community.
- The first step to organizing a webinar with two- and four-year higher education schools is to research existing curriculums. The second step is to contact Kim Poast of CDHE to discuss scheduling a webinar with Colorado colleges on how to develop a successful curriculum. Then, the Subcommittee would host the webinar.
- Some of the existing curriculums include two-year wood product certificates. Those programs are more oriented around business management than product development. Dr. Kurt Mackes of Colorado State University also has a curriculum for field operations.
- The webinar for two- and four-year college institutions should be planned for the beginning of 2021. Due to COVID-19, many higher education institutions are in tough situations and may not have the time to attend a webinar.
- Tim Reader and Nathan Van Schaik will research existing curriculums and successful programs to prepare for a webinar with Colorado higher education institutions to discuss curriculum development. They plan to have this task completed by the end of October.
- Dr. Kurt Mackes is organizing a webinar this fall about forest products manufacturing. The webinar will be an overview of primary and secondary manufacturing. There may be an opportunity for workforce centers to attend the webinar to understand the differences in the wood products business. Tim Reader will reach out to Dr. Kurt Mackes to determine if the webinar he is putting on in the fall will be open to workforce center participation.

Produce a pamphlet to show higher education and high school students the different pathways to get into the forest restoration and timber industry.

This priority task is a long-term task. The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is not prepared to develop a pamphlet at this time but will keep it on the work plan as a future task.

Identify ways to partner and promote the timber and forest restoration industry with small business development centers, workforce centers, and the CDA.

- In the short term, the workforce centers could serve as the primary way to recruit new employees to the timber and forest restoration industry. There is a higher retainment rate for workers if they are from Colorado than from out-of-state.

- Molly Pitts will reach out to a small business development center representative to discuss how the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee and small business development centers could partner to develop the forest restoration and timber industry workforce. Tim Reader will reach out to the CDA to discuss the same topic. Ellen Roberts and Molly Pitts can discuss with Clarke Becker about opportunities for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to partner with workforce centers.
- Once the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has had initial conversations with the CDA, workforce centers, and small business development centers, there may be an opportunity to set up a webinar or forum.

NEXT STEPS

- Molly Pitts will write the draft template of the work plan and send it out to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee for their review.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee will have a monthly standing meeting. Samuel Wallace will prepare a Doodle for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to meet in October.