

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)  
 October 19, 2020, 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM  
 RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee  
 Meeting Summary - FINAL**

**ATTENDANCE**

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

*Facilitation:* Molly Pitts and Samuel Wallace

**ACTION ITEMS**

<b>Workforce Capacity Subcommittee</b>	Forward contacts who may have stories about industry growth and workforce development to Nathan Van Schaik.
<b>Mo Bookwalter</b>	Provide her contacts from the Forest Stewards Guild to Nathan Van Schaik.
<b>Ellen Roberts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to Commissioner Kate Greenberg to identify opportunities for the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) and the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to partner. (She can reach out to Molly Pitts and Tim Reader if she needs additional support.)</li> <li>• Determine whether Honnen Equipment was planning to donate or lend their training simulator to Southwest Colorado.</li> </ul>
<b>Nathan Van Schaik</b>	Continue to reach out to potential leads to collect draft curricula for forest training programs.
<b>Samuel Wallace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute the two-pager on the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's (CDLE) training cost-share program to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.</li> <li>• Prepare a Doodle for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to meet in November.</li> </ul>

**ACTION ITEM UPDATE**

Meeting participants gave updates on their action items from the September 9 RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee meeting. Their comments are summarized below.

- Molly Pitts shared the draft work plan that the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee developed at their last meeting with the Subcommittee members. Subcommittee members did not provide additional comments or edits to the work plan. The work plan is a living document and will be updated periodically.
- Molly Pitts has not reached out to a small business development center representative yet. However, she did receive a contact for a small business development center representative in Southwest Colorado, and she will use that contact to identify statewide representatives as well.
- Tim Reader sent the two-pager on the CDLE training cost-share program to Samuel Wallace, who distributed it to the RMRI priority landscapes. Samuel Wallace will distribute it to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee.
- Tim Reader reached out to Dr. Kurt Mackes of Colorado State University (CSU) about the webinar Dr. Mackes is organizing about industry opportunities. The webinar, which was

originally scheduled for fall, has been postponed to the spring because the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) will be hosting Forest Action Plan webinars in the fall.

- Tim Reader reached out to his contact at the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA), but his contact recently quit. The purpose of reaching out to the CDA is to discuss how the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee and CDA could partner to develop the forest restoration and timber industry workforce. CDA has the Colorado Proud program and an internship program that could help support workforce development. Ellen Roberts has contact information for CDA Commissioner Kate Greenberg. Commissioner Greenberg is particularly interested in the relationship between soil health and biochar production. Ellen Roberts will reach out to Commissioner Kate Greenberg to identify opportunities for the CDA and the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to partner. She can reach out to Molly Pitts and Tim Reader if she needs additional support.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER UPDATES**

Molly Pitts and Ellen Roberts updated the RMRI Workforce Subcommittee meeting on their discussions with Workforce Center Development representatives. Their comments are summarized below.

- Molly Pitts and Ellen Roberts talked with Clarke Becker, the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium director, and Ray Lucero, the Western Region Workforce Center director. Molly and Ellen talked about the RMRI and Environmental Impact Fund (EIF) workforce development efforts and discussed how the workforce centers could help grow the workforce. Clarke Becker was interested in getting the forest restoration industry recognized as a growth sector in the *2021 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*. If the forest restoration industry were recognized as a growth sector, it would create opportunities for employers to receive state-provided funding to compensate interns. Many employers in the wood industry have said they are interested in hiring interns but could not afford to pay for people who did not have experience.
- The *2020 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report* was just released, so the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should start preparing to get the forest restoration industry recognized in next year's report. Clarke Becker will be the Workforce Development Center representative to help get the forest restoration industry recognized in next year's report.
- RMRI is a good messenger to get the forest restoration industry recognized in the *Colorado Talent Pipeline Report* because it highlights three areas across Colorado. The message to state officials should be that the forest restoration industry is a growth industry across all of Colorado, not only Southwest Colorado.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee will need to develop a pitch to get the forest restoration industry into the *2021 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report*. Having data and numbers in the pitch will be helpful. Tim Reader and Molly Pitts are working with Northern Arizona University (NAU) to distribute an industry survey to wood businesses. The survey will gather information on the industry status, gaps, and opportunities for growth. The survey is expected to be distributed in November, and Molly Pitts and Tim Reader are working together to get as many recipients as possible to fill it out. The information from that survey should be available at the beginning of 2021.
- The data will help inform the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee's pitch. Other potential data sources to include in a pitch are the state's economic development database, which has data on the workforce centers, and county economic impact models.
- For the pitch, it will help to have anecdotal stories. Examples of stories include the growth of cross-laminated timber businesses in Southwest Colorado, the biomass energy plant in Gypsum, or Montrose Forest Products' expansion in Southwest Colorado. The term "forest

restoration industry" should capture stories from the traditional industry as well as new products, such as J.R. Ford's production of biochar.

- Stories on the benefit of the forest restoration industry should come from businesses, community leaders, and elected officials. In particular, county commissioners will be able to provide information on how the forest restoration industry has impacted their communities.
- The Communications Subcommittee could work with the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to collect stories and develop a pitch. One goal of the communication workplan is to build a network of professional communicators who can relay stories about what is occurring in the landscape. If Workforce Capacity Subcommittee members have contacts who have stories about workforce development, they should send them to Nathan Van Schaik.
- As Workforce Capacity Subcommittee members determine what contacts and stories they should send to Nathan Van Schaik, a good test is if the story would make good social media content. Good social media content normally includes one photo or video and then has a brief description that identifies the who, what, where, when, and why of the story.
- The CSFS has a one-page document that they are using to gather stories. The one-page document could be used as a template for the RMRI Communications Subcommittee.
- The pitch to be included in the *2021 Colorado Talent Pipeline Report* will involve a written report and PowerPoint presentation. When the time comes to develop those materials, Nathan Van Schaik can help make them look professional and appealing.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should expect to begin working on a *2021 Colorado Talent Pipeline* pitch in early 2021.
- Molly Pitts is working on scheduling a webinar for workforce centers to learn from the San Luis Valley workforce centers.

## EXISTING TRAINING CURRICULUM DISCUSSION

Meeting participants discussed information and resources on existing training curricula. Their comments are summarized below.

- Most existing training programs are oriented around training people in upper-level business degrees. There is not an available curriculum oriented around training entry-level people in sawmill and forest operations work.
- Nathan Van Schaik reached out to professors and staff at Oregon State University and the University of Idaho. He identified five organizations that may be able to share their training curriculum:
  - [Northern Arizona University's Ecological Restoration Institute](#): Dr. Han-Sup Han is building resources to help people find training programs and available jobs and establishing a forest operations training center.
  - [The Lomakatsi Restoration Project](#) provides forest training programs for northern California.
  - [The Forest Workforce Training Institute](#) is a group out of Alabama that manages the Forestry Works program. They have a website that helps guide individuals interested in joining the forestry workforce but do not know where to start. The goal of reaching out to the Forest Workforce Training Institute would be to learn more about their program, not encourage foresters in Alabama to come work in Colorado.
  - [Forest Resources Action](#) has a strategic plan. One of the goals in the strategic plan is building a logging and trucking workforce. They manage a list of vocational schools.

- [CSU Warner College of Natural Resources](#) could talk to the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee about their programs and potentially become a partner.
- In the short term, the training programs of interest are related to fuel mitigation project and equipment operation training. Other restoration training programs, like those related to stream restoration, are beyond the purview of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee at this time. Additionally, there are already programs in Colorado that focus on restoration, like CSU, but there are not training programs oriented around forest operations.
- It would be worth reaching out to the Forest Workforce Training Institute and Forest Resources Action group and explain the purpose and goals of the RMRI Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to see if they would be willing to share their training curricula.
- Shasta College may be a good resource for a training curriculum. Shasta College is on the west coast, just launched a forest operations training program, and will have more familiarity with western forests.
- The Lomokatsi Restoration Project's training curriculum is likely focused on safety. It would be good to determine if their focus is on a safety curriculum and if they have any equipment operations training programs.
- The Forest Stewards Guild has a workforce training program as well. Their training is also focused on the safety aspects of hand treating forests. These safety training programs help reduce workers' comp rates, particularly in projects that do not involve mechanized equipment. Mo Bookwalter will provide her contacts from the Forest Stewards Guild to Nathan Van Schaik.
- There is a college in Maine with a training program that may be able to provide a curriculum.
- Dr. Kurt Mackes is a good contact for building a training curriculum. He ran a field course to teach students different, non-mechanized harvesting methods.
- Colorado correctional facilities offer training in heavy equipment operation. They could be potentially included in this discussion.
- NAU is hiring a director for the forest operations training center, which indicates they have received their federal grant funding.
- Tim Reader has reached out multiple times to a [manufacturing training center in Colorado Springs](#). They train high school students and may provide opportunities to qualify students to work in sawmills. They are a for-profit model as well and could offer insight on workforce development.
- Nathan Van Schaik will continue to reach out to potential leads to collect draft curricula for forest operations training programs.

#### **CURRICULUM DESIGN DISCUSSION**

Meeting participants discussed their next steps for designing a training curriculum. Their comments are summarized below.

- The goal of collecting curricula is to host a curriculum webinar in the spring. As the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee becomes more familiar with available curricula, they can begin identifying different desirable aspects of each curriculum to develop a draft curriculum. They can then invite schools in Colorado to discuss what programs they have and how they could integrate the draft curriculum into their programs.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee would be more successful with proposing curriculum for 2-year or 4-year higher education schools if they have a way to pay for a faculty member, other than the university or college paying for them. The faculty member could be underwritten by RMRI, Montrose Forest Products, or through another collaborator. Many campuses are now furloughing or cutting positions. There may be an

opportunity to encourage schools to adopt a curriculum if partners can fund a highly credentialed person to teach online or in person.

- It would be helpful to gather information on program duration. The duration of many training programs is 13 weeks, and these shorter programs are often held over the summer. Schools in Colorado may be potentially interested in establishing summer training programs.
- The Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should decide if their target audience for a webinar is two-year or four-year schools. Four-year schools would likely want a broader and more robust curriculum that incorporates different aspects of restoration, like stream restoration, air quality, etc.
- Honnen Equipment offered to provide a forest operations training simulator for higher education purposes. The forest operations training simulator was originally designated to go to Southwest Colorado. Southwest Colorado should remain the primary recipient of the forest operations training simulator, but it can be shared with other regions on a coordinated schedule. It is not clear if Honnen was interested in donating or lending the forest operations training simulator to Southwest Colorado. Ellen Roberts will determine whether Honnen Equipment was planning to donate or lend their training simulator to Southwest Colorado. CSFS could potentially manage the forest operations training simulator as a shared resource if it is being donated.
- Once the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee has developed a draft curriculum, they could reach out to Kim Poast from the Colorado Department of Higher Education to plan a webinar.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Molly Pitts will reach out to the Southwest Colorado Small Businesses Development Center and Ray Lucero, the Western Region Workforce Center director, to identify representatives to join the next Workforce Capacity Subcommittee call.
- The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee is working with businesses that are producing wood straw and other fire rehabilitation products, like biochar, which could help remediate soils following a fire.
- This week is National Forest Products Week. The USFS will work on highlighting RMRI industry partners on the RMRI social media channels. In future years, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee should develop a communications strategy for National Forest Products Week.
- Samuel Wallace will prepare a Doodle for the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee to meet in November during the week after Thanksgiving.
- Topics for the next meeting include:
  - Discussion with workforce centers and small business development centers.
  - Curriculum research update.