

**Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI)
November 1, 2021, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
RMRI Social License Subcommittee
Meeting Summary – FINAL**

RMRI SOCIAL LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE	
ATTENDANCE: Dan Beveridge, Anthony Culpepper, Patt Dorsey, Cindy Dozier, Tim Kylo, Jason Lawhon, Danny Margoles, Kate McIntire, Nick Smith, Chris Sukach, Tara Umphries, and Samuel Wallace	
ACTION ITEMS	
Nick Smith	Send a summary of the HFHC survey results to Patt Dorsey to distribute to the Social License Subcommittee.
Patt Dorsey	Send an op-ed she wrote on the GMUG National Forests to the Social License Subcommittee for their review and feedback.
MEETING SUMMARY	
PRESENTATION TOPIC: Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities (HFHC) Program	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Smith launched HFHC in 2013 to elevate the conversation on forest health and management. When Nick Smith launched the program, there were few advocates for active forest management on federal lands on digital platforms and social media. • The program's purpose is to support legislative solutions that promote active, multiple-use management of federal forest lands, create jobs and economic opportunities in rural, forested communities, and provide stable revenues for rural county governments and other essential services. The program also encourages federal agencies to use science and various tools to promote active management. • The HFHC Program extends to California, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. They used to operate in Colorado and Great Lake states until they decided to scale back. • The program includes a coalition of local elected officials, businesses, law enforcement, educators, and others. The grassroots network has over 300,000 people supporting active forest management on federal lands. • The HFHC Program has a website that encourages education, participation, and activation. Having a sign-up on the webpage is valuable for capturing people who visit the website. • Emails are the most effective tool for engaging people. It is helpful to segment email lists and send targeted emails based on what people are interested in and where they live. The HFHC Program sends out action alerts on legislation and forest management plans, with the goal of elevating the voices of those who support active forest management. The program also distributes daily US Forest Service (USGS) news round-ups and a monthly newsletter. • Social media tools are effective at reaching a broader audience and amplifying messages. It is the most cost-effective tool for building and activating an audience. • Different social media platforms serve different purposes. For example, Instagram is a good platform for visual learners. Facebook is good at inspiring people to take action and targeting audiences based on where they are and what they are interested in. At the height of wildfire season, over 6.3 million people were seeing HFHC social media posts. • Audiences are interested in content that informs and inspires action. Pictures of managed and untreated forests often generate many views and shares. People are also interested in the relationship between wildfires, carbon emissions, and climate change. 	

- HFHC has had a lot of success engaging with outdoor hunting clubs, like the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation.
- HFHC messaging focuses on positive outcomes and how active forest management solutions directly benefit the engaged audience. People in rural communities are interested in how forest management benefits their local economies. People in urban areas tend to want to know about recreation, healthy watersheds, climate change, and sustainable renewable products.
- A messaging strategy should build coalitions, organize from the grassroots, and activate audiences to support solutions. The strategy should give folks meaningful opportunities to be involved.
- The "pyramid of engagement" is a concept of how people engage with issues. There are five levels of engagement: 1) awareness, 2) interest, 3) participation, 4) commitment, and 5) leadership. The goal is to engage the audience to move up the pyramid (e.g., from awareness to interest, from interest to participation, etc.).
- HFHC recently distributed a survey in California. The results indicate that wildfires are a top concern for California voters. The survey results also indicate that voters also identified climate change as a leading cause of wildfires and that forest management can be a tool for mitigating climate change. Respondents also supported quick action after a fire to remove dead and dying trees where appropriate to reduce wildfire risk. Another key takeaway is that Californians did not agree that excessive logging or inadequate building codes were to blame for wildfires. Lastly, respondents identified firefighters, Cal Fire, USFS, The Nature Conservancy, and academics as the most trustworthy sources of information.

DISCUSSION TOPIC: HFHC Strategies and Tools

Discussion Points:

- HFHC can help share RMRI messaging in Colorado through their email list and social media following.
- HFHC invested a modest amount of funding to grow its Facebook page when the program first began. One strategy is to set options to target potential audiences based on location and other demographic information.
- One strength of RMRI is that the group can build a broad coalition to distribute and amplify messaging. There is an opportunity to engage a broader audience, including local firefighters, city councils, and chambers of commerce.
- Now is a good time to take advantage of recent wildfires to grow an engaged audience.
- The survey was conducted a year ago. With the most recent 2021 wildfires, interest in wildfires has likely increased since the survey was conducted.
- The hardest transition in the pyramid of engagement is moving people from participation to commitment. Apathy is a big barrier to engaging people, and sometimes the slow rate of

Decisions/Action Items:

- **Nick Smith:** Send a summary of the survey results to Patt Dorsey to distribute to the Social License Subcommittee.

<p>progress can be discouraging given the scale of the issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMRI partners are a good example of participation and commitment. Still, there are more opportunities to bring the public along and build the awareness part of the engagement pyramid. • One recommendation for the RMRI website is to make it easier for members of the broader public to get involved by including some type of sign-up. There need to be meaningful opportunities for people to engage. Messages should also be understandable and accessible to the larger public. • The survey results indicate that people see a need for active forest management but do not clearly understand the role industry plays. There is an opportunity for industry partners to communicate their role more clearly in partnership with agencies and how their work reduces the costs of active forest management. Industry should also communicate how they use 21st-century forest practices and modern science to make sure forests are healthy and accessible. Additionally, a messaging strategy should communicate that it is extremely difficult to bring back industry once it goes away. • HFHC tries to support collaboration as much as possible but tends to focus on supporting legislative solutions that support forest collaboratives. 	
<p>DISCUSSION TOPIC: Partner Updates</p>	
<p>Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montrose Forest Products has three ongoing projects: 1) a timber sale on Bradfield Bridge, 2) treatment on High Camp Ranch, and 3) a USFS timber sale on the east side of the RMRI landscape. Montrose Forest Products is also engaged with and providing comments on the Forest Plan Revision for the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests and the Salter Vegetation Management Project Environmental Assessment (EA). • Montrose Forest Products and the Dolores Watershed Resilient Forest (DWRF) Collaborative are organizing a tour of the Bradfield Bridge treatments. The tour's goal is to connect stakeholders and the public with what is occurring on the ground. • The Four Rivers Resilient Forest Collaborative is beginning to engage with the San Juan National Forest (SJNF) to develop an EA for an RMRI priority project in La Plata County. • Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) is planning its forest and fire learning series for the spring. The purpose of the learning series is to bring in speakers from various fields to talk about intersecting topics, such as forest health, fire, ecology, and smoke and health concerns. • The RMRI Southwest Colorado Steering Committee has been discussing creating a map that aggregates all the ongoing projects on the landscape. 	

- The Colorado Forest and Water Alliance (COFWA) has been presenting at basin roundtables across the state on the connection between forest and watershed health. They will be speaking at a water summit on November 16 in Montrose.
- Club 20 is hosting a watershed/forest health summit in March in Grand Junction.
- The Pike-San Isabel National Forests (PSICC) has a story coming out in the Leadville Herald on the Tennessee Pass Vegetation Management Project.
- NBC reached out to USFS Region 2 to see if any upcoming prescribed fires were occurring on any national forests. They are interested in telling a story on why fire on the landscape is important. It remains to be seen whether NBC will come to Region 2 to capture footage of a prescribed fire.
- Nathan Van Schaik, USFS, continues to push out messages via the RMRI social media accounts. He is also upgrading the website to have a subscribe button and updating some outdated information.
- The Communications Subcommittee is considering a format where they have standing monthly meetings to collect stories and develop strategies to message and distribute those stories.
- If partners want to share stories on the RMRI landscapes, they should reach out to Nathan Van Schaik for support and assistance.

NEXT STEPS

- There may be an opportunity to merge the Social License and Communications Subcommittee to have more effective meetings. More input from the Communications Subcommittee members is needed before making any decisions on merging the subcommittees.
- The next Social License Subcommittee meeting is on Monday, December 6, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. At the meeting, participants will discuss the goals and strategies that participants discussed at their October meeting.