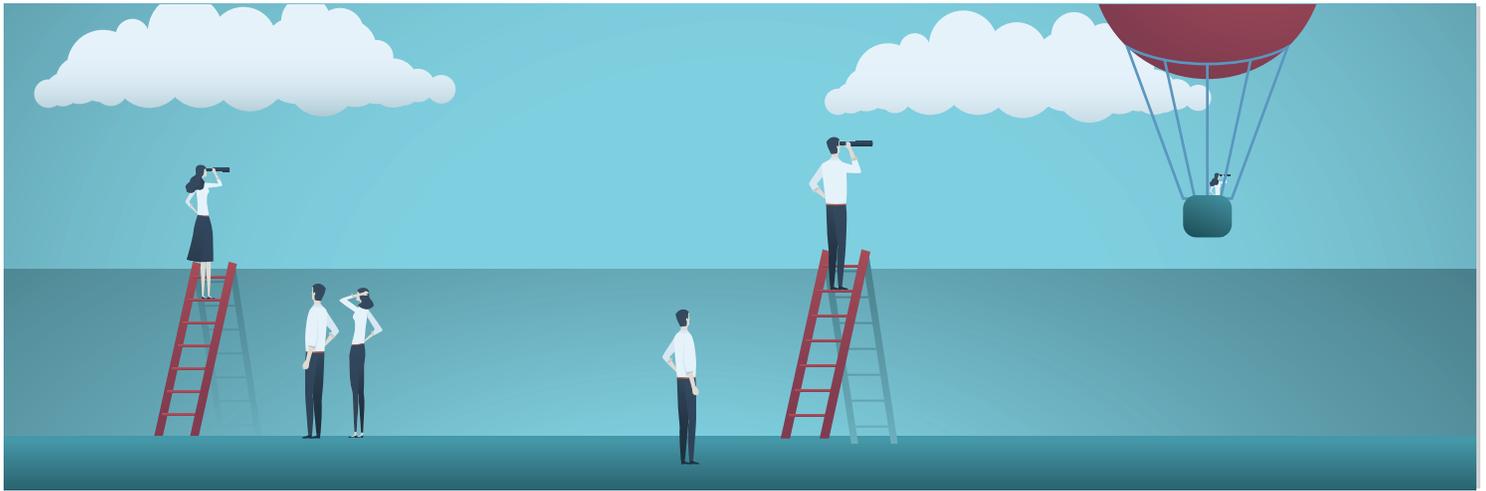


SUBCOMMITTEES ISSUE



Subcommittees take on barriers

RMRI Subcommittees were brought together to help remove key barriers and develop solutions identified in RMRI project areas. Visit restoringtherockies.org/subcommittees.

In September 2019, early in the formation of RMRI, organizers outlined a process for accepting project proposals that would serve as RMRI’s focal landscapes. By November, eight collaborative groups had submitted project proposals. A month later, the RMRI partners chose to initially focus efforts in Southwest Colorado and selected the Upper Arkansas and Upper South Platte as additional priority landscapes to support.

They also identified four cross-cutting issues and assigned subcommittees to address each one of them: what to do with all of Colorado’s unmerchantable wood; how to address workforce shortages; where to find the funding to do the work; and how to generate the public’s buy-in.

Today, RMRI has expanded to include six subcommittees drawing its members from across private, state and federal agencies. The subcommittees, according to the RMRI Governance Charter, are subject to change based on the needs of RMRI. There are two types of subcommittees: operational and substantive. The operational subcommittees focus on supporting all three landscapes and all

substantive committees, while the substantive subcommittees focus on statewide and/or place-based projects to advance RMRI goals.

RMRI’s Subcommittees function similarly to think tanks working in the interests of RMRI landscapes—each subcommittee attracting people with expertise, talent, technical savvy and

RMRI Subcommittees (Substantive)	RMRI Subcommittees (Operational)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Biomass Utilization ✓ Social License ✓ Workforce Capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communications ✓ Funding ✓ Governance

scientific background. Today, RMRI Subcommittees are building understanding and consensus around barriers like biomass and its uses, the state of the workforce, and the public’s perceptions surrounding forest management. They’re dissecting and attacking problems like what to do with all that small-diameter wood or how to recruit local talent into the forestry industry. While RMRI Subcommittees continue to find their niche within each of RMRI’s three landscapes, their work in 2021 continues to guide problem-solving. This is their story.

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Workforce Capacity Subcommittee

Address cross-cutting issues and remove barriers related to workforce capacity

2021 Outcomes

- ✓ Developed 3-prong strategy
- ✓ Connected with higher education officials
- ✓ Hosted several webinars

2022 Goals

- ✓ Organize Ponsse Simulator roadshow
- ✓ Recruit Subcommittee members
- ✓ Offer help with grant writing

The primary role of the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee is to develop strategies and approaches to improve workforce capacity in the three RMRI landscapes. That task is compounded by a changing climate, an overworked industry and a shrinking workforce (even before covid). Put simply, there are not enough people to do the required work in the forests, mills and trucks.

In 2021, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee—led by Molly Pitts of the Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA) and Tim Reader of the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)—took a three-prong approach to address the current workforce gap and the impending demand for more skilled workers in the forestry industry: Target education; help industry; and support the outdoor recreation economy.

Target education

Another role, as outlined in the RMRI Governance Charter, tags the Subcommittee with hosting conferences or workshops on workforce capacity. In January 2021, the Workforce Capacity Subcommittee hosted a webinar featuring three heavy-hit-

ters in forest equipment training. They included Shasta College, Northern Maine Community College and Northern Arizona University.

Out of these presentations emerged a clearer idea on how to develop a training program in Colorado. The Subcommittee, for example, established ties with local higher education officials at Pueblo Community College, as well as the Front Range Community College, which offers a forestry degree, and Trinidad State Junior College, which boasts Colorado's only trail-building curriculum.

Help industry

The Subcommittee assumed another role—identify existing resources on workforce programs and improve access—by having subject-matter experts speak about Job Corps, the Colorado Apprenticeship Program, Skill Advance Colorado and U.S. Economic Development Administration grants.

Additionally, the Subcommittee explored the option of buying a Ponsse Simulator. A Ponsse Simulator allows students to operate forestry equipment in a virtual world. The Front Range Community College has

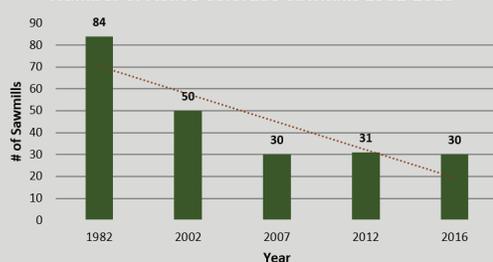
one that they use one semester per year, so there may be an opportunity to share that simulator with other community colleges. Currently, they are exploring potential grant opportunities to help develop a training program.

Support the outdoor recreation economy

The Subcommittee is committed to ensuring Colorado's outdoor recreation economy thrives as forest landscapes and watersheds face threat. That's because Colorado's outdoor recreation economy supports more than half a million, makes up 10% of the state GDP, employs 18.7% of Colorado's labor force and adds up to \$62 billion toward the economy. Communities benefit because of the healthy forests, clean water and community advocates.

The Subcommittee has been working with the Colorado Youth Corps Association (CYCA)—an RMRI Partner focused on restoring the state's outdoor areas—to identify internship opportunities. CYCA is working on a white paper to identify the possibility of developing private industry internships through CYCA. ■

Number of Active Colorado Sawmills 1982-2016



*Data provided by the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research – The Four Corners Timber Harvest and Forest Products Industry, 2016 Report.

Workforce capacity refers to RMRI partner's ability to provide a sufficient workforce to accomplish the mission. A few factors unique to Colorado impact RMRI workforce capacity. Deteriorating climate conditions, vast beetle kill, population growth and a shrinking logging industry place demands on a skilled workforce.

Ten percent of Colorado's 24 million acres of forest need urgent

attention while 22% of standing trees in Colorado forests are dead wood (CSFS). Meanwhile, 95% of homes in the U.S. are built of wood but 90% of all wood products are imported into Colorado (USFS). Since 2020, lumber prices have been unstable, increasing as high as 240% due to decreased workforce capacity, demand, a housing shortage and covid.





Biomass Utilization Subcommittee

Understand the regulatory and scientific barriers to action.

While it may be clear that RMRI Partners share values, it may not be so obvious that goals are shared. To fix this—and to establish consensus on the definition and benefits of biomass utilization—the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee developed RMRI’s first fact sheet.

The “[RMRI Biomass Fact Sheet](#)” was developed collaboratively over a period of several months, marking a milestone in the Subcommittee’s ability create a common operating picture to get work done. The fact sheet explains why the average Coloradan should care, and details biomass sources, opportunities and challenges. The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee members’ task is clear and bold:

“At RMRI, we are focused on the woody biomass found on private and public lands. More specifically, we are focused on its removal and utilization,” defining biomass utilization as “the harvest, sale, offer, trade, and/or use of woody biomass.”

Within this framework, the Subcommittee—led by Molly Pitts of the Colorado Timber Industry Association (CTIA) and Tim Reader of the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)—can better take on its primary role of crafting “strategies and approaches that lead to improving biomass utilization on the ground,” according to the RMRI Governance

2021 Outcomes

- ✓ RMRI Biomass Factsheet
- ✓ Input for CSFS Statewide Biomass Assessment
- ✓ 2021 state legislation and policy reviews

2022 Goals

- ✓ Increase/improve access to funding
- ✓ Bioeconomic Development Opportunity (BDO) Zones
- ✓ Biomass Conference in 2022

Charter, while also identifying and improving access to “existing resources.”

In 2021, the Subcommittee focused on leveraging “existing resources” available to RMRI’s three landscapes. The Subcommittee, for example, is plugged into the various existing grants and funds, and its members serve as subject matter experts on those grants and funds. In 2021, Subcommittee members reviewed the USFS Wood Innovations Program, USFS Community Wood Program, and the CSFS Wildfire Risk Mitigation Loan Fund.

Also in 2021, the Subcommittee laid much of the groundwork to set its landscapes up to benefit from Colorado’s state bill, HB21-1180, “Measures To Increase Biomass Utilization”—which passed and signed into law July 2021. The bill offers millions in grant funding toward projects derived from biomass utilization that mitigate wildfire or generate bioenergy or agricultural benefits.

While a statewide biomass utilization assessment was not part of

the bill, CSFS will conduct one under the leadership of Dr. Kurt Mackes, Colorado State University. The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee hosted Dr. Mackes, who delivered a presentation on how the assessment will be conducted. RMRI landscapes and Partners can expect to be involved in this collaborative assessment as a result of the Subcommittee’s work. The Subcommittee will support the assessment in 2022 by reviewing and providing input.

In 2022, the Subcommittee intends to pursue establishing Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) Zones to encourage the use of biomass in different ways. BDO Zones can help bring in funding to finance facility infrastructure.

The Biomass Utilization Subcommittee is also looking to support applicants for the Wood Innovations Grant (due in the spring of 2022) and improve access to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), CSFS, and other state and general stimulus resources. ■



HOUSE BILL 21-1180

CONCERNING MEASURES TO INCREASE BIOMASS UTILIZATION THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Tasked with identifying and improving access to existing resources, as well as track and address policy changes, the Biomass Utilization Subcommittee is plugged into Colorado’s most recent biomass bill. The bill assigns CSFS with managing a biomass utilization program awarding up to \$2.5 million in grants that demonstrate the utilization of biomass for purposes such as wildfire

prevention and mitigation, increased biomass energy generation, and agricultural biochar.

In 2021 the Subcommittee provided initial input into a Statewide Biomass Assessment, and will continue providing input throughout the process into 2022. The goal is to make this assessment a collaborative process by engaging partners and the public before finalized.





Governance Subcommittee

Clarifying governing structure and processes.

RMRI Governance Subcommittee is an operational subcommittee. The roles of the Governance Subcommittee are to clarify the governing structure and process of RMRI, as well as determine how any new subcommittee will fit within the existing governance structure of RMRI if or as needed.

The Governance Subcommittee stewards the RMRI Charter initially

developed in 2021 and located on the [RMRI website](#).

The most significant accomplishment of this Subcommittee has been developing processes for requesting an official RMRI endorsement or support letter for a specific grant or project. There are two processes: one for requests of support from the landscapes and Subcommittees, and

one for requests of support from RMRI broadly.

Tara Umphries, who guides the Subcommittee, will continue to support the RMRI landscapes into 2022. Contact her via email at tara.umphries@usda.gov. ■



Social License Subcommittee

Building social understanding, consent and license.

2021 Outcomes

- ✓ Developed messaging
- ✓ Built library of resources

2022 Goals

- ✓ Work with local landscapes for tailored materials
- ✓ Infographics – untreated vs. treated

As one of the original four RMRI Subcommittees, the Social License Subcommittee was stood up to address public perceptions toward active vegetation management, prescribed fire and private landowner forestry treatments. More specifically, the Subcommittee’s role is to develop “key messages to develop broad social approval.”

In 2021, the Social License Subcommittee developed [key messages](#) around prescribed fire, active forest management, and fire-adapted communities. The process of crafting the messages was collaborative and included local, scientific, and professional perspectives. The language of the key messages aligns with messaging developed by other RMRI Partners, such as the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service, Wildfire Adapted Communities, and the Division for Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC).

Also in 2021, the Social License

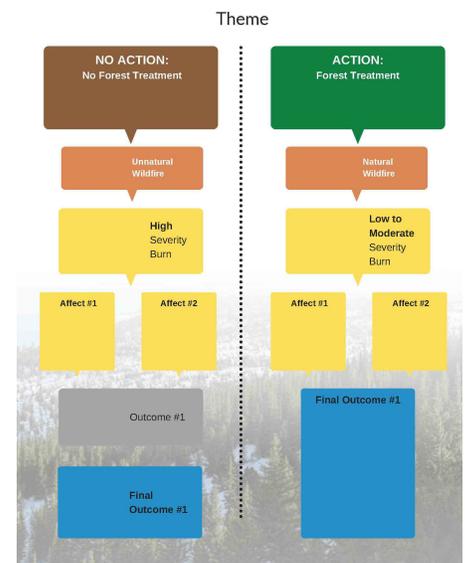
Subcommittee built a library of resources that features success stories, images and research on the cost-benefits of mitigation, fire adapted communities and prescribed fire.

The Social License Subcommittee is currently creating infographics to highlight the differences between treated and untreated landscapes. They are also building out strategies for how to increase social license.

In 2022, the Social License Subcommittee wants to work with local landscape Partners to tailor materials to the local level. They also want to work with the Communications Subcommittee to share success stories and integrate messaging into existing campaigns.

The Social License Subcommittee needs support from RMRI partners in increasing outreach to the recreation community and better defining the social license needs at the local level. They also need support in designing the "untreated versus treated" infographics. If you’re interested,

please contact Social License lead Patt Dorsey (pdorsey@nwtf.net). ■



A Social License Subcommittee product outlining the impact of treatments v. no treatments. The Subcommittee intends to provide messaging such as this tailored toward specific landscapes in 2022.



Communications Subcommittee

Helping RMRI Partners & landscapes speak with one voice.

2021 Outcomes

- ✓ RMRI Brand
- ✓ 10 publications
- ✓ Grew online audience

2022 Goals

- ✓ Increase 2-way communication
- ✓ Increase website views and social media followers by 100%
- ✓ Provide Partners consistent messaging, templates and fact sheets.

The Communications Subcommittee spent the first half of 2021 tackling one of their responsibilities outlined in the RMRI Governance Charter: Develop an RMRI brand. The National Wild Turkey Federation funded The Truth design team to assist the Communications Subcommittee with building an RMRI brand and logo—but what made this project unique was that it was a collaborative process.

First, The Truth design team recommended a name change. So the Communications Subcommittee on May 11 put it up to a vote among all RMRI Partners. Eighty-four percent said they were not interested in pursuing a name change and 88% said that "Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative" already reflects our mission and goals. So the Communications Subcommittee decided to keep the name.

Meanwhile, the Subcommittee arranged for The Truth design team to interview RMRI leadership. The design team then designed three logos based on the interviews and Subcommittee

feedback. Those were again put up for a vote among RMRI Partners. A total of 28 Partners voted, and 17 of 28 voted for the winning logo. Since then, the Subcommittee has provided for RMRI Partners a branding page at RestoringTheRockies.org/brand that includes a branding guide, logos and templates.

Beginning in 2021, the Communications Subcommittee committed to publishing the quarterly RMRI newsletter known as The Source. Each issue would focus on one of four issues: Partners, projects, accomplishments and Subcommittees. In 2021, the Subcommittee published issues on accomplishments, Partners and projects.

To address internal communication among RMRI Partners, the Subcommittee launched the 'RMRI Monthly Update', now published on the third Friday of each month.

In 2021 the Communications Subcommittee grew the RMRI Facebook page by 86% and the Twitter page by 37%. The Subcommittee aims to double those numbers in 2022, as

well as double website views.

At the top of the Communications Subcommittee's agenda in 2022 is to increase two-way communication among RMRI landscape and Partners. Meanwhile, the Subcommittee will aid Partners by enhancing RMRI communication tools, like upgrading the website, providing consistent messaging and templates, and developing boilerplate presentations that can be tailored to partners' needs. ■



The Communications Subcommittee in 2021 worked with The Truth and RMRI Partners to establish its brand and identity. Additionally, they provided landscapes with an [RMRI Branding Guide](#), [RMRI Logos](#), [RMRI Values](#) and [RMRI Templates](#).



Funding Subcommittee

Connecting RMRI Partners with funding opportunities.

While the Funding Subcommittee has not met as a group in a while, it currently serves in a "matchmaker" role to help landscape teams and Subcommittees connect with funding opportunities. Subcommittee members have primarily been federal and state agency partners, who are help-

ing connect grant sources with eligible projects. The Subcommittee does not control, divide or distribute funds.

The Subcommittee aims to resolve funding challenges; develop a funding strategy for private/foundation investment; and identify and address policy changes.

The National Wild Turkey Federation recently hired Liz Dowling as its Development Director for Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Based in Colorado, Liz brings added support to RMRI, and someone who can bring funding back to RMRI's strategic planning.

Depending on the Funding Subcommittee's priorities, one goal is to update and maintain a grants database with information about all relevant funding opportunities in one location. ■