

Mountainair Collaborative  
March 5, 2019, 1:30–3:30 pm  
Edgewood SWCD, Moriarty, NM

Joe Zebrowski facilitated the meeting. He began by reviewing the meeting agenda and purpose.

### Introductions

Joe Zebrowski, NM Highlands University, Facilitator  
Jay Turner, USFS, Cibola NF, Mountainair District Ranger  
Robert Barber, Lincoln County LANRAC  
Rick Merrick, South Central Mountains RC&D  
Dee Tarr, Manager, Claunch-Pinto SWCD  
Susan Ostlie, Great Old Broads For Wilderness  
Virginia Sizer, Great Old Broads For Wilderness  
Cliff Meyer, NM Off Highway Vehicle Assn.  
Marc LeFrancois , NPS – SAPU  
Juan Sanchez, NM Land Grant Council  
Alan Barton, NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute

### Cibola NF Revised Forest Plan Update

Jay Turner – Last week, Cibola NF Supervisor Steve Hattenbach and Forest Planner Sarah Browne did a briefing on the revised forest plan at the Washington Office. The draft revised plan was well received, and the visit went well. There were not a lot of questions. The Cibola NF is aiming for June to publish the Draft EIS & the draft revised plan. The Cibola NF will release its draft documents concurrently with the Carson NF & the Santa Fe NF. Once the plan is released to the public, Cibola NF will schedule public meetings. There will be a 90-day comment period.

Joe noted that Mark Werkmeister did a presentation for the Cibola Shared Stewardship Council on how to make substantive comments on a plan. Do we want to have a similar training for the Mountainair Collaborative? If so, we should have it about 30 days before the draft is released.

Robert said it seemed the CSSC training spent a lot of time on the NEPA process, and very little time on what makes a good substantive comment. If we do the training for the Mountainair Collaborative, it should focus on how to write a good comment. They did a training in Lincoln County that only took a couple of hours, and they focused on what the USFS looks at and what the stakeholders wanted. Joe said that at the CSSC meeting, Mark Werkmeister focused on how to find parts of the plan and how to make comments that would stand up in court.

Jay said the Collaborative could potentially just talk about the public involvement strategy. Joe said he will contact Mark Werkmeister to see if he can do a presentation that focuses only on how to write a comment. He will start this process and try to set up a meeting for May.

Dee & Susan both suggested that we make this a public presentation. We can meet at the Estancia SWCD, where they have a big meeting room. Robert suggested a 15-minute presentation on what makes a good comment would be a good way to open up public meetings. It would help the public know how to respond to the information presented in the meeting. Joe said it is the USFS that would run the meetings, so they would be the ones to address this. Robert responded that the USFS has pamphlets on this subject. Jay added that a lot of the USFS scoping documents have sections on how to comment.

Robert offered his perspective on writing a good comment – (1) some commenters can be emotional, but this likely does not make a helpful comment, (2) you need to know what it is you are commenting on, (3) you should offer an alternative, not just say “this is wrong,” “this is right.”

Jay added that it’s good to have a rationale that is based on the document. Robert said you can also base info on cultural or historical information that isn’t in the document. Susan said a commenter should also be able to base comments on USFS principles, if the Forest Service isn’t applying these in specific examples.

Joe noted that the broader question is, we’re going to be given these documents to review. What other info does the public need to help them review the document? How would the public access this info?

Susan has been looking for the Assessment Report, but as far as she can tell copies are only available at the Supervisor’s Office, not online. She wants to see the responses to comments she and others have submitted. Jay said he will check into this. Joe said these are documents that people might want to see. USFS should provide easy access to these, if possible. Should we anticipate that people are going to want to see comments that have already been made? Jay will look into getting copies of previous comments.

#### Draft Plan / DEIS Structure

Joe has copies of table of contents for both the Draft Revised Forest Plan and the DEIS. The final plan should follow a similar structure, although the specific content may be different.

The Mountainair Collaborative can assist by helping to solicit public comments, and by holding a workshop for the public on how to make a good comment, the logistics of making a comment, and USFS can introduce public meetings with a brief discussion on make helpful comments

Dee suggested that all partners can put info on their websites, as partners have done in the past. Also, partners can put ads in newspapers and on the radio. Jay said that the Communications Plan isn’t finalized yet, but that will determine how the USFS handles outreach. Robert concurred, adding that this information should be posted on as many websites and Facebook pages as possible – villages, schools, RC&D, etc. Also, flyers can be posted in public areas in communities – at the post office, e.g. We need to have a consistent message that everyone is sharing.

Deliberation on the Plan – this could be difficult to put into practice, especially if there are many different views represented at a meeting. Dee pointed out that the deliberations can help the collaborative process, and build the collaborative. Joe pointed out that one of our goals is to come up with consensus comments, so going through the process of coming up with these is useful for the collaborative. But any individual can also submit individual comments. Susan expressed the opinion that the collaborative should submit comments after the public meetings. Robert agreed, saying we should incorporate what the public says in our comments as a collaborative. People making comments need time to run their position by their own boards and members. Dee observed that time goes by quickly, so we need to be ready with comments. Going back to partners’ boards is time consuming.

Joe asked at what point in the 90-day period does the collaborative need to sit down and exchange comments? Robert wanted to clarify when the public meetings will take place? Will it be in the first two weeks after the plan is issued, so that we’ll have time to write our comments?

Jay said hopefully the public meetings will be scheduled to take place shortly after the plan is issued. Alan suggested, however, that people need time to review the plan before they comment, so if public meetings are early in the process, people may be forced to make comments without reviewing the draft plan adequately. Robert said we need a kick off meeting. Alan suggested the Mountainair Collaborative can help by running a kick off meeting, and the USFS can organize meetings at around 60 days to collect comments. Joe said the Collaborative can suggest to the USFS that they need to have 2 meetings, a kick off and a comment meeting. If the USFS can't do all those, the Collaborative may be able to pick up the kick off meetings. Jay will look into the process the USFS is planning and get back to us.

Joe said it appears we need a 30-day and 60-day check in. The goal is that Collaborative members will bring their draft or final comments to share with the group. These will be available for discussion. It will be up to the partner what they want to do with that. By 60 days, we should refine what the Collaborative's comments will be. This depends on what people submit and what people want to include. We should make sure copies of the documents are distributed around the community, in district offices, in public libraries, and elsewhere.

As Joe mentioned, he has copies of the table of comments, which will be available after the meeting.

#### Other Comments

- Jay announced he will be detailed to the SO for awhile. Jay will be working temporarily at the SO since Ian Fox has left to work at the RO as the coordinator for the CFRP program, forest modernization, and other issues.
- Jay said the Mountainair District is gearing up for fire season. They have started to bring people back on, and they're looking to fill a couple more seasonal positions. They should have all the positions filled by the end of March. The District will also look for windows to do Rx burns. Also, they are working on a new CFRP proposal to submit this week for the Capilla Peak area. The NEPA is now complete, so they're submitting a CFRP proposal for implementation. They still have one more year doing the NEPA CFRP in Corona.
- Robert is working with the Smokey Bear Collaborative on the Lincoln NF. The Lincoln doesn't have a plan revision going on yet, but the Smokey Bear Collaborative is working on a Transportation and Recreation Plan for the Hale Lake Area, south of Hwy 70 down to the Mescalero Reservation. The Smokey Bear Collaborative has a number of participants in various recreation interests. The participants are putting together their dream list for the area, which the USFS will then coordinate in a map to help the USFS make decisions on the area.
- The Village of Ruidoso approved the use of four wheelers on city streets, and Lincoln County has always allowed them on dirt roads. The Commissioners then approved a proposal to use ORVs on paved county roads. Have to be highway legal and licensed.
- Joe said the words "Forest Plan Revision" are not a part of the Collaborative's vision and purpose. We have a broader purpose and especially once the plan revision winds down, what will we want to take on as a Collaborative? How can we support local interests?
- Jay suggested that it would be great to see the Mountainair Collaborative get involved in the USFS's Program of Work development.

- Robert said that in Lincoln County, a couple years ago, they did an EIS on the use of chemicals for non-native plants. A collaborative would be good for such a process. If you treat one side of a boundary or property border and not the other side, then it's less useful. A collaborative could coordinate cross-boundary work.
- Cliff asked if the draft forest plan would change anything in travel management? Or is that just under the travel management plan? The Cibola NF is supposed to revisit the travel management plan each year, but it hasn't been revisited at all. Jay said no, it hasn't. But it should be a living plan.

Next Meeting: We didn't set a date for the next meeting. We'll follow the timeline we set up in this meeting for plan revision.