

Magdalena Collaborative
General Meeting
Minutes

Friday, August 17, 2018, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
Socorro County Annex Building, Commissioner's Room
198 Neel Ave., Socorro NM

The objectives for the meeting are:

- (1) Update on Forest Plan Revision and "Soft Release" of the Draft Revised Forest Plan
- (2) Develop Operating Principles for the Magdalena Collaborative

The meeting started with introductions of those in attendance.

The facilitator for the meeting is Alan Barton of the New Mexico Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute. A total of 24 people signed the attendance record.

Forest Plan Revision

Cibola National Forest Supervisor Steve Hattenbach gave an update on the Forest Plan Revision process. The Forest Plan is an overarching plan to manage the forest. The current forest plan is over 30 years old. The forest has been working on updating the plan for about 4 years, based on the Planning Rule that was passed in 2012.

The Cibola NF is planning a "soft release" of the draft of the revised forest plan. The intent is to make the current working draft available on Sept. 4, 2018 on the Cibola NF website. However, this is NOT a formal comment period; rather, this is a sneak preview of what will be published in draft form in January 2019.

The Forest Service will have a series of open houses at the end of September to answer questions about the draft forest plan. Each ranger district will host one workshop.

The Cibola NF released a preliminary plan in 2016, and this is another sneak preview to show some changes the national forest planners have been working on since then. The pre-release is so we can have open dialog before the formal comment period begins in January, and answer questions people have about the draft plan. The working draft is still going through an internal process and will also be submitted to the Regional Office for approval during the soft release and then to the Washington Office for approval. There are still going to be changes, but this should be the bulk of the Forest Plan. Formal comments will be during the January formal release. This process is consistent with other NM Forests working on revising their forest plans.

The Cibola NF has MOU's with 43 Cooperating Agencies (for the complete list, see https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd589792.pdf), and they will continue to be honored.

The Landscape Teams, including the Magdalena Landscape Team, are comprised of some of the 43 cooperating agencies. These teams can submit comments collectively, if desired, on the working Draft Plan ahead of the formal comment period, as stipulated in their individual MOUs. **The Deadline for Landscape Teams to submit comments is October 5.** These comments will be part of the project record with other comments submitted during the formal comment period.

The Magdalena Collaborative is a group of organizations, including cooperating agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders interested in the Magdalena area. This pre-release is not intended to be a comment period for the Collaborative, or anyone else from the public, but the national forest does want to have discussions with the Collaborative as they represent a diverse group of organizations with many members interested in the Forest Plan.

Landscape Teams on two other Cibola NF Districts, Sandia and Mountainair, decided to dissolve and effectively merge into a collaborative group. The Magdalena and Mount Taylor Landscape Teams have been more and less active and have decided not to dissolve until the MOUs expire when the final plan is issued. But, the Landscape Teams will also remain engaged with the collaboratives.

Ruthann Harriet is the Point of Contact (POC) for the Magdalena Landscape Team; she was unable to attend the meeting today.

Ron Burnett noted that Kim has pulled together many stakeholders, and asked if there is some way for us all to start working out issues within the Collaborative? The amount of recommended wilderness seems to be the single largest issue identified so far on the Magdalena Ranger District.

Steve said it would be nice if everyone could pull together to comment as a collaborative to get some kind of agreement or consensus. Any other issues anyone can identify and agree on, would be great, too.

Other questions/comments:

Question: Does the EIS consider the No Action alternative?

Response: Yes.

Question: What is the timeline?

Response: Following the Draft Release in January, there will be a 3 month comment period, then the USFS will take about 6 to 9 months to make changes to final. The intent is to release the final revised plan and EIS towards the end of 2019. There could be delays, however.

Question: Will there be maps with the Soft Release? Will they have the polygons? The maps can be hard to understand.

Response: This is why the Forest Service wants to have the open house, to discuss issues like this.

Questions: Will the maps be GIS or base layers?

Response: They will probably be large scale maps, as pdfs. You probably won't be able to get GIS on the web. The USFS might try to get data layers out.

Question: There has been a lot of turnover of staff on the Cibola NF and on the Planning Team. Who is the current lead?

Response: Sarah Browne is heading up the Planning Team. There are still some open positions, and the Cibola NF is working on building some of the planning team.

Question: How long has new Forest Supervisor been in place?

Response: Steve Hattenbach started 3 months ago as of this week. He has lived in NM since 1997. Albuquerque is his home, and he has recreated with his family on the Cibola for a long time.

Question: How does the forest-wide collaborative (the Cibola Shared Stewardship Council) work with the District collaboratives?

Response: They are separate entities. The Shared Stewardship Council has stewardship interest over the whole national forest. Their next meeting is Thursday, August 23, at Isleta Pueblo. Their role is to look at the forest-wide issues, and the local collaboratives should be more focused on their respective districts.

Open House

The Cibola NF will hold an open house for the Magdalena Ranger District on September 26, 2018, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. With limited staff and time, the national forest can only have one open house per district to answer questions. A Doodle poll of members of the Magdalena Collaborative generally showed that Sept. 26 was the best date for most people. However, all of the open houses will be open to the public, and people can attend open houses in other ranger districts as well. The Mountainair RD has scheduled their open house for Sept. 25th in Mountainair.

The intent of the open houses is for the public to ask questions about the draft plan and to have an opportunity to look at larger maps, so that they can understand the plan and then during the formal comment period in 2019, they can offer comments that are better prepared and more helpful. There are many time limitations to stay on track, including time for internal briefings and working around the holidays.

Ron Burnett commented that he could not be there, but could find a replacement for himself.

There will be tables, some with copies of the plan, with maps, and Forest Service staff to answer questions. There will not be a big presentation. People can come anytime during the three-hour open house and can learn about the plan.

Question: How is the general public involved?

Response: The USFS is not sending out a press release or a call to the public for this draft version. They will do that for the formal comment period once the revised draft plan is released in January. However, the general public is welcome to attend the open house to learn more about the plan. Comments will not be collected from the public at this time, however; the USFS will not track comments until the formal comment period opens in January. All comments that have been received up until now have already been tabulated and are on record. For example, comments about wilderness, one of the biggest issues, have been recorded, and the proposed alternatives in the current draft of the plan incorporate a range of recommended wilderness.

After the formal publication of the Draft early next year, there will be another round of public meetings, and comments will be taken then. However, Steve cannot stop anyone from sending him a letter, but any comments received now will not be recorded for formal standing later.

Question: Is the collaborative about wilderness?

Response: We hope it's about a lot more than wilderness. We hope it's also about ideas for implementation of the plan to get restoration on the ground.

Question: Who will organize public meetings related to Forest Plan Revision?

Response: The Forest Service will organize and conduct the open houses, but the USFS could use the assistance of the collaborative to advertise the open house to its members and others in the community. Everyone can look at the plan, be familiar with it, and have good questions. Bring your friends to the open house. Be sure everyone knows it is not a comment period, though. When the formal comment period opens, there will be 90 days for the public to submit really well thought out comments.

All members of the Magdalena Collaborative and of the Magdalena Landscape Team can participate in the open house as individuals. In addition, the Landscape Team can submit comments on the draft revised plan following the soft release, as per their MOUs with the USFS.

The Magdalena Collaborative does not have an MOU and cannot submit official comments, but can potentially work with the Landscape Team to submit comments. The Collaborative wants to meet and determine areas of agreement/consensus to draft comments and submit them to the Landscape Team. Then, if the Landscape Team is willing, they can provide the comments to the USFS. Following the open house, the Collaborative would like to set up a meeting to discuss potential responses to the USFS, and set a date to get comments to the Landscape Team before Oct. 5 deadline. The Landscape Team will take the comments from the Collaborative, but will not commit to sending them in as part of the Landscape Team's comments on the draft plan. The Landscape Team may submit comments individually or may submit comments together. Currently, there are 3 members still active on the Magdalena Landscape team (Catron County, Sierra SWCD, Quemado and Salado SWCD).

The Collaborative agreed to hold a meeting on October 1st from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon, at the Socorro Annex in the Conference Room, in order to review the pre-release draft plan and EIS as a Collaborative. Anyone who is interested can attend. Please come prepared to discuss the plan.

Background on the Magdalena Collaborative

District Ranger Kim Obele gave a brief background on the Magdalena Collaborative. The Landscape Team, which consists of cooperating agencies that have signed an MOU with the USFS, started working with the Cibola NF on the Forest Plan Revision when the national forest first started the process a few years ago. As more interest developed outside of the cooperating agencies, the Cibola NF encouraged collaboratives to form. Magdalena was the last Ranger District of the four to establish a collaborative. The process started with conference calls in early 2018 among 12 organizations that originally expressed an interest. The purpose of the calls was to organize and plan an initial kick-off meeting. That meeting took place on April 6, 2018 in Magdalena. At that meeting, some who were present expressed an interest in joining the Coordinating Team, and a meeting of this group was held on June 28 in Magdalena.

The meeting on April 6, 2018 was a good start for the Collaborative. The notes from this workshop-style meeting are 17 pages long. Over 50 people were there, representing a wide range of organizations in the Magdalena/Socorro area and beyond. We brainstormed common

interests and came up with ideas for the meeting. We had a delicious lunch together, and the meeting was very productive. The notes are posted on the Magdalena Collaborative website; please read them.

At the meeting of the Coordinating Team on June 28, approximately 20 people attended. The purpose of the meeting was to start a discussion on the organizational structure of the Magdalena Collaborative. The group created a map of the geographical area the collaborative will focus on. Notes from this meeting are posted on the Magdalena Collaborative website.

Magdalena Collaborative Website

The Collaborative has a website, which is hosted by the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute. The URL for the website is:

<http://nmfwri.org/collaboration/Magdalena-collaborative>

On the website, there is a link to a map that is in Arc-GIS Online, an interactive mapping program. The map includes layers that can be turned on and off. The layers show different landscape features. The map also has options for different backgrounds (the base map), including land ownership, a topo map, or an aerial photo.

The project area for the Magdalena Collaborative is indicated with a dotted line, indicating that this area is the focus for the collaborative but not necessarily the only area where we will work. Some minor adjustments need to be made to the map as it is currently drawn. Once the adjustments are made, the map will include all of the USFS Magdalena Ranger District, as well as Bureau of Land Management land, State Land Office land, and private land.

The group discussed a couple of questions that have been raised. First is whether national wildlife refuges should be included in the map. Currently, the borders drawn by the Coordinating Team do not include wildlife refuges. The refuge manager for the Sevilleta Refuge attended the meeting, and said the refuge staff would participate in the Magdalena Collaborative whether the map boundaries incorporated the refuge or not. Some members also suggested we might want to include the Bosque del Apache NWR as well, and perhaps a delegation should visit the managers of the Bosque del Apache to see if they are interested in participating in the Magdalena Collaborative.

Members should discuss the map boundaries with their organizations, and we can consider this at the next meeting of the collaborative and finalize the map then.

Another question that was raised was what layers should be included in the online map. Currently, there are layers showing the boundary for the collaborative, fire history, and vegetation treatments. These were included because the NMFWRRI has easy access to these layers and they fit with some of the purposes of the Magdalena Collaborative expressed at previous meetings. We can, however, add many additional layers as well. What layers would members like to see added?

Members suggested layers showing Roads and Trails, Wilderness Areas, and Streams and Springs. Note that some of these may be available on the base maps, but we will try to add these layers as well.

The Web Map can be viewed at:

<http://nmfwri.org/collaboration/magdalena-collaborative/magdalena-collaborative-web-map>

Communications and Roles

The Cibola Shared Stewardship Council (CSSC) is the Forest Wide collaborative, and its members are interested in the national forest as a whole. The CSSC is also a coordinating council for the local (district) collaboratives. The Magdalena Collaborative's relationship with the CSSC is our prerogative. RuthAnn Harriett has served as the POC between the Magdalena Landscape Team and the CSSC, and also as the POC for the Magdalena Collaborative. The District Ranger and the Facilitator also attend CSSC meetings. Anyone can attend, however, so please attend CSSC meetings if you want. The meetings are beneficial; at each meeting, different groups make presentations on their work, and you learn a lot by attending. The next meeting will be on Thursday, Aug 23 at 10:00 am, at Isleta Pueblo.

The Magdalena Collaborative needs an alternate POC to work with RuthAnn, and to attend meetings of the CSSC if RuthAnn cannot attend. RuthAnn would like the help overall with the duties of the POC. Other local collaborative POCs tend to be Soil and Water Conservation District managers, but it is up to us.

Ron Burnett volunteered to serve as the Magdalena Collaborative's Alternate POC, and those in attendance applauded. Fridays work well for him for meetings.

Operating Principles for the Magdalena Collaborative

The Landscape Teams were required to create charters prior to conducting any business, and the other district collaboratives have followed suit. The Sandia Collaborative has a charter, while the Mountainair Collaborative opted to create operating principles in lieu of a charter. At the meeting of the Magdalena Coordinating Team, a preference was expressed for more informal operating principles for this collaborative as well. The members agreed that a more informal approach was preferable. We can use the operating principles developed by other collaboratives as a model; however, we should resist the temptation simply to copy what other groups have written. It is valuable for the group to go through the process of discussing the principles that apply to the Magdalena landscape. This is a worthwhile investment of time and builds ownership in both the principles and the collaborative.

To assist in the somewhat boring task of creating operating principles, the facilitator outlined elements that might be included in a set of operating principles. There is a full slide presentation that can be viewed on the Magdalena Collaborative website. The outline of potential elements in a set of operating principles includes:

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| (1) Overview of the Organization | (9) Operating Procedures |
| (2) Vision Statement | (10) Decision-making and Governance |
| (3) Organizational Purpose | (11) Communications |
| (4) Organizational Mission | (12) Public Relations and Education |
| (5) Organizational Goals | (13) Interaction with the Community |
| (6) Organizational Values | (14) Conflict Resolution |
| (7) Landscape Values | (15) Amending the Operating Principle |
| (8) Organizational Structure | |

A group of members agreed to form an ad-hoc committee to work on the operating principles. This group will meet on October 12 at the Magdalena Ranger District office, from 1:00 to 2:30 pm. The committee will create a draft of the operating principles and then will send them out to the full collaborative so members can have their organizations view them. We can then revise and approve them at the next full meeting of the collaborative in Nov.

Members who expressed an interest in working on the ad-hoc committee to write the operating principles include Ron Burnett, Bill Ferranti, Susan Ostlie, Jim Nelson, Jim McGrath, Chris Greiner and Kim Obele.

Upcoming Collaborative Meetings

The date for next meeting of the full collaborative will be November 30 at 1:00 pm. The meeting will be in Magdalena, hopefully at the Fine Arts Center. A message will be sent out once this date and location are confirmed.

The Forest Service Open House on Forest Plan Revision will be September 26, 2018 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm at the Magdalena School Fine Arts Center, 201 Duggins Drive. This will be a combined Magdalena Collaborative Meeting and a Public Meeting to answer questions and hear concerns about the Revised Forest Plan.

The Collaborative will then meet on Monday, October 1 from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon to discuss the open house and to make suggestions for the forest plan. The meeting will be in Socorro, at the Socorro County Annex Building, 198 Neel Ave.

On October 12, there also will be a meeting of the ad-hoc committee who volunteered to work on the operating principles for the Magdalena Collaborative. This meeting will be at the USFS Magdalena Ranger Station at 1:00 pm.

Visit the Magdalena Collaborative Website at <http://nmfwri.org/collaboration/magdalena-collaborative>