

Meeting Notes

Mountainair Collaborative Meeting

March 20, 2018, 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Edgewood SWCD, Moriarty, New Mexico

Attendees:

Dee Tarr – Claunch-Pinto SWCD
Joe Zebrowski – NMHU-GAINS
Jay Turner – USFS Mountainair District
Juan Sanchez – Chilili Land Grant
Robert Barber – Lincoln County LANRAC
Art Swenka – Estancia Basin Resource Association
Cheyenne Trujillo – NM Land Grant Council
Cliff Meyer – NM Off-Highway Vehicle Alliance
Virginia Seiser – Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Jason C. Quintana – Manzano Land Grant
Alan Barton – NM Forest & Watershed Restoration Institute

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 pm by Joe Zebrowski, the meeting facilitator

Announcements

Joe Zebrowski –

The next Shared Stewardship Meeting for the Cibola NF is next Wednesday, March 28, at the Isleta Pueblo in the Hotel/Casino, in the Rio Grande Room. The meeting starts at 10:00 am.

Introductions

Reviewed Agenda

The notes from last meeting were handed out. Please note any changes and send to Joe.

Meeting notes and other records of our activities are being posted on the Mountainair Collaborative website, hosted by the NMFWR. There is an interactive map on the site. Any feedback on the page can be sent to the facilitator.

Overview

Joe Zebrowski –

Our main focus today is adopting the operating principles.

The collaborative was formed to exchange ideas and information among communities in the area of the Mountainair Ranger District. The collaborative is an outgrowth of the Forest Plan Revision process, and the goal is to institutionalize the collaborative work that was initiated during forest plan revision. However, this group is directed by community members, and we set our own parameters.

The last regular meeting of the collaborative was in November. The discussion was about the charter, and a little about the landscape values. We formed an ad hoc committee to work on the charter. Participants were Jay Turner, Dee Tarr, Joe Zebrowski, Alan Barton, Robert Barber, Juan Sanchez, Mark Dixon (Pueblo of Isleta), and Susan Ostlie (Great Old Broads for Wilderness).

Mountainair Ranger District Report

Jay Turner –

Elaine Kohrman, Cibola Forest Supervisor, recently accepted a position at the Regional Office as Deputy Regional Forester, replacing Jim Upchurch who retired in December. An interim plan for leadership on the Cibola is being developed.

Ian Fox will also be on a detail at the Regional Office starting at the end of April, lasting through the summer. He will fill in for Walter Dunn, who is retiring.

A candidate has been selected for an open position on the CNF covering recreation, engineering, archeology, lands & minerals. The name of the new employee has not been announced yet, however.

The District and Forest are gearing up for fire season, and it looks to be a busy one. The Mountainair District's seasonal fire crew started yesterday (3/19/18), and they are now in training. Lookouts will be operating by the end of next week. Tarrant County is in a burn ban right now, and the Cibola NF will likely go into Stage 1 burn conditions at the beginning of next month.

Forest plan revision – the planning team is working on a draft EIS for the plan. The DEIS should be available to the public in June. Then, a comment period will be open and will run through the summer, until the beginning of September. Forest staff will review comments in the late fall, and should have the EIS wrapped up by early spring next year.

Projects – work in the Isleta area continues. The area was shut down due to road conditions on Highway 321, due to moisture. They are working on a contract for road crews for this summer – 245 to Capilla, 422, campground roads to Red Canyon and 4th of July.

Doghead Allotment recovery – The BLM is wrapping up surveys, thanks to Juan and Art who worked with them.

The Romero CFRP should be done soon – September is the deadline.

Two planning CFRPs are in process. Capilla Peak (north of Romero), and one in the Gallinas area (Corona). These involve archeological surveys and MSO surveys. Goshawk surveys were completed last

year. They will start environmental analysis on Capilla and should be able to do implementation there next year.

Barranca – have EQIP funds to work there.

The District has some prescribed burn funds, but they need precipitation before they can burn again. They probably won't be able to burn until the fall. There probably will be burns on the west side of the forest this spring, but nothing on the east side until after the monsoons.

The District is working on getting a summer Youth Conservation Corps group with the Forest Stewards Guild. They'll have a fall crew this year as well, which will be a group of 8 older youth who have some fire qualifications. They can work on prescribed burns and wildfires, and will work on other projects as well.

Charter / Operating Principles

Our discussions have led the collaborative to develop operating principles rather than a formal charter.

The ad-hoc committee working on the operating principles met twice, and we have circulated the drafts among the committee and the broader group.

Structure of Operating Principles –

The document is short – 3 pages.

Sections of the document:

Overview

Vision & Purpose

Structure of Organization

Communications

Governance and Decisionmaking

Amendments

The operating principles are a living document and can be modified at any time by consensus of the collaborative members.

We'll review the content of each section and will discuss any issues partners raise.

Overview

This section establishes the purpose of the document. We are an informal association, with no legal incorporation, no treasury. We are our own entities coming to the table to share information.

This section was approved by consensus.

Vision Statement

The vision statement conveys what we want the ranger district to be like in the future.

There was some discussion of the language in the vision statement.

The question was raised why we have social and cultural as values the collaborative seeks to promote? And why do we not have terms like recreational and educational among the values we support?

The ensuing discussion covered the value of general versus specific values in our vision statement, and what needs to be in the vision versus in plans that are built on the vision.

One view was that terms that are too specific lock us in to courses of action that may be against the Collaborative's interests at a given time. Social & cultural incorporate more elements and allow for more integration of a broader part of the community.

Cultural includes history, but also the living traditions and lives in groups such as the land grants.

One problem with including recreation, health, education, and other specific values is that if we make a laundry list, then anything that isn't on the list will be taken as excluded intentionally

The vision is a basis for building goals and objectives. We can include more specific aspects in our goals and objectives. We should have a strategic plan for each year which would include the goals and objectives.

The group agreed on the language as it stands in the vision statement.

The question arose about the relationship between the Mountainair Collaborative and the Estancia Basin Watershed Health, Restoration and Monitoring Group. What role will that group have in the Mountainair Collaborative? The members of the Estancia Basin Group can also be participants in the Mountainair Collaborative, and vice versa.

The question arose as to who are all the participants in the Mountainair Collaborative? We should be making decisions that are appropriate for all partners. A list of the partners is on the website as a pdf.

Purpose Statement

The group briefly discussed the meaning of consensus. Consensus means everyone can live with a decision or the language in a document. If the group cannot reach a consensus to convey to the Mountainair Ranger District, then various perspectives will be communicated. Jay noted it is helpful to

the District to know the different positions, especially for new issues that arise that the District will have to address. The earlier the District knows the different the positions, the easier it is to incorporate them into decisions.

The USFS will bring concerns to the collaborative, and the partners will bring concerns to the USFS.

Boundaries – the focus area for this group is the Mountainair Ranger District and nearby lands. The broader boundaries are left vague because each project may extend different distances off of the district.

The group agreed on the purpose statement.

Structure

The key word is: Informal. We are not a 501c3, a subdivision of government, or anything like that. We are a collaborative of partnering organizations. Points of view and information are communicated from partner organizations, through a representative, to the other partners in the collaborative.

A question arose about language in the Structure section of the document. In paragraph 2 of this section, the language stating a potential partner must have a “reasoned, expressed” interest in the District was changed to “reasonable and expressed.”

The group agreed we want to keep our organization locally focused, although statewide groups that work locally would fit into our purpose and structure as well.

Contact List – our list includes partners but also anyone who wants to keep abreast of what the collaborative is doing. We changed the wording to “contact list consisting of partners and parties...” to make the language clearer. Also, we should amend the last sentence to specify that to join the contact list, a party can sign up by contacting the facilitator.

Everyone agreed that quarterly meetings are acceptable. We also could have special meetings as necessary. Any partner can request a special meeting.

Facilitator – the facilitator created meeting agendas based on input from partners. Anyone can attend a meeting, but in the section on governance we address the issue of a group bringing a lot of members; only one person is the designated representative. At the end of the meeting, there will be a period for public input as well. It is best to have agenda items submitted early, so that partner organizations have an opportunity to discuss them and convey their views to their representative. The representative will be the one to represent the organization’s views at the meeting.

Ad hoc committees – a committee can be appointed to address specific points that they would bring back to the collaborative. How the committee is organized and operates is the prerogative of the committee. The ad hoc committee that worked on the operating principles decided we don’t need standing committees at this point, and we will work through ad hoc committees as long as this system works well.

Everyone agreed to accept the Structure section with the changes noted.

Communications

Communication is the fundamental purpose of this organization.

The Meeting Ground Rules noted in this section will be included in an Appendix. They are guidelines for behavior at meetings.

Meetings will be announced in advance – for now we don't have a specific time frame; it is up to the facilitator to ensure adequate notice is offered. It was noted that it is important to announce the meetings with plenty of notice so that partnering organizations have time to prepare their positions on the issues to be discussed.

Communications and documents will be posted on the website.

There was discussion about the relationship with other collaborative groups and the Cibola Shared Stewardship forest-wide collaborative. The Mountainair Collaborative is its own organization – we don't report to the Cibola Shared-Stewardship group. But, we do want to stay in touch with them and let them know what we are doing. Part of the purpose of that organization is to share information among the four ranger district collaboratives in the Cibola NF.

Other collaboratives – there are several other similar groups working in New Mexico, including the three other collaboratives in the Cibola NF (Mt. Taylor, Sandia, and Magdalena), two in the Lincoln NF (Greater Ruidoso Area WUI Working Group, Otero Working Group), and some in the Santa Fe NF (Greater Santa Fe Fireshed Coalition, East Jemez Landscape Futures, SW Jemez Mountains Collaborative). There are similar collaboratives in the Gila and Carson NFs as well.

Congressional staff – we need to make sure we have them on our contact list.

The Mountainair Collaborative name can be used by partners in their own work. The facilitator does not issue permission to use the name, but should be notified when the name is used.

The Facilitator will sign communication in the name of the Collaborative.

The group agreed to adopt the Communications portion of the operating principles.

Governance and Decisionmaking

Business of the Collaborative that is conducted should be discussed at regular or special meetings, or ad hoc committee meetings.

There was a discussion about who would vote on issues before the Collaborative. Partners are the voting members. Issues that will be voted on will be discussed in advance, and partners will have an opportunity to discuss the issue with their organization members.

Consensus – the organization will operate more through consensus, as defined in the operating principles. Rather than a formal vote, we can express views with a thumbs up or thumbs down (the

approach used in the Shared Stewardship Council). In communicating with the Forest Service, we want to convey a variety of views, not just the majority view in the Collaborative. So, if we have a consensus and agreement, we can convey that view, but if not, we can vote and convey both the majority and minority views. What is helpful to the USFS is to hear the range of opinions, especially if they hear them early.

The paragraphs on governance were accepted by the group.

Amending the Charter

We can always amend the operating principles as necessary.

Changes –

Last paragraph of first page – reasonable and expressed interest

Top of second page – clarify language on partners and others on contact list

Third paragraph on second page - however

Last page – amending the charter, change to operating principles

Attach Appendix A

Adopting the Principles – are we ready to adopt them now, or do we need to go back to our organizations to discuss them more?

The groups agreed to adopt the organizing principles, with the changes we've discussed.

Other Business

Inclusiveness – have the Torreon and Tajique land grants been notified of this group? These land grants have been notified. Anyone who knows of another organization that should be included should notify us to add them to the contact list.

Structure for Agendas for future meetings –

The agenda for today will be the standard for future meetings.

We'll try to have a partner spotlight and informational topics at each meeting. Although they were on the agenda for this meeting, we did not have time to include them in the meeting.

Future meetings – we've met so far at Moriarty, but we would like to move around in the future. For now, we'll keep the same location, at Edgewood SWCD, as we're gaining momentum. Moving around might increase participation in different parts of the district.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, June 13, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at the Edgewood SWCD office in Moriarty, NM.