

Wyoming Governor's Task Force on Forests

Meeting Summary
December 18-20, 2013
Cheyenne, WY

<input type="checkbox"/> Draft for Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved
<p>Task Force Members Present:</p> <p>Aaron Bannon, <i>National Outdoor Leadership School</i> Joel Bousman, <i>Sublette County Board of County Commissioners</i> Jacque Buchanan, <i>U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region</i> Bill Crapser, <i>Wyoming State Forestry Division</i> Jessica Crowder, <i>Wyoming Governor's Office</i> Sen. Ogden Driskill, <i>Wyoming State Senate</i> Jason Fearnelyhough, <i>Wyoming Dept. of Agriculture</i> Buddy Green, <i>BLM Wyoming</i> Steve Kilpatrick, <i>Wyoming Wildlife Federation</i> Mark Konishi, <i>Wyoming Game and Fish Department</i> Harry Labonde, <i>Wyoming Water Development Office</i> Carl Larson, <i>Larson Livestock, Inc.</i> Jim Magagna, <i>Wyoming Stock Growers Association</i> Lisa McGee, <i>Wyoming Outdoor Council</i> Jim Neiman, <i>Neiman Enterprises, Inc.</i> Rep. Jerry Paxton, <i>Wyoming House of Representatives</i> Reg Phillips, <i>Dubois-Crowheart Conservation District</i></p>	<p>David Whittekiend, <i>Uinta-Wasatch-Cache Nat'l Forest</i></p> <p>Alternates: Brent Ewers, <i>University of Wyoming</i></p> <p>Facilitators: Courtney Amerine, <i>UW Ruckelshaus Institute</i> Jessica Clement, <i>UW Ruckelshaus Institute</i> Elizabeth Spaulding, <i>UW Ruckelshaus Institute</i> Steve Smutko, <i>UW Ruckelshaus Institute</i> Richard Stem, <i>Consultant/Advisor</i></p>
<p>Agenda:</p> <p>Day 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and introductions Task Force purpose and mission and roles Discussion of assessment and expectations Discussion of Task Force interests Governor Mead's charge to the task force Review, discussion, and amendments to groups charter Information Session Public Comment <p>Day 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Information Session Continued Identification of issues to be addressed Discussion of Three Major Themes: fire and other disturbance, forest management, and economic opportunities and innovation Break out group work General discussion regarding group issues General discussion of considerations related to potential recommendations to the Governor Identification of short-term and long-term issues 	<p>Handouts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Process Plan Draft Group Charter Book: <i>Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In</i> by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. Wyoming Governor's Task Force on Forests, Stakeholder Assessment Wyoming Forest Action Plan Interest Statements (generated at the meeting) <p>Presentations: Kellen Nelson: <i>Forest Ecology Basics</i> Bill Crapser: <i>A Look at our Wyoming Forests</i> Richard Stem: <i>Authorities and successful principles of implementation</i></p>

Day 3

1. Breakout Groups prioritizing list of issues and approaches to be deliberated
2. Merge breakout group ideas and generate a general determination of priority issues to be addressed
3. Discuss process plan

Action Items Completed:

1. Governor Mead formally provided the Task Force with its charge and Jerimiah Rieman elaborated on the Governor's charge.
2. The Task Force was presented with and discussed the stakeholder assessment the Ruckelshaus Institute completed.
3. The Task Force was presented with and discussed forest ecological and silvicultural considerations.
4. The Task Force discussed principles of collaboration.
5. The Task Force identified the interests that will be used to guide its recommendations and the issues that need to be addressed.
6. The Task Force was presented with the themes the Governor outlined and the steering committee approved. These include: (1) fire and other disturbance; (2) resource management; and (3) economic opportunities and innovation.
7. The Task Force reviewed the charter and members will have the opportunity to make suggested changes for approval at the next meeting.

Action Items Pending:

1. The facilitators will organize the list of issues and propose an approach for addressing them in future meetings.
2. The Task Force Steering Committee will review and approve the draft agendas.
3. The Task Force Steering Committee will set the dates for the remaining Task Force meetings.
4. The Task Force needs to do final review and approve the charter.
5. A glossary of terms will be compiled.
6. The role of the Task Force in relation to the State Forest Action Plan will be discussed.
7. The Steering Committee will identify information needs.
8. A process will be developed for determining what information will be considered by the Task Force.

Meeting Summary

I. Welcome & Announcements

- A. Steve Smutko welcomed the Task Force and outlined the process, charter, stakeholder assessment, and the agenda for the meeting. The Task Force will address three major themes: Fire and other disturbance, resource management, and economic opportunities/innovation, as well as short term and long term recommendations.
- B. Jerimiah Rieman welcomed the Task Force on behalf of the Wyoming Governor's Office. Rieman thanked the co-chairs and recognized the diversity in the group. Additionally, Rieman highlighted watershed issues, bark beetles, emerging forest industries, recreation, and other topics. Upon receiving the Task Force's recommendations, the Governor will accept, reject, or modify them. The recommendations will be shared with local, state, and federal government partners, non-governmental organizations that can help accomplish the ultimate recommendations of the Task Force and the public. Rieman stressed that the Task Force should not limit its recommendations only to those the Governor can implement, but also it should include those that the Governor can influence. Rieman requested that the Task Force pay special attention to the Governor's energy initiative and the biomass and alternative energy development outlined within. The Ruckelshaus Institute will facilitate the consensus-based decision making process that will lead to recommendations. Richard Stem will provide technical assistance for dealing with federal agencies and the understanding of opportunities that may be present. Finally, Rieman emphasized the importance of looking forward collectively and not backwards.
- C. Jessica Crowder reiterated that the Governor is looking for short and long-term recommendations that could continue beyond the time period identified and that could be implemented across land ownerships. He is interested in out of the box thinking that will meet the needs of Wyoming.

II. Agenda, Procedures, Outreach

- A. Elizabeth Spaulding provided a summary of the stakeholder assessment. The assessment is meant to provide an understanding of the interests, positions, and values identified by the diverse Task Force members. Those who participated in the Stakeholder Assessment were asked several questions: What does forest health mean to you? How do you perceive the health of Wyoming forests? What do you think are some actions that the Task Force should recommend that will benefit Wyoming forests? What are your desired outcomes from this Task Force in one, five, and ten years and should the Task Force consider a longer time scale?, and finally, Were there logistical constraints for participants on the Task Force? Differing opinions exist on what management actions should be recommended and the urgency of those recommendations. Stakeholders emphasized the need for data, relationship building, and public outreach. Each stakeholder agreed that this is a high priority issue.
- B. Elizabeth recommended that the taskforce consider what data are needed and available, what a realistic timeline is, and examine the purpose, methods, and scale of forest treatments.
- C. In response, Task Force members mentioned that the term "resiliency" is missing from the assessment. The Task Force is also considering creating a glossary of terms, so that each member understands each term. Several Task Force members echoed that they were happy that the steering committee removed the term "healthy" because of the subjective nature of the word.

III. Principles of Collaboration and Discussion of Interests

- A. Steve Smutko outlined the principles of collaboration and presented each taskforce member with a copy of *Getting to Yes*. The four principles of collaboration highlighted include: separating the people from the problem; focusing on interests not positions; generating options for mutual gains; and evaluating options using objective criteria.
- B. The taskforce members completed an “interests” exercise. Members wrote down their interests and posted those interests on the board. The interests identified in that exercise are listed in the document called “Interests of the Forest Task Force.”

IV. Governor’s Address

- A. Governor Mead addressed the taskforce. He highlighted the effects that the increasing cost of fighting fires is having on the Forest Service’s budget. The Governor expressed the importance of the broad range of perspectives within the Task Force and believes the outcome of the Task Force could set a standard for the nation.
- B. The Governor would like to see the Task Force outline ways to monitor and implement specific ideas and gauge results. The governor emphasized that he and the legislature are supportive of this process. While all may not agree on what forest health is, the Governor suggested that many could agree we can do a better job with our forests. The Governor would like to see the Task Force do more than make suggestions at the state level, but provide recommendations to all levels of government and agencies, making Wyoming a national leader in forest management.

V. Charter Discussion

- A. The Task Force members discussed the purpose of the draft charter. The document is meant to ensure that each member has the same information and understanding of how the Task Force will proceed. The steering committee made changes to the draft, which are reflected in the most current version of the charter on the website. Task Force members will have an opportunity to suggest changes to the charter for approval at the next meeting.

B. Information Sharing

- A. Kellen Nelson, from the University of Wyoming, gave a presentation entitled *Forest Ecology Basics*. The powerpoint presentation is available on the website. The presentation provided the Task Force with information on the basic ecology of Wyoming’s forests and the factors that affect those forests. Nelson provided the criteria for evaluating forest health as given by the Forest Service, emphasizing that health is often influenced by cultural beliefs, land management objectives, visual appearance, and geographic and temporal scale.
- B. According to Nelson, the function of the forest ecosystems and services they provide are at stake depending on the management decisions made. Nelson went on to describe natural forest disturbance regimes and the difference in resistance (the ability of the ecosystem to avoid disruptions) and resilience (the capacity of the ecosystem to return to its original state following a disturbance.)
- C. Bill Crapser, then gave a presentation entitled *Forest Action Plan*, which provided an overview of Wyoming’s 2010 Forest Action Plan. The powerpoint presentation is available on the website. The themes of the Forest Action Plan are to conserve working forest landscapes, protect forests from harm, and enhance public benefits from trees and forests. Crapser highlighted the costs of fighting fire, cost sharing agreements, Fire Safe Communities, and Good Neighbor Authority. While some of the plan has been implemented, it is Crapser’s hope that that Task Force could

provide recommendations to further implement the plan.

- D. The Task Force engaged in a conversation about the Forest Action Plan and several voiced concern that the Task Force not reinvent the wheel by re-vetting topics in the Forest Action Plan. Other members saw the Plan as an excellent resource framework and a tool that can be used to help guide Task Force recommendations.

C. Breakout Groups: Three Themes

- A. Task Force members broke into working groups to discuss the three themes: disturbance, management, and economic opportunities and innovation. Under each theme the break out groups discussed the main issues and problems that should be discussed by the Task Force. They then reviewed and clarified the list of issues. The issues are listed in the document, *Forest Task Force Issues*. This document is currently in draft form. Once approved by the Task Force, it will be posted on the Task Force website.

D. Regulation, Authority, and Rules

- A. Richard Stem provided a brief overview of the regulations, rules, and authority guiding the Forest Service. He emphasized three common elements that affect the ability to implement projects. These include: 1) organization (the capacity and skill of people involved); 2) process and restrictions to the process (e.g. NEPA, ESA, HFRA, etc), and 3) the public (importance of having public support for a project). Stem highlighted some programs available to the Task Force including stewardship contracting, local coalitions, contract timber sales, Good Neighbor Authority, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. Stem emphasized that the tools are available. There was interactive discussion around the need to better understand and integrate organization, process, and the public; further descriptions of authorities and the cross over effects to Forest Health was left for further discussion.

Next Meeting

Date: March 19 – 21, 2014

Location: To be determined