

Middle Reach Minutes April 25th, Meeker

Attendance

Rodney Gerloff
Ginny Love
Andy Thomson
David Smith
Chuck Whitman
Callie Hendrickson

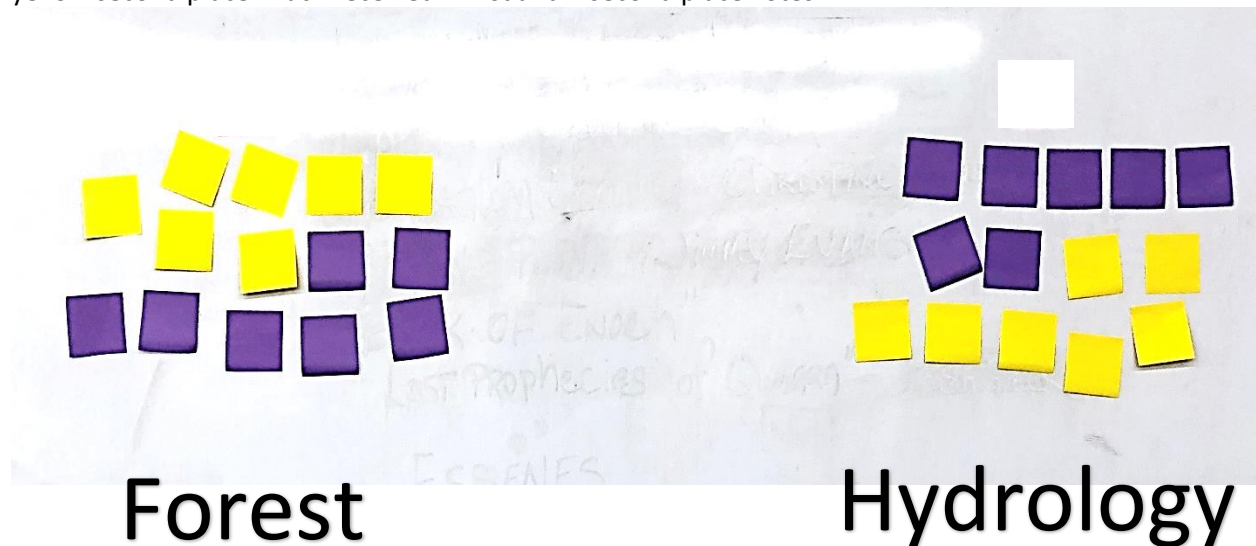
Ed Coryell
Forrest Nelson
Curtis Keetch
Nakala Lestina
Chris Lockwood
Kari Brennan

Chris Collins
Hunter Causey
Ian Wilson
Don Hilke
Pauline Wilber
Liz Chandler

Travis Day
Julia Eskelson
Linda Stewart
Walt Proctor
Mary Ann Wilber

Outcome

Priority vote resulted in a tie between forest management and hydrology study. Purple is first place, yellow second place. Each received 7 first and 7 second place votes.



Minutes

Forest Management

Curis Keetch talked with the group about forest management. At the present time, there are two big obstacles to getting work accomplished: personnel and market for the wood produced. Funding is promised, but has not been delivered at this time. Curtis has identified several areas that small projects can be done on as soon as funding is available. NEPA will take a considerable amount of time, money, and effort for the landscape scale projects. Categorical exclusion NEPA is available for smaller scale projects. This NEPA can be completed in months, not years. This would be smaller projects, but they can be strategically placed and have a positive impact on forest health. Curtis is hoping to double his staff in the near future. This will help to facilitate planning and permitting. The Craig Powerplants that are being decommissioned may be converted to Biomass plants. This would be helpful as a market for wood produced in the projects.

The County Wildfire Protection Plan may be a helpful tool in determining where work can be done and permitted more easily.

Next steps for a forest project are: NEPA, contract analysis, and determining projects. There are several smaller projects that can be done in the near future.

Hydrology

Hunter Causey, CO River Conservation District, spoke to the group about hydrology studies and how to conceive, plan, and successfully execute a project. His suggestion is to focus on what management decisions need to be informed by a study –what are people wanting to accomplish. Then decide what specific questions need to be asked and answered to yield the information necessary to inform the decision. His educated opinion is that the delayed return flows are the most significant from lands farther away from the river. He is suggesting that Powell Park is close enough to the river the return flows are likely very immediate (a week or two vs. a month or more). CSU – Timothy Gates or Perry Cabot would likely be good sources to utilize. A good connection with the local well driller is very important because of the significant information that person has on local conditions. Does the study want to address water quality? Flood irrigation over Mancos Shale could act on quality differently than upriver flood irrigation.

It is important to be clear on the goals of the study because several different types of analysis are available. The appropriate type will depend on the goals. For example, a commonly used analysis is the Glover. It is designed to be used on the plains and would not work well on the White River.

After the presentation, the group was invited to bring up other priorities they wanted to see the Water Initiative consider. No further ideas were brought up so the group discussed forest management and hydrology. After the discussion, a vote was held. Several people did not have a preference and chose not to vote. Those that did vote, split the vote evenly between forest management and hydrology. There is support to use the term upland vegetation management to make sure we include BLM land in the discussion. The remaining time was spent asking questions of the professionals and gathering information to start the Scope of Work.

Callie asked the group to consider the return on the time and money invested. This led to consideration of starting hydrology work now while the permitting is ongoing for the vegetation management.