



**San Juan Headwaters Forest
Health Partnership**

SJHFHP -- the “*Partnership*”: what we’re about

- established around 2012 (from “Upper San Juan Mixed-Conifer Working Group”);
- area of focus: Pagosa Ranger District and adjacent county & private lands;
- subject of focus: resilient & sustainable forests and adjacent communities;
- who we are:
 - governmental – federal, state, county, town – and other organizational entities, and private individuals:

USDA Forest Service & Natural Resources Conservation Service; Firewise of SW Colorado; Colorado State Forest Service; Archuleta County; Town of Pagosa Springs; Audubon; Southwestern Water Conservation District; San Juan Backcountry Horsemen; Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association; Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District; Colorado Ecological Restoration Institute (@ CSU); Chama Peak Land Alliance; Pagosa Springs High School “Global Sciences” Class; Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team; Mountain Studies Institute; Forest Health Inc. LLC; FolkWest; the National Forest Foundation; Colorado State Department of Natural Resources; Southwest Conservation Corp,

plus...

... many volunteers from highly diverse backgrounds.

SJHFHP -- the “*Partnership*”: what we do

- The SJHFHP brings together community members, land managers, environmental groups, community organizers, and local decision makers to:
 - Identify community needs;
 - Plan and prioritize projects to meet the needs;
 - Implement projects in priority areas;
 - Inform the community about forest health, threats, and how work on the ground supports community health; and
 - Monitor work to determine effectiveness and guide future efforts.
 - “monitoring” = collecting data on-site (pre- & post-treatment) → evaluating data → summarizing/documenting/sharing results, and → adapting treatment Rx’s, if needed.
 - monitoring “*troops*” have included citizen science groups, high school students, MSI staff and interns, partnership members *ad hoc*, and will include CFRI staff.

Partnership efforts – past, present, and coming up...

- Fire Risk to Water Supplies Assessment

- funded by the SWCD;
- designed to support existing efforts (e.g., Archuleta County Community Wildfire Protection Plan [CWPP]);
- Assessment PROCESS:
 - Map water infrastructure;
 - Assess the likelihood of fires occurring;
 - Evaluate potential risk to water resources from wildfire;
 - Identify focus area(s) that have high infrastructure values AND high fire risk; and
 - Identify high-priority areas in which to target effective management actions.

Fire Risk to Water Supplies Assessment *continued...*

- Types of projects considered:
 - managed wildfire; -- prescribed fire;
 - mastication (cutting, but leaving material onsite);
 - traditional logging (cutting/removing larger material, but leaving “activity fuels” behind);
 - whole-tree logging and removal (cutting/removing almost all of manipulated material).
- Results – the numbers...
 - area, Fourmile, Turkey, West Fork, Upper & Lower Blanco → 184,511 acres
 - area comprised of national forest system lands → 165,272 ac
 - area, NFS lands at high fire risk → 45,085 ac
 - area, NFS, high fire risk, outside of wilderness/RNA’s/Wld&Scnc Rvrs → 16,878 ac
 - area, NFS, high fire risk, outside of above, & roadless, but STEEP! → 4,789 ac
 - area, NFS lands at moderate fire risk → 47,918 ac
 - area, NFS, moderate fire risk, outside of wldrns/RNA/W&SR → 32,174 ac
 - area, NFS, moderate fire risk, outside of above, & roadless → 19,721 ac
 - *area of max mgt options = ~11%*

on-the-ground projects

- Cloman Park –
 - county park, w/ trails for biking, hiking, disc golf, nordic in winter;
 - SJHFHP secured “forest restoration grant” (CSFS) to establish demo site for differing treatment scenarios; cut in 2013;
 - have ongoing monitoring.
- Four Mile –
 - multiple forest health/restoration efforts, on federal and private lands, in high-priority watersheds around Fourmile, McCabe, Hidden Valley, Dutton & Martinez creeks;
 - provide indirect protection for namesake “Pagosa Lakes”, Hidden Lake, Dutton Ditch/Pipeline & mainstem San Juan River diversion; approx 2,000 acres treated;
 - grants from Colo Dept of Natural Resources, CSFS, & “Joint Chief’s” projects, plus contributions from homeowners, Hidden Valley Ranch & Forest Health Inc. LLC.

Forest Health Treatment examples – FOURMILE project



Location: Four Mile
Site: FM14
Direction: 000

Forest Health Treatment examples – FOURMILE project (continued...)



Location: Four Mile
Site: FM14
Direction: 000

Forest Health Treatment examples – FOURMILE project (continued...)



Location: Four Mile
Site: FM18
Direction: 000
Date: 20150821
Time: 1000

Forest Health Treatment examples – FOURMILE project (continued...)



Location: Four Mile
Site: FM18
Direction: 000
Date: 20160713
Time: 0950

on-the-ground projects, *continued...*

- Turkey Springs –
 - ongoing forest health/restoration thinnings on mostly federal (some private) immediately adjacent to Pagosa Lakes subdivision (largest, most densely populated area in county); over ~450 acres to be treated;
 - funded through Joint Chief's efforts (Farm Bill – sourced \$\$).
- Reservoir Hill –
 - w/in TofPS and site for many events, including 2 renown music festivals; plus hiking/biking/nordic trails, disc golf, PAWSD water tank;
 - Pagosa HS science class trained to, then gathered data; reported findings to town council; SJHFHP secured grant, town matched \$\$'s.





SJHFHP other *water-resource* related accomplishments...

- 4/13 – hosted two public events (PS & Durango) on “San Juan Bark Beetles and Effects on Water Resources”;
- assisted in “Forests-to-Faucets” teacher training events over multiple years;
- 9/13 – hosted members of “Front Range Watershed Group” to present on watershed assessment efforts;
- 5/17 – hosted Chris Sturm, CWCB, to inform partnership members of CO state’s efforts in watershed restoration program & stream mgt plans;
- hosted two “Bridging the Divide” public events (2014 & 2016) looking at effects of West Fork Complex fires on watersheds, forests, and communities across the Continental Divide;

lessons learned

- public's short memory: e.g., wildfire events;
- real/factual science wins over publics;
- honest portrayals of “the good, the bad, and the ugly” gains trust;
- “one size does not fit all” when discussing forests, & effects from disturbance;
- when debating merits of mgt efforts, do it “in the field”;
- invite & embrace potential partners; you'll be surprised w/ their abilities & value to your efforts;
- realize you can't win over ALL your publics no matter how hard you put together the **best** project; and
- [you've heard this before...] *listen, respect all* – including naysayers, always *seek improvement, leverage your efforts w/ others*, and *follow thru w/ promises made*.