Annual Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA) Public Workshop
06/09/2021; 1800 – 1930
Via Microsoft Teams or Phone

In Attendance:

Joe Gonzales	Chad Prosser	Tom and Karen Gabriel
Frank Romero	Russ Bacon	Casey Campbell
Robin Kepple	Mary Grace Bedwell	Keith Brugger
Tim Douville	Melissa Martin	Katie Van-Alstyne
Steve Loose	Ben Wudtke	Jason Armbruster
Clint Bassett	Matt Schweich	Jerod Delay
Leslie Crossland	Nathanael Dermyer	Jesse McCarty
Greg Hunter	Mark Conrad	Matt Cuzzocreo
Embere Hall	Mary Flores	Bern
Brad Weatherd	Marla Fox	Clair Loucks
Britt Brito	Mark van Roojen	Holly Kennedy
Tait Rutherford	Melissa Martin	Adam Bianchi
Eric Dalton	Carrie Haderlie	Leanne Correll
Greg Warren	2 listeners on the phone	

This workshop is being recorded.

Due to time constraints, only the presenters will be introducing themselves. If you ask a question and were not introduced, please introduce yourselves.

Intent of the Workshop: Public engagement and feedback on focus areas and proposed treatments.

Leaders Intent with Forest Supervisor Russ Bacon (Time 5:20)

Thank you joining us on this workshop. Looking forward to the discussion and engagement on focus area and treatment proposals. We have key checkpoints, but the project is reliant on continuous dialogue throughout the process, especially from the public.

A lot has happened since the decision was signed, namely Mullen Fire, setting back timelines on implementation. Potential treatments in areas impacted by Mullen are on hold until the pending Supplemental Information Report (SIR) is completed but we are continuing implementation in the Sierra Madres and north of 130 on the Snowy Range. Want to stay focused on feedback on proposals from the Forest Service and cooperators.

This is the first of many annual workshops and feedback is always welcome to help make these workshops valuable to everyone. The process will change and adapt along the way. The forest looks forward to on-the-ground workshops and field trips.

Status of Supplemental Information (SIR) Report (Time 10:45)

The unit started the SIR process to respond to the Mullen fire. A SIR is not a NEPA document and therefore cannot be used to fulfill the requirements for a revised or supplemental Environmental Analysis (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A SIR cannot repair deficiencies in the original environmental analysis or documentation, nor can it change a decision. SIRs are an agency's internal tool used to determine whether new information, changed circumstances, or changes in the proposed action that arise after the agency decision require supplementation of an EIS or EA.

The specialists were asked to analyze whether the impacts of implementation given the new existing conditions were still within the effects analyzed for the EIS. LaVA is not a typical project with polygons. Appendix A was designed to be flexible to be managed with changed conditions. The forest is anticipating that treatments within the Mullen footprint will be mainly focused on restoration and reforestation, along with continued fuel mitigation.

[Story Map](#) (Time 14:15)

New tool to gain efficiency and allow for feedback and display information. LaVA Treatments tab shows an interactive map that displays datasets that can be clicked on and off to show treatments, focus areas, cooperator proposal, and other datasets. The Completed Treatments tab shows past treatments completed under non-LaVA decisions. As LaVA treatments are completed, they will appear under this tab. The Current Treatments tab shows treatments being implemented under the LaVA decision. Future treatments tab shows future treatments, proposed treatments and focus areas.

Provide Feedback tab – Proceed as guest. Click "+ Submit Feedback" and follow the prompts. Feedback can be submitted for Preliminary Treatment Areas or Focus Areas. Points can be added to the map to give specific feedback. All feedback will show as soon as it submitted. Feedback can be provided anywhere on the map, excluding the Mullen area until the SIR is completed. Comments or suggestions for areas outside of the mapped focus areas can be provided by choosing Other under the Focus Area Name and dropping a point.

Story Map was requiring an AGOL login. That won't typically be the case. It was in beta testing and has been up and down to incorporate updates. At the time of the meeting, the story map is live. If the story map is not live when trying to access it, please contact the forest.

Cooperators (Time 23:00)

Clint Bassett, Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities, Water Resources: We have a long history with the Forest Service. About 80% of Cheyenne's water comes from the MBRTB. Risk assessment of wildfire on the infrastructure. Recently submitted updated priorities post-fire identified. Glad to be part of the process.

Britt Brito, Habitat Biologist, Wyoming Game and Fish Department: Biologists from the WGFD have been working with the Forest Service and cooperators. LaVA will go hand in hand with the mule deer migration initiative, improving habitat. Wildfire prevention and mountain pine beetle epidemic has created a landscape lacking in mosaic forests using well-controlled treatments. WGFD's top priority is habitat improvement. Also excited for the degree of opportunity for feedback and public engagement. LaVA provides a diverse group of agencies to monitor the effects of treatments.

Appendix A Overview - Jason Armbruster, Brush Creek-Hayden Ranger District (Time 30:20)

Brief review of the implementation framework. Appendix A is the guidebook to implementation. Unlike some past NEPA projects with few engagement opportunities, LaVA provides a variety of options for engagement.

Appendix A Purpose – Provides a process with sideboards and constraints, with mechanisms for accountability, tracking and decision-making, as well as a framework to ensure active public and cooperating agency engagement.

Appendix A lines out a 5-phase process. On the schematic, the yellow arrow is the name of the phase and the blue triangle is the output.

- Phase 1 - Focus Area: Identify focus areas on the landscape. Those large areas with objective(s) are added to the story map for public feedback. Feedback is reviewed.
- Phase 2 - Individual Treatments: Develop treatment proposals
- Phase 3 - Field Validation: Conduct field surveys, compare on-the-ground conditions with the proposals and constraints, threshold, sideboards set forth by Appendix A.
- Phase 4 - Review: Upload completed implementation checklist and Treatment tracking workbook to the Story Map.
- Phase 5 - Report: Evaluate SOPs, triggers, facilitate field trips, prepare, review, and finalize biennial monitoring report. If monitoring results in changes to App A, a SIR may be prepared.

Question of the iterative process – When would the first biennial monitoring report be completed? There's a concern that treatments will be completed before the monitoring can provide feedback to the process. The first report would occur after treatments have been implemented. We do not a have a set timeline for the first monitoring report, though feedback is welcome.

Current Treatments

West Hog treatments have been identified as critical for water infrastructure. The treatments have been field verified and prepared for packaging. Spool GNA is a cross boundary vegetation treatment and is currently being advertised. As stated in the Final Record of Decision, Spool is farther ahead in the process and therefore isn't available for the same level of feedback.

Focus Areas by District

Tim Douville – Silviculture Forester and Timber Management Assistant, Laramie Ranger District (Time 56:04)

- **White Rocks Focus Area** is ~28,000 acres southwest of Arlington, WY. Objectives include reduce fuels and create defensible space, forest and rangeland resilience, timber products, restore wildlife habitat, public access, and human safety. Tools may include prescribed fire, commercial timber harvest, thinning and aspen enhancements. WGFD identified cross-boundary areas in the Wick and Med Bow conservation district identified aspen enhancement areas. Anticipating that White Rocks will receive ~1,000 acres of commercial timber harvest. Other types of treatment acres are going to be identified at a later time. Proposed treatment areas are currently being identified. Known decision triggers include watershed condition trends.
- **East Kennaday Focus Area** is ~17,500 acres, southeast of Pennock Mountain. Objectives include reduce fuels, forest products, forest resilience, restore wildlife habitat, enhance public access and human safety. Tools may include prescribed fire, timber harvest, thinning, and aspen enhancement. Potential treatment areas will be identified fall 2021 to spring 2022. Saratoga-Encampment Rivers Conservation District has identified priority aspen enhancement areas. Anticipate ~1,000 acres of commercial timber harvest. Other types of treatment acres are going to be identified at a later time. Known decision triggers include watershed condition trends.

Keith Brugger – Timber Management Assistant, Brush Creek-Hayden (Time 1:01:55)

- **Acorn Focus Area** near Bottle Creek ski area. Objectives include reduce fuels and create defensible space, forest resilience, timber products and hazard tree removal. Some potential treatment units have been identified. Tools may include prescribed fire, commercial timber, and thinning. Feedback from cooperators did not offer needs to expand treatments in this focus area. Anticipate ~500 acres of treatment to achieve objectives.
- **Panda Focus Area** with objectives to reduce fuels and create defensible space, forest resilience, and timber products. Some potential treatments have been identified. Tools may include

prescribed fire, commercial timber, and thinning. Field validation this summer. Anticipate ~500 ac of treatment to achieve objectives.

- **Sandstone Focus Area** is focused around Battle Pass. Objectives include reduce fuels and create defensible space, forest resilience, improved access to Belvidere Ditch, and forest products. Potential treatments are currently being identified. Tools may include prescribed fire, timber harvest, thinning, aspen enhancement, and hazard tree removal along Belvidere Ditch. Incorporated feedback from several conservation districts by expanding focus areas for aspen enhancement and fuels mitigation along private property boundaries. Field validation to occur this summer. Anticipate ~1,400 ac to meet objectives.
- **Teddy Creek Area** – Along the Jerry Accord 443, below South Spring Creek. Objectives include Reduce fuels and create defensible space, forest resilience and forest products. Tools may include prescribed fire, timber harvest, thinning operations, aspen thinning, and aspen enhancement. Treatment areas are currently being identified. Incorporated treatment proposals adjacent to BLM land and expanded aspen enhancement in response to several conservation districts. Field validation this fall. Anticipate ~1,490 ac of treatments.
- **East Hog Focus Area** is open to input. Preliminary focus area identified. Discussing treatments, tools, etc.
- **Out year projects for next year's discussions**
  - Miner focus area
  - Vulcan focus area north of Jerry Accord
  - Jackpot focus area. Identifying treatments in the area.

Steve Loose, Wildlife Biologist, Brush Creek-Hayden (Time 1:11:25)

- **Sandstone** polygons in orange, ~3,000 acres of older aspen stands that will be evaluated this summer to see if it can regenerate or conifer removals. ~1700 acres to evaluate for thinning conifers in aspen stands to promote longevity or regenerate aspen stands. Manage and treat aspen stands for wildlife habitat.
- **Troublesome Creek** – Dense, continuous shrub stands, lacking variability will be evaluated this summer for future treatment. ~50 acres of shrub treatments out of ~300 acres. Conservation districts and WGFD interested in the areas as well. Not within mule deer corridor but adjacent to the corridor. Could incorporate some fuels objectives and cost sharing.
- **East Hog** – Shrubland and aspen treatment opportunities.

Public Engagement Opportunities

- Ability to drop pins on the story map
- Feedback form is available for comments, but the shared mailbox went down. Hold feedback forms until Joe sends an update for the email.

Additional Engagement Opportunities?

The forest acknowledges that it is still in transition mode of planning to implementation. Public engagement in the fall is in order. Different perspectives are welcome. Committed to send a postcard for public engagement opportunities present themselves. There will be an option to continue receiving hardcopy postcards or electronic correspondence. If everything goes as planned, hope to hold a monitoring field trip. If not, the platform will be Teams again.

Questions from chat will be provided in a separate document.

Melissa Martin is retiring in July. She has been the team leader for LaVA for many years and built a lot of relationships. We're sad to see her go and wish her well in her retirement.