

**Threats to Private Forests Workshop Agenda**  
**Central Rockies**  
**March 4-5, 2009**

**Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Offices**  
**BLM CO State Office Building**  
**2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, CO**

**Objectives:**

- Develop a detailed outline of the threats in the Central Rockies
- Review major past efforts to describe threats
- Articulate potential solutions to the threats to be passed on to drafting committee

**Wednesday, March 4**

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**8:00 a.m.                    Opening comments**

**8:10 a.m.                    Agenda review**

**8:20 a.m.                    Introductions**

**8:35 a.m.                    The Western Threats Assessment Process**

A brief explanation of the context for the workshop, how the workshops are organized and the expected final outcome. Review of threats that describe the challenges for the Central Rockies region.

Description of the process and how we arrived at the themes to be discussed for the day. There is also the potential adding of other threats to the list.

**9:00 a.m.                    Briefings on Threats**

Workshop organizers will brief each of the four threats/issues identified as challenges for the Central Rockies region by reviewing studies to understand the impacts of the threats on forests in the Central Rockies.

These threats are:

- Forest Health Challenges
- Deteriorating Infrastructure
- Subdivision for second homes, residential, recreation
- Deteriorating social license

Question and answer will be included as part of the briefing.

**9:50 a.m.                    Break**

**10:00 a.m.                  Discussion**

The group will be asked to discuss the threats and to work to discuss the underlying causes and impacts of the threats to private forestry. How are these threats changing the economic and social parameters of private forestry? Some potential questions include:

- Is the threat a symptom of a larger threat or a cause of other symptoms or both?

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- What is the nature of the threat? What is the definition?
- Is it different in different locations?
- How is this impacting private forests?

**12:15 p.m.**

**Lunch**

**1:00 p.m.**

**Discussion**

How are the threats related to each other?

What are additional threats and how are they related to the discussion?

**2:30 p.m.**

**Review of outline** of threats and discussion of how they should be bound together/ organized.

**4:00 p.m.**

**Adjourn, Day 1**

*6:00 p.m.*

*Dinner out?*

**Thursday, March 5**

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**8:00 a.m.**

**Discussion of Day 1**

Any additions or changes from the previous day.

**8:30 a.m.**

**Review of outline:** Is this the way it should look? What changes are necessary?

**9:15 a.m.**

**Solutions: Given the outline of threats, how can solutions be applied?** Solutions that were mentioned during discussion will be reviewed and new ideas will be invited.

How can we overcome barriers to achieving productive private forests in the Central Rockies?

**11:30 a.m.**

**Next steps, comments on workshop**

**Noon**

**Adjourn**

Threats to Western Private Forests

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**Threats to Private Forests  
Central Rockies Workshop  
Meeting Summary**

**March 4-5, 2009**

**Meeting Attendees:**

Al Hendricks – AZ State Forestry	Ann Walker – Western Governors' Association
Brian Kent – USFS RMRS	Dana Coelho – WFLC
Danielle Gaines – Private Consultant	Dee Sessions – USFS Region 4, S&PF
Frank Cross – SD Tree Farm Cmte.	Jamie Barbour – USFS PNW
Jay Jensen – WFLC	Jeffrey Kitchens – BLM Colorado
Jerry Beatty – USFS WWETAC	Joe Duda – CO State Forest Service
John Crisp – WY State Forestry	Kent Reid – ERI Highlands University NM
Kristy Bosheinen – USFS WWETAC	Leonard Wood – Custer County Commissioner
Lindon Wiebe – USFS Region 2, S&PF	Mike DeBonis – Forest Guild NM
Rich Harvey – NV Division of Forestry	Rob Davis – Future Forests LLC
Salomon Ramirez – USFS Region 3 S&PF	Steve Gatewood – Private Consultant AZ
Tim Reader – CO State Forest Service	Todd Haines – NM State Forestry
Will Singleton – Facilitator	Kent Reid – NM FWRI
Tom Crow – USFS RMRS	

**Workshop Objectives:**

- Develop a detailed outline of the threats to the Central Rockies
- Articulate potential solutions to the threats to be passed on to the drafting committee
- Provide guidance to the drafting committee for the Central Rockies section of the report

**Action Items / Next Steps:**

- Workshop participants are asked to review the draft workshop summary carefully to ensure that it is complete and accurate
- WFLC will post the finalized summary on a private website for participants' reference
- Flip chart photos will also be posted on the Web
- Once the summary is finalized, invitees who did not attend will be asked to add their perspectives that will could be an appendix to the summary

**Process Summary:**

The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition is conducting five workshops throughout the western United States to identify threats to maintaining private forests as working lands. This workshop was the first of the five. Its focus was on the Central Rockies region and Nevada. This area – with its dry montane forests and rapid population increase has been experiencing similar issues. The workshop was organized to ask participants to delve into the issues in depth. The results of the workshop are going to be incorporated into a report to be approved and published by the WFLC board. The major steps of this process are:

- Workshops held in five regions throughout the West
- A drafting group is assembled to draft a report
  - The report will summarize the results of the workshops but will also synthesize the themes of the workshops to produce a unified report that reflects the entire region
- The draft report will be reviewed by the WFLC board, changes may be suggested/requested
- A finalized report will be produced by the drafting committee.
- WFLC expects to print a final report by the early fall of 2009.

- Workshop participants will be asked to review the report and ensure factual accuracy as well as determine their willingness to have their names associated with the report as “Workshop Participants”
- Drafting committee members will be asked if they want to sign on to the report
- The report will be published by WFLC, printed, posted on the Web and distributed to key policy makers

**Workshop Results:**

Workshop participants engaged in a day and a half of discussions centering on conditions in the Central Rockies. After an initial review of themes that were developed through interviews with WFLC members, the participants discussed the nature of barriers to maintaining private working forests.

The discussion was framed around three central organizing categories: **Ecological, Economic, and Social**. This framework was used to highlight threats and solutions to private forests in the Central Rockies. The participants made suggestions of important threats and solutions through general discussion. The participants were also asked to draw a Venn diagram reflecting the threats in the geographic area in which they work (ie. Custer County or USFS Region 4). They were asked to draw the diagram to reflect which of the three groupings were the most important (Ecological, Economic, or Social) and they were asked to identify their three priority threats.

The **Venn diagrams** showed that conditions vary greatly throughout the region while many of the specific threats are commonly experienced. These diagrams were scanned and are going to be used to inform the drafting committee on the variability in the region.

Through the discussion, workshop participants identified **threats or barriers** under the three categories. These threats/barriers are included in bullet form at the end of this summary. Many of the social threats centered around a lack of consensus that comes from new and diverse communities living around the working forests. The discussions of economic barriers referred to negative consequences of regulatory and tax policy, which penalize the private land owner. Costs of production and transportation were also highlighted as major barriers, particularly as forestry relates to other uses for private lands. Finally, ecological barriers dealt with problems that cannot be addressed at the local level (climate change) as well as those that are as a result of local practices (variability of neighbors’ forest management practices on forest health).

These threats were transcribed on paper and distributed to the participants on day two. Other than an expressed need to make the language more precise, there was general agreement that the threats were a sufficient description of the problems faced by private working forests.

**Solutions** were discussed on day two and are attached at the end of this summary. They also centered around the three large categories of Ecological, Economic, and Social. Solutions were given at the local, state and national level.

Finally, as a result of the discussions, an **outline** was suggested that might be a format for the Central Rockies “chapter” of the eventual region-wide report. Participants stressed the importance of establishing the right context, the importance and scarcity of private lands as a part of the landscape, and to not paint too grim of a picture. They stressed that there are many important opportunities that are associated with the threats and barriers. A description of Threats, Solutions and a proposed outline follow. The last item is a list of reports, examples and initiatives that can be used to inform the writing of the report.

**A. Outline:** The workshop participants were asked to develop an outline for discussing private forests in the Central Rockies. This is a suggested approach for the Central Rockies section of the Threats to Private Forests Report.

I. Introduction

A. Context – The importance of private lands

- i. Private lands provide essential ecosystem services
  - 1. Water: private lands tend to be the moister areas that supply major urban areas and agriculture with water resources
  - 2. Ecosystem services: Private lands provide many different ecosystem services that benefit all but these services may not be economically valued (Example: the Ruby Mountains of NV)
- ii. Private Lands are the access to Public Lands
  - 1. Original settlers picked the spots that would be the gateways to public lands and natural resources
  - 2. Private forests are the “lynch pins” to working public lands – if these access points are cut off by subdivision or other uses, access to key public resources could be lost
- iii. Private Lands are also Bottle Necks
  - 1. Private lands in the Central Rockies also tend to be bottlenecks for wildlife migration because riparian areas and key elevations tend to be held by private land owners.
  - 2. Riparian areas are wildlife corridors – certain elevations are crucial for seasonal wildlife movement
  - 3. These lands in the Central Rockies are very scarce – very low percentage of the overall landscape (analogous to “beach front property”)

B. The State of Private Lands

- i. Change in fire ecology
- ii. Immigration and the Wildland Urban Interface
  - 1. Changing attitudes about private and public lands
  - 2. Changing conditions for industry
- iii. Result of having substantial funds addressing short term fire crises rather than some of the structural barriers to continued forestry on private lands

C. Who is Involved and what role do they play?

- i. State foresters
- ii. Counties, and county commissioners
- iii. Feds
- iv. Industry

II. Threats to Western Private Forests (to be distilled from the attached list)

III. Recommendations / Solutions (to be distilled from the attached list)

**B. Central Rockies DRAFT Threats-** Workshop participants were asked to list the threats and barriers that impact private working forests in the Central Rockies. These threats were grouped into three categories: social, ecological, and economic/policy.

### **1. Social**

(From Ven Diagram Exercise)

- Emotions and perceptions of individuals and communities cloud views on ecological health, and economic needs
- Lack of consensus on the right practices to maintain industry and forest health
  - Scientific
  - Value-driven
  - Many different owners make common practices more difficult
  - Lack of consensus on how to address insect outbreaks that result in large areas of dead trees
- Attitudes about markets shape whether people use local products
  - Local products are undervalued
- Intolerance of those with other motivations/values
- Shift in taxation
- Values are different among the newbies and the old timers – this is driven by population change
  - Lack of markets for timber make it difficult for people who are not wealthy to manage large landholdings for conditions that they consider to be ecologically correct
- Newcomers have values/attitudes that can make management difficult
  - Disconnected from the land
  - Long time locals have a good sense of what is required for forest management but those who influence forest practices from the outside (or who are new comers) are disconnected the land
  - Public uncertainty over land management – its requirements and true ecological needs leads to misunderstanding
  - Unrealistic expectation from private land owners
- Social promotion of residential in WUI
  - Everyone wants their piece of “paradise”
  - Ranchette Mentality (40 ac attitudes)
- Long standing practices can pose barriers
  - Some states have an anti-zoning mentality
  - Land use vs. property rights
  - Distrust of government means that agreements that can bring resources in to do forest management are not captured. Land owners don't want to sign a 10 year agreement with the Feds
- Large areas of dead “red” trees have changed attitudes in the public over social license
- Lack of scientific understanding of what constitutes healthy forests

### **2. Economic / Policy**

- Governmental policies create perverse incentives
  - Inheritance taxes
  - Different taxation for different land size parcels
  - Funds are being spent for short term crises as opposed to longer-term solutions
  - Subsidies for new uses skew the market away from more traditional uses
  - Uneven incentives
  - Unsustainable uses

- Decreasing grants from the feds
- Feds are managing for other values (ie. Economic/social)
- The economics / costs of doing traditional forestry no longer work
  - Transportation costs
  - Supply inconsistencies
  -
- Shift in use of wood from lumber to other uses
  - The new uses for private forested lands might exceed the acceptance of the public
- Lack of market has led to a lack of infrastructure
- The economics of the scale of addressing the red tree problem has prevented action
- Achieving forest health “perfection” is not economically feasible
- Land parcels continue to get smaller (are subdivided) at the same time that economies of scale demand substantial lands to make a profit
- All actions require cost-share
- Forestry is no longer competitive with other uses for the land
- Small scale work force is not being utilized
- Lack of capacity to do forestry
- Current economics / policies do not account for the value of ecosystem services that private land owners provide larger society / improperly monetized

### **3. Ecological**

- Climate change leads to:
  - Lack of water
  - Change of moisture in the wood
  - Fire
  - Invasive species
  - Bark beetles/red trees
- Too dense forests leads to poor forest health
- Poor forest health leads to
  - Invasive species – cheat grass - others
  - Unsustainable fire damage
  - Bark beetle/ red trees
  - Tree mortality
- Neighbor practices can lead to threats to forest ecology
- Encroachment of other native species
- Scarcity of water inhibits forest productivity, brings fire, impacts water quality

**C. Central Rockies DRAFT Solutions** – After discussing threats/barriers, participants discussed some of the solutions. Again, the suggested were grouped into three super-categories: Social, Ecological, Economic / Policy.

### **1. Social**

**To address threats associated with an uninformed public and communities that do not share the same values:**

- Produce short “bite-sized” publications on forest science and ecology issues
- Educate communities on forest health coupled with public engagement
- Develop earned media to promote stewardship values
- Engage insurance agents/ industry on the risks of WUI
- Engage real estate developers / agents on the hazards associated with certain risky WUI practices

**To inform local decision-makers:**

- Do leadership training and produce a guide for county commissioners and planners on the costs associated with land conversion. Review options for counties that could be used instead of converting working private forests.
- Guide district rangers on how they can help, cooperate with county planners
- Further utilize collaboratives to send local voices and networks up to the state and national level. An example is the CO Beetle Cooperative and the Front Range Round Table.

**To enable responsible choices when acquiring private forested lands:**

- When purchasing, find ways to inform buyer or the costs of fire management and treatment on their land (ie \$2000/ac for fuels treatment)
- Require that forest stewardship plans be conducted (through ordinance) for insurance (ie Flagstaff)
- When planning a parcel, encourage defensible positioning of housing and other structures

### **2. Economic / Policy**

**To help landowners earn sufficient income from their forested lands:**

- Increase funding to extension offices that work with landowners
- Monetize carbon benefit of forests and other ecosystem services
- Develop ecosystem exemptions similar to county level agricultural exemptions
- Value watershed management and incentivize stewardship
- Incentivize practices that can augment water resources

**To reduce regulatory barriers that hamper efficient use of forested lands:**

- Loosen NEPA to allow clearing on public lands of beetle kill trees before the beetles hit private lands
- Avoid state EIS bills that add further complicate permitting for removal of beetle kill trees
- Cost share for stewardship plans

**To promote better communication between state and county officials**

- Create better links between state foresters and counties (planners) to address the pressure of development on working lands
- State foresters should work with counties before planning of subdivision happens

**To ensure that policy encourages working land ownership and use:**

- Change the tax code to promote multi-generational stewardship such as reforming the inheritance tax or developing more easement mechanisms that will reduce tax implications
- Easements should be developed that reflect benefits of ecosystem services for broader public
- Keep forest management decisions as local as possible
- Find ways to avoid counties' need to tax "highest and best use"
- Promote carbon tax instead of cap and trade
- Create a tax lien that would be activated if land is subdivided in the future – this would allow a lower tax rate for undivided lands

**To ensure the development of a vibrant and informed industry base:**

- Score USFS Forest Stewardship & Fires Reduction grants to provide opportunities for private industry
- Encourage investment through consensus based resource assessment to identify areas where there is no opposition to forestry. (Arizona conducted such an assessment for the area from the South Rim of the GC south to the Mogollon Rim.) The assessment can be used by industry to secure financing.

**Support existing, new & emerging markets for forest products**

- Don't leave behind traditional uses as new policy fads develop. Fix renewable energy incentives to also promote traditional (thermal) energy uses.

**3. Ecological**

**To emphasize the ecological importance of private working lands**

- Encourage wildlife connectivity through private forest lands to assist with climate change adaptation

**To promote forest health, contractors should be well informed**

- Ensure that labor is skilled, bad technique can promote disease
- Develop a consensus standard for fuels reduction
- Require certification of contractors similar to ISA Certified Arborists
- Require a course/certification for state contract eligibility

**D. Resources** – Workshop participants were asked to describe reports, actions and initiatives that should be used as experiential resources for informing the WFLC report. The following were mentioned, WFLC staff has added a descriptor for each of the resources along with links:

**Forests on the Edge** - <http://www.fs.fed.us/openspace/fote/> - The goals of the Forests on the Edge project are to increase public awareness of the importance of conserving America's private forests as well as the private lands located around the nation's national forests and grasslands; create additional tools for strategic planning, and provide better information to Congress and Forest Service partners on the values of and pressures on our forests.

**Statewide Strategy for Restoring Arizona Forests** - [www.azforests.org](http://www.azforests.org) - The *Statewide Strategy for Restoring Arizona Forests* was developed by the Governor's Forest Health Councils in response to citizens' concerns about the health of Arizona's forests. The Strategy presents a 20-year road map for restoring forest health, building sustainable forest-based businesses, and protecting our rural communities from wildfire. This is not the Farm Bill required State Forest Resource Assessment.

### **State-wide Forest Resource Assessments and Resource Strategies -**

[http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/state\\_assess\\_strategies.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/redesign/state_assess_strategies.pdf) - Required by the 2008 Farm Bill and due to be completed in June 2010. To ensure that federal and state resources are being focused on important landscape areas with the greatest opportunity to address shared management priorities and achieve measurable outcomes, each state and territory will work collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders to develop a statewide forest resource assessment. The state forest resource assessment should provide a comprehensive analysis of the forest-related conditions, trends, threats, and opportunities within the state. A state's forest resource strategy will provide a long-term, comprehensive, coordinated strategy for investing state, federal, and leveraged partner resources to address the management and landscape priorities identified in its assessment.

**War on Cheat Grass** - This is not so much a report or document as an effort by some western governors to declare "war on cheatgrass". If there are specific documents to include they may pertain to legislation passed in Utah (<http://ag.utah.gov/news/CheatgrassLegis.html>) or elsewhere. A check back to Rich Harvey (NV) who I think brought this up would likely be helpful.

**WGA Western Bioenergy Assessment** - <http://www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/transfuels/> - Part of the Western Governor's Association's "Transportation Fuels for the Future" initiative, the Western Bioenergy Assessment examines the potential for future development and creates a comprehensive framework to assess environmental, technical and socioeconomic impacts associated with national, state and regional bioenergy and biomass management policies.

WGA Forest Health Advisory Committee reports on Forest Mortality and Woody Biomass - <http://www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/fire/index.htm>

**Western Bark Beetle Assessment** - [http://www.wflccenter.org/news\\_pdf/325\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.wflccenter.org/news_pdf/325_pdf.pdf) - The recently released March 2009 update to the Western Bark Beetle Assessment, published by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, lays out a strategic approach to reduce the undesirable bark beetle-caused tree mortality in the forests of the West and increase forest resiliency to bark beetle outbreaks and catastrophic wildland fires. The assessment centralizes information on the current proliferation of bark beetles throughout the West, future risk, management strategies, and tools to accomplish the long-term goal of protecting and restoring western forests to a state of improved health and sustainability.

### **NM Forest and Watershed Health Plan -**

<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/MAIN/documents/FWHPLAN033005.pdf> - is an integrated collaborative approach to ecological restoration developed by the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Health Planning Committee. It was developed in response to the conclusion that many of New Mexico's ecosystems are in an unhealthy state, as demonstrated by overly-dense woody vegetation, a degradation of biodiversity, and fragmentation and deterioration of wildlife habitat.

**Great Basin Restoration Initiative** - <http://www.blm.gov/nifc/st/en/prog/fire/more/gbri.html> and <http://www.nv.blm.gov/GBRI/greatbasin.htm> - The Great Basin includes most of Nevada, the western half of Utah, the lower third of Idaho, the southeast corner of Oregon, and a narrow strip of eastern California. Mobilized after the devastating fires in 1999, the GBRI team is seeking to provide technical assistance and guidance, obtain funding, and keep the issue of the failing Great Basin ecosystems in the public's vision.

**Analysis of Small Diameter Wood Supply in Northern Arizona -**

[http://www.forester.nau.edu/project\\_woodsupply\\_finalreport.htm](http://www.forester.nau.edu/project_woodsupply_finalreport.htm) - This report, completed by the Northern Arizona University Forest Ecosystem and Restoration Analysis Unit, represents a “snapshot” of currently available wood supply in the region. The results of this study will be used to assist in the development of multi-year forest stewardship contracts to attract new industrial users and to supply wood fiber to existing local wood product businesses.

**Front Range Fuels Treatment Partnership** - <http://www.frftp.org/> - The FRFTP is a dynamic alliance of federal, state, and local governments; land management agencies; private landowners; conservation organizations; and other stakeholders who are committed to reducing wildland fire risks through sustained fuels treatment.

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