



Land and Water Sector Working Group
March 9, 2023
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.
Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and roll call
 - a. Present
 - i. Geoff Blakeslee (Chair)
 - ii. Carolina Manriquez (Co-chair)
 - iii. Ann Raiho
 - iv. Michael Woodbridge
 - v. Kristy Winser
 - vi. Michele Meyer
 - vii. Nathan Stewart
 - viii. Tim Wohlgenant
 - ix. Tim Sullivan (YVSC technical assistant)
 - b. Not present
 - i. Julie Baxter
 - ii. Todd Hagenbuch
2. Update from the Board meetings
 - a. Proposed recommendations timeline
 - i. March - Edit recommendation wording and assess against criteria
 - ii. April - Identify Implementation Actions and Tactics
 - iii. All CAP Working Group session - April 27 (3-5pm)
 - iv. May - Format recommendations
 - v. Public Open House - end of May
 - vi. June - Finalize formatted recommendations
 - vii. July - Public release of recommendations - move to quarterly meetings

Group is focused on defining near to mid-term actions for the CAP Board to consider. Consolidate what we are going to be working on.

By April will need to define key action steps for each proposed recommendation. With mostly final wording completed by May.

3. Continue to revise/refine proposed recommendations and review proposed criteria rankings See Recommendations Spreadsheet
 - a. Down to 13 recommendations - all have plausible connection to carbon reduction
 - i. Removed a couple that relate to a broader, cross-cutting recommendation (e.g voluntary offset funding programs), building code amendments fall

more to Energy Working Group, open space purchase program might not be the best way to address carbon reduction. We won't lose these ideas, but we aren't going to flesh them out at this point.

- b. Review of proposed lower tier recommendations and what might be missing
 - i. Clarify that alternatives to burning refers to open slash pile burns, and is not *per se* a recommendation against use of biomass at Hayden plant. If Hayden biomass proposal moves forward, the group would encourage a lifecycle carbon analysis to insure the plant is helping achieve CAP goals.
 - ii. Do we need to think more about forest management as a wildfire management/fuels reduction process with carbon benefits from avoided wildfire and climate resilience co-benefits? Carolina suggests yes given how much of Routt County is in forested condition. We will add a new proposed recommendation for the next meeting. Incentivizing local processing should be part of this consideration, and can have carbon sequestration benefits.
- c. Criteria - Low is relative within section. Feasibility relates to short-term (3-5 years).
- d. Review of current recommendations:

Tab 1 - Climate Smart Agriculture

Riparian trees projects probably the most shovel ready of NRCS identified practices. Issue for this recommendation may be having the staff to reach out to private landowners. Unclear if big win for greenhouse gas potential if cannot do many acres. Good co-benefits.

Momentum - Conservation District starting to push climate smart ag ideas, working pretty closely with NRCS, conservation district and extensions.

Communicate that there are specific programs that could have a significant impact on carbon and need some effort in Routt County to bolster these programs, particularly in bolstering NRCS. Key to mention partnerships in carrying this out.

Tab 2 - Small low-tech wetland restoration projects

Some of this work is already underway; how do we do more here? These are the most carbon rich habitats we can create on an acre by acre basis. Co-benefits - water quality and quantity. Seems popular with landowners that have been willing to do this in places like Moffat and Gunnison counties.

It would be helpful if we had some more data on GHG potential per acre and overall.

Tab 3 - Post-burn reforestation

Forest Service: Lots of these likely are going to be on Forest Service lands. Highest GHG reduction potential on this list, but at what scale. Hard to replant in wilderness areas and some other burns. Costs should maybe be high and not medium - depends on the forest service budget.

Hopefully the Forest Service gets more money for tree planting, other ways to do plantings, to get money into in (Penny Pines program, National Forest Foundation, Arbor Foundation) - at least a handful of ways for external money to purchase seedlings and get plantings done. Perhaps the County could appropriate a budget line to encourage plantings? Our

recommendation should talk more about external money, not just increase Forest Service budgets, but bring in other funding.

Identifying a key partner is paramount. Can YVSC grow to whole landscape planting rather than just riparian? In other areas, there are NGOs whose sole purpose is to plant trees. Funding, grants out there, low hanging fruit, but needs to be at the scale we need. Need to include something in actions steps about seed collection, tree growing, tree procurement.

Tab 4- Urban tree planting

Do we need to be talking about native trees? Exotic trees may suck up more water.

Can add under actions/tactics - identify appropriate species for these. City has thought about what is appropriate. Do the current programs need adjusting?

Should we be thinking beyond municipalities on this issue? HOAs to expand?

Change urban to include residential (but need a caveat to not increase wildfire risk/and use appropriate species)

County: Working on design criteria for Stage 2 growth areas (like Stagecoach) - good to cross tree planting over to residential as well as urban. Have begun process, outlining a technical working group - looking to stakeholders for comments to help inform the process from a technical perspective. Also community outreach element. Saying 'consider' if making a recommendation that looks beyond the County to take the lead.

'Consider' increasing the rate...

Tab 5 - Riparian tree planting

Included in Integrated Water Management Plan - has momentum Dovetails with first strategy, climate smart agriculture - City looking to implement a water credit training program that can include use of trees to address water temperature exceedances. Work is underway, so have feasibility behind it, but only funded for a couple years, though anticipate more funding being available for this work.

Strategy 2 - Tab 7 - Riparian setbacks in code

Codes are already being rewritten now.

City and County have existing regulations, County updated more recently to be restrictive. State as **'Evaluate and revise land use' rather than adopt**. Adopt makes it sound like there aren't any regulations in place right now. **Leave off new construction at the end to keep it more broad.**

Tab 8 - Solar Siting rules

Current commissioners are supportive of the CAP and large scale renewables, but still likely going to be a County responsibility to permit development. **Consider and develop, Evaluate and develop...**

Action step to develop what some guidelines would look like (follow up with Kristy).

County: County has a draft set of regulations at the staff level which has been handed over to consultants. County going to do a solar summit April 26 - rep from Colorado Solar and Storage Association (COSSA) to do some presentations, CPW, industry as well as County giving overview on update process.

Add a few more co-benefits beyond wildlife habitat. If regulations lead to increased costs, that could have an impact.

Tab 10 - Land clearing permits for new subdivisions

County: Evaluating whether the County should have land clearing permits, right now you can clear cut your property as part of the building process without any restrictions. Other counties have a permit process. We have much larger properties here.

County: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) code - would need to develop some landscaping criteria which we don't have currently. Design criteria are pretty minimum at present because we don't have too much development out in the county, but that is increasing in certain areas. Need to prepare and create design criteria - evaluating landscaping codes, promoting street trees for new developments and smart planting for stuff that supports WUI. For larger parcels - if removing X amount, need a permit for that - similar philosophy should there be a permit process.

Tab 12 - County water conservation

Maybe more appropriate through zoning regulations than building codes. Incorporate with Tab 10 on landscaping process.

Tab 13 - Land preservation subdivisions

Are there other incentives we can be looking at for people to follow this process?

4. Next meeting and proposed agenda:
 - a. When2Meet poll to be sent for April meeting