

Catalina-Rincon FireScape Meeting Notes

Thursday October 7, 2010

9:30 am to noon at The Nature Conservancy, 1510 E Fort Lowell, Tucson

In attendance: Cori Dolan, Angie Elam, Don Falk, Brooke Gebow, Stan Helin, Kristy Lund, Steve Plevel, Randall Smith, Josh Taiz (notes by Cori and Brooke; approved by Angie)

PIL/Proposed Action/launching NEPA update

A tentative date for the first Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) meeting was set for November 18, 2010. It turns out November 18th is also a Forest Plan Revision Team meeting. Several people named on the Catalina-Rincon PIL are also on the Plan Revision team. Chris is cleared to make the IDT meeting, but others may not be.

Angie and Brooke met in September to discuss wilderness. They feel we could use a template from NPS and USFS to lay out a case for treating in wilderness. TEAMS can be a source of help in this area. **Angie and Brooke will meet again on making the case for wilderness treatments.**

Fuels map update/workshop dates

Joe Scott and Don Helmbrecht are coming to Tucson with the fuels map November 3-4. On November 3, the morning session will be used to make corrections to the fuels map. In the afternoon we will hold a "rollout session" where we learn how to use/not use the map and what kinds of information it can tell us. The afternoon session is open to interested staff across agency partners. The purpose of the session is to educate potential users of the map. This could include FMO/AFMO/Fuels types and district biologists. **The group will send contact info to Cori for people they think will be interested in the afternoon session.**

Don Falk and a few others will meet with Joe and Don H. on November 4 to do specialized, Catalina-centered model runs. This meeting will be held at the conference room at the NPS Fire office. Don asked the group what scenarios they are interested in knowing about from these model runs. Ideas were: Summerhaven, buffelgrass, fuels, climate change, wildland-urban interface (WUI) on all fronts, effects of treatments proposed in wilderness, and MSO PACS. **Note: This November 4 session will be pretty focused and academic. The general information session the afternoon of November 3 in Benson is the one recommended for most of the group.**

In preparation for the meeting, **Don, Perry and Chris will get together to discuss a November 4 meeting schedule. Don encouraged others in the group to send him additional ideas for model runs by October 22.**

Chris explained the results from initial fire behavior model runs at a 90m resolution/scale using basic model inputs reflecting fire-season conditions in southeastern Arizona, such as: upslope wind at 15 mph (20 ft from the ground), relative humidity 15%, air temperature 95°F, 100-hour fuel moisture 8%. Because topography is so complex, they adjusted fuel moistures based on elevation and aspect, using 4500 as a base elevation. This sort of model conditioning allows for fuel moistures to vary over elevation and aspect: 1-2% for 1 hr fuels at valley bottom, but 7-8%

at higher elevations. Temperatures and relative humidity change with aspect/elevation, so this is a nice model capability- more realistic for running fuel moistures across a whole landscape. The inputs can be adjusted based on realistic inputs from experts. The 30m resolution map may also be done but it's too large to email so Joe and Don H. will bring it with them in November. The 30m runs will improve accuracy and may be a useful tool at the project level.

MSO design criteria

The MSO design criteria originated from the Huachuca plan and were revised for the needs of the Chiricahua FireScape project. The Chiricahua group is working with Mark Crites from Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Mark C. has said they need a really solid justification for treating in the PACs. We discussed using the model runs to help strengthen our need to treat in PACs. Josh reminded the group MSO design criteria have been approved in the past. There is a link on the CNF website. **Josh will take these other guidelines (WUI- 10 year old FWS guidelines) and mesh them with the Chiricahua criteria to give us a starting point with the FWS.** Randall expressed the need to apply the same criteria forest-wide and will wrap them into planning with Rick Gerhart and the BLT that is slated to be complete by January 1, 2011.

Meeting with Environmental Conflict Resolution group

Brooke, Tom Swetnam, Don, Chris and Cori met with Larry Fisher and staff regarding Coronado's prospects for getting funded under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration program. This is a competitive process and rankings for national submittal are done at the regional office. The Coronado proposal covered PERP but was not selected. Don suggested ECR as a possible advisor/collaborator if we decide to put up another proposal. Two questions still unanswered are: do projects selected for this round lock up funding for the next year and if another funding round does come up, should we put FireScape up as a whole to show this large acreage project? Larry said he would find out if congressional funding is locked up for the next few years or if there is a means to compete again. Since funding for implementation is key, the group discussed putting together a strategy much sooner. Randall and Tom S. (accompanied by Brooke) will give a FireScape presentation to a visiting WO/RO delegation and Coronado leadership in Safford on October 14. Randall informed the group that a proposal process will occur next year. We also discussed inviting the new Forest Supervisor to a FireScape meeting. **Don, Brooke, Tom, and Randall will meet to decide next steps regarding a proposal (whole forest vs. individual projects).**

Website update

Cori reported that she met with Craig Wissler of the ART lab to determine what our options were for continued website help. Averill Cate is only available to us on nights and weekends as he has taken another job, but he is still interested in working on our website. Craig reported that other than Averill, there was no one else in the ART lab who could help us with the website re-design. He also reported that the College of Agriculture has hired two people recently, Toby and Matt, to help maintain websites in the College. Matt (of Toby and Matt) is still trying to figure out their exact role in the College, how many projects they can take on at one time, and how much they will charge. After going through the website with him, however, Matt felt that in the future he and Toby could fill the role of maintaining the FireScape website. Their fee will fall somewhere around \$30-\$40/hr, which is similar to what we pay the ART lab. The plan then is to keep working with Averill until the re-design is complete and then talk to Toby and Matt for long-

term maintenance. Brooke reported that we have funding through TEAMS for this kind of help, but it would be so much more expensive and they are off site.

The group discussed the long-term placement and maintenance of the website. Currently the website is housed on a University server. Stan felt that the longevity of the website may be a forest-wide question because Chiricahua FireScope is just now coming on line as well. Randall suggested that the University is a good place for the website because federal agencies have restrictions on access. Don requested a link from all the partners' websites to FireScope. The group also discussed the data needs for the site. We may not need to have complex GIS capabilities. When people want GIS data, they can request it from us. We will want to put the fuel model map on the site with data. There is a lot of data behind the fuel model map and the question of how we can best display that without allowing users to change the information came up. Chris will be the keeper of data on the fuels map. **Cori will meet with Averill on Oct 26 to discuss the above issues.**

Integrated Landscape Assessment Project Introduction (ILAP)

Miles Hemstrom (FS ILAP lead) and Jimmy Kagan (ILAP science delivery module lead) from Oregon introduced the ILAP project. They received 6 million dollars of stimulus money (Recovery Act employment) to provide new (14-20 box) vegetation state-and-transition models as part of a land management decision-support modeling effort. This project covers OR, WA, AZ, and NM. The goal is to deliver vegetation maps and planning models for large landscapes, not at the individual project level. They are trying to help people interact with the rest of the natural world in a sustainable way across big landscapes. They are not creating new data, rather using data collected already from other folk to map changes in vegetation from treatments and growth, natural disturbances, human use and values across all ownerships and vegetation types in the 4-state area.

Modelers divide the world into cover and structure classes and determine a probability of a transition event (management, treatment, fire, etc). First, they model the current management conditions (if you keep doing what you're doing, how will that affect the landscape?) using the ecosystem management decision support tool. The model shows where you would go to achieve a certain set of management objectives. They could always use better, more local information. Don feels that we have information for our area that can help them. Brooke asked how they maintain this model into the future if the money runs out in 2 years. Jimmy reported that the system is modular in design so, as updates occur, local personnel can update the data in specific modules. Josh feels the outputs are similar to mid-scale pnvts and thinks this is a good fit to the work we are doing. The information gathered from the personnel on the ground is pretty close to the models so far, which is great news for our NEPA document.

Miles and Jimmy will be in touch if they want to use the Coronado as a test landscape—possibly interesting because of its lack of timber emphasis.

No regular first week in November meeting

Waiting to confirm November 18 IDT meeting (conflicting Forest Plan meeting)

Next regular meeting Thursday December 2 at TNC