

Agenda Catalina-Rincon FireScape
March 3, 2010 Meeting
12:30 p.m. at The Nature Conservancy (1510 E. Fort Lowell)

In attendance: Cori Dolan, Angie Elam, Don Falk, Brooke Gebow, Stan Helin, Kristy Lund, Melanie Meyers, Steve Plevel, Jennifer Ruyle, Randall Smith (notes by Cori Dolan/Brooke Gebow)

Meeting time: The regular meeting time was changed to the first Thursday of every month at 9 am. **Our next meeting will be Thursday, April 1st at 9 am, TNC (1510 E. Ft. Lowell).**

Desired conditions update: Jennifer reported that the desired conditions descriptions for lower elevations (desert and grassland communities) are now complete. They are based on NRCS ecological site guides that describe what a reference site (not drastically disturbed site) looks like. She contracted with Dan Robinett, who created landscape-level units at mid-scale, broken out by soil type and landform. Broad site descriptions are based on identified sites on the ground. Jennifer has Dan's raw descriptions and has edited them for use in the Forest Plan. In this way, the raw form can be used as a reference and then customized as needed. **Don proposes to meet with Dan to make sure the fire return intervals listed in the desired condition statements are in sync with current research.**

Jennifer engaged Dan to draft only lower elevation descriptions because the wooded environments have been done already for inclusion in the Forest Plan. Brooke reminded us that the ultimate goal is to marry these descriptions to the Ecological Units. The upper elevation descriptions in the Forest Plan have already been brought into our Ecological Unit descriptions for Catalina-Rincon, but it was suggested that Dan could be contracted to refine these higher elevation unit descriptions if we found that necessary.

Don asked if these desired conditions statements were appropriate for the Chiricahua-Dragoon FireScape project and Jennifer reported that some sites *are* from the Chiricahua-Dragoons. These target descriptions are not only needed forest-wide, but also will be useful when approaching the public.

Jennifer reported that the descriptions do not expand beyond the boundaries of the Coronado National Forest and suggested that Dan could expand them out to the mapped area. Steve reminded us that climate considerations need to be fed into desired conditions. Brooke suggested that Cori could be the editor-in-chief of the entire set of the Ecological Unit descriptions, including desired condition statements, and keep them up to date as new information of all kinds comes into the project. **Brooke and Cori will meet with Jim to review the Ecological Unit descriptions and look at formatting new sections/subjects for inclusion.**

UA/NASA Space Grant: Melanie Meyers, a graduate student in the UA Geography Department, requested a partnership with FireScape for a UA/NASA Space Grant. Melanie has worked with the Mt. Lemmon community bringing GIS to describe fire-related landscape features. Melanie would like to expand this project to other communities around the Catalina

Mountains and provide wildland-urban interface (WUI) communities with a tool kit for dealing with wildland fire planning and management. Outputs would include a large-scale fire hazard GIS layer, maps and tables to educate the public on large-scale fire management, and a website with GIS for each community. The Space Grant is partially funded by NASA for one year, with a possibility for a second year. Melanie is asking for a 6K stipend and \$750 travel fund per year from the FireScape group. Kristy suggested that KML files for Google Earth would be extremely helpful for making the information accessible to people who live in rural areas. Melanie said it would be quite easy to export the ESRI files to Google Earth once it gets established. She also reported that Pima County would host the ESRI data. The proposal is due March 12th of this year.

Steve offered the following as to how Melanie's proposal connects to FireScape:

- The mountain ranges are surrounded by communities with Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) and most of those communities fall within the external boundaries of the FireScape analysis area.
- The communities would use information from FireScape to aid in CWPP formation and we, in turn, could use community updates to put back into FireScape.
- Melanie's information and resources would give us a better understanding of conditions in the WUI. For example, Melanie now has detailed information on where power lines, fire hydrants, etc are on Mt. Lemmon.
- Melanie's reputation in the community she has already worked with would be an asset to our public participation.

Kristy reported that having CWPPs and public involvement for WUI issues is the only way to get federal funding in the future.

The group will consider how this project would advance the mission of FireScape, who would supervise Melanie, and whether there were funds to cover the stipend. Steve will provide a write-up of his thoughts for Brooke and Stan by Thursday. Brooke and Stan will then discuss the proposal further.

[Note: We have declined to fund Melanie at this point. The Forest Service provides ample funding to states for such work, our project has GIS and outreach resources available, and our FireScape team has no process in place for handling such requests. We gave Melanie Brian Lauber's contact information and will further explore the CWPP issue.]

Steve mentioned interest in shifting his project involvement away from day-to-day details (of websites, contact lists, etc) and **will draft up a refined proposed future role for himself** (send to Brooke and Stan).

Fuels Assessment Update: Don reported that the fuels assessment session with Joe Scott in February was a success, and that things are moving at twice the speed he expected. The objective of the fuels session was to get the best fuel layer to model fire behavior under different treatment options.

Another fuel session is in the works for late April (the week of 19th or 26th) with Joe Scott and Don Helmbrecht in Benson to put all four major mountain ranges in play at once. **Cori will coordinate this session with all interested parties.** The April session will focus on creating vegetation and fuels layers for Catalina-Rincon and Chiricahua-Dragoon. Don reported 5 possible options:

Corrections based on:

- a. Local knowledge of EVT's (existing vegetation types)
 - i. Study local description of EVT's
- b. Burn severity mosaics and post-fire fuels
 - i. TEAMS will identify and download any post-2000 data in MTBS (monitoring trends in burn severity)
- c. Thinning treatments leading to changes in fuel model or fuel properties
 - i. Polygons
 - ii. Properties
- d. Rx burns
 - i. E.g. CNF: 11000 Agua Caliente, Chimney 8000; others on SNP
 - ii. Polygons
 - iii. Properties
- e. Geo-referenced photos (Stan reported that Josh has a box of photos that could be included)

The next step is the modeling application. Information used for this includes:

Fire spread, properties, and effects under:

2000 conditions

Post-fire and treatment conditions 2010

Explore treatment options based on 2010 landscape

Fire effects

Soils

Plant communities

Riparian systems

Cori will contact Joe and Don H. to see which week works for them and what, if any, pre-work we should be doing on this end.

Chiricahua-Dragoon Update. Brooke reported that Bill Edwards has left for Afghanistan, but before he left they met with the grazing permittees to give them a heads up about future, larger-scale treatments and invite them to include their private lands in our Chiricahua-Dragoon analysis area. There was a positive response from most permittees, with as much as 100,000 acres on board. There were also three public meetings. These were not well attended but the reactions were relatively positive (attendees understood the need for treatment). The organization of the meetings included two short presentations with time for questions after. The first presentation covered the need for the project, and the science tools used in analysis. The second presentation covered current and desired conditions for each vegetation type and appropriate treatment tools, including pictures of actual fire treatments. Brooke suggested this format might be appropriate for Catalina-Rincon FireScape public outreach.

CFLRP. Randall is coordinating the Coronado's proposal, which will focus on the Huachuca and PERP projects, given compliance is complete for both landscapes (or just about for PERP). **Don and Randall will try to coordinate with Maggie McCaffrey at the Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution about reviewing the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program proposal,** given the Center's involvement with this process.

Janel McCurdy and the Project Initiation Letter. Brooke reported that Janel had drafted a project initiation letter for Chiricahua-Dragoon that we could model our own after. There will be a C-D Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) meeting March 24th and 25th. Brooke and Stan will meet with Janel on Catalina-Rincon on March 26.

Website latest: It's alive! **Steve and Cori will meet with Averill to check on the website status and inventory what still needs to be done, especially regarding maps.**