

## Task Force Meeting Minutes

September 4, 2013

1. Problem trees should be removed within 100' of transmission lines. May require statutory change to allow to trim that type of tree.
2. RPS – incentivize companies to cut problem trees and then develop biomass energy generation. A thinning project could dovetail with Biomass. Thermal RE credit that geothermal has – could be model for biomass credit. Brent Racher interested in this.
3. Federal agencies could look at problem areas together. Model after FEMA and coops in the Gulf Coast area after hurricanes. Mutual Aid Agreement?
4. Elements of Proactive Management
  - a. Thinning
  - b. Fire Management
  - c. Stream Restoration
  - d. Flood Mitigation
5. Costs associated with fires:
  - a. \$138-232M = cost of Las Conchas Fire
  - b. 7 years to treat 700,000 acres @\$30-40M annually = \$210-280M over 7 years.
6. Santa Fe Watershed Association is an example of sharing the cost of watershed protection from fires, watershed restoration, and public/private partnerships for resources (money). This could be a statewide proposal.
7. Luis Reyes – a combination of solutions including thinning around easements, communication with federal agencies, permits for thinning and a forest management plan. Even those areas outside easements with “problem trees” are important to participate in mitigation efforts. The coop is meeting with their fire departments on a monthly basis to find out which areas need to be trimmed. The Forest Ranger helps KCEC to identify trees for cutting.
8. Mora San Miguel – no fire for years until this year. Neglect of Pecos area. Fire began with lightning strike of power line. State Water Engineer collaborate with the Forest Service etc on forest management, ultimately helps mitigation of fire and water resource protection.
9. Gilbert Zepeda - Wilderness Act prohibits large scale vehicle use in the wilderness. Park Service policy may inhibit prescribed burns. Due to public outcry over prescribed burns for example. People prefer/policy has protected areas, off limits to thinning. Money allocated to fire suppression: Forest Service cannot go under budget, so they borrow from other projects within the agency. \$600M borrowed this year.
10. A problem of fire: flooding and runoff is exacerbated after several fires because rain water doesn't soak in Forest which then becomes like chaparral.
11. Severe fires jeopardize water security.
12. Public awareness and responsibility are important.
13. Lucky Varela – Statutory changes may be necessary.
  - a. Legislation – how to bring concerns together.
  - b. Funding – can be requested to his budget,

- c. Game Commission –
  - d. Congressional district – Valle Caldera
14. Can the PRC lobby to get more state money and manage a fund to help trim trees, work with utilities to trim problem trees, look at BioMass use of trimmings.
  15. Tony Delphin, State Forester. Agrees with Laura
    - a. Identify communities and watersheds at risk
    - b. They are working on 2500 acres \$3M/year thinning watersheds on state and private property. More needed.
  16. Land and Water Conservation Fund is practically non-existent. \$ and resources have not been adequate. Capital could be increased. L & W Fund is for management of what the govt already owns, not watershed management.
  17. Watershed restoration Fund has more funding potential – collaboration is critical among agencies.
  18. Priorities of areas in forests if some ignite this is more critical to water resources.
  19. With GPS, need to walk the power lines and mark problem areas. This is not an insignificant project, if the PRC would take it on.
  20. Dwight Lamerson – Biomass RPS funding for thinning trees. Coops are on their own when it comes to funding Renewable Energy. IOUS have more money available. Coops generation is smaller. Could use RPS money to thin but is it cost-effective? Staff could look into this.
  21. If biomass is incentivized, biomass would be worth pursuing for the additional fire management and watershed protection elements.
  22. Michael Aune – Hazardous fuel reduction, thinning, and watershed protection are critical. Local Congressmen, Senators need to know these fires will affect us and we need to do something about fire protection.
  23. Green Fire Times article on Proactive Management Practices.
  24. Secretary Flynn: What about the Wilderness Act? Laura McCarthy – the Park Service has a liberal interpretation of this Act.
  25. Laura M: PRC is needed as a catalyst for action.
  26. Interim committee – ask them for proposed legislation. Water and Natural Resources Committee.
    - a. Keven G – would participate
    - b. Zepeda – would offer his agency to be at the table
    - c. Tony Delphin/Brent Racher – ask Water and Nat Resource Committee for money.
  27. Lyons – PRC, not a lot of money in PRC for Right of Way (ROW) nor forest thinning. Biomass forest bi-product, credits for biomass, pilot project.
  28. Judy Allison – electric infrastructure antiquated, doesn't support needs. Bury the lines in some areas? Along roadsides.
    - a. This is operationally difficult according to coops and utilities in some areas and with some power lines. Especially in winter conditions, and in rugged terrain.
    - b. Pat – AARP – underground lines – use sensors to see where the lines have a break.
      - i. Luis Reyes – yes there is this equipment but expensive in rugged areas.
      - ii. To change over to underground in forested areas requires NEPA review.

29. How do you wisely use resources in the short-term that have a long-term impact?
- a. Task Force could work with Federal and State foresters on a plan.
  - b. BLM lands, for example, should follow plan.

Prepared by Mary Jane Parks 9-2013