



Land Use Sector Working Group
Meeting #6
February 13, 2023
1 - 2:30 p.m.

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome and roll call
 - a. Present
 - i. Geoff Blakeslee (Chair)
 - ii. Carolina Manriquez (Co-chair)
 - iii. Tim Wohlgenant
 - iv. Michelle Meyer
 - v. Kristy Winser
 - vi. Todd Hagenbuch
 - vii. Julie Baxter
 - viii. Ann Raiho
 - ix. Nathan Stewart
 - x. Tim Sullivan (YVSC technical assistant)
 - b. Not present
 - i. Michael Woodbridge
2. Update from the Board meetings
 - a. CAP Board work session on Working Group recommendations
 - i. Board looking for 5-10 recommendations. Preference on more near term actions, but long-term still should be included. Include immediate opportunities, work going on that could use input. If funding is available, make sure we are taking advantage of that (e.g., NRCS and IRA). Criteria important for thinking about ranking/recommendations.
 - ii. Criteria - Board wants to talk about weighting impact and cost. Co-benefits are particularly important for Land Use Working Group. Cost related to ease of implementation. Political barriers are important, but that will be on the Board to figure out.
 - iii. Board will review recommendations and decide how to present them, but they want to see full list of recommendations even those with lower priority rankings.
 - b. Website/newsletter subscription - please share with your network
 - i. Looking to Working Groups to help spread the word about the CAP website and encourage networks to subscribe to newsletter.
 - c. 2023 CAP Board Communication Plan

- i. Communication goals include increasing broader understanding of what's in the CAP, who's on the Board and Working Groups, updates on CAP progress and opportunities for public involvement
 - ii. In addition to the website and newsletter, this includes outreach/press releases to local media outlets, hopefully a monthly column in local papers, monthly outreach and communications with our municipal communications managers (in process), Facebook/Instagram/website blog for more frequent updates (in development) and plans to host a public community event in April or May.
- 3. Review strawpoll vote on recommendations (EasyRetro) and agree on which ideas we want to further detail
 - a. Anything that got two or more votes included in the list of 19
 - b. How can we fund green infrastructure is a big part of what we are looking at
 - c. From a prioritization standpoint, some of these efforts are going to naturally be discussed through code updates. County has started that process and identified areas it is going to move forward on sooner rather than later. Particularly design criteria - landscaping, land clearing permit process, already have wetlands regulations and permits, but going to be re-evaluated during 11-month process
 - d. Pay attention to language of recommendations - e.g., with land clearing guidelines, here are the benefits of doing it (why rather than should)
- 4. Agree on wording for recommendations and share ideas on how they meet criteria
 - a. Develop program to capture current increased funding for climate-smart agriculture projects through NRCS
 - i. How do we capture current bump in funding?
 - ii. Define top 3 climate smart ag practices - seems pretty broad right now - what's applicable to our County
 - iii. We have primarily perennial grasslands in our County ag land - dollars are probably spent in other places that can capture more carbon
 - 1. Tree planting is still good - riparian areas still important, urban and upland also applicable
 - iv. Focus on current funding and develop projects that are climate-smart. Co-benefits are good. Funding in hard. Need landowners willing to do these projects. Scores high on opportunity, but low for impact.
 - v. Need a strategy to help support outreach
 - vi. Wetland restoration on ag properties could easily be folded into this one
 - vii. Tighten this up to identify opportunity
 - b. Promote wide-spread, small scale high elevation wetland restoration (not on main stem of Yampa)
 - i. Need to think about different jurisdictions and how to link - does NRCS have funds that would go toward just wetlands restoration? Mostly USFS at higher elevations - could California Park be a project that could be replicated?
 - ii. Cal Park - submitting project to Secure Rural Schools, needs to be used on forest service lands) for wet meadow restoration - recommendation would be to develop a pilot program that could be replicated, scaled and practices cataloged
 - iii. Talk to Pat O'Toole - interested in bringing funding to low-tech projects
 - iv. Model this and where it would apply. High opportunity (Walton, National Forest Foundation) - how to capitalize on getting more of this done?

- v. Explore ways to tie this to fire risk reduction through more wetted areas in key locations.
- c. Increase USFS reforestation particularly on prior burn areas - incorporate private lands as needed
 - i. High potential impact, but need Michael W's help to see if there are things we should be doing and keeping in mind.
 - ii. Would be good to keep this flexible/broad - not just talking about prior burn areas - forests aren't coming back the same way they came back 10 years ago
 - iii. From a carbon sequestration perspective, good to get trees out there when you have lost them, including non-federal lands
- d. Increase the rate of tree planting in urban areas by X
 - i. City has limited budget for trees that they supplement with grants.
 - ii. Still a year or two out from making big moves here, need smarter, centralized irrigation controls first, need to educate the public about benefit of turning parks into urban forests. Link this with overall water conservation goals. Follow up with Parks and Rec.
 - iii. Funding availability and timing could make this a good recommendation.
- e. Plant canopy trees on all eligible acres of Yampa (sufficient acres to meet water quality standards for temperature)
 - i. NRCS has prioritized this for climate smart ag funding. High carbon sequestration potential. Where do we find sustained funding and willing private landowners? Maybe include Trout Creek and other tributaries.
 - ii. City will be applying for large grants for developing a Water Quality Credit Trading Program from the EPA this year. Should include funding to pay landowners. High priority for the city to get this going, but projects themselves would be outside of city limits
- f. Develop and adopt code for wetlands and riparian corridor protection for City of Steamboat Springs and the County
 - i. Waterbody setback regulations different from City and County - Would help the City for this to be a recommendation. Matter of getting staff and funding working on this and match up better with County.
 - ii. Wetlands part of evaluation of County code (in process).
 - iii. Would be important to strengthen beyond current federal 404 permit standards which allow offsite mitigation in areas of less value for water quality and flood control.
- g. Develop/consider smart siting/mitigation rules/guidelines for large-scale solar development
 - i. Concern there is about to be a rush on large-scale (2000-4000 acre) solar development (at least 3 large projects) - drive away from native habitat and do it on disturbed lands
 - ii. If on native sagebrush habitat that could be a lot of carbon lost
 - iii. Need to work on the outreach and education component of this
 - iv. Timely. County is exploring regulations, but at present focused on wildlife habitat. Identify carbon sequestration elements to this, particularly when they can overlap with habitat protection.
- h. Develop criteria for PDR awards that incentivize restoration and protection of carbon rich resources
 - i. PDR committee plans to rewrite criteria - put in language about climate value? Opportunistic. Lower priority, but not a heavy lift.

- i. Develop land clearing regulations and permitting associated with new developments
 - i. County to address this issue this summer/fall. Don't expect changes with milling, continue to allow and support. Expect to see a permit for land clearing and what that looks like.
 - j. Strengthen water conservation requirements in new City of Steamboat Springs landscaping standards
 - i. City stakeholder meeting in March to consider what able to consider to require. Maybe commercial and multi-family new developments first
5. Quick review due to time constraints of remaining recommendations for feasibility and likely importance.
- a. Capture carbon from wood waste - discuss with Waste Working Group to understand current ability to compost wood chips
 - b. Increase efficiency of forest management through incentivizing local mills-not likely to significantly change rate of forest management
 - c. Increase outreach to landowners to encourage new conservation easements, particularly on lands of value for climate mitigation and adaptation - combine with recommendation to add carbon considerations to PDR criteria
 - d. Aggressive water conservation requirements in new City of Steamboat Springs landscaping standards - Feasible and likely important to meet water conservation standards (City hiring consultant to develop options).
 - e. County land purchase for open space - not considered a high priority carbon strategy due to costs compared to PDR program
 - f. Adopt water conservation/saving codes as part of County Building Codes with a focus on outdoor water conservation/efficiency - Likely not feasible as building codes don't cover outdoor watering currently
 - g. Household water metering and reporting by County and City zone - Might be feasible, though seems unlikely to be as effective in reducing use as new landscaping codes and other water conservation strategies
 - h. Encourage cluster development and use of Land Preservation Subdivision (LPS) Exemptions to discourage and reduce the desirability of 35-acre subdivisions - Important, yet already incorporated in County Masterplan and ongoing regulations so may not increase carbon savings.
6. Next meeting and proposed agenda:
- a. Doodle poll to be sent for March meeting
 - b. Prioritize recommendations. Have recommendations done by May - with quarterly check-ins after that