**Forest and Watershed Health Coordinating Group Meeting**

**BLM Conference Room, Albuquerque**

**Meeting Notes**

**August 11, 2009**

**In attendance:** Lori Robertson (Reclamation), Donald Auer (NMDGF), Michael Bain (Quivira Coalition), David Old (NMFIA), Nina Wells (NMDA), Faye Krueger (USFS), Jeremy Kruger (FWHO), Ken Leiting (NMACD), Mark Meyers (NMSLO), Kent Reid (NM FWRI), Susan Rich (FWHO), Ed Singleton (BLM), Jim Wanstall (NMDA), Les Owen (NMDA), Dr. Lloyd Irland (Yale School of Forestry)

**Unfinished Business and Updates**

Update on 2009 Statewide Assessment and Strategy – the kickoff meeting was held July 8th. A second large stakeholder meeting will be scheduled in early to mid-November to prioritize the model layers currently under development. Eight teams of technical specialists are meeting in the interim and providing input into the 8 models. Information is being posted on the watershed clearinghouse portal: <http://allaboutwatersheds.org/groups/SAS/public>.

Update on ONRW – NMED’s revised proposal contains three parts: the draft proposal to designate waters within USFS National Forest Wilderness Areas as Outstanding National Resource Waters; draft rule changes to 20.6.4.8 NMAC, governing ONRW designations; and draft amendments to the state’s Antidegradation Policy Implementation Procedures. The latter two will positively affect all existing and future ONRWs by clearly allowing restoration work to take place within designated areas. The official comment period runs through 8/31/09. Public meetings are being held throughout NM; the meeting schedule and the proposal are posted on NMED’s website: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb/onrw/>.

Follow-up on discussion about funding and other challenges facing partners – Mike Bain presented the CG with a letter from watershed groups to funders outlining several difficulties those groups are having (copy attached). He explained there are too many costs watershed groups incur and cannot cover through utilizing state/federal grants for restoration projects, such as costs for work plan development and environmental reviews. Reimbursement rates need to keep up with increases in overhead. Faye Krueger said she would get in touch with the USFS contracts specialist to learn more. A subcommittee meeting was proposed to look further into the topic. Invitees should include agency contract and procurement specialists (including DFA). A white paper delving into these issues could be an outcome of such a meeting.

Presentation – Dr. Lloyd Irland (Yale School of Forestry): Cooperative Marketing Support Project for Small Wood-based Firms in the SW. Information related to the project that Dr. Irland is doing for the Southwest Sustainable Forest Partnership can be accessed via SWSFP’s website: <http://www.littlecolorado.net/SWSFP/Irland.htm>.

**New Business**

Annual Report – Susan distributed the FHWO annual report for members’ review. Among the FY2009 accomplishments highlighted were the Watershed Forum, community wildfire protection planning, the Know Your Watershed public outreach and education campaign with watershed signs, the forest and watershed clearinghouse’s web portal, and more. Discussions followed on several of the topics. NMDGF reported positive movement on the archaeological survey price agreements. The final report will be published on the portal and on Forestry’s website: <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/FD/forestandwatershedhealthoffice_annualreports.htm>.

Adoption of Logo – The CG voted to adopt the portal logo as the group’s official logo.

FWHP 5-year review and report – March 2010 marks the five-year anniversary of the signing of the State Forest and Watershed Health Plan. Susan would like to begin the process of drafting a 5-year report on progress made in implementing the Plan fairly soon. She will call on members to assign the appropriate person to provide information for their agencies’ contribution.

Strategy for Biomass Utilization – Discussion deferred until November meeting.

State-led effort to streamline environmental review process – NMED is spearheading an effort to streamline the mandatory environmental review process for entities receiving certain state revolving loans and grants. Susan distributed an overview of the effort (copy attached) and will send out an update after the August 19 workgroup meeting.

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for 9:00-1:00 on November 12, 2009 at the NRCS’ first floor conference room.