

Colorado Forest Health Advisory Council

Listening Session

March 3, 2021

Summary of Results

The FHAC was created by HB16-1255 to provide a collaborative forum to advise the State Forester on a range of issues, opportunities and threats to Colorado's Forests.

Panelists:

Mike Lester, Director CO State Forest Service

Dan Gibbs, ED CO Dept Natural Resources

Jacque Buchanan, USFS Deputy Regional Forester

Jen Kovecses, Coalition for Poudre River Watershed

Jamie Gomez, ED West Region Wildfire Council

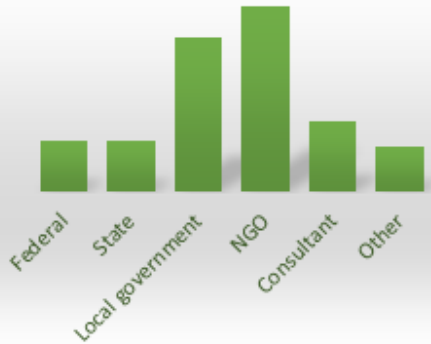
Anthony Culpepper, Four Rivers Resilient Forest



Attendee Profile

220 ~ Registered
142 ~ Logged On
84 ~ Views of Recording

38 had heard of the
FHAC before this
meeting ~ 48 had not.



Please rank: if the state were to increase its investment in forest health &/or post-fire restoration, where should they invest?



Are you familiar with...



Forest Atlas

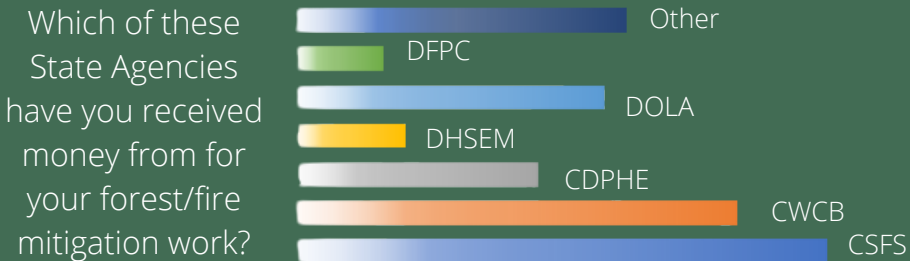


Forest Action Plan



Shared Stewardship

State Funding



Other includes DNR and CPW.

How have you found working with State Agencies for grants?

Overall webinar attendees complimented state agency staff (10), but they found the application process cumbersome (5), payments slow (9), and were buried in paperwork and the process (5).

"Project development takes time... need funding for project development."

"Everything is reimbursement based which is hard for getting work started."

"Mapping requirements that the software isn't able to do."

What would you change?

Easier and common applications (5), the gap between needing homeowner commitments, matching funds and timing of funding (5), organization capacity for applications and reporting (4), remove CSFS as pass-through and apply USDA/USFS directly (2), and direct invoice payment (3).

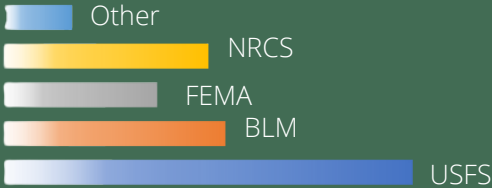
"Move CSFS out of CSU and move to DNR."

"Fund outreach and coordination."

"Make some grants drawdown vs. reimbursable."

"...focus and support on capacity building to get social buy in and good projects shovel ready."

Federal Funding



Other includes BIA, NFPA, Intn'l Fire Chiefs, State Farm.

Which of these Federal Agencies have you received money from for your forest/fire mitigation work?

How have you found working with Federal Agencies ?

Most found the federal grant process cumbersome, complex, difficult, "insane" (16), dedicated staff necessary to administer (3), and again complementary of agency staff (5).

Interesting given the comments to take CSFS out of the loop to deal with USFS directly for grants.

"You have to win a big project to make it worthwhile."

"Grants awarded seem to go to the same areas."

"Turn over with grants and compliance officers with USFS and BLM a challenge."

What would you change?

Metrics other than acres (6), simplify the application and process (6), adopt Shared Wildfire Risk Mitigation tool (1), innovation grants for new methods (2),

"...programs like RMRI, influenced by \$\$ and people often removed from the on-the-ground reality not take precedent."

"Streamline process for entities with proven successful admin and implementation."

Have you been able to blend pots of money from various sources?

Yes (10).

"Record keeping is a challenge.

"It is different and time consuming every time."

"State \$\$ is a really, really critical component."

No (3).

"Don't have time/staff to figure out."

"Not efficiently."

"Too much work."

"Workshop on blending would be super."

What limits your capacity to increase on the ground work?

A word cloud on a white background, tilted diagonally from bottom-left to top-right. The words are in various colors (green, blue, purple) and sizes. The largest word is 'Staff' in green. Other prominent words include 'Funding' in green, 'Social_License' in blue, 'Restrictions' in green, 'Biomass' in purple, 'Planning' in purple, 'Local_Government' in purple, 'Leadership' in blue, 'Time' in purple, and 'Checking_Survey_Project' in blue.

How can FHAC and agencies help you improve your effectiveness?

- Funding and training to get funding.
- Help navigate agencies, funding, programs.
- Continue webinars/listening sessions.
- Solve the Biomass issue.
- Support coalitions getting the work done.



Suggestions for legislation or regulatory changes to help increase work on the ground?

- Expand access to Federal grants for NGOs, and funding flexibility.
- Funding options, for capacity, planning, mitigation.
- Focus on science and data, remove politics.
- Reduce barriers for prescribed burning.
- WUI development codes.



What questions could research help you answer?

- If you can't afford to do it all, what should you do?
- Studies on historical fire, traditional fire use.
- Business model for biomass, forest products, biochar.
- The complexity of Gamble Oak issues.
- Are beavers the answer? Where? How many?
- Forest management impacts on downstream water users.
- Can carbon markets support increased forestry?

How has recent fire changed your work?

- "Increased interest and political will, for mitigation, veg mgmt, structure hardening."
- "Chaos, plans trashed, fatigue sets in."
- "Change direction to floods, erosion."