

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments eNews May 2017



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Putting fire back into the forest, starting in Aspen By Jon Stavney



Basalt Mountain Fire

The High Country Forest Collaborative (a re-envisioned version of the successful Colorado Bark Beetle Collaborative) met in Carbondale at the Fire Protection District on April 28th. The wider mission of the group is "community forest resilience." One key topic for forest health is reversing the suppression focused approach to wildfire which has altered the natural burn intervals of forest ecosystems, and made the forest less healthy. The upshot of decades of active fire suppression has been hotter, more dangerous fires, and increased risk to mountain communities.

The focus of this meeting was a review of the April 2016 prescribed fire in Aspen at the doorstep of some of the most valuable real estate in the world, and the multi-jurisdictional effort required to pull off such an audacious planned incident.

Scott Fitzwilliam, White River National Forest Supervisor cited the Beaver Creek Fire in Jackson County last summer which "changed assumptions about what fire does." He told the group, "75% of our organization is focused on putting out fires. Maybe it is time to switch to more planners and burn bosses. We cannot cut our way out of this problem. We cannot suppress our way out of this problem."

In the far ranging discussion in the afternoon with the HCFC group, Jim Genung, Fuels Specialist for Aspen Sopris Ranger district, who is the planner/burn boss Fitzwilliam is referencing, warned elected officials "you will be at the meeting when it comes to your town" if you don't get active with mitigation and prescribed burning.

Ron Biggers, Glenwood Springs Fire Marshall has spent years following the Storm King and Coal Seam Fires that ravaged his town, educating homeowners and working to bring grant money to the community for mitigation efforts. He agreed that even that effort is not enough. Biggers said, "we need to be putting fire on the ground so we can fight fire on our terms, rather than nature's" when it is near our communities, and noted that "we don't tell the story of how important mitigation and preparations are; for instance, the save rate of 82% of the homes from the Waldo Canyon Fire," meant that one of the most damaging fires in Colorado Springs history would have been 82% more damaging to homes had the community not put great effort ahead of time. "Who hears about that," said Biggers.

That sentiment was shared by the group made up mostly of representatives from various agencies in the upper Roaring Fork who spent the morning sharing how they worked for more than a year preparing for the fire. We were "working towards a greater acceptance in the community for prescribed fire" as our goal, stated Ben Carson, Aspen City forester who set the stage for Will Roush, Conservation Director

from Wilderness Workshop who showed a video of the planning efforts behind the fire. Convincing the community of why it was important to set fire to the forest as close to their property as possible took a very elaborate public relations plan which involved hikes, noted Rouch. He put a long list of "weed pulls," publications and meetings on the screen. The selling point was on the day of the Hunter Creek prescribed burn with a smoke plume that went thousands of feet into the sky within sight of Aspen on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in April, resulted in no 911 calls. In a similar prescribed fire, the summer before on Basalt Mountain there were more than 400 calls.



Hunter Creek Burn - Mike Lyons Photo

The rock star of the presentation was Jim Genung, who spent the better part of an hour describing how the incident was planned, and how the public relations effort was written into the overall NEPA document for the fire. The entire incident was "in a box that could be unpacked for another event." He passed around the ping pong ball sized ignition sources which require an injection of glycol when dropped from a helicopter to ignite. Explaining to the group how the fire was set and managed was clearly the highlight of the morning. After describing the extensive meteorological circumstances



required for the event to get the go-ahead, and hearing the HCFC group pining about the need to change public perceptions about fire, he said "I would like nothing better than to fly with a bunch of ping pong balls in perfect conditions in the spring and go dropping balls. We could burn 10,000 acres safely with fewer people, and improve the forest."

Everyone agreed that in spite of efforts to educate the public about living with fire, we have a long ways to go before that day comes. Sloan Shoemaker, Executive Director of the Wilderness Workshop asked rhetorically, "How can groups like this help?" Fitzwilliams replied,

"Help us find common denominator projects that focus on ecosystem services as federal land managers. Tell the story on economic terms." The High Country Forest Collaborative group closed out the day discussing with Fitzwilliam how they could work with the White River National Forest towards the next successful prescribed burn.

29th Annual Senior Awards

This year's Senior Awards Ceremony took place at the Summit County Community & Senior Center on May 3rd. The theme was Age Out Loud, as issued by the Administration for Community Living for Older Americans Month, which takes place every May.



This year's award winners:

Summit County	Senior of the Year: Sandy Bainbridge	Friend of the Seniors: Town of Frisco / Vanessa Agee
Pitkin County	Steve Child	Reese Henry Tax Advisors / Krista Eddy
Jackson County	Kay Gladstone	Jane Bingham
Grand County	Richard & Martha Smeltz	Jeanie Johnson
Garfield County	Sunny Dunn Linn	Sharon Harper & Chelsea Carnoali Parkinson
Eagle County	Irene Olive	Carly Rietmann

The Smell of Fresh Bread...



When people are asked to name a smell that evokes positive emotions, one smell stands out as the clear favorite - the smell of fresh bread baking. Sam and Juli Gordon, owners of Smell That Bread Bakery in Steamboat Springs, have transformed their passion for baking high-end, artisan bread and other baked goods into the only bakery in the Yampa Valley to prepare their delicious products by hand every day.

Their freshness, quality, and methods are unmatched anywhere in town. They use only traditional techniques and

preferments, including levain. Levain is a living culture or starter, used as a leavening agent in place of instant yeast. This method has been used for thousands of years, dating back to ancient Rome. There are no shortcuts in the STBB process. Everything is made fresh daily.

Smell That Bread Bakery has been operating since April 2014 as a wholesale bakery, providing bread products to nearly every fine dining establishment in Steamboat Springs. In July of 2015, customer demand led them to open a "Dutch door" with limited hours to sell their bread and cookies retail. That business grew quickly creating a demand for a full retail shop.



Knowing they wanted to meet the desires of their customers, Sam and Juli reached out to the **Northwest Loan Fund** to help purchase equipment and hire staff for the expansion. They are adding an additional 650 square feet of space where customers can stop by for a cup of coffee to go with fresh-baked breakfast treats like flaky croissant, delightful



Danish, or a melt-in-your-mouth cinnamon roll. Lunch selections will include fresh French bread sandwiches, home-made soups, and grab-and-go lunch options that are delicious and affordable. Of course, their customers will always be able to pick up a just baked artisanal loaf of bread to go with dinner at home.

Sam and Juli are experienced bakers with years of training and formal education at the San Francisco Baking Institute - one of the most well-respected baking schools in the world. They return to attend classes every few years to stay up to date on new techniques and to further hone their craft.

Smell that Bread Bakery is located at 135 11th Street, Steamboat Springs. Resistance is futile.

You can check out their website at <http://SmellThatBreadBakery.com>

. For more information about the Northwest Loan Fund, contact Anita Cameron at Anita@northwestloanfund.org.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging Washington DC Briefing

April 3-5, Erin Fisher, Director of the Alpine Area Agency on Aging for NWCCOG, visited Capitol Hill with several other Colorado Area Agency on Aging Directors for n4a's Aging Policy Briefing. N4a is the national association of Area Agencies on Aging.

This year was the 23rd annual briefing and it was the largest thus far, as 180 participants representing Area Agencies on Aging and Title VI Native American aging programs from across the country convened in the nation's capital. The Aging Policy Briefing commenced with when Adriel Bettelheim, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and editor at POLITICO, shared a big-picture overview about how policies and priorities promoted by the 115th Congress and the new Trump administration could affect older adults. Experts from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the National Governors Association, the National Association of Medicaid Directors and several other national aging and health

care advocacy organizations shared their thoughts about the future of health care and Affordable Care Act repeal efforts as well as predictions about anticipated budget threats from the new Administration and Congress.

After the briefing, the Colorado Aging Network joined Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG's) federal lobbyist, Mickey Ferrell, to meet with staff from Senator Gardner and Bennet's office as well as Representatives DeGette, Polis, Coffman, Buck, and Perlmutter.



Pictured: Erin Fisher, Alpine AAA; Laura Matthews, Boulder County; Jayla Sanchez-Warren, DRCOG; Jamie Ulrich, Weld County; Eva Jewell, Weld County AAA; Sherry Leach, Boulder County AAA; Melody Dowell, Lower Arkansas Valley AAA; Bob Held, NE CO AAA.

Little known resource offered by NWCCOG

You might be wondering how to get your council to be more productive, or create a long-term strategic plan, or how to better engage with the community. Sometimes, you just need a neutral third party to facilitate a meeting so all parties can be heard and all ideas considered.

NWCCOG just might have what you're looking for. Let's talk about how we can facilitate a half-day, full-day, or multi-day retreat for your organization.

Contact Jon Stavney for more information. Jstavney@nwccog.org

2017 NWCCOG COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Full Council & EDD Board Meeting

Location: North Branch Library, Blue River Room, Silverthorne

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Primary Agenda Items: Review/acceptance of the 2016 audit

Thursday, July 27, 2017

Full Council Meeting

Location: Community House, Grand Lake

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Approval of 2018 dues; approval of 2017 budget revisions; discussion re: Annual Planning Meeting Agenda

Thursday, August 24, 2017

Full Council & EDD Board Annual Planning Meeting

Location: Airport Operations Center (AOC), Aspen

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Agenda Items: Strategic Planning for 2018

Thursday, October 26, 2017

Full Council Meeting

Location: NWCCOG Office/Conference Call

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: Review of draft 2018 budget

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Full Council, EDD Board & Foundation Board Meeting

Location: TBD - Summit County

Time: 10:00 a.m. - noon

Primary Agenda Items: 2017 budget revisions; approve 2018 budget; adopt 2018 meeting schedule; annual NWCCOG Foundation Board meeting.

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

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