

Best Practice: Building Local Support & Credibility

Summary

The Elkhorn Restoration Committee created the *Inform, Involve, and Educate Outreach Program* to tell the group's story as part of outreach to local organizations.

Keys to Success

- Develop the strategy with collaborative members to build internal support
- Create materials that all members can use during outreach events to ensure the message is clear and consistent.

“Establishing our Inform, Involve and Educate Strategy required us to prioritize our efforts, establish criteria for what we do, set timelines, agree as to why we are here doing what we are doing and be able to succinctly share that with anyone. This strategy allows anyone from the ERC to have the same format and points to share regardless of their background.”

- Al Christophersen, ERC Co-Chair

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Developing a strategy and supporting documents can help tell a collaborative group's story and build public support

In 2014 the Elkhorn Restoration Committee, which focuses on the Elkhorn Mountain wildlife management area of the Helena and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests in Montana, developed a communication strategy members call the *Inform, Involve, and Educate (II&E) Outreach Program*. The strategy was developed to build public support and credibility for the group, and also to help recruit new members. The Restoration Committee hopes to share its story, accomplishments, and program of work with members of local government, sportsmen's organizations, community groups, schools, businesses, and private landowners.

Tom Williams, Elkhorn Restoration Committee Chairman, explained, “Through the II&E outreach program we have presented our goals and accomplishments to organizations and committees with a vast array of interests.”

Though the II&E outreach program was developed for the public, the process to create and update it also benefits the Restoration Committee. As Al Christopherson noted, “the committee process of getting a diverse group to agree to who we present to, what we say, and how we say it is an extremely powerful relationship building process for the committee.”

The strategy, which is attached, outlines clear goals and objectives for public outreach events, process steps for contacting local organizations, potential outreach opportunities, and key topics to cover during presentations. A two-page handout the group created to accompany members during outreach events is also attached. Content includes a brief description of the group, membership list, goals, and geographic area. A PowerPoint presentation was designed as another piece of the “package” that Elkhorn Restoration Committee members could use to tell the group's story in an organized and consistent way.

Links

- Elkhorn Restoration Committee
<http://www.montanarestoration.org/elkhorns-committee>

Elkhorn Restoration Committee
Inform, Involve, and Educate Outreach Program (I, I & E)
April 5, 2014

Goal statement: The ERC desires to inform and involve a broad spectrum of diverse public segments of the mission and achievements of the ERC to establish a better understanding of our mission, work, and support for them. The ERC desires to identify shared restoration opportunities with those groups that meet our shared needs and goals.

Goal 1

Statement: The ERC will utilize its 14 Restoration Principles (13 MFRC and 1 from the Elkhorns Plan) as a base to tie discussions to.

Goal 2 Statement: Utilize the ERC restoration analysis efforts with Crow Creek and other projects as an example in these I, I & E

Objectives:

1. Develop a standard detailed presentation format by June 2014 enabling anyone on the ERC to be able to make presentations
2. The full ERC to develop a thorough list of potential groups, people and entities to reach out to with this I, I, & E protocol by May, 2014.
3. Establish a list of the top priority (5-10) groups to contact utilizing our established protocol by May 2014.
4. Make presentations to the selected top priority groups by October 2014.
5. Make presentations to all receptive entities by Dec., 2014
6. Evaluate and critique feedback to each presentation and make appropriate adjustments to our presentation format. (Adaptive Presentation Management)

1. Process for approaching each group/entity during planned outreach efforts:

Assign a lead person from ERC for each target group, who will then determine:

- Contacts for group,
- Mission/ mandate: how does it intersect with mission of ERC,
- When they meet and where,
- How we get on their agenda?
 - I, I and E presentation
 - Letter to them with our I, I & E information attached
- What is the ask? That is, what do we want from them and/or what might they want from us (do we want information, or to apply for a grant, or to have them engage in a project, etc.). Possibilities include:
 - Join us on a field trip
 - ERC make a presentation on our mission, activities and achievements and needs (I, I & E presentation)
 - Either attend a meeting where the ERC will be discussing a project, OR let us know if they have interest in projects in particular areas (so we can send project information, come back and brief them, etc.)
 - Letter of support – for the ERC's approach and work in general, or for specific projects? Or for funding proposals to support specific projects?
 - Understanding of shared needs/goals.
 - Financial support through grants, etc.
 - Volunteer opportunities.
- What materials do we want to include in an information packet for the meeting?
- Set up a day and time for meeting,

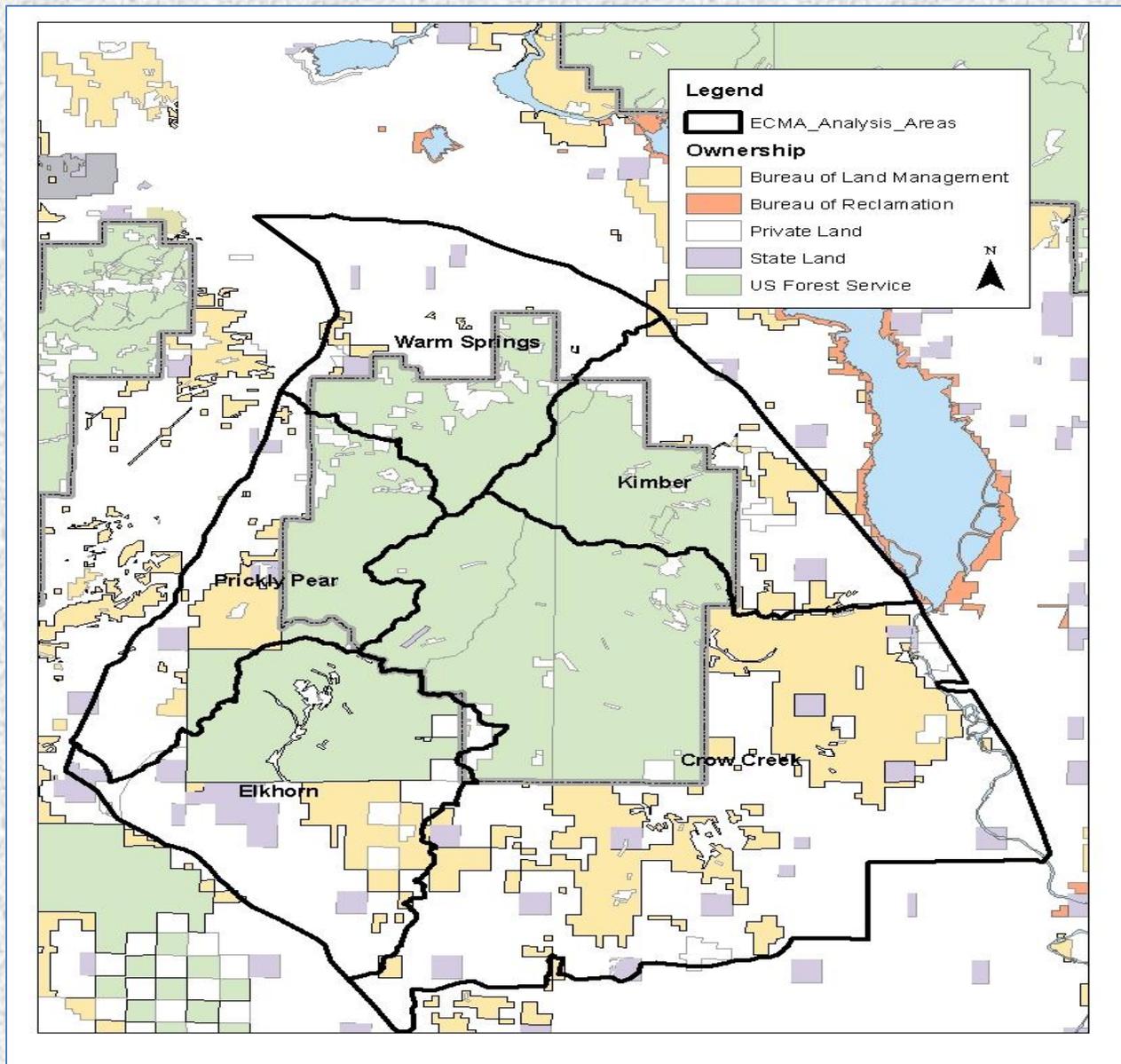
- Establish who from the ERC should present at the meeting, and
- What we would like the outcomes to be.
- Tweak presentation appropriately for that particular group,
- Vet with entire ERC.

2. List of groups we may wish to talk with:

- Local governments
 - Broadwater County Commissioners
 - Jefferson County Commissioners
 - Lewis and Clark County Commissioners
 - Townsend City
 - Montana City
 - Boulder
 - Helena
 - (Winston, East Helena, Silos, Clancy, Jefferson City) These may not be incorporated communities so it could be a series of community open houses.
 - Others?
- Sporting clubs and groups
 - Helena Hunters and Anglers
 - Broadwater Rod and Gun club
 - Back Country Horsemen
 - Trail Riders
 - RMEF/Mule Deer/WSF
 - Trout Unlimited
 - Others?
- State and Federal Legislators
 - State Legislators – do we know which ones might be most important (i.e. the top 10 list)? Also, organize a day-long at the State Legislature with booth.
 - Federal Legislators
 - Congressman Daines
 - Senator Tester
 - Senator Walsh
- Chambers of commerce/Businesses
 - Helena
 - Hometown Helena
 - Townsend
 - Boulder
 - Montana City?
 - Others?
- Industry/businesses
 - Livestock growers
 - Agriculture-crops
 - Forest industry-RY, Marks Lumber, Marks P&P, consultants
 - Sports/sporting goods businesses and group
 - Mountain biking groups Others?
- Landowners – do we have any sort of list from the other work of Committee members to guide us in identifying where to start? I.e. the top 10 list, and then the next 10, for example?
- Public at large
 - Newspapers – (1) Helena Independent Record; (2) The Townsend Star; (3) the Boulder Monitor; (4)
 - TV: Helena, Butte, Great Falls, and/or Bozeman stations?

- Radio: Thoughts about which ones? (E.g. which ones might be most popular with local ranchers/ farmers, hunters and anglers, etc.?)
 - Public info meetings ERC hosts
 - Partners
 - Volunteer sources
 - Funding sources
 - Annual conferences, especially local ones:
 - Fire-wise groups,
 - National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council meeting of all motorized groups in Great Falls in August,
 - Hunting and angling groups,
 - Recreational groups (motorized and non-motorized).
3. Supporting materials for outreach efforts:
- MFRC Guiding Restoration Principles,
 - Powerpoint presentation (brief history, mission, and work of ERC, successes to date, current projects and focus, with lots of photos),
 - ERC 2-page factsheet with map and photos, list of members and organizations, a few web links, successes to date, etc.,
 - List of upcoming projects that may be first in pipeline and opportunities to engage, participate, provide support, feedback, etc.
4. Presentation Outline and Materials Power point presentation/Handout:
- Power point presentation/Handout:
 - MFRC Restoration Principles, ERC mission, Code of Conduct and members
 - Landscape assessment example, project input examples
 - What our needs are, commonality with group attending
 - Can we combine some groups into one presentation time, if so what are the likely combinations?
 - Other informational handout information

Factsheet for the Elkhorn Restoration Committee



Who we are: Local citizens with diverse interests that all center on the Elkhorn Mountains: hunters, anglers, ranchers, back-country horsemen, motorcyclists, wildlife enthusiasts, woods workers, and landowners.

Where we work: Elkhorn Cooperative Management Area (ECMA), which includes the Forest Service, the BLM, and Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and private lands

Our goal: More resilient and naturally functioning ecosystems in the Elkhorns through collaborative restoration projects on public and private lands

Why we belong to the ERC: The Elkhorn's are socially and economically important to local, state, and national interests and in need of restoration to sustain key values

Why now? Restoration treatments are needed now to keep ecosystems from diverging even more from their natural resiliency conditions



ERC Members

Tom Williams, Chair; **Doug Abelin**, **Anne Carlson**, **Al Christophersen**, Co-chair; **Dennis Milburn**, **Lois Olsen**, **Karole Lee**, **Mike Sedlock**, **Steve Marks**, **Mike Vashro**, **Gail Vennes**, **Brian Kimpton**, **Brian Kahn**, Facilitator; **Franklin Slifka**.

Interests: Recreation, Motorized recreation, wildlife, fisheries, forest management , fire management, horse users, ecological systems, back country and wilderness values, wood products, workers, local businesses, ranching, sportsmen groups, local government, etc.

Agency and Technical Advisors

Any Burgoyne, MT DNRC

Adam Grove, MT FWP

Jared Bybee, BLM

Heather Degeest, Forest Service

Corey Lewellen, Forest Service

Justin Meissner, NRCS

Denise Pengeroth, Forest Service

Dave Sabo, Forest Service

Melissa Hayes Kochel, Coordinator,
Montana Forest Restoration Committee (MFRC)

Gordy Sanders, MFRC

Prickly Pear Land Trust

Special Values of the Elkhorn Mountains

- It is well loved by local citizens who hunt, fish, ranch, work, hike, and recreate there year round
- It's the only designated Wildlife Management Unit in the entire National Forest System
- It has intact wildlife populations and habitats for elk, mule and whitetail deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, black bears, and mountain lions,
- Elkhorn managers focus on wildlife values but also prioritize ranching, recreation, and the local economy

Contact Information

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The Elkhorn Restoration Committee



What is restoration?

- **Restoring naturally functioning landscapes**
- **Providing economic opportunities**
- **Providing recreational opportunities**

N. Crow Allotment Conifer Encroachment



1959



2004

Mountain Pine Beetle Impacts Warm Springs Area 2009



Restoring Natural Fire Cycles Crow Creek



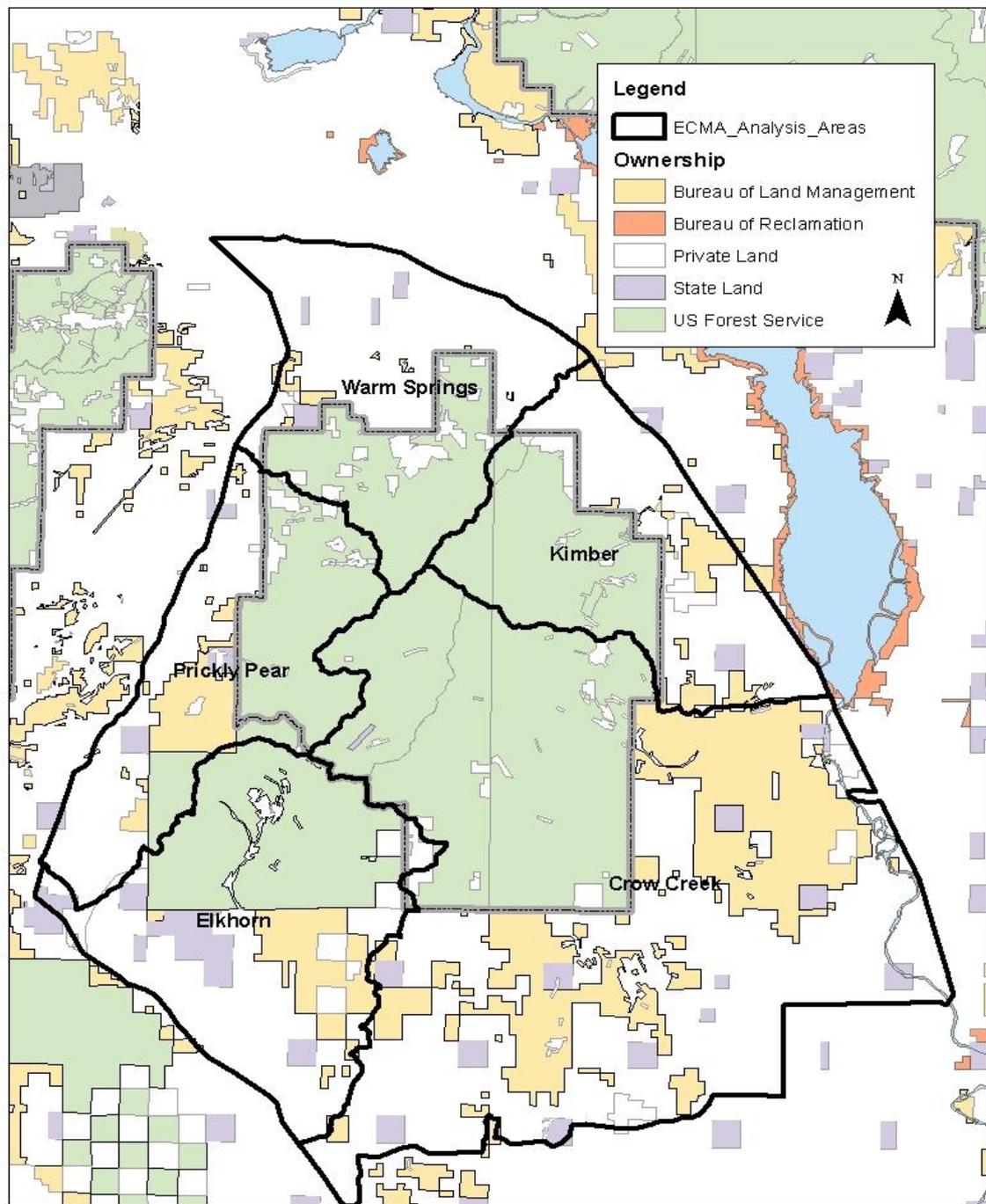
Special values of the Elkhorn Mountains



- Includes the only designated Wildlife Management Unit in the National Forest System
- Intact wildlife populations and habitats
- Collaborative management recognizes a wide variety of uses: wildlife, ranching, forestry, recreation, watersheds, and the local economy
- A wide range of citizens hunt, fish, graze, hike, work, and recreate in the Elkhorns
- Habitat restoration work opportunities span the whole spectrum of habitats
 - Cooperative management with private land owners
 - Recognize BLM lands as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Analysis Areas within the Elkhorn Cooperative Management Area (ECMA)

- Crow Creek
(207,154 acres)
- Elkhorn
(70,341 acres)
- Prickly Pear
(56,811 acres)
- Warm Springs
(60,245 acres)
- Kimber
(57,653 acres)



Purpose of the Elkhorn Restoration Committee

- **Work to influence the timely implementation of the 13 Restoration Principles and the interagency MOU where appropriate in the ECMA.**
- **Serve as an information resource and knowledge base for agency personnel and private landowners in this landscape**
- **Identify potential design, implementation, and monitoring issues during planning of restoration projects; seek solutions early**
- **Offer the public, agencies and private landowners input/information regarding the potential effects of a proposed action/activity.**

History of the Elkhorn Restoration Committee

- **Founding year: Chartered in 2011**
- **Who we are: Local citizens with diverse interests**
- **Our goal: More resilient and better functioning ecosystems through collaborative restoration projects**
- **Where we work: Elkhorn Cooperative Management Area (ECMA), which includes the private, state and federal land**
- **Why we belong to the ERC: The Elkhorns are socially and economically important to local, state, and national interests but in need of restoration to sustain key values**
- **Why now? Restoration treatments are needed now to keep ecosystems from diverging even more from their natural resiliency conditions**

Successes of the Elkhorn Restoration Committee

- Developed a collaborative landscape assessment process leading to planning for restoration projects (e.g. Crow Creek)
- Sponsored field trips to help broaden public understanding of the results of restoration work
- Enhanced public understanding and awareness of the Elkhorn's Cooperative Management Area direction from managing agencies
- Developed a collaborative process to evaluate and provide feedback to improve several Forest Service and BLM Elkhorn projects (e.g. Warm Springs, Iron Mask, 1988 Habitat Enhancement)
- Web site:
www.montanarestoration.org



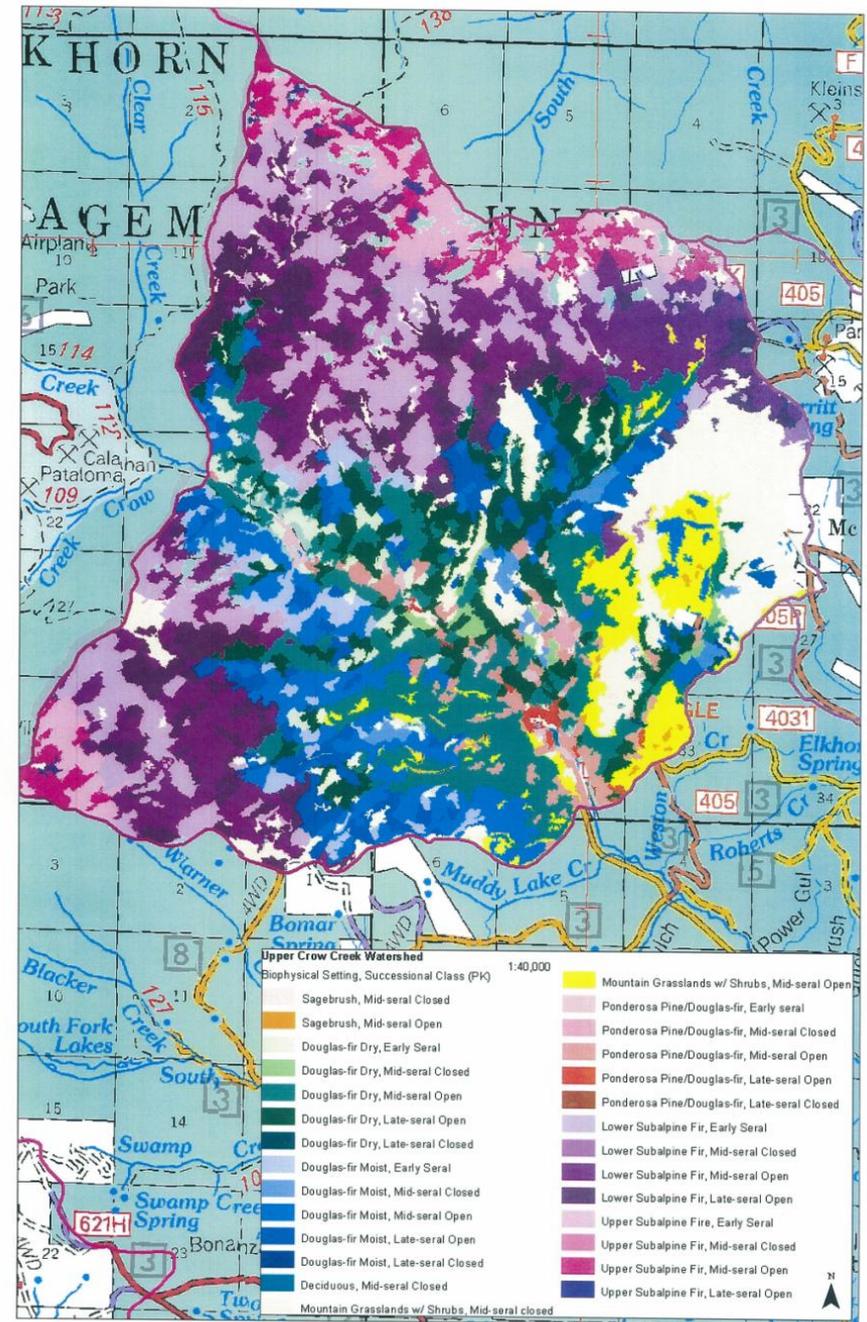
Crow Creek Restoration Opportunities

By Ownership

Forest Service
Bureau of Land Management
Private
State

Forest Type

Mountain grasslands
PP-Dry DF
Moist DF
Lower SF
Upper SF
Riparian



July 2013

Vegetative Restoration Proposed Action

Management	FS	BLM	Private	Total
Total Watershed Acres	65,518	46,111	87,482	199,111
Gross Treatment Acres	30,135	24,019	45,390	99,544
Past 20 yr. Trt. Acres	9,870	5,211	6,665	21,746
Net Available Trt. Acres	20,265	18,808	38,725	77,798
PP-Dry DF	5,401	8,344	4,216	17,961
DF-Moist	3,138	350	442	3,930
SPFI1	5,668	0	216	5,884
SPFI2	1,375	0	0	1,375
MGRA Avail. Acres	4,571	10,065	29,473	44,109
RIP Acres	112	49	4,378	4,539
Percent of Wtrshd Avail.	38%	40%	44%	39%

What's Next?

- **Develop collaborative recommendations for the remaining analysis areas (Short, med, long range projects)**
- **Work across private/public boundaries for restoration activities**
- **Monitor restoration efforts**
- **Provide educational opportunities regarding restoration efforts**

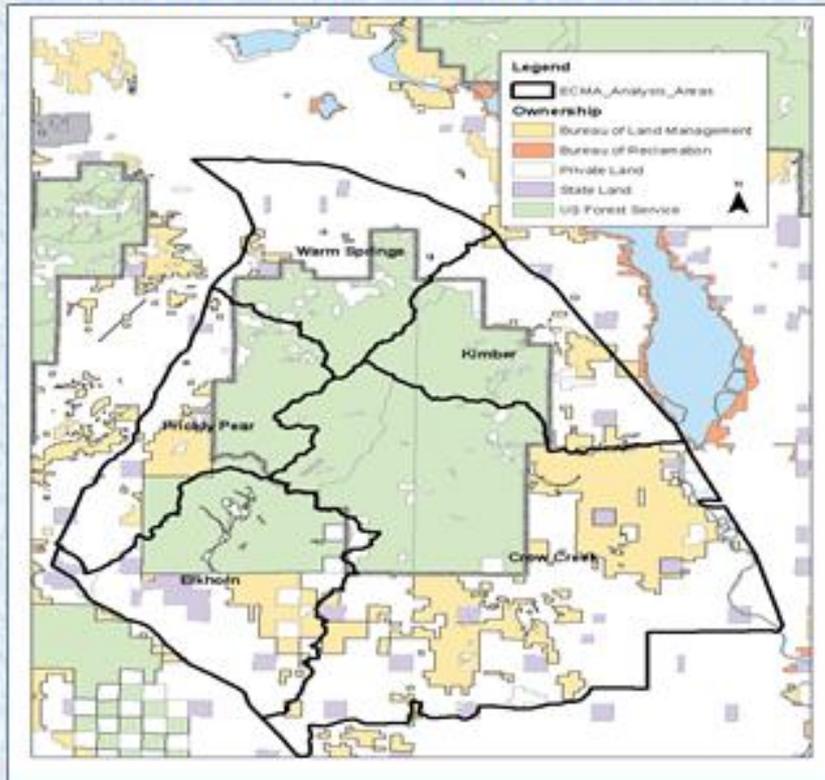


How can you be involved?

- **Why are we here talking with you?**
- **Opportunities for your group to engage: support for projects, members, volunteers, project help or ideas, reviews**
- **What we can offer you: more information, guided field trips on potential restoration projects, participation in reviewing projects and monitoring results, involvement in projects**



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MFRC Monitoring Field Demonstration Handbook



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