New Mexico ESD Core Group annual meeting 2011-12-15 Jornada Experimental Range Headquarters

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Meeting began 10am. Introductions were made around the table. Reports from participants began with Brandon Bestlemeyer. Brandon explained his report would also be covering the activities of Jeff Herrick and Joel Brown who could not be present. He reported they have been cooperating with NRCS in conducting SRM sponsored ESD workshops. They have been held in Colorado and Florida. They are modeled after the kick-off workshop that was held at the Jornada facility in 2010. The goal is to kick start the ESD development process and multi agency partnerships that are necessary to success. A workshop is scheduled to be held in Reno, NV a location in the NE to be determined and The Mojave desert area.

The second project Brandon reported on is a cooperative effort ion Montana with the NRCS and Forest Service to formulate ESD to cover FS jurisdictional areas. Data from TES/TEUI are being used to develop concepts and the standard 3 phase sampling process for ESD used to correlate and further develop site descriptions. A contractor at Montana state, Dave Roberts is helping with the data. The Bear tooth mountains is the first target area. Particularly interested in trajectories with changes in white bark pine stand health. 2 full time Jornada staff are imbedded with NRCS-Montana folks to help move the process along. The longer term goal is to carry this project from region to region. Demonstrating how ESDS development can be done.

Brandon concluded by reading a new portion of the NRCS ESD manual that is explicit about how groups like the NM ESD Core Group can participate in the entire ESD process. This is good news for the future of the core group and its work.

Andrew from state forestry next spoke about the FIA process in NM. It has been in catch-up mode since the early 1980’s. Now it is 70% caught-up in just the last 2 years. This is due to a bunch of sampling and work funded thru ARRA. 8 of 10 panels are in for review and initial reports available the end of this month. The FIDO web site will make the data available. This site has some map products available. By 2013 accurate state level reports will be available. Something that is different in data definitions between FIA and NRCS is the amount of tree cover required to call a site a forest site. NRCS used 15% cover. FIA uses 10% cover. Some overlap with NRCS data currently called rangelands will occur. From a procedural perspective state forestry did a mass mailing looking for access to private lands. They got a 60% positive reply.

Charles Hibner reported that his soils office is almost completed with a new soils mapping of the Carlsbad Caverns national Park.. As a result Scott Woodall is progressing on 6 fully revised ESD and 2 new ESD for that part of NM.

Kris Havstad introduced the <http://jornada.nmsu.edu/esd> web site to the group. It is not only the place where all meeting minutes for the core group are stored, but, also where all ESD related materials from Jornada can be found. One of the big advantages is that the content can be rapidly updated. This is due to the fact that Jornada controls the content directly. Kris invited participants to just ask Jornada staff and content can be added.

A science program for the Malpais border group and partnered with BLM is underway. This is concentrating on evaluating the environmental effects of the long term and extensive burning program as undertaken by the Malpais Border Lands group. The next big project on the near horizon is an effort to use the Area of Interest (AOI) concept in a map based access portal to relevant land management data. The key is geo-referencing data so that a person would just need to “mouse-over” a map to see a list of available pertinent materials. So far they have over 1000 layers of data being prepared for display. It will be both government and non-government sourced. Malpais will be the first large scale test of the concept. Jason Carl is working on this landscape toolbox.

Ken Leiting spoke of the NMACD efforts to support the BLM and NRCS restore NM project. Their use of retired NRCS, BLM, FS conservationists to develop conservation plans for restore Nm cooperators continues as a real success story. ESD figure prominently in preparing these plans. This same cadre can be used to support ESD development with sampling, listening sessions, etc…

Jessie Ouzts is the NRCS forester and forester with stae forestry. She is ready and able to support Forest ESD development as part of her job.

Laura Burkett has inherited the Las Cruces BLM state and community mapping project. They are developing the second round of data for this powerful management tool. She said the Pitchfork area in the Malpais area is in need of a soils ESD update. It is a hybrid of LRU 42.2 and 41.3 and a cienega thrown in for interest. Jornada is doing contract work with the nature conservancy in that area.

Wayne Robbie said that in the NFS ESD discussions are now well underway. The center along the lines of their capacity to participate, the utility in a forest setting, how to incorporate plant associations, Habitat types-TES versus ESD. How ESD can be used within published TEUI, How the hierarchy of ESD and the FS sytem fit together. Wayne had many handouts on TES/TEUI/ESD projects and their utility in riparian mapping and forest restoration efforts.

Meeting concluded at 2pm.