



2-3-2
COHESIVE
STRATEGY
PARTNERSHIP

Tour of Walatowa Timber Industries – Notes

Exploring the Relationship Between Local Mills, Restoration Work, and Rural Communities

Where: Walatowa Visitor's Center, Jemez Pueblo, NM

When: 06/03/2026



Attendees

1. Adrian Parrott
2. Apple Snider
3. Audrey Ek-Psomas
4. Brett Baer
5. Carina Bracer
6. Claudia Brookshire
7. Cody Dems
8. Colin Tucker
9. Doug Ligale
10. Erin McElroy
11. Gabe Kohler
12. Governor John Galvan
13. Grace Sorenson



14. Jeremy Marshall
15. Jody Bickel
16. John Ussery
17. Ketevan Ussery
18. Kristen Pelz
19. Lily Bruce
20. Marcelina Smith
21. Marvis Aragon
22. Maya MacHamer
23. Paul Gurule
24. Paul Martinez
25. Peter Watson
26. Rachel Wood
27. Reuben Montes
28. Rick Duran
29. Rosa Soriano
30. Sandra Dingman
31. Sarah Otero
32. Shannon Maes
33. Trevor Armijo
34. Tricia Keffer
35. Vincent DuPont

Welcome to the Jemez Pueblo – Governor Galvan

- Common stewardship goals unite us; we come together to build relationships and share related expertise
- Jemez Pueblo has always been a ‘timber Tribe’ by stewardship and livelihood; Jemez people are still deeply tied to their ancestral lands that are currently managed by USFS within Rio Chama CFLRP. Collaboration is essential for managing these lands
- Jemez Pueblo was very involved in SW Jemez CFLRP and wants to be part of Rio Chama CFLRP



Jemez Community Development - *Marvis Aragon*

- Environmental stewardship and culture are both fundamental to economic opportunity creation for Jemez
 - Jemez Enterprises hires locally, creating economic opportunities that also enable individuals to share their magic and medicine with the community, to stay in their community and sustain their language and their way of life
- Hiring 5 interns as key part of workforce development initiative; when people self-identify their potential, we have healthier minds, bodies, and communities
- Jemez Enterprises was established under federal law and manages the Pueblo's visitor center, Hummingbird Café, Redrocks Convenience Store, Redrocks Trails, and Walatowa Timber Industries sawmill
- Partners can support the Pueblo by listening first, understanding, then supporting
- Walatowa Timber Industries will undertake strategic planning this year. Looking at available inventory and how to position the mill for future products and opportunities

Why Local Mills Matter - *Gabe Kohler*

- Restoring forests for fire risk reduction has led to fewer legal battles than earlier more timber-focused era of forest management, but also requires mills to make something with restoration byproduct (smaller diameter wood)



- Wood products markets fluctuate over time; surviving sawmills are already very adaptable and resilient
 - There are around 30 small mills across the 2-3-2 landscape that subsidize restoration work through hauling and processing
 - According to CFRLP-funded analysis, mills in 2-3-2 are processing at about 50% of their capacity (with current infrastructure)
 - There is a huge bottleneck in outyear planning to align NEPA ready work within access to roads for hauling.
- Small local sawmills provide critical economic opportunities in rural communities. WTI has 15 FTEs plus contractors, this is equivalent to 3,500 jobs in Albuquerque when adjusting for community population. Mill wages have secondary effects, creating and sustaining local economy.



Rio Chama CFLRP - *Sandee Dingman* Rio Chama CFLRP Project Manager

- The goals are around promoting active forest and watershed restoration work with socioeconomic benefits to rural communities. Although CFLRP dollars are only usable on USFS land, the socio-economic impact of investment goes well beyond NFS boundaries.
- CFLRP creates a major federal funding flow to manage – working with local partners can be ‘like trying to fill a teacup with a firehose,’ requiring thoughtful effort to match large-scale funding to small-scale operators



Learning from the SW Jemez CFLRP - *Jeremy Marshall, Senior Forester at the Forest Stewards Guild*

- “SW Jemez CFLRP is to Rio Chama CFLRP as apples are to Saturn:”
 - SW Jemez had \$4M annual appropriation just on the Jemez Ranger District with minimal business rules, vs. the current Rio Chama \$3M divided by 4 forests with stricter business rules. \$600K Santa Fe NF allocation spread across 4 Districts of the Santa Fe (Jemez, Cuba, Coyote, Espanola RDs)
 - Rio Chama CFLRP is decentralized by design and there is no 10-year Stewardship Contract like SW Jemez has. Funding is only intended to be seed money to bring in other investments
 - Hard to count on our Federal partners in this moment of chaos and upheaval, which has been very challenging for all partners, but especially agency staff.
 - NM Forestry is having to step up and cover more in current funding climate resilience.
 - SW Jemez CFLRP had additional support via unlimited overtime, Enterprise USFS help, timber markers from Texas, and Regional Office support. Rio Chama doesn't have any of the same support
- The charge for this field tour is to *think creatively*. Timber is a focus of current US Forest Service leadership, but no new money is being directed towards getting restoration work done

Supply and Contracting - *Paul Martinez, Santa Fe NF Supervisory Forester*

- Current USFS reorganization contributing to uncertainty and delays in contracting and agreements; also affecting pipeline of NEPA projects
- Timber Sales vs. Service Contracts
 - Timber sale – USFS marks the unit, hosts site tour, contractors submit sealed bids and the lowest bidder wins
 - Two kinds of service contracts, IRTC and IRSC - USFS identifies service work (improvements in the project area such as roads, culverts, etc.) contractors can bid on and upon completion receive credits towards the timber sale. Rising costs and travel distances are making it harder for contractors to compete
 - Contract agreement - USFS works with partnering organization to develop treatment polygon, USFS provides funding, and Partner oversees bidding and project completion



Follow Up

- The Socioeconomic Subcommittee should round up and share workforce development/support programs, like the NM Job Training Incentives Act which pays 25% of wages for first 6-months of employee training
- We need to think creatively in structuring contracts and agreements: less than 6-inch diameter restoration work is hard for a mill to turn a profit - It costs too much from stump to product and we don't have control over international markets and trade. Contracting and Agreement webinar?
- Hauling Distances: The areas where restoration work is the most beneficial ecologically are not well aligned with efficient hauling/travel to mills. Transportation Grants? Sort Yard?

Questions and Discussion: How can the 2-3-2 be a better partner to small mills?

- What information is needed to help Walatowa Timber Industries plan going forward?
 - Need known supply for 15-20 years
 - *Greater need to understand contracting process and timeframes*
- What is the biggest bottleneck for ensuring future supply?
 - NEPA polygons get scaled down at every step of process - need ways to streamline NEPA



- Collaboration is the wave of the future!
- There is an emerging new National Forestry Technician Apprenticeship Program – how could this bring capacity to CFLRP work?
- Walatowa Timber Industries mill receives about 600 truck loads per year; soon able to double capacity
 - In NM ponderosa stands, ~1.5 truckloads = 1 acre of restoration work
 - It costs ~\$1000 per 100 miles of road travel, yet each load is only worth \$800
 - *We need to subsidize hauling costs or develop central sites*
- John Ussery Announcement
 - In ecosystems, the real winners are not the ones that consume the most but those that collaborate the most. The 2-3-2 is the same
 - Developed a Watershed Resilience Online Marketplace (growing from Santa Claran 2-3-2 discussions)
 - Forum to match partner needs and suppliers; aims to improve connectivity within our network