

TAYLOR PARK ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

(Taylor Park AMG)

Operations Manual

March 2022

This Operations Manual may be modified or amended at any time by agreement of signatories on the Taylor Park Memorandum of Understanding.

This is Appendix A as referenced in the Taylor Park Memorandum of Understanding.

1. PURPOSE

In this document, the Taylor Park Adaptive Management Group (Taylor Park AMG) refers to the volunteer stakeholder group working to share knowledge of social, economic, and ecological conditions to inform the Taylor Park Vegetation Management Project.

The primary purpose of the Taylor Park AMG is to assist the Gunnison Ranger District of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) in applying an adaptive management framework in accordance with the Taylor Park EA.

2. VISION AND MISSION

Vision: Achieving a resilient and adaptive upper Taylor Park Basin that provides ecosystem services, maintains ecological integrity, and sustains community values in the face of environmental change, through the support of a diverse and active collaborative group.

Mission: Promote forest, community and watershed health through science and values-based collaboration.

3. OBJECTIVES

- Provide comments designed to inform agency decision making on treatment sites within the project's proposed treatment areas and treatment design.
- Help with articulating monitoring questions.
- Participate in the post-treatment field review and evaluation of the effects of treatment to be included as part of the annual report for Forest Management Review.
- Review ongoing monitoring to make recommendations for adaptive management of future projects.
- Have representation at the annual review with the District and Science Team.
- Anticipate roadblocks that may arise and work with the District and the Science Team to resolve.
- Strive for consensus of diverse interests on formal comments/recommendations submitted to the District.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ADAPTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT

- Every effort should be made to ensure participation of the identified stakeholder groups.
- The process will encourage participation by all stakeholders.
- Decision making processes for the group should focus on producing outcomes that strive to meet the terms of the Taylor Park Project NEPA decision.
- Projects will include a monitoring component.
- Projects will honor the complexity of forest ecosystems and use the best available science for their implementation.
- Projects will focus on creating and maintaining healthy forest ecosystems and consider the community's economic needs and impacts to local landowners and businesses.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Taylor Park AMG will function as an independent working group. It will serve in an advisory role to the District for implementation and monitoring of the Taylor Park EA.

a. Membership

The Taylor Park AMG will provide membership and voting rights to organizations and individuals representing key interests and perspectives involving, geographic, economic and social balance, and knowledge of the lands and resources within the Taylor Park project area. The members will be self-selected by stakeholder category. The stakeholder interests and number of seats were established by open public process design workshops. The identified interest groups to be represented and the number of voting board seats available are:

<i>Organization/Interest</i>	<i>Number of Board Seats</i>
Colorado State Forest Service	1
Community member at large	1
Conservation	1
Forestry Logger	1
Forestry Processor	1
Grazing/Agriculture	1
Gunnison County Commissioner or designee	1
Local Business	1
Mining	1
Recreation/Outfitter	3
Taylor Park Homeowners	2
Water Resources	1
Wildlife and aquatic species	2
<i>Total</i>	<i>17</i>

- It is important that the Taylor Park AMG structure assures continuity over the years and can apply collaborative learning from year to year. Therefore, members should be able to make multi-year commitments to attending meetings and field trips.
- Alternates may be assigned for each stakeholder interest and can then serve as the proxy described below.
- Members may be added to the group as the need arises by nomination and approval of the Taylor Park AMG.

- It should be noted that seats can sit vacant until able to be filled.

b. Meetings

- The Taylor Park AMG anticipates convening three (3) or four (4) meetings annually knowing that the group may need to meet more often depending on group/project needs.
- Members will read materials submitted in advance of meetings and complete assignments accepted. Members shall participate actively in meetings.
- The full membership may elect to nominate and approve a Chair and Vice Chair.
- Meetings will be open to the public. Time will be allowed at the end of the meeting agenda for public comment.
- Members can join virtually as technology is available but should make an earnest effort to attend in person.
- A qualified facilitator or a member of Western Colorado University's Center for Public Lands (CPL) will facilitate all meetings.
- An agenda will be prepared and followed for each meeting. The meeting schedule and agenda will be posted on the CPL website and the Taylor Park AMG project webpage.
- Minutes of each meeting will be recorded and distributed to all members and posted on the Taylor Park AMG project website.

c. Code of Conduct

Taylor Park AMG members will adhere to the following basic rules of conduct:

- *Focus on learning.*
 - Come willing to learn.
 - Come to meetings prepared.
 - Listen to understand. Be present and aim to fully hear others.
 - Critique constructively and ask questions to learn.
 - Be willing to be creative, explore alternatives, and search for opportunities.
 - Share all relevant information.
 - Share and consider information from diverse sources.
 - Please ask—there are no stupid questions.
 - Respect the range of knowledge present in the group and avoid stereotyping.
- *Listen and speak with respect.*
 - Only one person speaks at a time. Allow people to finish their thought. No interrupting and no side conversations.
 - Speak when you have something to say: bring up concerns and different views.
 - Commit to stating interests, problems, and opportunities rather than positions.
 - Voice your concerns and take the time to address conflicting concerns.

- Do not dominate discussions. Do not use meetings as a forum to “soapbox.”
 - Members will respect the personal integrity and values of other members both in and outside of meetings.
 - Regard disagreements as “problems to be solved” rather than as “battles to be won.” Search for opportunities, alternatives and use the creativity of the group to find the best solution.
 - No personal attacks or accusations. Threats of violence and aggressive outbursts from any member of the Taylor Park AMG will result in the termination of the meeting for the day and consideration of engagement of individuals moving forward.
 - Lack of participation from any member for over a significant amount of time will result in consideration of engagement of individuals moving forward including possible termination.
- *Communication outside of meetings.*
 - Keep your colleagues and constituents informed about the process and the progress of discussions.
 - Bring relevant information back to the group.
 - Do not criticize individuals or the group process. Bring your concerns directly to the individual or the group.
 - Do not presume to speak for others who you do not represent.
 - No backroom deals.
 - Members will keep commitments and honor agreements.

d. Committees

Standing and ad hoc committees may be appointed as necessary to work on specific issues or tasks and report back to the full Taylor Park AMG. The Taylor Park AMG may request persons with specific knowledge or expertise to serve on committees who are not members of the Taylor Park AMG. Committee members shall function according to the Taylor Park AMG Code of Conduct and Operations Manual.

5. DECISION MAKING PROTOCOL FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal: To come to a recommendation that group members can support following a respectful hearing of all concerns.

The Taylor Park AMG will give written comments/recommendations to the Gunnison Ranger District on a five-finger scale of agreement. Members “vote” by raising fingers in numbers representative of the following:

1. Endorsement – member likes it.
2. Endorsement with minor point of contention – Basically, member likes it.
3. Agreement with Minor Reservations – Member can live with it.

4. Stand aside with major reservations – Formal disagreement, but will not block the proposal/provision.
5. Block – Member will not support the proposal.

- Consensus is reached when all members vote 1, 2, or 3.
- Consensus with Major Reservations is when all members vote 1, 2, 3, or 4.
- Consensus is not reached when one or more members vote 5.

a. Reaching Consensus

Project-related recommendations will be made by the Taylor Park AMG. Recommendations made during Taylor Park AMG meetings will be recorded and distributed to all members and placed on the website. Each meeting will begin with a brief review of the recommendations made during the previous meeting.

Taylor Park AMG members are encouraged to prioritize attending meetings in person. If this is not possible, members are encouraged to join virtually (when available), ensure a proxy is in attendance, or to submit written input to the facilitator ahead of time. Regular members can send a designated alternate to participate in Taylor Park AMG meetings and vote by proxy in the regular member's absence. Alternates must be an informed affiliate or member of the organization, business, or entity being represented, and be able to represent the active member in making recommendations.

As recommendations are being made by the Taylor Park AMG, meeting members will be asked to indicate their support or verbal confirmation through the scale above. Each participant may disagree with elements of recommendations as they're being developed but must offer a constructive alternative that seeks to meet the needs of all members involved.

Once the Taylor Park AMG has agreed upon a recommendation, a report will be given to the District for their consideration in their role as decision makers for GMUG managed lands and waters. If the recommendation provided by the Taylor Park AMG is not chosen by the USFS staff managing the Taylor Park Adaptive Management process, the District will communicate to the AMG regarding the decision. Upon receiving feedback/explanation of decisions from the District, the AMG will direct further communication first to the appropriate line officer, then the Forest Supervisor.

b. Inability to Reach Consensus

The Taylor Park AMG will make every effort to reach consensus. If the Taylor Park AMG cannot reach consensus during a meeting, members are encouraged to continue the conversation via conference call, email discussions, in-person meetings, or whatever format is most effective, between meetings in order to function most effectively.

If a time comes when the Taylor Park AMG is unable to reach consensus the following actions will be taken:

- o Areas of agreement and disagreement will be clearly recorded in writing
- o Majority and minority reports will be written to address the areas of disagreement. Each of these documents will include:
 - The name of the lead author and names of all who agree with the report.
 - A description of their proposal and the rationale used to develop it.
 - What group members in the majority and minority anticipate doing if their proposal is chosen by the District (i.e. defend it in public), or not chosen (i.e. file an objection, or appeal, etc.).
- o The majority and minority reports will be given to the District for their consideration in their role as decision makers for GMUG managed lands and waters.

6. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Information about the Taylor Park AMG will be made available to external stakeholders via the [CPL's website \(www.centerforpubliclands.org\)](http://www.centerforpubliclands.org) and other venues as appropriate.
- The members of the Taylor Park AMG will do their best to take it upon themselves to share information about the process and progress of discussions among their constituents and community.
- All efforts will be taken to ensure that the group's work remains transparent to external audiences. Non-members will have access to all information and the ability to share thoughts and comments with the Taylor Park AMG.
- The Taylor Park AMG will give verbal or written updates at the public meetings held as part of the adaptive management cycle.
- The responsibility for public outreach relating to Taylor Park Vegetation Management project implementation remains with the District or its designee.

7. MONITORING

The Taylor Park AMG will make formal recommendations for consideration by the USFS, concerning monitoring activities that will be conducted in accordance with the Taylor Park Vegetation Management project. The Taylor Park AMG will help articulate monitoring questions and continually evaluate results as they are made available by the Science Team. Updates on monitoring activities will be presented at Taylor Park AMG Meetings by the Science Team, upon request. The results of monitoring activities will be used to make relevant recommendations and inform management decisions as part of the adaptive management process.