



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General
Membership Meeting Summary
May 6, 2016
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. Draft press release if/when WCB funds are awarded.
2. Obtain list of STF's proposed HUD grant projects and discuss prioritization and additional projects (Project WG to provide draft recommendations to STF and SNC).
3. LT to consider field trip dates for Agency folks and Legislators as requested by Mr. Amodio
4. Comparative monitoring questions to be developed in conjunction with Rim Fire Reforestation ROD
5. Mr. Patrick Koepele to convene Large Landscape Plan subcommittee

MEETING GOALS:

- To hear presentations/updates on current forest issues
- To act on 2016/2017 Objectives and Charter amendments
- To affirm process for moving forward with prioritization of HUD projects and developing Large Landscape Plan

SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Chris Trott welcomed the group and self-introductions were made.

Funding Updates:

Mr. Patrick Koepele distributed a grant summary. He noted the recent award of \$842,474 from SNC to fund restoration implementation of four meadows, ten springs, and two undersized culverts in the Cherry Creek Watershed. He also requested attendance by YSS members at the Wildlife Conservation Board meeting on June 2nd when they will consider a \$3,510,000 grant to benefit wildlife. Chair Trott applauded the Healthy Watershed Consortium proposal. Mr. John Amodio noted no applications from California were awarded funds.

Charter Amendments:

Ms. Carolyn Lott referred to the redlined amendments that were distributed electronically. The main thrust of the amendments is to replace the Steering Committee with the Leadership Team and to clarify how YSS positions will be communicated.

Agreement: There was consensus to accept the amendments.

2016/2017 Objectives:

Chair Trott provided an overview of the four goals and asked for comments and/or questions. He noted the rewrite of the Forest Plan was not envisioned when the objectives were updated, but may need to be added. He said the purpose of the objectives is to provide a way to check in, from time-to-time, and be sure the focus of YSS efforts is on what has been articulated. Mr. John Amodio added the first two goals are intended to be a partnership with the USFS.

Agreement: There was consensus to accept the objectives as circulated.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Tree Mortality Report:

Mr. Mike Albrecht said the effects of the bark beetle is expanding as four more counties have been added to the governor's critically impacted list. He announced Tuolumne County has opened a yard at Hatler Industrial Park for wood not going to market. The focus for tree removal is subdivisions as there is a concern about safety if the trees remain through next winter. Within the context of the county's 16-17 budget year, there are hopes to complete 12 large projects and a number of smaller ones. Compliments go to the multiple agencies that have had to integrate work to be more efficient. The process of getting permitting for entry on private land is still more lengthy than desired.

Mr. Randy Hanvelt said the Governor's Task Force meets on Monday. The CA Disaster Assistance Act is covering 75% of the costs for hazard tree removal that can impact public rights of way. A screen crew filmed some of the devastation and Mr. Hanvelt will send the link to Ms. Lott for distribution. Chair Trott noted CARB fully acknowledges wildfire contributes 50% of black carbon contaminants, but they only focus on pollutants that are human-generated.

Supervisor Jeanne Higgins referred to displayed maps, one of which illustrated the high hazard zones and noted SNF is in said zone. High, medium, and low priority areas of human threat were also illustrated. She said the FS had planned to put out salvage for the green forest. but had to switch to tree mortality salvage timber sales. They are also utilizing crews to fall trees using fuel reduction equipment.

Supervisor Higgins distributed the STF FY 16 Sales and the USFS Update on the Sequoia, Sierra, and Stanislaus mortality estimates. The FS is waiting for better weather so aerial surveys can be conducted and estimates can be updated. She noted the only area where new NEPA has been done is Wrights Creek. It is unclear whether any of the NEPA documents will need to be updated to reflect the change from green timber removal to removal of dead trees. However, the concerns about impacts to species and cultural sites are still the same as addressed in the original NEPA documents.

Supervisor Higgins continued saying the FS put together the current list of tree mortality treatment thinking they could sell that amount of timber. However, the FS knows it will bump up against a capacity issue.

Mr. Brian Wayland added the amount of salvage is unbelievable. It is a matter of what can be removed and the feasibility of getting it out. The blue stain market is not very good, but it can take some product. Mr. Bill Haigh said BLM has just started focusing on mortality as they do not have a lot of timber in the YSS area. However, now that the infestation is spreading north, it will affect more timber on BLM land in Tuolumne County.

USFS Updates:

Supervisor Higgins said the MOU among a number of agencies to include the USFS and CAL FIRE is supporting increased prescribed fire. STF has a lot of prescribed fire sites ready to go, but the rain has delayed setting them.

Supervisor Higgins brought maps and copies of the Reforestation Draft Record of Decision (ROD). She said she also has CDs and it is online. She acknowledged, to a large extent, it is based on input from YSS. It recommends spreading all four reforestation approaches across the landscape.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Mr. John Buckley noted press releases have gone out from YSS. He asked how YSS can be most effective in helping acquire dollars for comparative monitoring as that is the basis for YSS recommending the multiple approach concept.

Supervisor Higgins said she knew part of the premise for YSS support of their approach was that this could be a learning opportunity. However, there is nothing that can be built into the ROD to prescribe research. There will be some monitoring, but not the comparative monitoring YSS hopes for. She said it is a great opportunity for "citizen science" which helps connect people to the landscape through data collection and observation. This might be considered as a component of the HUD grant. She also suggested YSS formulate the research questions they would like answered through comparative monitoring.

Mr. Marty Gmelin said the FS laid out the four alternatives without bias. They did make sure the alternatives with burning were situated away from residential and high traffic recreational areas and that herbicides would not be used next to Camp Tawonga, for example.

Supervisor Higgins said the ROD addresses approximately 21,000 acres for reforestation efforts and roughly splits the acreage among the four alternatives. They will be monitoring stands for natural regeneration. There are also 13,000 acres of thinning and applying ISO stands, so that totals approximately 47,000 acres of some type of treatment. Some of the HUD grant funds will go to this effort. There is close to \$1M in Knutson-Vandenberg (K-V) Trust Funds. However, there is still a large funding gap. Other than in the Cornerstone area, there is very little of the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) that will take place in the near future.

Chair Trott indicated the FS has invited YSS to participate in a field trip to Wrights Creek. Ms. Lott will circulate the Doodle Poll.

Status of HUD Resiliency Project Identification:

Ms. Angela Avery, SNC, reported on progress-to-date on processing the NDRC grant. Ms. Avery said there has been no discussion regarding specific projects as the contracts have yet to be signed between HUD and the State of CA. She provided handouts to the group. Normally, there are only two years to expend the funds. However, the state has requested a full extension for a total of five years. When the decision on this is posted on the Federal Register, the clock will start clicking.

SNC is administering the Forest Health and the Biomass pillars. The next big step is developing the action plan which is extremely detailed. Once the plan is accepted, work can begin. They think work will start by the end of the year. They have not spent time talking about specific projects, but they are 100% committed to working with YSS on project priorities.

Ms. Avery said there is \$27M for the Forest and Watershed pillar. There are five categories within the pillar to prioritize projects. There is also some level of NEPA required. This application is unlike any HUD has dealt with previously as their projects have traditionally been urban projects. There was a recognition of the contribution of climate change on fires in the west. This grant is a model in the making. Therefore, HUD is likely to give the state more flexibility, but also to apply more scrutiny as it is not a traditional disaster relief project.

After distributing the list of possible alternatives for distribution of the funds within the five sub-pillars, Ms. Avery said the distribution will have to be decided prior to considering specific projects. The five sub-pillars are: Restoration and Reforestation, Biomass Removal and Thinning, Fuel Breaks, Rangeland Improvements, and Noxious Weed Removal.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Update on Activities in Sacramento:

Mr. Amodio reported the two “show-stoppers” for increased pace and scale are funding and policies. He believes there is a quickly closing window-of-opportunity for YSS as the Governor’s Declaration of Emergency has raised the forest profile. Until very recently, AB32 discussions did not acknowledge the role of healthy forests in relationship to greenhouse gases. CARB has very little capacity to understand the impact of biological systems versus human contributions to greenhouse gases. Mr. Amodio said this year is important as the scoping plan will be developed. CARB is going to determine how the annually raised funds of \$2.5B is going to be invested. The biggest challenge for CARB is putting forward a cohesive plan for how to move forward, rather than a silo approach.

Update on Pacific Ultrapower Chinese Station:

Chair Trott said the 30-year Ultrapower contract with PG&E expires in January. It appears Ultrapower will accept a 3-month extension to their fixed price contract amendment which will keep the plant operating through Oct 31 in the hopes something will change during the additional timeframe. The Utilities have been directed by the PUC to issue RFP’s for five-year contracts with those plants that can use fuel from the High Hazard Zone (HHZ). SNF is in a high impact area. However, the logistics are challenging as 50% of the wood product for the contract has to come from the HHZ in 2017. Even though the drought killed trees may be available, the current logging, chipping and trucking capacity is too small to accomplish the task. The minimum requirement increases by 10% each year up to 80%.

Large Landscape Plan:

The Chair reminded the group of the work Mr. Albrecht and Mr. Buckley put into the initial draft. Dr. Malcolm North and Dr. Peter Stine have reviewed the draft. However, the initial draft does not address the tree mortality issue. Chair Trott said the plan needs more vetting and there needs to be consideration of expanding markets and of marketing.

Chair Trott said while there is a desire to treat the Rim Fire area, there is also a desire to treat the green area, as well. He said the Leadership Team would like to establish a committee to continue work on the plan. The scope is to bring the plan to a point of development where it is ready for the general membership to discuss it.

Mr. Albrecht said he recommends YSS look ahead with optimism to the GTR220 (Integrating Wildlife Habitat and Forest Resilience with Fuels Reduction - Ecosystem Management Concepts for Mixed-Conifer Forests) as it is broadly supported. Mr. Amodio reminded the group part of the urgency is that later this summer, SNC will be picking another pilot project for the WIP.

Volunteers for the committee include: Karl Dambacher, Jim Maddox, Patrick Koepele, Michael Pickard, Mike Albrecht, Brian Waylund, John Amodio, and Chris Trott. Mr. Koepele will coordinate the meetings. Ms. Lott will send email addressed to Mr. Koepele.

Field Trip/s:

Chair Trott said the purpose of the field trip/s proposed by the Leadership Team is to educate decision-makers. There is a proposal to organize a joint field trip between YSS and TuCARE which would focus on tree mortality. Mr. Albrecht added a side benefit would be for the two organizations to get better acquainted. Mr. Koepele said there should be consideration of more than one trip as there is a need to get statewide environmental groups out to see the experimental forest and other forest conditions. There is also a need to expose state agency representatives to what is going on on-the-ground.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Next YSS General Meeting:

Friday, July 15th, 10a.m.-2p.m. – Bring your own lunch

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Jeff Redoutey	Blue Mountain Minerals	
John Romena	Buena Vista Biomass Power	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present
Linda Millsbaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
	CSERC/Alternate	
	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians	
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	Present
Jody Trott	CTBC/Alternate	
Scott Gelfand	Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp	
Phil Coffin	FBTC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	Present
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	Present
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Michael Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association/4x4 in Motion	Present
Paul Maben	Pacific Gas & Electric	
Kamran Rasheed	PG&E Alternate	
Stuart Crook	Permitee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Mike Horvath	SFPUC/Natural Resources	
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Jon Sturtevant	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	Present
	SCTG/Alternate	
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
	SPI Alternate	
	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
Willie Dutra	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	
John Gray	TC/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Vicki Albrecht	TuCARE/Alternate	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	Present
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Stephanie Suess	TCRCD/Alternate	Present
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	Present
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	Present
Jim Maddox	Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present

LIASON MEMBERS

Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	Present
Nathan Graveline	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
Linda Mazzu	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
Randi Jorgensen	SNC/Alternate	
Allen Johnson	SouthWest InterFace Team	Present
Scott Tangenberg	USFS Stanislaus NF	
Ann Denton	USFS/Alternate	Present
Marty Gmelin	USFS/Alternate	Present

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
--------------	--------------------	---------

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Randy Hanvelt	TC Board of Supervisors
Jim Junette	USFS
Jeanne Higgins	USFS
Kent Smith	SNC
Not Signed In	Americorps Members with TRT