



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General
Membership Meeting Summary
July 15, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 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. USFS to provide presentation of projects still in need of funding.
5. VC Graveline to coordinate meeting between Ms. Moore and the WCB/SNC Grant Committee
6. Develop and send letter of support for SNC/TUD Ditch Fuel Reduction Grant
7. Supervisor Higgins to communicate with the Pacific Southwest Research Station regarding the YSS monitoring questions
8. Look into suggestions for future agenda topics (see below)

MEETING GOALS:

- To hear presentations/updates on current forest issues
- To develop consensus on current action items

SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Chris Trott opened the meeting and self-introductions were made. The Chair welcomed new attendees: Ms. Alisha Lomeli, PG&E, Mr. Jeb Brooks, SPI, and Ms. Bailey Hunter, Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians.

Funding Updates:

Mr. Patrick Koepfle reported on the status of YSS grants. He said the National Forest Foundation (NFF) Community Capacity Grant is nearly completed. Funds have been used for past field trips and the work of Mr. John Amodio and Mr. Peter Stine. The Resource Advisory Commission (RAC) pays for the services of Ms. Carolyn Lott and website costs. This grant expires in September and a renewal request has been submitted to the RAC for \$12,000. The meeting is August 19th and it was suggested a representative of YSS attend. The Chair thanked Mr. Walt Kruse for writing the application.

Through another NFF grant that funded Rim Fire reforestation efforts, volunteers planted 57,000 trees. The volunteers came from all across the US. A renewal request has been submitted.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Planning Grant is complete. \$842K in SNC implementation grant funds have been awarded and work has begun. The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved \$3.5M in implementation funds.

A Fish & Wildlife Prop One grant has been submitted to begin planning efforts for the YSS Large Landscape Plan. It includes a wildlife assessment, planning using LIDAR, and NEPA/CEQA documents. The area of focus is the green forest from the North Fork and Upper

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Clavey to the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) boundary. The Chair thanked Mr. Koepele and Ms. Mary Moore for all their work on preparing the application.

A member asked Mr. Koepele if a percentage of the grant can be used to help pay for Ms. Lott's services. Mr. Koepele said he will look into that and existing grants to determine opportunities.

WCB & SNC Grants:

Ms. Moore provided the background for the implementation awards from SNC and WCB. SNC's planning money set the stage for the implementation funding. There are four types of projects funded through the SNC grant and seven types through the WCB award. The WCB wanted planning included in the implementation grant, while SNC provided planning opportunities through an initial award. The projects are as follows:

- WCB installation of two wildlife guzzlers
- WCB installation of 19 wildlife friendly troughs and replacement of 2 existing troughs
- WCB Aspen Stand restoration (32.2 acres)
- WCB installation of Great Gray Owl nest structures (26-58) Note: The Tribe did not want structures in their areas of significance as owls are a bad omen to them. Ms. Sherri Brennan said grazers have not been included sufficiently in the outreach. Ms. Moore said the FS has engaged a variety of groups including Permittees. USFS staff will be in contact with affected parties.
- WCB deer habitat restoration (719 acres)
- SNC deer habitat restoration (204 acres)
- WCB culvert replacement/removal (2 Sites)
- SNC culvert replacement (2 sites) Note: There are about 20 sites that need restoration/replacement. All of these projects address just a small portion of the need.
- WCB meadow and stream restoration (42 acres/9 sites)
- SNC meadow and stream restoration (21 acres/4sites)
- SNC spring restoration (7acres/7 sites) Note: 120 springs need some improvement.

Ms. Moore said other opportunities include the HUD grant which will help with forestry-related activities. Also, a Prop One grant application has been submitted for large landscape planning. Through the Plumas Foundation a proposal was submitted for implementation of five meadows in the Reynolds area and planning for 15 Rim meadows.

Applications will also be submitted for other Prop One solicitations, the Green House Gas Fund, the CAL FIRE fund, and through federal partners.

VC Nathan Graveline said YSS would like to engage in discussions about the projects. VC Graveline will coordinate with Ms. Moore regarding the projects. Mr. Jim Maddox, Mr. Jim Phelan, Mr. Koepele, and a representative of the Permittees will work with VC Graveline and Ms. Moore through a WCB/SNC Grant Committee. The goal is to convene prior to the next YSS meeting. Supervisor Higgins said YSS will need to be consulted if there are any significant changes to projects.

It was suggested the USFS provide a presentation of projects that still need funding.

SNC/TUD Ditch Project:

Mr. Michael Pickard said the impetus for the proposal is if there was a fire, the TUD wooden portions of the flumes would burn up and could take a number of months to restore. During that time, water delivery would be interrupted. He said an application to SNC is being written for

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fuels reduction on 200 acres of USFS land on Mi-Wok Ranger District. For the overall project, it will be an all lands approach working in partnership with SPI, PG&E and TUD. Mr. Pickard said they would like a letter of support from YSS for the project.

Chair Trott asked what the primary goal is and what the end product will be. Mr. Matt Waverly said different people were having separate conversations about fuel reduction and through this effort, everyone got together. The primary goal is fuel reduction around wooden flumes. The idea is to make a shaded fuel break with canopy reduction of about 50% and removal of the understory. They will use hand-thinning, chipping, small burn piles, and some mastication.

Mr. John Buckley recommended YSS provide a strong letter of support. He noted Dogwoods, Alders, and Maples should not be removed as they provide soil stability. Riparian areas need to be treated differently, as well.

Some work will start as early as the fall by PGE. The result of the grant application will come in December. Work could begin on forest service land in the spring. They have not yet developed a budget for the application. SPI will take care of their own property, as will PG&E. The idea is to coordinate all efforts. Another grant has been submitted for funds to help on SPI land.

Agreement: There was agreement to send a letter of support for the application from YSS.

YSS Large Landscape Plan and Tree Mortality:

Mr. Koepele said the Large Landscape Plan was the initial focus of YSS. Mr. Buckley and Mr. Mike Albrecht drafted the original plan. It was originally put together as a conceptual plan for the public, not as a scientific document. At the last YSS meeting, there was agreement to convene the LLP Committee. The committee was convened in May. The group agreed to keep pushing the document forward. Mr. Peter Stine, retired from Pacific SW Research Center, was hired to assist with the scientific aspect of the draft plan. The committee needs to reconvene to make sure there is a clear understanding of what the plan will be used for.

Chair Trott said this plan addresses one of the goals of YSS. YSS will want to bring it to the USFS and then start doing outreach to potential supporters and funders. The Chair said this plan was pre-tree mortality so how to proceed with it now needs to be discussed.

Mr. Albrecht spoke about the tree mortality efforts taking place that are focused on roads and subdivisions. He said Leisure Pines was a pilot project and the difference is dramatic. The emphasis now is on Mi-Wuk Village. There are about 4,000 trees that need to come down along the public right away. Dead Oaks can be removed if they could fall on power lines and/or roads.

Ms. Alicia Lomeli, from PG&E, said there is a new program being offered that involves PG&E removing trees taken down to protect their lines. Even trees felled last year can be addressed. Tuolumne County is the first county where this is being implemented.

Supervisor Higgins said the USFS approach on tree mortality is focused on where people gather or where there is public infrastructure. They have felled over 10,000 trees already. The next effort will be on the watersheds. The USFS is utilizing authority under the Farm Bill that allows a CE to treat insect and disease stands. All of the treatment is dependent upon availability of resources. They are currently putting together some contracts for equipment. It is estimated the Stanislaus NF rate of mortality is approximately six to twelve months behind the Sierra NF and the Sequoia NF. Supervisor Higgins said the Pacific Southwest Research Station is working on some predictive models.

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There is an effort to have the mortality issue declared as a federal disaster.

Mr. Steve Brink said insect and disease is not in the Stafford Act so the current situation cannot be declared a federal disaster. There needs to be an amendment to the Stafford Act.

Mr. Albrecht suggested 3,000 acre blocks could be sold as large landscapes to clean up under a CE with a stewardship approach. He cited past personal experience where he was responsible for doing the cultural and historic archeological work. He said, at a minimum, a pilot project should be pursued. He noted YSS represents almost all the interests in the county and will support the USFS doing something bold to address the mortality. Supervisor Brennan said, from a county perspective, she would like to see a small group go after this aggressively. She said Tuolumne County and the USFS should lead a pilot project. Mr. Brian Waylund said if 3,000 acre plots are awarded, thinning should be done at the same time.

Mr. Buckley noted there is an unknown in regards to which green trees will ultimately succumb to the drought and bark beetle, so caution should be used in removing green trees at this time. He also said time-is-of-the-essence in harvesting bark beetle trees as there is only a six-month window during which the wood is of value.

Agreement: A Mortality Committee (Mr. Buckley, Mr. Albrecht, Mr. Waylund, Mr. Dwight Follien, Mr. Jim Phelan, Mr. James Maddox, Mr. Brink, Supervisor Brenna, VC Graveline, and Chair Trott) will work with Supervisor Higgins on ideas for more boldly addressing the mortality issue.

Supervisor Higgins will report back to the committee regarding the ability to include a pilot project under the Farm Bill. Mr. Albrecht asked that performing the archeological work be included in the pilot project. Supervisor Higgins will send Ms. Lott available dates to poll with the committee.

Supervisor 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 for trees that can impact public rights of way. A screen crew filmed some of the devastation and Supervisor 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 FY16 Sales" and the "USFS Update on the Sequoia, Sierra, and Stanislaus Mortality Estimates." 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.

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Mr. 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 the infestation is spreading north, it will affect more timber on BLM land in Tuolumne County.

Mr. Koepele said he does not think YSS should stop work on the LLP, but rather wrap tree mortality into it.

Agreement: There was consensus to focus on tree mortality now, but continue efforts on the LLP.

Reforestation EIS Status and Settlement:

Chair Trott said YSS submitted a friendly objection letter. CSERC and the county did the same. An unfriendly objection letter was submitted by the John Muir Project and the Center for Biological Diversity. Mr. Barney Gant facilitates the objections. The decision will be rendered by noon on July 29th.

It was reported Mr. Chad Hanson is not interested in participating in a mediation meeting with other objectors. He wishes to meet separately with Mr. Gant. It was noted the friendly objectors do not intend to participate if the unfriendly objectors are not attending. Mr. Buckley said the basis of the unfriendly objection is a claim that there are thousands of acres heavily stocked with conifers that don't need reforestation. The USFS says where they find places like this, they will not reforest. Mr. Buckley said Mr. Hanson confused logging with biomass removal. YSS needs to be poised to respond immediately to support the USFS if there is litigation.

Pacific Ultrapower:

Chair Trott said as a result of Governor's Emergency Proclamation, the CPUC was asked to do whatever they can to extend contracts for plants that use materials from "high hazard zones." They ordered the energy companies to send out solicitations and bids are due in a couple of weeks. Pacific Ultrapower is bidding on all three solicitations: PG&E, SoCal, and San Diego Electric. The key question is how is an energy price that is at least twice the market going to be paid? Will the CPUC approve this?

Ultrapower will find out if it is on the short list by September. If it happens, Pacific Ultrapower will shut down for a period of time to ramp up and make improvements. Mr. Buckley noted the bidding process needs to be informed regarding the HUD material removal. Supervisor Brennan said the PUC has been absent at the last few Task Force meetings. The county will follow up with the state agencies who can help inform the PUC.

Mr. Albrecht asked if the contracts for Ultrapower come through, can the USFS support 80,000 bone dry tons in 2017? There is going to be a need to provide access for 24 loads over 252 days. Supervisor Higgins said the USFS will have to think through the mechanics of how to get the material out. Mr. Brink noted roughly two thirds of tier one and tier two materials have to come from the forest for all successful bidders. The only forest with a lot of NEPA cleared areas is the Stanislaus. The Rim Fire footprint is already positioned.

Sacramento Activities:

Chair Trott referred to a report from Mr. John Amodio. He said most of the activity related to the Forest Climate Action Team. The meeting was well attended and all participants were in

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agreement that forest management has a real role in air quality. Once the plan is completed, it should lead to funding for implementation.

Reforestation Monitoring Questions:

Chair Trott distributed the questions developed and reminded the group YSS supported the ROD as long as there is monitoring that takes place to learn from the various methodologies. At a previous meeting, Supervisor Higgins noted USFS researchers choose what they wish to research. The Chair said YSS is committed to finding researchers to work on this. He commended Mr. Buckley for formulating the draft which was then reviewed and amended by the Reforestation Committee reviewed and amended. Ms. Lott will send the document to Supervisor Higgins so she can communicate the questions to the Pacific Southwest Research Station.

HUD Grant Update:

Chair Trott shared information from Ms. Angela Avery stating on June 7th the Federal Registry Notice went out which starts the time clock. The grant agreement is estimated to be signed late July-August. CALFIRE, USFS, and SNC agreements are scheduled to be signed late August. The action plan is due late October. Until SNC knows more specifically what HUD will allow, they do not have direction on what projects will qualify. All of the projects will be vetted through a public process. YSS will likely need to comment in September.

Field Trip/s:

Mr. Albrecht said TuCARE organizes an annual educational field trip into the forest. This year the trip will focus on tree mortality. The TuCARE board approved hosting the field trip in conjunction with YSS. The date will likely be late September. YSS will have input into how the trip will be structured and the invitees. The YSS Leadership Team wants the focus to be on state agency staff. Ms. Stephanie Suess said the Columbia College Board has sponsored two lecture series and are going to sponsor another on tree mortality and it would be useful to align the series with the field trip. Volunteers for the Field Trip Committee were Mr. Albrecht, Chair Trott, and Ms. Suess.

Agreement: There was consensus to have YSS co-sponsor the field trip with TuCARE. A Field Trip Committee (Mr. Albrecht, Chair Trott, and Ms. Suess) was formed to work with TuCARE.

Topics of Interest for Future Meetings:

Chair Trott asked for input. Supervisor Brennan said it would be useful to hear a presentation on how waterways are declared impaired and what the body of science is that is used and where there are deficiencies. Dr. Ken Tate, University of California, (kwatate@ucdavis.edu) and Mr. Dan Makin are the contacts. The Central Valley Water Quality Control Board has received a petition to list a number of sites within the T-Stan Watershed. Mr. Buckley said it would be good to include a speaker who does not come from the grazing perspective. Supervisor Higgins said the CVWQCB could send staff to speak about the processes that are in place.

Mr. Follien said he would like to have a discussion on recreational trails and how they work with fuel breaks. Mr. Pickard noted there was a presentation at the National Forest Foundation on how to use recreation money as match funding. He added introducing recreational components into some of the forest projects might open the door to private company donors like Cliff Bar, REI, etc.

Mr. Buckley suggested an update on the timeframe for Forest Plan.

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Next YSS General Meeting:

Friday, September 16th, 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	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	
Linda Millsbaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
Julia Stephens	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	
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	Present
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Michael Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association/4x4 in Motion	Present
Alisha Lomeli	Pacific Gas & Electric	
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	
	SCTG/Alternate	
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
	SPI Alternate	
Bailey Hunter	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	Present
Willie Dutra	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	Present
John Gray	TC/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present

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Vicki Albrecht	TuCARE/Alternate	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Stephanie Suess	TCRCD/Alternate	Present
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	Present
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	Present
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	
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	
Marty Gmelin	USFS/Alternate	Present

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Randy Hanvelt	TC Board of Supervisors
Matt Waverly	PG&E
Jeanne Higgins	USFS
Kara Kelly	TCRCD
Clare Long	USFS
Marie Benech	USFS