



Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General Membership Meeting Summary March 17, 2017

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. Invite media to visit some project sites for purpose of authoring article on SNC & WCB projects.
2. USFS to provide presentation of projects still in need of funding.
3. Set up meeting with YSS representatives, Ms. Benech, and the PSWRS to further discuss reforestation monitoring/research. (on hold pending application for funding by research partners)
4. Continue efforts to promote LLPP through Senator Feinstein's office.
5. Investigate grant opportunity as suggested by Mr. Brink.

MEETING GOALS:

- To hear presentations/updates on current forest-related issues & NDRC
- Discussion and possible next steps regarding LLPP

SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Trott opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Current and Potential Grant Status:

Mr. Seth Connelly provided a grant status update and an overview of TRT as the fiscal agent for YSS. The update included grants from the National Forest Foundation, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and Wildlife Conservation Board, as well as, tree planting and restoration efforts being coordinated by TRT and Stanislaus National Forest. A balance sheet was distributed. Chair Trott added, when the timing is appropriate, YSS would like to have the media come out to view projects and hopefully pen an article about what is happening on the ground.

Chair Trott also updated the group on a \$5,000 grant from 2016 RAC funding for facilitation. The Stanislaus National Forest will contribute an additional \$5,000 to make the total \$10,000.

The group also discussed storm damage to roads, including how funding could be obtained to repair the damage.

Sacramento Activities Update:

Mr. John Amodio reported on involvement in the Forest Carbon Plan and AB 32 goals for Forest Health stating comments on behalf of YSS were submitted. There was discussion regarding the importance of telling the YSS story.

Future funding was discussed including a recent meeting with Mr. Jim Branham from Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Pending opportunities include:

- Pacific Forest Trust - Allocating 20% of GHG funds to working landscapes and forests. Would go through Wildlife Conservation Board (25% funding for high speed rail also comes out of GHG funding.)
- Parks Bond slated to be on the ballot.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Pacific Ultrapower Update:

Mr. Dennis Serpa said the PG&E contract ended last year. The 2016 Biomass Renewable Auction Mechanism (BioRAM) contract, to help with tree mortality, started last week and will last for five years. 50% of the feedstock must come from forest hazard zones. Next year the contract requires 60%, with 80% in following years. Mr. Serpa provided an overview of how feedstock is certified and what constitutes Tier 1 and 2 Hazard Zones.

The plant has been down since the end of October. They did most the upgrading work in-house, which saved money. The contract started on March 1 and they started work on March 8th. The power is being sold to Southern CA Edison.

Natural Disaster Resiliency Competition Project – Locations for Watershed Resilience Pillar:

Mr. Elliot VanderKolk said the final agreement with HUD was signed at the end of January. SNC is still working out interagency agreements for approximately \$40M in funding. They are also working to get the first feasibility study consultant on board for biomass.

NEPA and CEQA issues are being worked on and HUD still must adopt the NEPA. They hope to get a waiver from the state.

Ms. Maria Benech said approximately 25,000 acres are targeted and they hope the public and YSS can help determine locations. They cannot spend HUD money where other funds are being spent, and those will be the only locations excluded from choice.

Ms. Benech said it is more expensive to plant in clumps and groups than in rows and explained why. Additional planning is need to address the planting schemes and additional crew costs to set up the planting.

Approximately 600 acres are being planted this year, 2,000 acres next year, and 3-4,000 acres the following year. The desire is to plant 7,000-8,000 acres over the next four years. There is an opportunity for YSS to help find funding for additional reforestation. She noted the weather has been impacting site prep and adds to the costs.

Reforestation Workshop Report and Update on TUD/SNC Ditch Project:

Mr. Michael Pickard, from SNC, provided an overview of the CAL FIRE workshop held in the Fresno. He said it would be of benefit to do a similar workshop for forest landowners in this region. The topics covered in the workshop included elevation and seed zones being considered for planting.

TUD acquired funding for the Ditch Project. Access to the project has been stalled due to storm damage. Work will still start on time, but not on the A Flume. They will start on the lower flumes first. CCC's will be doing some of the work, as well as, CAL FIRE crews.

Report on Meeting with Supervisor Higgins:

Chair Trott reported Supervisor Jeannie Higgins met with a few YSS members when she was here in Sonora. She said, at the federal level, there is a goal for the FS to produce 3 billion board feet in this fiscal year. Supervisor Higgins's job is to identify potential roadblocks and find solutions.

At the local level, she encouraged YSS to continue with the large landscape project. She said under the Farm Bill, 3,000 acre parcels can use Categorical Exemption to move ahead with

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

projects more quickly. She thinks the Forest Service can implement something like what was done at the experimental forest.

Mr. Steve Brink said applications are due in 21 days for the conceptual proposal for GGRF and CAL FIRE. The FS should identify a 3,000 area for a project. There was discussion on locations where NEPA has been completed.

Forest Service Report:

Supervisor Scott Tangenberg handed on information on a 3000-5000 Acre Resiliency Project. He said they must start planning now. It takes two years to get the planning done and there will only be two years to implement. They are thinking of a small landscape proposal including a demonstration of green tree thinning even with tree mortality.

He said there are two options:

- The easiest reach is to implement existing completed NEPA projects and the Two-Mile EA. Implementation would be done GTR-220 style. There are several areas where treatment can be expedited.
- The other is to proceed along the path we are currently on through the Farm Bill. They should look for 3,000 acres and tailor the project as best possible somewhere in the HWY 108 area.

In regards to whether this project could be on-the-ground next year, Supervisor Tangenberg said it would be up to interested contractors, but it can be offered.

Chair Trott said the goal is to get something done on the ground, as soon as possible, as close to what was done in the experimental forest.

In regards to Tree Mortality, a one-page briefing was prepared for a county forum, but there was a light turnout. The hardest hit areas are low elevation Ponderosa Pines. Maps were distributed. The FS proudest accomplishment was selling a substantial amount.

The FS is working with SWIFT in one area. They also have a Cooperative Agreement with the County and are working with Mr. Mike Albrecht on Ferretti Rd in Groveland.

The Farm Bill NEPA work for 2017 is in Arnold and Cold Springs. They are working closely with all the collaborative groups. They also have three contracts with Caltrans on HWYs 120, 108, & 4. Mr. Dave Horak provided a map of the highest priorities, as well as, what has been completed.

Rim Reforestation was handled by Ms. Benech. She said much had been covered during Mr. Connolly's update. They should be starting this year's work next week. She said leftover trees may be sold to private landowners through the El Dorado RCD.

A Storm Damage Report was provided regarding the February 9th event. Sixty inch culverts were overtopping. They are facing a crisis that equals '97. There were 34 failures and they are still counting. The biggest one is Cottonwood Road at Thompson Meadow to Reed Creek. They are working on 2N14 to the slides stabilized, but at the last mile to Reed Creek there is no road.

Federal Highways has assigned a manager to that project and they do not anticipate that road being available for use. They are working with a forest leadership team to get a map out to make the closures available.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Supervisor Tangenberg spoke about Forest Plan Revisions. He said a letter was sent to forest supervisors which he passed out to the group. He said the Stanislaus Plan was signed in 1991, and is due for a revision. The planning rule was put in place in 1982 and the framework was adopted in 2012. The letter describes the region's intent to proceed forward with the Inyo Plan and supplemental EIS for Sierra and Sequoia Plans. Next on deck are the Stanislaus, El Dorado, Tahoe, and Plumas Plans.

Data collection/cleanup is continuing over this year which will culminate in pre-assessments. Initiation of assessments is the formal start of the forest plan revision process and is determined by Washington. The Stanislaus and El Dorado will engage in a public engagement process about how this will happen. They are already in discussions with the county and CSERC, and now with YSS.

Mr. John Buckley said, for the early adopters, it has been a five-year process. He asked why the Forest Service would establish a different stakeholder process outside of the two existing collaboratives. Supervisor Tangenberg said the rules say the FS should tap into existing groups and the intent is to capitalize on YSS and ACCG.

Supervisor Tangenberg added forest and project planning could be better if the FS has access to products like LIDAR imagery. LIDAR was described and it was suggested YSS might be able to assist in securing funding.

Large Landscape Pilot Project and Potential Connection to Draft Tuolumne County Large Watershed Treatment Pilot Project:

Chair Trott provided an overview of the LLPP development to date. Supervisor Sherri Brennan said, after the tour with TuCARE, she met with Ms. Shelly Abajian from Senator Feinstein's office. They decided to pull together a small group of people to discuss, and jointly come up with, an idea to present to the senator for funding and/or legislation. It was noted, YSS has tried to secure funding for a long-range planning effort and YSS has not been successful yet.

Mr. Buckley provided a history of the project idea. He said, overtime, there has been an effort to get input and buy-in from a lot of different interests. There was a debate, within the leadership team, as to whether to wait to do work in the green forest until there is something conclusive regarding tree mortality, but also acknowledgement that the planning process takes some time. He said CSERC, and other conservation groups, have concerns about a ten-year plan, but the rest of the leadership team feels it is the right amount of time.

He reminded the group the purpose of YSS is to determine where agreement can be found and then to try to implement areas of agreement. He said there seems to be agreement within the Leadership Team on three main items:

- Ramp up mechanical treatments and biomass removal acres.
- Target 3,000 acres of prescribed treatments in the YSS areas.
- Target 3,000 acres per year for ecological treatments.

Funding would be balanced among the three. Treatments would be designed to be consistent with Forest Service and CAL FIRE. YSS would be involved with designing and implementing the plan. TRT wants a partnership agreement to include assuring monitoring.

Mr. Albrecht said there are two processes – one being the county's and one being that of YSS. He said they are similar and the LT wants to address the two points where there could be issues within the membership. He said there seems to be agreement to pull out quantifying board feet and just leave acres treated because it matches LLPP.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Supervisor Brennan said it was difficult for the county to take away board feet, but Mr. Albrecht helped the county understand it is about acres treated. She said Ms. Abajian has an interest in moving this forward, but said it cannot be competing with YSS or both will fail. Planning and litigation is where it gets bogged down. She said that is why the county wants 30-day binding arbitration.

Chair Trott said the group should consider the question of whether they can support the draft LLPP. Mr. Allen Johnson, from SWIFT, said it is important to strive for consensus so the LLPP can move forward.

It was noted the focus of the LLPP is on forest projects for fire resiliency, not a forest plan that deal with other issues such as trails and wilderness areas. In regards to budget, the goal is for implementation of the LLPP to be additive, not taking away from what is already spoken for. It is going to be a challenge, but if it is possible, YSS would like to get funding for the planning and additional support.

A question was posed about whether it would be useful to reach out to the usual litigators for buy in. Mr. Buckley said the local conservation groups are accepting of the LLPP if it is consistent with current forest policy and does not get legislatively transformed into something else. There are concerns about the county's master agreement. The conservation groups believe YSS must have input into the plan.

Mr. Jim Phelan said the YSS plan is flushed out while the Tuolumne County's plan looks like an overview. YSS cannot enter into the master stewardship agreement, so some other entity must be the lead agency.

Chair Trott said if YSS is going to be successful in proposing a large landscape plan, YSS should be part of a larger group of people that includes additional interests. The biggest test for YSS is putting the LLPP out to a large audience knowing YSS does not control the final version.

Supervisor Brennan thanked the group for the conversation and for being part of meaningful forward progress. She said the county tried to take the important pieces from the YSS plan and recognizes there is a need to work together and not compete.

After additional discussion, there was agreement on the following points:

- The Leadership Team should continue discussions with Ms. Abajian.
- Accept the LLPP as the basis for a funding request.
- Continue to work with the county on a proposal
- Work with the Stanislaus NF on a Cal Fire GGRF funding proposal as referenced by Mr. Brink

Other:

Chair Trott thanked all in attendance. Mr. Pickard reminded the group there is an opportunity to comment on Prop One funding. He advised applying through the pre-application process which is due September 1.

Next YSS General Meeting:

Friday, May 19th, 10-2.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

MEETING ATTENDANCE
Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Jeff Redoutey	Blue Mountain Minerals	Present
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present
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	Present
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	
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	
Jeb Brooks	SPI Alternate	Present
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
Vicki Albrecht	TuCARE/Alternate	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	Present
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	Present

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	
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	
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	Present
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	Present
Ann Denton	USFS/Alternate	
Marty Gmelin	USFS/Alternate	Present
Maria Benech	USFS/Alternate	Present

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlou Consulting	
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Keith Martin	TGSC
Carolyn Lanza	TCRCD
Kevin Moss	TRT
Tim Hughes	USFS
Dennis Serpa	Pacific Ultrapower Chinese Station
Elliott VanderKolk	SNC