



Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Steering Committee Meeting Summary February 3, 2014 1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Mr. Allen Johnson to contact Supervisor Merlin Jones regarding representation at YSS.
2. Ms. Jen Sorensen and Mr. Rob Griffith to put together a boundary map for the February 21st YSS general meeting.
3. Vice-chair Buckley, Mr. Walt Kruse, and Mr. Karl Dambacher, as a subcommittee of the SC, to work on charter modifications.
4. Ms. Carolyn Lott to send the current member sign-up form to current members to facilitate membership in the new YSS Collaborative.
5. Mr. John Amodio to inquire of SNC regarding using Prop 84 funds for Ms. Lott's services.
6. Mr. Jim Phelan to inquire of the RAC regarding funds for Ms. Lott's services.
7. Ms. Lott to put together a draft two-year budget for her services.
8. Chair and vice-chair to draft a letter for the submission to the regional forester and forest supervisor requesting \$10,000 for YSS support services.
9. Mr. Gary Severson to talk with Mr. Griffith regarding the funding request and visit of US Butch Blazer.
10. The chair and vice-chair to work with Ms. Lott to draft YSS objectives and goals in relationship to what YSS hopes to accomplish.
11. Ms. Lott to survey YSS members as to what information is needed from the FS in regards to enlightening members on project focus.
12. Vice-chair Buckley to follow up with Mr. Dallas regarding project concepts.
13. Ms. Lott to send out previously developed Project Selection Criteria.
14. Mr. Nathan Graveline to follow up on funding opportunities available through the Wildlife Conservation Board.
15. The chair and vice-chair, along with Mr. Jim Maddox and Mr. Nathan Graveline will serve on a project review subcommittee to be chaired by Mr. Mike Vroman.
16. Mr. Karl Dambacher and Ms. Sorensen agreed to develop a draft template for a funding/sponsorship letter.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Develop a communication plan for interacting with neighboring collaboratives.
2. Develop a press release and "elevator" speech and media plan
3. Define "zones of agreement" in regards to recovery and restoration and determine method for publicizing

MEETING GOALS:

1. To identify the role and define the governance, mission, and operations of the YSS Steering Committee.
 2. To begin discussions regarding potential funding opportunities and possible projects
 3. Identify areas of agreement and differences related to the Rim Fire EA and EIS.
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SUMMARY:

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Meeting

Welcome and Introductions:

Mrs. Carolyn Lott, Facilitator, opened the meeting. Mr. Buckley asked if there were additional items to be added to the agenda. Ms. Jennifer Sorensen said she would like to add discussing expanding boundaries to the agenda.

Mr. Buckley referenced a conversation he had with Mr. Jim Branham, Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and indicated YSS may have a little more time than once thought to get project ideas to SNC. He said he would speak more about this later in the agenda. A number of members made comments that led into agenda items below.

Discussion of the Role of the Steering Committee:

A question was raised whether there should be a steering committee since most interests volunteered to be on the Steering Committee (SC). Mr. Gary Severson said there are two tiers of involvement, and some members may not be able to commit to the amount of time necessary to participate in the SC. He added more individuals may want to join the collaborative as YSS becomes more successful. He offered perhaps an Executive Committee would help address the situation.

Ms. Lott said trust building is essential to the effort. As members gain confidence in one another they may feel more comfortable in relinquishing some of the responsibilities to others. She also pointed out this is an evolving process and members may want to re-evaluate the structure over time.

A member suggested having some working groups to focus on specific tasks. Another member said he volunteered for the SC as it seemed not many individuals were stepping up. Then more and more members volunteered. A member added either way there will likely be struggles as agreements are forged, whether they are at the SC level or general group level or both.

In regards to the boundaries and membership discussion, it was suggested that Supervisor Merlin Jones be contacted regarding representation from Mariposa County. Mr. Allen Johnson volunteered to contact him. Concerns were raised about the area of Tuolumne County that is north of Highway 108. It was also noted there should be correspondence or a liaison with the Cornerstone project. A member said ultimately it would be desired to have all the forest represented within a collaborative group.

A member said, for the present, YSS needs to focus on the Rim Fire area. However, it is important not to forget other non-burned areas. Ms. Lott asked before the group decided on a boundary recommendation, that Ms. Sorensen share the concerns of the tribe.

Ms. Sorensen said Chicken Ranch is pushing to get the boundary moved to the edge of the Stanislaus River as this is important to the Tribe. She also said there is a desire to focus efforts on protecting what has not burned. She suggested pushing the boundary to the river includes adding more of Tuolumne County and those interests are already at the table.

Mr. Severson observed there is nothing statutory to the boundaries. The boundaries are really to help potential funders know the area of focus. It was suggested a map be developed that would show the Cornerstone boundaries and the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group boundaries. The current boundaries of YSS could be shown and include the proposed expansion to the river. Ms. Sorensen volunteered to work with the FS on putting together a map to display the referenced areas. The map will be available for the YSS general meeting on February 21st.

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Agreement: The SC agreed to have Ms. Sorensen and Mr. Griffith bring back a boundary map for discussion at the next YSS general meeting.

Review YSS Mission/Purpose and Discuss Charter Modifications:

It was determined not to be a prudent use of time to work on charter details at the SC meeting. A subcommittee was formed to work on charter modifications and attempt to make it more of a motivational piece. Mr. Buckley, Mr. Kruse, and Mr. Karl Dambacher volunteered to work on charter modifications.

Agreement: Members agreed to the formation of the charter subcommittee.

A member stated he believes the current mission statement to be inclusive, succinct, and that the guiding star, "health is wealth" is embedded in the language. Mr. Severson underscored the charter provides internal governance and tells the group's unique, compelling story.

Discuss Governance/Organizational Structure:

Ms. Lott noted a clerical-type issue that needs to be addressed. She said it would be useful to document the beginning of the independence of the collaborative by having members sign up for membership again to clearly demarcate the new beginning. She circulated the current form asking for notations if any changes were deemed necessary. None were noted. Ms. Lott will send the current form electronically to all current members.

Agreement: Members agreed a new sign-up process for YSS membership should take place.

A member questioned if selecting an executive committee might be prudent. Mr. Severson responded that a small group is probably useful such as a chair or co-chairs. A member suggested Mr. Albrecht and Mr. Buckley as co-chairs. Mr. Buckley said he thought it would better if Mr. Albrecht was chair and he, Mr. Buckley, would be willing to serve a vice-chair. It was noted a finance officer should also be included as designated positions on the SC. Mr. John Amodio was requested to fill this position as he represents Tuolumne River Trust (TRT) and TRT has agreed to be the fiscal agent for YSS.

Agreement: Members agreed to appoint Mr. Albrecht as YSS SC Chair, Mr. Buckley as YSS SC Vice-chair, and Mr. Amodio as YSS SC Finance Officer.

Identify Media Contacts:

There was conversation regarding what types of issues should be referred to the designated media representative and what any member should be free to discuss. Vice-chair Buckley said all members, if asked, should feel free to speak about their membership in the collaborative and make statements regarding supporting the work of YSS and the collaborative process. A number of members supported the idea of developing press releases and a good "elevator" speech. Developing a press release and "elevator" speech will be agendized in the future.

Agreement: Members agreed to designate Chair Albrecht as the primary YSS media contact with Vice-chair Buckley as his alternate.

YSS Process Funding :

A discussion ensued regarding strategic use of consultants and developing internal leadership. A member said he would like to see Ms. Lott continue on in her role as long as she is willing. It was suggested perhaps SNC funds could be used to assist with funding this position. Finance

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Officer Amodio volunteered to check with SNC regarding the potential use of Prop 84 funds to support Ms. Lott's work for YSS.

Mr. Jim Phelan noted that the Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) had funded Ms. Lott previously. He offered to take the lead in talking with them regarding funding assistance.

Vice-chair Buckley said it is important to know what to ask for. He offered ideas for meeting frequency stating it is not likely the group will meet during July and August. It was suggested Ms. Lott put together a proposed two-year (calendar year) budget assuming ten steering committee meetings and four general meetings per year.

It was suggested the group also check with the Forest Service regarding assistance with funding for support from Ms. Lott. Mr. Severson suggested asking the FS for \$10,000 to assist with the effort and that the request is put in as soon as possible.

Agreement: There was agreement that the chair and vice-chair draft a request letter for submission to the FS regional forester and the forest supervisor for \$10,000 to support YSS facilitation efforts.

Mr. Severson underscored the importance of following through with Mr. Butch Blazer, Deputy Under Secretary for USDA, to help fund facilitation. Mr. Severson offered to work with Mr. Rob Griffith and provide him with information regarding the funding request and a visit to see the Rim Fire burn area and meet with YSS.

Additional discussion referenced putting together a summary of YSS objectives and goals in regards to what the collaborative wishes to accomplish. It was also mentioned that at some point, YSS may need a project manager/s.

It was underscored requests for funding for YSS support staff should be tied to what YSS wishes to accomplish versus supporting meetings.

YSS Project Funding:

Forest Supervisor Skalski announced the Acting District Ranger for the Groveland District will be Mr. Mitchell White, a vegetation ecologist from Arizona. He will start next week.

Vice-chair Buckley reviewed with the group the preliminary details on the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) fund allocation for Rim Fire recovery. He said he spoke with SNC representatives and was given feedback that it was important to propose projects that are tied directly to watershed and water quality benefits as that is the emphasis for Prop 84 funding. He reported that when using biomass transportation incentive funding as an example, he learned that there may be a better, stronger funding match for that biomass transportation assistance when the state has a different pot of funds come up in June. His feedback from SNC was that Rim Fire recovery projects need a clear nexus to watershed and public benefits. Chair Albrecht said he believes biomass is watershed enhancement related.

Vice-chair Buckley shared there is a million dollars to go to the Rim Fire area and SNC will consider a variety of sources for project ideas. YSS ideas will be part of the mix considered, but SNC will decide what will be funded. Mr. Chris Dallas will be evaluating the proposed projects. He will decide if the projects meet the requirements of Prop 84. It was noted Mr. Vance Russell, National Forest Foundation, has potential funds available, as well.

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Finance Officer Amodio noted if funds for projects are awarded to YSS, the funds can be channeled through the Tuolumne River Trust.

Ms. Lott said when working with Prop 84 dollars direct benefit to the watershed is important. Also, it is not just about whether your project technically qualifies, but rather how it rates against other submitted projects.

Vice-chair Buckley said Mr. Brahman wants YSS to float concepts with Mr. Dallas so YSS can get feedback on whether they are on point. Projects for this award must be within the Rim Fire area.

Vice-chair Buckley said the FS needs to help YSS understand what the FS wishes to accomplish. YSS needs to know what the gaps are and where funding is needed. Mr. Griffith said he asked FS personnel what they have on the shelf that might be a match for the SNC funding. Supervisor Skalski said she wants to look to YSS for general criteria. It is also important to determine if these dollars can be used to leverage additional funding. Also, there will be a need for future planting.

Mr. Griffith continued that FS staff shared projects related to invasive species. Additionally, there is a need for infrastructure, in particular range fencing. There is a need to manage cattle where meadows are threatened. He added perhaps there is an opportunity to leverage funds with Yosemite Park through the Yosemite Conservancy. He noted there is a need for a hydrologist watershed specialist to work on meadow/riparian areas. There is a real need for pre-survey work. Perhaps a worthy project would be to hire a meadow expert consulting firm. Also, there are conifer seeds in the FS seed storage locker, but the seeds need a couple of years to grow these into seedlings. There is also a need for willow seedlings and other non-commercial types of trees. These trees need somewhere to be grown. In the river canyon there is a trail system that will need maintenance that aligns with recreation and access.

Mr. Griffith said he does not have a list of specific projects. He noted biomass will be considered in the Environmental Impact Study. Some members said they had a hard time getting their arms around some of these projects as there is nothing specific being shared, but rather just general project concepts.

Another member noted there are concerns about the timeline and how it relates to NEPA and CEQA. Mr. Griffith said that if a project is not currently covered in the EA and EIS then those are not projects for the immediate future. Vice-chair Buckley noted the FS may be in the field in an area but not realize right outside a unit boundary there is an opportunity such as a wildlife corridor. He asked that the FS keep the door open in case there might be a reason to justify expanding if there are not significant issues involved in doing so.

Vice-chair Buckley said it is his understanding the SNC money has to be obligated no later than 2016, but SNC does not want the bulk of projects pushed out two years. It was suggested perhaps a mix of projects, and studies that later projects could build on, might be presented.

Mr. Griffith said there are 120,000 acres that are not currently being addressed and the FS does not even know what the needs are yet on that acreage. Currently, the FS is focusing on areas where there are proposed projects. Survey crews are deployed. There will be a fair amount of field work this season.

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A member said it is important to try to assure projects submitted have benefits that are distributed among a variety of interests. It was noted the strength of YSS is its diversity and unity. It was noted that projects that are looked at by YSS include recovery studies.

Vice-chair Buckley said there are dollars that can be spent that do not involve the NEPA process such as infrastructure like fences around meadows. He said CSERC has already identified a number of them. If a fence was in existence and it is simply being replaced NEPA is not needed. Dollars are needed for initial assessments and materials and volunteers can do a lot of the work. If there is a specialist that can be hired to do a meadow assessment, a true specialist who could identify the meadows that would have the highest priority and benefit for the watershed, then that would be worthwhile. He continued YSS should look at projects that may lead to additional dollars later as information is available through the studies.

A member agreed with the meadow survey idea. He noted some of the deer corridor information associated with the salvage efforts will help provide an understanding of which areas still need help as they will not be addressed through FS salvage.

A member asked when there is a decline in the value of the unharvested timber. A member said it depends on the arrangements of the timber sale or stewardship contract. It is anticipated that much of the salvage will not provide surplus funds to finance other activities. It was noted it would be helpful if the FS could share with the group which acreage has the highest priority.

Finance Officer Amodio asked that Ms. Lott send out a request querying members as to what information YSS needs from the FS in order to further discuss project focus for SNC funds. Vice-chair Buckley said he will report back to Mr. Dallas regarding basic project ideas considered to date to help determine if they are within the scope of the fund purpose, including separating out biomass versus biomass with transportation. He said it is essential YSS identifies projects that are a clear match with Prop 84. He added it will be important to hone the project ideas and establish the price range of projects being considered. It was suggested a Project Review Committee be established to begin work on the budget, narrative, etc.

Agreement: There was agreement that Mr. Mike Vroman would chair the Project Review Committee and Vice-chair Buckley, Mr. Jim Maddox, and Mr. Nathan Graveline would also serve on the committee.

It was also noted that a template letter for funding requests/sponsorships could prove useful. Mr. Karl Dambacher and Ms. Sorensen agreed to work on draft for SC review.

It was noted the FS indicated if they had crews walking the streams they would know how much vegetation would come back naturally vs what needs there are for restoration.

Consider Areas of Agreement and Differences Related to Rim Fire EA and EIS:

Chair Albrecht said this is an opportunity for everyone to come together as a group on the big issues that knit us together. Articulating common support will help deflect things that can derail efforts such as litigation. He said he and Vice-chair Buckley have talked and, for example, Vice-chair Buckley supports salvage but has concerns about how many new roads will be built. Chair Albrecht continued that there may be a need for some new roads. However, if others say they are against any new roads that will be indicate vulnerability. He opined if a judge is hearing on case on the Rim Fire and has support for efforts from the YSS group, the judge will see support from a very diverse group and it will likely assist with a ruling favorable to moving ahead with recovery and restoration efforts.

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Vice-chair Buckley said he has met with many of the key interests that most represent the potential litigants. He said he is encouraged as he saw the first glimmer of hope that there may not be litigation. He added wherever YSS can find areas of agreement those areas need to be publicized.

The group offered a few of the challenging areas such as:

New roads
Snag retention-individual or in groups
Where to salvage around riparian areas
Protected Activity Centers

Finance Officer Amodio said the issues need to be on the table. He said you do not get to choose whether you get sued, but perhaps by whom you get sued. He said the Tuolumne River Trust (TRT) supports a good level of salvage except in sensitive areas. They are working to help educate other environmental groups regarding the need for salvage. He said TRT believes there is a long-term commitment in forest health. Mr. Severson said the group should focus on things they agree upon, set aside what they do not agree upon, and work on what is in the middle. Ms. Lott noted YSS had developed Project Selection Criteria early on. The group asked that she send the document to SC members.

Discussion of Next Meetings:

Agreement: The next YSS general meeting will be at FS Headquarters on Friday, February 21st, from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Agreement: The next YSS Steering Committee meeting will be Friday, March 21st, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Mike Albrecht	TuCare	Present
Vicki Albrecht	SRM/ Alternate	
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	Present
John Gary	TC/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
Lindsey Meyers	CSERC/ Alternate	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	Present
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/ Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	Present
Karl Dambacher	DC /Alternate	Present
Nathan Graveline	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	Present

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Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Steven Brink	AFRC/Alternate	
Allen Johnson	SouthWest InterFace Team	Present
Kelly Bearden	SWIFT Alternate	
Walter Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon	Present
Jim Maddox	Tuolumne County Sportsmen/Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present
Todd Miller	Blue Mountain Minerals	Present
Jeff Redoutey	BMM/Alternate	
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne-Mariposa Resources Advisory Council	Present
Jennifer Sorensen	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of CA	Present
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	Present
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Scott Tangenberg	US Forest Service	Present

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Name	Organization	Attendance
Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting/Facilitator	Present

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Rob Griffith	US Forest Service
Susan Skalski	US Forest Service
Gary Severson	High Point Resources, LLC