



Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Steering Committee Meeting Summary March 21, 2014 1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. The chair and vice-chair to work with Ms. Lott to draft YSS objectives and goals in relationship to what YSS hopes to accomplish to help inform development of workplan.
2. Develop one-page briefing paper for Supervisor Skalski to use in D.C. and submit to Rebecca Garcia by April 21st.
3. Mr. Griffith to work on a FS-hosted webinar related to release of the EIS.
4. Mrs. Lott to distribute the amended version of the charter.
5. FS to provide an additional briefing on the four alternatives.
6. The litigation position letter to be circulated for comments to be received by COB March 31st.
7. Consider what YSS might want to have posted on the FS website.
8. VC Buckley to follow up on request for NFF funds for meadow assessment.
9. If FS grants \$100,000 for Reynolds Creek and Two Mile meadow restoration projects, VC Buckley to work with SNC on matching funds.
10. Mr. Vroman to continue work on the Spinning Wheel Project development and other projects that may be matches for SNC funding.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Press release
2. Elevator speech, fact sheet
3. Workplan

MEETING GOALS:

1. To approve YSS governing documents
2. To discuss YSS boundaries
3. To approve litigation position and letter
4. To discuss SNC project concepts

SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Albrecht welcomed the group and self-introductions were made. He pointed out that while the group has been meeting for four years, and some might think that decisions have not been made quickly, collaborative efforts take time. He pointed out in just the couple of months the group has been reconstituted, the charter has been updated, projects are being compiled to respond to funding opportunities, commitments are coming in for financial support, the boundaries are defined with possible future expansions noted, and the process has been organized.

Supervisor Skalski praised the group for their momentum and commitment. She referenced the YSS letter requesting dollars for collaborative support. She said it looks promising. She said Deputy Under Secretary Butch Blazer plans to visit and is awaiting travel approval. She and Mr.

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Griffith are travelling to D.C. on April 28th and will be providing briefings on a number of things including the Rim Fire and YSS.

Vice-chair Buckley followed up with the funding request stating that the Supervisor suggested the request be increased to \$20,000. There are some procedural issues that need to be worked through regarding competitive bidding. Ms. Ann Denton noted there is also a RAC request in addition to the FS request.

Mr. Steve Brink added that Mr. Blazer will be here the week of June 23rd and would like a field day, to include the Crook property, and would like to meet with both Me-Wuk bands.

Finance Officer Amodio complimented the FS on the open house. He requested that after the EIS is released that the FS host a webinar. Supervisor Skalski said the FS would work with Mr. Griffith on this.

Standing Items:

Ms. Lott distributed and collected additional YSS sign-up forms. She distributed the most current YSS membership list.

Ms. Lott asked if there were any corrections to the February Steering Committee and February General Meeting summaries. None were heard.

Agreement: The meeting summaries were accepted as emailed.

Draft Communication Protocol:

Draft Communication Protocol was distributed with the agenda packet. It was developed by Ms. Lott in conjunction with the chair and vice-chair to address communications issues. VC Buckley walked the group through the protocol. The first issue focused on use of the distribution list stating that anything a member wished distributed should be sent to Ms. Lott who would determine whether to send it out to the group or confer first with the chair and vice-chair. The second item stated that only members assigned as the liaison with a potential funder should contact the funder directly. Other members should go through the liaison. The final point was in regards to the media underscoring the importance of members sharing their membership in YSS with the media, if asked they should share their positive observations about the collaborative. Formal comments and/or statements of collaborative positions are to be communicated through the chair and/or vice-chair.

Update on Finances:

FO Amodio said the existing NFF grant needs to be refined to reflect the new YSS structure. Five amendments have been requested:

- Allow the three-hour facilitation training to be held during a SC meeting
- Transfer funds for a brochure/DVD to website development
- Shift strategic consultation between the facilitator and FS to the facilitator and officers
- Request a 10% increase as allowable to the grant for facilitation and/or website development
- Redirect the TRT activity portion of the grant from non-profit status research to researching innovative efforts such as the Redwood Foundation in Mendocino County and bring back models for YSS to consider.

Agreement: Members agreed to the five refinements.

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VC Buckley acknowledged the potential financial commitment from the FS for facilitation. He noted he believes the time commitment for Ms. Lott is much more than originally anticipated. He said there is a tremendous amount of time spent between meetings and funds should be directed to supporting this effort.

Mr. Chris Trott said the grant proposal for facilitation support through the RAC has been developed. VC Buckley and Ms. Lott assisted in its development. The amount is \$8184 and has been submitted.

VC Buckley noted two members were working on a generic letter that could be customized for funding inquiries. He said the letter is on hold for now until there is something more tangible to use in developing language.

Mr. Nathan Graveline reported on possible funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board. He said the funding will likely go to the FS or a fiscal agent. He is not sure if there will be a mix of projects or solely FS projects. He said the board wants the money to go to a single entity. He will be meeting with them in November and hopes to have a clear picture of the request by then. He will come back to the group with more information.

Mr. Graveline said in regards to the Conservation Corp, he will coordinate with Mr. Mike Vroman.

Follow-up Items:

- Charter – It was noted an amendment to the charter was requested. Mr. Matt Waverly shared that one statement could be interpreted as stating that YSS could prioritize efforts on private land. It was noted that while that was not the intention of the language, it could be construed in that way. It was suggested the language be amended to read “interested” landowners.

Agreement: Members agreed to accept the charter as amended.

Ms. Lott will send out the amended version of the charter.

- Boundary Changes – Ms. Sorensen passed out a map for reference. She noted Supervisor Skalski was concerned about FS capacity to work with additional land within YSS considering the intensity of effort on the Rim Fire area. Ms. Sorensen said the Stanislaus River Watershed is important to the Chicken Ranch Tribe. However, the tribal council is willing to defer to the YSS membership. Ms. Stephanie Suess said they are concerned about this area because the watershed and water is important to them. It was noted because of the burn there is greater focus on the health of the overall watershed.

Ms. Denton said there is concern by the FS about the number of additional stakeholders along the 108 corridor who would need to be invited into YSS. Additional members voiced their opinions which spanned from support for staying with the current boundaries to expanding even further than to the river.

It was noted that for likely the next 3-4 years the focus will be primarily on the Rim Fire burn area. While the boundary could be changed now, it is unlikely there will be enough funding to support meaningful work on additional land. It was suggested that YSS let it

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be known that, at some point, expanding boundaries to the Middle Fork, and possibly to the North Fork, will be considered as the collaborative matures. There was support for this being the intent of YSS. Additional discussion was heard addressing multiple points of view.

Agreement: Members agreed to keep the current boundaries and add further discussion about expansion of the boundaries to the 2015 workplan.

- YSS Litigation Position Letter/Media Release – VC Buckley summarized the points in the draft letter. He said the issue before the group was how to present united support of the FS position on salvage without undercutting individual organizations' positions. He noted it would be significant for the media to acknowledge the position of YSS. He said the letter would go to Randy Moore, but could also be provided to the US Senators and others of influence. As an example, he qualified that while CSERC might not agree that the eventually selected alternative is their favorite, all the alternatives are reasonably acceptable and CSERC position would be to not stand in the way of salvage.

FO Amodio said the TRT is in favor of robust salvage. However, they are concerned about the timing of the letter. They have not seen the four alternatives so cannot comment on them. There are some appropriate environmental constraints and treatment forms that they would like to see spelled out more clearly.

Chair Buckley said the intent of the letter is to coalesce as a group and make a statement to the press. Additionally, there is a hope that the position of YSS will hold some influence and the local community should be aware of the YSS position.

It was noted that most organizations will have to confer with their organizations prior to signing on to the letter. Ms. Lott passed around a sign-on sheet so organizations prepared to sign on today could do so. Some agencies said they could not sign-on because they were state or federal agencies. A few members asked if they could comment on the letter offline.

FO Amodio asked if it was possible for the FS to provide an additional briefing on the four alternatives. The FS agreed. It was noted that an organization's signature on the letter does not release the FS from responding to comments from that organization on the alternative selected.

Agreement: Members agreed to submit comments by March 31st and bring the revised letter back to the April 18th meeting for signing.

Posting of Rim Fire Activities Timeline on FS Website – Ms. Pam Baltimore said the FS is updating their website and the schedule will be posted. The FS is also interested in posting the YSS logo, stories, etc. on their website.

Goals/Objectives – continued

Website – continued

Communication Plan for Engaging Neighboring Collaboratives – continued

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Elevator Speech – FO Amodio has been working on this and the item will be scheduled for a future meeting.

Discussion Regarding Possible Project for SNC Funds:

Project Subcommittee Chair Mike Vroman passed around a spreadsheet depicting projects considered to date. He said he had a conversation with a FS employee who shared three additional projects that are categorically exempt (CE). The CE process has been expedited through the most recent Farm Bill.

It was noted there was a Region 5 funding opportunity for YSS and the FS to apply jointly for funds out of D.C. The application had to be submitted the day of the call and VC Buckley authorized attaching the YSS name to the application. He apologized for not being able to confer with the group, but shared that delay would have cost a loss of \$100,000. SNC shared that if this is granted, it can be used as a match for SNC funds.

In regards to the SNC timeframe, it was noted it is desired to identify projects sooner rather than later. SNC would like at least one project to be underway this calendar year. It was noted the Bull Meadow project had a high benefit to private land and the SNC funds have to show a clear public benefit.

Mr. Vroman referenced the Spinning Wheel project submitted by the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians. He said this project has a high value in regards to cultural landscape and is directly associated with living Native Americans. He has been out in the field looking at this project. Artifacts are being washed into the stream and it is a venue for noxious weeds. The Tribe has submitted a proposal, but it needs some refinement.

The biomass removal project will be problematic if it is already in the EIS as it will be seen as a project the FS already planned to fund. It will be seen as more closely aligned with salvage. When questioned regarding if it would matter if the project is a “pile and burn” versus transport, VC Buckley said the issue is whether there is a clear watershed benefit.

Restoration of rangeland fencing and the Jawbone and Pilot Ridge OHV trails all need to be done after salvage.

In regards to meadow assessment and restoration efforts, VC Buckley said NFF reportedly may have a small amount of money, \$15,000 that could go toward hiring someone to do meadow assessment. However, no authority from YSS to apply for these funds has been received as of yet. Mr. Graveline said such an assessment would help identify projects for the Wildlife Conservation Board to consider funding.

Agreement: Members agreed to support VC Buckley in requesting NFF funds for meadow assessment.

Mr. Vroman continued commenting on submitted project ideas. He said identifiable issues with sediment input from road and stream crossing restoration qualifies for categorically exempt status (CE).

The assessment to identify springs acknowledges that springs appear after the burn. The idea is to use pre-determined criteria to assess whether the spring is best for stream contribution or for watering stock.

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The Rim Fire Interpretive Project is well put together, but not something SNC would fund. However, searching for an appropriate funding source will continue.

In regards to Bull Meadow, it does not seem to fit with SNC, but other funding sources are a possibility.

The Tribe is going to assist in further development of the project that focuses on aspen grove treatments. Aspens are related to watershed restoration. This project was not mentioned during the conference call with SNC so there has been no feedback yet.

Members asked questions regarding the timeframe for putting together proposals, who will write the proposals, and whether there is a link between proposal funding and TRT as the fiscal agent of YSS. It was noted much needs to be worked out yet.

VC Buckley acknowledged Mr. Vroman for his dedication and the amount of time spent on this effort. He said SNC wants something as soon as possible. He said the conflict is the FS wants more time to work through their needs and SNC wants to know sooner rather than later.

Mr. Vroman said the Spinning Wheel Project is important as it illustrates the outreach with the Tribe and it is a culturally rich location. Ms. Denton was identified as the FS contact for this project. Funding for a project such as this would probably be structured through an MOU. It was noted that if this project was funded at the current level of request it would absorb about half of the SNC funding. Citing this as an example, a member said until there is more information about fundable projects it is difficult to make an informed decision on project selection.

Mr. Vroman said the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Mule Deer Foundation have both expressed interest in doing work in the Rim Fire area. He added he has reviewed approximately 60 different funding websites. If he perceives there is a possible match, he calls the funder directly to inquire further.

VC Buckley said some of the information needed to make decisions will not be available until the FS completes their field work this summer. He also suggested moving forward with submitting to SNC the Reynolds Creek and Two Mile Projects. Ms. Denton said there should be information in the coming week regarding the disposition of matching funds. VC Buckley offered to work with Ms. Vance and Mr. Dallas from SNC regarding the application.

Agreement: Members agreed to authorize VC Buckley to pursue discussion regarding funding for Reynolds Creek and Two Mile.

Agreement: Members agreed to authorize Mr. Vroman to continue to negotiate Spinning Wheel Project details with the Tribe for consultation with SNC.

Report from FS on Priority Projects and Funding Needs :

No additional information was available.

Other:

Mr. Brink reported the US Administration has called for increasing Collaborative Forest Restoration Landscape Restoration Act (CFLRA) funding. Information should be available late fall to early winter. The amount considered is up to \$20 million per award.

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Discussion of Next Meetings:

Agreement: The next YSS General meeting is scheduled at FS Headquarters on Friday, May 16th from 9:0 a.m. – 12:0 p.m.

Agreement: The next YSS Steering Committee meeting will be Friday, April 18th, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Location TBD

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Mike Albrecht	TuCare	Present
Vicki Albrecht	SRM/ Alternate	
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	
John Gary	TC/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
Lindsey Meyers	CSERC/ Alternate	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	
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
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
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	
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
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	Present
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	Present
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Scott Tangenberg	US Forest Service	

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Name	Organization	Attendance
Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting/Facilitator	Present

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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Bev Shane	Tuolumne County
Ann Denton	US Forest Service
Steve Brink	California Forestry Association
Marty Gmelin	US Forest Service
Stephanie Sues	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians
Matt Waverly	Sierra Pacific Industries