



Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Steering Committee Meeting Summary June 13, 2014 1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m.

FOLLOW-UP 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. If FS grants \$100,000 for Reynolds Creek and Two Mile meadow restoration projects, VC Buckley to work with SNC on matching funds.
4. Project Workgroup to continue work on the Spinning Wheel Project development and other projects that may be matches for SNC funding.
5. Chair Albrecht and VC Buckley to coordinate with Mr. Griffith on a request relating to unallocated regional funds and internal contracting deadlines.
7. VC Buckley to coordinate with Mr. Griffith to determine if a letter from YSS can assist in securing a deadline extension for contracting the meadow restoration grant work.
8. The Project Workgroup to provide Ms. Lott with an updated project spreadsheet to be distributed for use during the July steering committee meeting.
9. Mr. Trott to draft a YSS letter in support of funding from the 2014 Farm Bill Biomass Crop Assistance Program for consideration by the SC.
10. Chair and vice-chair to consider authoring an op ed article in recognition of the first anniversary of the Rim Fire.
11. Mr. Graveline to follow-up on getting agreement on who will be the applicant for the CA Wildlife Foundation grant and obtain the necessary letter of support from the FS.
12. Mr. Graveline to coordinate development of CWB proposal development.
13. The chair and vice-chair to discuss with Mr. Junette the details of the August YSS field trip with a report to the steering committee during their July meeting.
14. Ms. Lott and Ms. Sorenson to develop a website RFP for consideration during the July meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Objectives and Goals
2. Workplan
3. Website
4. TRT to Present Models from Research

MEETING GOALS:

- Determine how to proceed with website call for proposals
- Develop talking points for field trip with Mr. Horst Greczmiel
- Hear presentation from Restoration Workgroup and Project Workgroup

SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Albrecht opened the meeting and asked for self-introductions. Ms. Jennifer Sorenson noted she is representing Chicken Ranch Rancheria and the Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District.

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The chair shared a literary passage that spoke about early experiences in forest involvement and the natural environment. He presented Finance Officer John Amodio with an award for travelling the farthest distance to attend the YSS meeting. He also asked members to remember the young faller who lost his life felling a large tree.

II. Process Items:

Chair Albrecht asked if there were any changes to the April 18, 2014 meeting summary. None were heard.

Agreement: There was agreement to accept the meeting summary as emailed.

(It was requested that the project spreadsheet be updated and distributed to members for use at the next meeting.)

III. Follow-up Items:

USFS Report on EIS Open House/Webinar, Non-range Fencing Locations, and Other FS Reports

It was noted the webinar and open house materials were fundamentally the same. The webinar was visually challenging, but the audio part worked very well. The chair noted there are four alternatives presented in the EIS. The second alternative is no action. He said the other three are a range of actions mainly addressing production of sawlogs and protection of the Black Backed Woodpecker. Alternative One is the most aggressive in producing timber at 661 million board feet and protects 77% of the woodpecker habitat. Alternative Three protects 79% of the woodpecker habitat and produces 623 million board feet. It also contains less new road construction. Alternative four produces 540 million board feet, protects 81% of the woodpecker habitat and contains areas for research.

Currently roadside sales are underway. 60 million board feet will be logged over the next six months along roadways. Salvage logging will take place on 30,000 acres. The decision on the EIS will be made public by Sept. 1st.

FO Amodio complimented the FS on their efforts to inform stakeholders. He said the webinar proved itself as an invaluable tool. He encouraged the FS to continue to share information, as appropriate, through this medium. He said the information shared addressed some of the stakeholders' concerns. He noted there are still differences of opinion on how to calculate woodpecker habitat as some groups focus on the percentage of potential paring sites protected rather than habitat in general. He complimented Ms. Maria Benech on her work, as well as, the work done by Mr. Jim Junette.

Mr. Chris Trott said there is some biomass removal in the EA. He stated the goal is to reduce the residual fuels 10-20 tons per acre. Mr. Trott said under the EIS, there are roughly between 7,000 and 8,000 acres of targeted biomass removal and between 20,000 and 26,000 acres of machine piles and burns. He wondered how the decision was made regarding removal versus burn. Ms. Benech said it depends on the amount of funding received. He also asked about the lack of a greenhouse gas analysis. He observed perhaps this analysis needs to be addressed in the EIS to avoid a pitfall that could lead to legal challenge later on as the estimate is that 2.5 tons or more of pollutants can result from burning. Mr. Scott Tangenberg said they typically include comments about climate change, but he is unaware of how specific they are required to be in analyzing greenhouse gas.

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Mr. Trott pointed out there is going to be another fire and if plantations are going to follow through restoration efforts, it would not be wise to set up a situation where the plantations are destroyed in a future fire because there is too much fuel left on the ground.

Mr. Jerry Jensen noted ideally it would be best to remove all of it, rather than burn it, to help fund reforestation efforts. He added the more timber left to decay on the ground, the more CO₂ is emitted. Mr. Trott said there is also methane that is produced.

FO Amodio asked if there is a way to use any of the emissions for energy production. Mr. Trott said there is a state law that directs energy companies to buy a certain amount of energy from small plants producing energy from forest and agriculture. Currently, there are three pending projects in California, one being in Wilseyville. He said it takes a while to get such a plant permitted and then the purchase agreement with the power company for the energy takes another three-five years to complete. He added a two to three kilowatt plant only uses a couple of truckloads of material per day. FO Amodio noted there is a biomass agency meeting in Sacramento with the goal of streamlining the process.

Mr. Jensen asked how the current salvage timber is holding up. He added it would be better to leave medium size snags rather than large diameter snags. Chair Albrecht said the White Fir is already deteriorating. Mr. Junette noted timber under 20 inches in diameter was not included in the salvage estimates.

Forest Supervisor Susan Skalski addressed the continued road closures. She said this has been a very difficult situation. However, she has chosen to keep roads closed as long as SPI is taking logs out on the roads. She said the FS recognizes the key areas are access to roads such as to Cherry Lake, Cottonwood Road, etc. They are working to organize the salvage work in a way that will enable some access into the areas. She said she is very sensitive to the needs and desires of the public. Mr. Junette noted he has met with the CCC crew leader and they will be starting work in some areas very soon.

IV. YSS Support Funding Update:

RAC Funding

Mr. Trott said the RAC had half of the amount of money needed to fund twice as many grant requests. The request for YSS was \$8,100. He provided a presentation to the RAC board and they were very supportive, but their preference is to focus on projects on the ground. He noted no project was awarded what was requested. The RAC awarded YSS \$2,000. The FS is going to provide additional funding. The next step for the RAC funding is to fill out the long-form which Mr. Trott will do.

Mr. Tangenberg said now that the RAC funding is in place through next year, it provides the FS with the appropriate vehicle to contribute funds to assist with facilitation and other support costs. The FS has identified \$32,000 for this purpose. He said he is unsure of the timing of the availability of funds. He said he believes it may depend on completion of the long-form.

NFF Funding

FO Amodio said the existing facilitation grant has received final approval of the amendments requested and discussed previously. He noted this frees up the money from a brochure to be spent on a website. The money for non-profit research is now directed to community models for community based forestry. This work needs to be completed by the end of September. He anticipates a report to YSS on the research around that timeframe.

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V. Update on Finances & Project Status:

Discussion on NFF/Local Funding Grant/Action

FO Amodio said the Wilkinson family in Groveland produced and sold Rim Fire tee-shirts to raise funds to donate to restoration efforts. The FS suggested the family work through YSS on utilizing the funds. Mr. Patrick Koepele has been working with the family and also with NFF as NFF can provide funds for citizen engagement in restoration work. The application for the NFF funds has to be submitted by June 25th. The Wilkinson family will donate \$12,000 and the Tuolumne River Trust (TRT) will prepare the NFF proposal which will target expending \$43,000, \$23,000 being requested as the NFF match of local funds. TRT will contribute the remainder of the local funds for an amount of \$11,000. With these funds, TRT is proposing to hire a project coordinator who will work with YSS and the FS on volunteer labor and supplies for restoration efforts. Ms. Clare Long from the FS has already been involved in this effort. FO Amodio said it will be incumbent upon YSS members to involve their constituencies in the volunteer effort.

YSS needs to agree to sponsor the application. The effort will begin in September and be completed by Sept of 2015. The funds will be expended to pay the volunteer coordinator and purchase supplies that cannot be secured through donations. The amount is targeted to fund 25 project days.

The presentation of the check from the Wilkinson family will take place on Tuesday, June 17, at 10:00 a.m. at Rim of the World and the event is being coordinated by Mr. Junette. The check will be made out to YSS. The chair asked if anyone could attend on behalf of YSS. It was noted Mr. Koepele would be there to receive the check.

Agreement: There was agreement to support the NFF application on behalf of YSS for the purposes stated above.

Report on NFWF Funding

Chair Albrecht said the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation has agreed to fund the meadow assessment for an amount of \$25,000. The Plumas Corp. will be conducting the assessment.

Report on SNC Funding/Action

FO Amodio said SNC has looked positively at funding the springs assessment and surveys. The intent is to hire the Springs Stewardship Institute which has extensive experience in doing surveys. It is believed \$40,000 will be secured through SNC to enable the assessment to be done. The Institute will spend two weeks in August and two weeks in September conducting the assessment. They will assess what remedial work can be done. They bring their own equipment and come with high credentials. As an example of the work they are engaged in, FO Amodio said they will be identifying springs in the Grand Canyon in July.

The SNC application is due next week. Mr. Chris Dallas said SNC will streamline the application process as YSS is a well-known and credible organization and therefore the application does not have to go to the whole SNC board. Mr. Dallas said SNC does not like to just fund assessments and surveys, but Mr. Tangenberg assured SNC the assessment will lead to projects. FO Amodio said he needs agreement from YSS to proceed with the application and then TRT will work with the FS and SNC to submit the application. The FS will provide the technical expertise needed to develop the application.

Agreement: There was agreement for TRT to proceed with the SNC application for the springs' assessment and surveys.

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The chair noted that just during this meeting, YSS can count four funding successes: the RAC/USFS Facilitation Support Funding, the Wilkinson, TRT, NFF Volunteer Reforestation Project, the NFWF Meadow Assessment Project, and the SNC Spring Assessment Project.

Report on CWB Funding

Mr. Nate Graveline said he spoke with the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) on Wednesday. He said there are still some things that need to be sorted out such as who will be leading CEQA compliance efforts. Mr. Tangenberg said SNC money has to be used for CEQA compliant projects and they are working to get an exemption. Mr. Graveline said CA Fish & Wildlife CEQA staff is willing to help with CEQA issues.

Mr. Graveline said the other issue is identifying the applicant. He said whoever applies has to receive the money and be responsible for it. The FS has to discuss this with TRT to determine who will administer the grant. He said the CA Wildlife Foundation knows how to do this and has the history with and has worked with the WCB. Mr. Tangenberg said the FS would need to provide a letter of support for the Foundation to administer the grant. Mr. Graveline said he will follow up on this. He continued, saying biomass removal and spring and meadow restoration fits well with what the Foundation likes to fund. Approximately \$1 million is available for this work. YSS needs to come up with a proposal and then, when it is submitted, representatives from YSS will need to attend the meeting to advocate for the proposal. Mr. Graveline said if the Foundation is the applicant, they will work with YSS to put together the concept paper in the fall.

Other Funding Opportunities

Mr. Trott said there is a potential funding mechanism for biomass removal through the 2014 Farm Bill Biomass Crop Assistance Program. He said this is a matching program for high priority biomass to be used for energy. There is \$12.5 million available with \$10 million focused on high priority projects from federal lands. The FS and BLM can apply for funds to remove hazardous fuels or address insect/disease issues. The power plant is not paid through this funding, but rather the entity performing the work is compensated. He said \$10 million is not a lot for the whole country. However, he is working with Mr. Steve Brink and the CA State Farm Bureau to understand the logistics regarding how funds might be acquired for the Rim Fire area. The FS is working through the regional office and their DC office is also working on securing some of this funding for Rim Fire area. The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors will be asked to send a letter to legislators and potentially YSS could send letter.

It was noted the application for these funds has to be filled out by the energy company wishing to receive the materials for use in energy production. Mr. Trott suggested the request should be for \$2 million. He said he will work on drafting the letter.

Mr. Randy Hanvelt noted the world is watching YSS. He cited articles in the SF Chronicle and others. He supported sending the YSS letter of support as he believes it would influence the governor and legislators to pursue this funding for the Rim Fire area. He added there should be an effort to pursue AB32 money. He said biomass disposal would address the spirit of AB32 and the board would support this, but the power of YSS would be very influential.

It was mentioned the press needs to continue following YSS efforts in order to help keep the issues alive for the public. It was suggested that the chair and vice-chair should do an op ed piece in recognition of the first anniversary of the fire.

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VI. Draft “Targeted Messages” for Mr. Greczmiel & Framework for Visit:

Field Trip with Mr. Horst Greczmiel (Associate Director of the President’s Council of Environmental Quality) and Mr. Tony Took (Associate Deputy of the USFS)

Chair Albrecht said there will be good attendance from YSS on the field trip based on the RSVP list. Mr. Hanvelt said Mr. Greczmiel is the person who streamlined the expedited EIS. He suggested YSS thank him for the “alternative arrangement.” The chair said Mr. Bernie Gyant would like discussion regarding what the NEPA process provides and how it can be streamlined. Discussion could focus on challenges and opportunities for engaging. Chair Albrecht said much of the discussion will take place on the bus. The first stop is at Rim of the World and the second will be at Peach Growers. Mr. Jon Sturtevant said long-term care of the remaining green forest needs to be stressed.

VII. Restoration Workgroup Presentation/Action:

The members of this workgroup are Mr. Brink, Mr. Sturtevant, Mr. Trott, and FO Amodio. FO Amodio reported that YSS is making progress in attracting funding. However, restoration work is going to require millions of dollars. The workgroup is working on defining an appropriate scale of funding that YSS should be proposing. He noted YSS has a high profile between the Yosemite name and the Rim Fire. Secondly, the legislative area has the largest legislative delegation in the nation and the delegation is united on some things. The delegation is exploring how the FS is funded to do its work. Third, the degree to which YSS can establish common ground will help mold how the group, and perhaps the forest, moves forward. He added that all the members have established associations and developed constituencies. For example, TRT has a 30 year relationship with the family camps which enables TRT to reach the Bay Area delegation.

FO Amodio said when he met with Mr. Brink, the two of them shared a concept. The idea they discussed is if 30% of the annual budget allocated for firefighting could be pulled offline for another dedicated purpose, this would amount to about \$40 million. Some of these funds could be dedicated to reforestation efforts. He said Mr. Brink pointed out to have a chance at getting this accomplished action needs to be taken soon so, over the next four months, the case can be built. Mr. Brink said he broached this idea with Senator Feinstein. It was pointed at that what would most advance this is if it could be a line item in the president’s budget. FO Amodio said this would take YSS working with the entire delegation to do this. He said Mr. Brink shared the 2015-2016 budget cycle is the target timing for this effort.

FO Amodio said there is a wealth of research and emerging science to support the restoration effort. Some of the experts include Mr. Malcolm North, Dept. of Plan Sciences at UC Davis, and Mr. Peter Stein, previous Senior VP for the Trust for Public Land. The workgroup will make contact with them and try to schedule a meeting with them. The goal is to be briefed so YSS members have a common understanding of the nature of investments that are needed. The workgroup will work towards arranging a briefing for YSS.

It was noted SNC has hosted science forums in the past. SNC is going to launch another series July 9th on reforestation and restoration and a two-day follow-up in August. FO Amodio said YSS can benefit from SNC bringing together top researchers in the field.

The workgroup would like to provide an update to the steering committee in July. Their goal is to provide initial findings no later than September in order to move forward with an action plan in early fall. Mr. Sturtevant point out that Mr. Stein will be participating in the field trip on Monday.

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A summary document was distributed that outlined the proposed mission and scope of the workgroup. The mission is: “to prepare options and recommendations for the full YSS on investments needed to restore the watershed and forest health and productivity of the Rim Fire and associated ecosystem. The scope of work options to be identified will encompass restoration investments needed to restore the full breadth of the renewable resources recognized by the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, specifically the renewable resources of timber, range, water, recreation, fish and wildlife.” The guiding principle offered is health is wealth.

Chair Albrecht said he appreciates the efforts of the workgroup. He pointed out that the workgroup will be bringing YSS targeted action items. He observed this could potentially be some big thinking with large dollar amounts. He said Mr. Gyant is very interested in large scale restoration which includes increasing pace and scale.

Mr. Tangenberg said NEPA can be perceived as one of the barriers to large scale restoration. He suggested the goal should be to focus NEPA, not to water it down. Mr. Junette said the FS develops a “needs” report each year. However, it only reflects a portion of the need and there is not even funding for that amount of work.

FO Amodio concluded by saying the only way large scale change happens is when it comes from the public with public support. The only way this effort will be a success, will be if YSS, with help from others, can put together something that is compelling and demonstrates the huge public benefit.

Agreement: There was agreement to accept the mission and scope of the YSS Restoration Workgroup.

VIII. Discussion of YSS General Membership Field Trip:

The Chair opened the discussion of the August 15th YSS field trip. He said he is personally ready to look at some things beyond the Rim Fire. He suggested visiting the experimental forest and considering how the forest should look in the future. He said the experimental area mimics some of the GTR220 concepts. An additional site he suggested might be to visit Crabtree Road and view the differences.

A number of members liked this idea. FO Amodio said if this concept is part of the trip, it should be blended with issues within the Rim Fire area that could trip up the group and for which a common understanding is needed. He suggested visiting “the elephants in the room,” if there are any. Mr. Graveline said he would like to visit Jawbone Ridge. He noted the group has been talking about the prescription for biomass so this is an appropriate area.

Agreement: The steering committee agreed to dedicate the August general meeting to the field trip and that members should reserve the day for the trip.

The chair and vice-chair will discuss the event with Mr. Junette to further define the trip for presentation during the July meeting.

IX. Discussion of “Call for Proposals” for Website Construction, Desired Features, Posting & Maintenance:

The chair said he believed the need for creation of a stand-alone website had been discussed enough and it was time to move the concept forward. He noted Ms. Lott has agreed to update and maintain the website, assuming training is provided to her. Ms. Lott summarized the

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features and platform suggested for the website and asked if there were additional functions members would like to see added. Mr. Sturtevant suggested the site should have the ability to accept donations. Ms. Lott brought up the idea that members of YSS, relatives of members, and/or business associates and friends may be interested in responding to an RFP for development of the site. The group agreed there would not be a conflict if the responses to the RFP were rated through a “blind” scoring process. It was agreed that Ms. Lott would survey YSS for contacts of YSS members who might have an interest in responding to the RFP to develop a distribution list. Ms. Sorenson agreed to help Ms. Lott develop the RFP.

Agreement: There was agreement to develop an RFP for the website and bring it to the steering committee for final review during the July meeting.

X. Discussion of Noxious Weeds:

Mr. Randy Hanvelt began the discussion stating he had met with representatives of the timber industry regarding noxious weeds. They participated in a field trip and Mr. Hanvelt distributed copies of pictures from the trip. One comment was grazing might have helped, but the livestock would have to have had access to the weeds when the crop was young.

He suggested in order to deal with the many aspects of reforestation and recovery, there needs to be a long-range view and plan. He said it would be worthwhile to define the ideal forest. It would then be important to track the work such as documenting how many Black Backed Woodpecker nesting sites were created as a result of Rim Fire restoration efforts. He said if the restoration and tracking is done correctly, a new standard can be set. Conducting a number of controlled experiments could help figure out the restoration process for other sites, as well. He said creating a handbook of sorts could prove useful.

Mr. Hanvelt created a forest growth scenario table which he distributed to the group. The table depicted a “no change” scenario wherein management continues according to the status quo. It also depicted increased investment in infrastructure and rate of forest treatment at a level of 2.5 additional board feet per year and also at an increase of 1 million board feet per year. He said if 125 million board feet is harvested per year, it would take 30 years just to address new timber growth.

He said forests are swiftly moving to a situation where wildfire is becoming the dominant method for treatment. He added management is not keeping up with growth and this does not help wildlife or the ecosystem. He noted from a human perspective, it is affecting access to fire insurance. He challenged YSS to think broader as he believes YSS can make a significant impact. Mr. Hanvelt also said there is a story to be told by looking at the amount of forest products the U.S. is importing.

Ms. Sorensen said the discussion reminded her of the conversation around increasing the boundaries of YSS. She said there needs to be thought about the capacity of the FS to take on more work. She offered that perhaps the capacity could be driven by what on-the-ground condition is desired.

XI. Other:

The chair noted that it had been a good meeting and the accomplishments of YSS are beginning to be noticed.

XII. Date of Next General Meeting/Steering Committee Meeting/Agenda Items:

The next steering committee meeting will be held Friday, July 18th from 1:00p.m.-4:00p.m.

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The next YSS General Meeting will be Friday, August 15, tentatively from 9:00pm – 4:00 p.m. This will be a field trip and details will be forthcoming.

MEETING ATTENDANCE Steering Committee Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Todd Miller	Blue Mountain Minerals	
Jeff Redoutey	BMM/Alternate	
Walter Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon	Present
Linda Millspaugh	CSA/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	
Julia Stephens	CSERC/Alternate	
Jennifer Sorensen	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians of CA	Present
Stephanie Suess	CRRMWIC/Alternate	
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	Present
Jody Trott	CTBC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	
Karl Dambacher	GoldRushNews.com	
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Allen Johnson	SouthWest InterFace Team	
Kelly Bearden	SWIFT Alternate	
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	
John Gray	TC/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	TuCare	Present
Vicki Albrecht	TuCare/Alternate	
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen, Inc.	
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	
Jim Maddox	Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present

LIASON MEMBERS

Name	Organization	Attendance
Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	
Nathan Graveline	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Scott Tangenberg	US Forest Service	Present
Ann Denton	US Forest Service	

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Name	Organization	Attendance
Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting/Facilitator	Present

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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Jon Sturtevant	Tuolumne Group Sierra Club
Jim Junette	US Forest Service
Randy Hanvelt	Tuolumne County