



Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General Meeting Summary for February 21, 2014

ACTION ITEMS:

1. FS to post timeline of activities related to Rim Fire on the STF website.
2. FS to follow-up with Butch Blazer invitation. YSS to send invitation if a visit has not been arranged during the spring.
3. FS to report on lessons learned through locations within the Rim Fire area they found earlier treatment to be successful in fire protection.
4. FO Amodio to discuss with chair and vice-chair how NFF non-profit line item funds might be redirected.
5. FO Amodio to inquire regarding additional NFF funding opportunities to support YSS.
6. Ms. Vance to investigate whether there are funds that can be leveraged to help support YSS efforts.
7. Chris Trott, John Buckley, and Jon Sturtevant to put together RAC funding proposal
8. Ms. Lott to send out FS funding request letter to members.
9. Mr. Graveline to report back on further WCB funding developments-timeline concepts at November WCB meeting.

AGENDIZE FOR STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING:

1. Discussion regarding website development
2. Draft template for funding request letter-Karl Dambacher
3. Update on visit from Butch Blazer
4. Update on YSS support funding opportunities

MEETING GOALS:

1. To consider recommendations from the steering committee regarding process moving forward.
 2. To discuss YSS boundaries and also discuss possible project concepts for SNC.
 3. To help discern zones of agreement/differences on latest EIS plan.
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SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Mrs. Lott, Facilitator, opened the meeting and asked for introductions. Mr. Richard Stem complimented the group on their efforts. Forest Supervisor Susan Skalski thanked the group for their work. She asked Deputy Forest Supervisor Scott Tangenberg to share his background with the group. She also introduced Interim Groveland District Ranger Mitchell White who also shared his background.

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Supervisor Skalski shared the regional office had some concerns regarding the financial impacts of the Rim Fire work. She said she briefed the leadership to be sure they understood the scope of activities and the cost control measures. It was noted the timeline for activities requires the use of contract assistance which is more costly. The regional office validated the efforts. She added the Forest Service Chief continues to be interested in the forest continuing to work with YSS.

Ms. Lott reminded the group of the motive for requesting new sign-up forms. She provided forms for use at the meeting.

Review Agreements from Last Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting:

Chair Mike Albrecht started the discussion with levity, citing public camper comments left for the Forest Service at various campsites. He reinforced the importance of the collaborative's new independence from the Forest Service. He also underscored the opportunity to assist in identifying projects that meet the goals of Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Rim Fire funds.

The chair then spoke to the results of the first steering committee meeting. He reviewed the seven agreements and fourteen action items that resulted from that meeting and are found in the February 3rd steering committee meeting summary.

He concluded by saying YSS is in this for the long-haul and therefore members need to think of YSS activities in those terms as the collaborative's purpose is not just to address the Rim Fire. He added that local agreements will help deflect future lawsuits from out-of-the-area groups.

Review Finances-Facilitation Budget:

Chair Albrecht said Ms. Lott put together a detailed proposal for facilitation and process management for the 2014-2015 calendar years. The total not-to-exceed budget is \$26,000. This includes ongoing process support and coordination, pre and post meeting work, and facilitation of nineteen steering committee meetings and five general meetings. He noted her work helps keep efforts coordinated. Vice-chair Buckley referenced her number of years of work with the T-Stan Integrated Regional Water Management efforts. He said she was instrumental in helping the group position itself to be awarded over 3 million dollars in grant funds and establish credibility with Department of Water Resources. He noted her service will pay for itself and help keep YSS moving in a positive direction. Ms. Ann Denton shared the importance of neutrality in the role and the value of coordination and support in between meetings, as well as, during meetings.

Finance Officer John Amodio said he inquired of SNC if any of those funds could be used to help support YSS. He was told that opportunity was very limited and could only be considered within the context of the new fiscal year. FO Amodio said he would continue to work with SNC on this possibility.

FO Amodio referenced the current National Forest Foundation (NFF) grant noting it has a required facilitation training component. The Tuolumne River Trust (TRT) is the fiscal agent for this grant and as such, is recommending the training component be done within the context of a steering committee meeting. This grant also speaks to researching and presenting non-profit status as an option for YSS. As YSS members, to date, have indicated they are not necessarily interested in pursuing non-profit status, FO Amodio will discuss with the chair and vice-chair how else these funds might be directed. Again within the grant, are funds earmarked for a DVD and brochure. FO Amodio thought the group might want to redirect these funds to development of a website instead of static materials. A member reinforced the importance of an interactive

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website. FO Amodio concluded by saying he will also check back with NFF regarding additional funding opportunities. Ms. Mandy Vance said she would look into whether there are some funds that can be leveraged to assist.

Mr. Jim Phelan reported back on his inquiry regarding Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) funds. He said between Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties there should be approximately \$150,000 to consider awarding. The presentation date is May 19th with the application due April 18th. He noted someone from YSS would need to present the request as he is on the committee and it would not be appropriate for him to do so. Chris Trott, VC Buckley, and Jon Sturtevant volunteered to put together the RAC proposal.

VC Buckley said he and the chair worked on the content of the letter requesting YSS support funds from the FS. Mrs. Albrecht formatted the letter and the letterhead making it look very professional. It was sent to the regional office for consideration. The request was for \$10,000. Ms. Lott will send out a copy to members.

Mr. Karl Dambacher said he was in the information gathering stage and would have a draft for the March 21st meeting.

Regarding the request for a visit from USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment Butch Blazer, Supervisor Skalski said he is interested in coming to visit the Rim Fire area and meet with YSS. The FS is taking the lead on arranging this, but caution was mentioned that it may require a very short notice for a YSS meeting. She recommended that if he has not arranged to come this spring, then it would be appropriate for YSS to send an invitation letter.

Mr. Nathan Graveline reported on possible funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). He said he followed up with Mr. Peter Perrin from Fish and Wildlife who would oversee the application. The projects need to go through F&W accompanied by a letter of support from YSS. It is possible that an entity from YSS could apply. He still needs to get further information on how funding would be distributed. He said conversation with the FS needs to take place to determine which projects are suggested to be funded through the EIS. The WCB wants comprehensive forest health projects that are large scale. He said there are not many projects within the EIS that would fit and there should be more than a single focus on biomass. He also mentioned there is no time limit on applying for these funds. The board meets quarterly and the November meeting is when they would like some project ideas to discuss in concept. The funding limit is up to \$2 million and they fund private and federal projects dependent upon the funding mechanism. It was requested Mr. Graveline report back on further developments at the next meeting.

Committee Reports:

Boundary Changes: Ms. Jennifer Sorensen and Deputy Forest Supervisor Tangenberg presented a boundary map for discussion. Ms. Sorensen noted that Chicken Ranch Rancheria is interested in focusing on unburned lands, specifically part of the Stanislaus River Watershed which is within the Tuolumne County boundary. The two boundary changes for consideration were an expansion to the South Fork of the Stanislaus River and an expansion to the Tuolumne County line/North Fork of the Stanislaus River. It was noted if the boundary is pushed all the way north, a decision needs to be made regarding whether to stop on the east at the Emigrant Wilderness line.

Timing – Meeting Calendar:

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The group decided it would be best to convene the Steering Committee as soon as possible. The date of Monday, February 3rd from 1pm-4pm, was chosen. The meeting will be held at the FS Supervisor's Office Conference Room. Mr. Buckley volunteered to coordinate putting together an agenda with the rest of the Steering Committee. Ms. Lott will assimilate the materials and distribute them.

Ms. Lott called for a formal motion to reorganize YSS as an independent organization.

Motion: A motion and a second were heard to reorganize YSS as an independent organization. The motion passed unanimously.

It was suggested the 3rd Friday of February be held as a tentative date for a meeting of the larger YSS Collaborative.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Discussion:

Supervisor Skalski introduced Mr. Jim Branham of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the other guests to collaborative members. Mr. Branham said the SNC board authorized one million dollars of Prop 84 funding for Rim Fire recovery efforts. He shared information regarding compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). He said their goal is to move the money into projects as soon as possible. The next board meeting is in March and he would like to have project ideas ready to present at that time.

Additional potential funders were introduced. Mr. Peter Perrine was noted there are CA Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission funds that may be able to be utilized to support restoration efforts. One of the things they are looking at are riparian corridors and efforts that go forward long-term. There may also be support from the California Conservation Corp. It was noted their labor efforts have been used in the past to build fencing. Mr. Vance Russell said the National Forest Foundation may also be able to provide support and may help leverage/match other funds. It was noted they do not get a lot of proposals from California and they are very supportive of collaborative efforts. There are possibilities of matching funds up to \$100,000. Projects must benefit a national forest.

Mr. Branham continued that the Prop 84 funds must be used for public benefit and improvement of watershed health. Use of these funds triggers CEQA. However, because this is considered an emergency, it may provide greater latitude to work under CEQA exemption.

A member asked whether funds might be available to fund NEPA and/or CEQA activities. Mr. Branham said there are funds available. He noted if there are very good projects that need this work there are ways to work this in to the funding opportunities. However, SNC's goal is to move the money into actual projects as soon as possible. He said SNC's board meets quarterly and the next meeting is in March, followed by a meeting in June. SNC will be working closely with the FS, the county, and they are really looking forward to input from YSS. The point of contact for YSS is Mr. Chris Dallas. Funds can be awarded to public agencies, Tribes, and 501c3 organizations.

Concerns were raised by a member about inadequate access to water to help mitigate dust from roads while work is being done. Supervisor Skalski said this issue is being addressed within the EIS. Another member noted the fire is a poster child for portraying the need for watershed protection and the effect of the current sedimentation.

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Mr. Branham responded to a member's belief that money should be put toward biomass efforts by saying that is something SNC would have interest in, as well.

A member said he would like SNC to better define the restrictions on what the funds can be used for. Mr. Branham said SNC does not want to be so specific as to limit the thinking that goes into this. He gave some possible examples such as restoration of roads and culverts, reforestation efforts, grazing issues around sensitive areas, and terrestrial and aquatic habitat restoration.

Members gave additional suggestions such as replacing fencing that was existing pre-fire and restoring the ditch system used for both cattle and wildlife. Another member noted stream restoration and recovery efforts as important as there are so many miles of denuded stream banks. Also suggested were biomass efforts to reduce fuel and produce products. It was noted the focus should be to save what is left and restore the rest.

A member observed that unmaintained plantations are not the long-term answer. Supervisor Skalski said the FS is looking at lessons learned through this fire and are working with their scientists to develop better pathways for the future.

Mr. Branham said there will need to be an application for the SNC funds. However, it is important for concepts to be discussed with SNC first. They would like it to be a very collaborative process. The funds generally need to be encumbered within two years and expended by 2017.

It was noted CA State Parks may have funding available for Off Highway Vehicle recreation efforts.

A question was asked regarding NEPA. Mr. Branham said because the projects will be on FS land, NEPA has to be a component of the process. For SNC purposes, CEQA must also be done.

A concern was raised about how funds would be received for projects and if expenses had to be submitted to SNC for reimbursement. Mr. Branham said they have some ability to provide some funds in advance.

A member asked if the EIS goes into an appeal process if that would be problematic for SNC funds. Mr. Branham said that would constitute a real challenge.

The group thanked all of the potential funders and committed to working on project ideas.

Conclusion:

Ms. Lott noted that YSS is a very committed group and they are very grateful for the opportunity to work with potential funders. Supervisor Skalski thanked the YSS members for their commitment and offered special thanks to those who stepped up to participate in the Steering Committee.

Next YSS General Meeting:

Tentatively scheduled for Friday, February 21, 2014

MEETING ATTENDANCE

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Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Allen Johnson	SouthWest InterFace Team	Present
Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	Present
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Brain Wayland	SPI Alternate	
Brandon Sanders	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	Present
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	Present
Jeff Redoutey	BMM/Alternate	
Jennifer Sorensen	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians	Present
Stephanie Suess	CRRMWI/Alternate	
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	Present
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	Present
Jim Maddox	Tuolumne County Sportsmen/Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne-Mariposa Resources Advisory Council	Present
Jody Trott	CTBC/Alternate	
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
John Gray	TC/Alternate	
John Romena	Buena Vista Biomass Power	
Jon Sturtevant	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	Present
Kamran Rasheed	PG&E Alternate	
Karl Dambacher	DC Alternate	Present
Kelly Bearden	SWIFT Alternate	
Linda Millspaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Lindsey Meyers	CSERC Alternate	
Mandy Vance	SNC Alternate	Present
Matt Waverly	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
Michael Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association	Present
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	Present
Mike Albrecht	TuCARE	Present
Mike Horvath	SFPUC/Natural Resources	Present
Missy Marino	TCRCD Alternate	
Nathan Graveline	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Patrick Koepele	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Paul Maben	Pacific Gas & Electric	
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Sasha Farkas	TCFB Alternate	
Scott Tangenberg	USFS Alternate	Present

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Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	Present
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	Present
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	Present
Stuart Crook	Permitee/Landowner	
Susan Skalski	USFS Stanislaus NF	Present
Todd Miller	Blue Mountain Minerals	Present
Vicki Albrecht	TC/Alternate	
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Pam Baltimore	USFS
Gary Severson	High Point Resources LLC
Mike Krol	AWF
Gary Severson	High Point Resources, LLC
Jerry Martinez	BLM
Jim Roehl	Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council
Will Dutra	TMWTC
Chris Dallas	SNC
Bev Shane	TC
Maria Benech	USFS
Margaret Dowd	Mariposa County Resident
Marty Gmelin	USFS
Rob Griffith	USFS