



## Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative Field Trip with Regional Office Staff August 8, 2017

### **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:**

1. Schedule a field trip to visit reforestation sites.
2. Invite media to visit some project sites for purpose of authoring article on SNC & WCB projects.
3. USFS to provide presentation of projects still in need of funding.
4. 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)
5. Continue efforts to promote LLPP through Senator Feinstein's office.
6. Investigate a Good Neighbor Agreement with CAL FIRE and apply for a grant as suggested by Mr. Brink.
7. LT to work with Ms. Liz Peterson and FS on a potential Master Stewardship Agreement.
8. A.D. Tangenberg to get YSS LT a checklist of tasks needing to be addressed in a salvage project.

### **GOAL:**

- To share concerns regarding the green forest with Regional Office staff and explore potential of funding for the YSS LLPP.

### **SUMMARY:**

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Chair Chris Trott welcomed the group and noted the two primary purposes of YSS are to promote restoration of the Rim Fire footprint and resiliency within the green forest.

#### **Long Barn Stop:**

Chair Trott shared YSS has hosted several tours to the experimental forest (GTR-220) and all participants have said the way the area is maintained is exactly how they would like to see all the forest look. YSS realizes the rest of the forest is not experimental, so there are some limitations on what is permitted. So, within standards and guidelines, YSS would like to see practices implemented that are as close as possible to experimental forest. He added, the area being visited was used for biomass, logging, mastication, and salvage. This site is what YSS would like to see on the forest with the addition of prescribed burning. YSS agrees with this type of treatment.

Mr. John Buckley said the YSS Leadership Team (LT) has been trying to get the message to the USFS that YSS agrees with this type of treatment and wants increased pace and scale. Action on the ground has been lacking. He said while the site is not the perfect, YSS believes there would be incredibly broad agreement from the public that this is what they want the forest to look like.

Chair Trott shared the YSS Large Landscape Pilot Project (LLPP) vision is treatment of up to 5,000 acres per year over 5 years, up to 3,000 acres per year of prescribed burning, and 300 acres of restoration projects. As treatment is done, YSS wants to have these areas as examples to show the public. Mr. Buckley clarified, these are additional acres to the regular USFS work. It is not intended these areas supplant USFS work.

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Mr. Keith Martin cited volunteer efforts he has been involved in in support of US Park Service personnel. Acting Supervisor (AS) Scott Tangenberg said the FS has used volunteers in the Rim Fire footprint in partnership with Tuolumne River Trust (TRT). Mr. Seth Connolly said TRT has been in contact with US Parks Service and they have more resources at their disposal. Mr. Buckley said CSERC does volunteer work every two weeks, but what volunteers can do is a different level of effort than what is needed for thinning/logging projects requiring heavy equipment.

Mr. Marty Gmelin said when the Long Barn Stop area work was being done, the revenue from the saw logs helped pay for removing small growth and restoring roads.

Mr. Mike Albrecht noted the next two stops would show areas that need work. He added Tuolumne County has the markets to take these materials, and without future guarantees of product, the infrastructure is in jeopardy of closing.

### **Wright's Burn Stop One:**

Chair Trott pointed out the extremely dense forest and said there are hundreds of thousands of acres that look just like this. This area has not been thinned since the fire that occurred in the 50s. He said this is an example of where treatment could help the forest and provide products for market.

Mr. Albrecht said it costs about \$10-12,000 per day to operate logging. One needs to remove enough board feet to make it profitable. If it can be profitable, the FS can rely on private companies. There are still well-trained people in the area and there is collaborative agreement by YSS. 200 years ago, there would have been a lot of large trees and much less understory because of fire.

Mr. Buckley said GTR-220 was developed by researchers who looked back at how the forest used to be and saw historically there were clumps and openings and scattered individual trees. Oaks, dogwoods and other tree varieties have been shaded out of existence in dense stands. While this specific area is in a Protected Activities Center (PAC), there are plenty of areas outside of PACs to treat. And by not treating dense areas of the forest, PACs can be destroyed in large fires. Over 40 PACs were destroyed in Rim Fire.

Deputy Director (DD) Bernie Gyant asked who liked the way this stop looks and no one raised their hand. Mr. Brian Wayland noted he does like what he sees where USFS has treated stands. He added when it gets this dense, from a commercial aspect, it is a no go because they cannot harvest the large trees and there is no money in small trees.

Mr. Hanvelt asked if, from an industry standpoint, there is the capacity to take on an additional 5,0000 acres per year as in the YSS LLPP. Mr. Wayland said SPI has the capacity. Mr. Albrecht said there would need to be additional logging crews. But that would help support the infrastructure in the county.

Ms. Carolyn Lott noted the YSS collaborative is part of the infrastructure that needs to be protected and this will only be accomplished by seeing progress on the ground.

### **Wright's Burn Stop Two:**

Mr. Albrecht said this area is a contrast to the WB Stop One as there are trees of value. He noted one side of the road is a plantation from after the Wright's Creek fire. It has been thinned

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about three times. The fire stopped at the road. The other side of the road is very dense with lots of ladder fuels. Mr. Albrecht estimated 30-50,000 board feet per acre be harvested in this area. He said this area is an example of the great opportunities for thinning. Leaving areas like this creates huge fire hazards. Areas like this were also hit hard by beetles infesting fir and pine trees. He said this is the kind of landscape YSS would like to treat. He added the industry has geared up to take larger trees and smaller trees. Smaller cedar trees, for example, can be used for cedar fencing. An additional benefit for opening areas is it will allow for the release of what is not growing because of lack of light. Proceeding this way eliminates the need to replant.

Mr. Albrecht said there are sugar pines that died in the last year and have not been marked and removed and they are just deteriorating. These are hazard trees. After two years, they are no longer valuable. Mr. Albrecht said YSS is proposing that YSS can do part of the work. Foresters must write CEQA documents, which are like NEPA, for work on the private land so they have experience doing this. YSS would like the USFS to allow a group of YSS members to work on the pilot project development and implementation. He added YSS is not here to say what has not been done, but rather how YSS can help to do more.

Mr. Waylund said he would like to bring in surveyors and qualified biologists to see if some of the PACs can be retired.

### **Hull Creek Campground Stop:**

Chair Trott said YSS is tired of having more said than done. The focus of the lunchtime discussion is to be objective and try and come up with a clear path. TRT has applied for 5-6 grants to develop the LLPP plan, but has not been successful because funding entities do not want to fund planning. This is the biggest hurdle as the projects themselves can mostly pay for themselves. He said the LT has been thinking a lot about how YSS can get through this hurdle. He asked if the YSS vision could be accomplished? What is the clear path to get there?

D.D. Gyant said he knows YSS can get there. He said the FS must do business differently. He said he is frustrated when everyone could get together around a burnt forest, but not a green forest. However, YSS has met that challenge. He continued that on a good year, the FS is treating about half the acres per year they want to treat. The FS has been reactionary and society is not willing to invest on the front end.

D.D. Gyant referenced the comment about the energy of YSS. He observed if you ever get to a place where people lose interest, they will not come back. YSS needs to focus on how to leave the CA forest in a better place. He added that collaboratives do not move quickly.

He continued saying fire suppression takes about 50% of the funding. Nationally, the FS has already invested 50% of their budget into suppression. D.D. Gyant suggested looking at a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA). He said YSS would pick a landscape, take care of NEPA, and put receipts back into the landscape. He noted the new administration is going to want more products out of the forest. Currently, when they are investing so much into working on salvage, they do not have the resources to work on green forests. He said he believes there is an opportunity to use cap and trade dollars and water bond funding.

D.D. Gyant said there is MSA on the Upper Mokelumne. He said if YSS is counting on the USFS, they should not do so as the FS will continue to work at a snail's pace. He added the FS is working with US Fish and Wildlife to keep more species from being listed at it makes progress come to a standstill.

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An MSA allows adding to a contract without going through the whole acquisitions process. Chair Trott confirmed an IDIQ gives the FS authority to spend up to \$7M, but does not mean the FS has the money. It enables private contractors to be utilized without going through all the bureaucracy. An Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract enables this.

Mr. Albrecht asked if the MSA on the Mokelumne has led to anything on the ground. Mr. Jim Junette said Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMWRA) received an SNC grant to do the survey work. NEPA was already completed. UMWRA paid for the grant writer and the CEQA work. Mr. Junette said the MSA can cover the entire forest. Then you focus on the specific areas you want to work on. You can run the MSA through your own contracting processes. You have a financial plan with each area of focus. YSS could use in-kind as match. It is possible at the end of the FS fiscal year there will be money other forests have not been able to spend that can be directed into funding for the MSA. MSA allows for product removal.

Mr. Buckley summed up what he had heard. He said on a negative side, given the FS operational path, there is a slow pace of work and reducing funding. He said YSS cannot ask the FS to do more. He added this is frustrating as the USFS has the responsibility for managing the forests and the money just goes into fire suppression and not into managing forests proactively. He concluded the FS will not come up with more funding to get things done.

He said regarding the MSA, if YSS could take on the MSA, it would really be on the backs of the members of YSS to get the survey work done. He said some YSS members just met with Mr. Todd Ellsworth and had a candid conversation on treatment of about 2,000 acres, but the wood is of no value other than biomass. Mr. Buckley wants to see green trees included in projects. Mr. Junette said it would take another year to get green trees into the project because of the requirements. Mr. Buckley queried whether the same regulatory process would be part of the MSA as YSS is trying to get something done in a more streamlined process.

A.S. Tangenberg said Mr. John Exline shared there are national level conversations going on about how to streamline timber processing and how to streamline NEPA. Ms. Diana Craig said there are also conversations about finding a way to integrate NEPA and CEQA.

D.D. Gyant said he and Mr. Exline are on a national team looking at how to modernize the timber product program. He said they are starting to challenge why having a Forest Plan is not enough to guide the process. He also noted most forests have little-to-no shelf stock left. D. D. Gyant added he does not want to give contractors money to do analyses and then have FS personnel redo the work.

Chair Trott asked if it is possible to take the Farm Bill CE and utilize it twice per year to accomplish what YSS wants to accomplish with the LLPP. That could streamline the process as it could be established the projects have no significant effect on habitat.

Mr. Albrecht said right now YSS does not have their specialists doing anything. He added YSS does not want to drive away today and have this concept of a MSA die. He asked how the process could keep moving at a very fast pace. He said there are likely only two years to keep the wood product industries alive in the county. Time is of the essence.

The question was raised as to who is going to be responsible for drafting the MSA. Ms. Liz Peterson said she has a template and would work with a team of YSS members on drafting the MSA. Mr. Hanvelt said D.D. Gyant needs to appoint a team to work with the YSS team.

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D.D. Gyant said he would do that. He suggested naming the whole forest in the MSA. He said YSS should focus on some quick EAs on bark beetle trees along roads to get started and to inject some receipts. He said this would help feed the biomass plant quickly.

Mr. Elliot VanderKolk said there is potential funding for thinning of plantations. There is money in the biomass pillar. D.D. Gyant said water agencies have interests, as well.

Mr. Buckley said we have heard YSS should focus on salvage hazard trees. He requested either A.S. Tangenberg or Mr. Junette send out quick checklist of what needs to be done in regarding this type of project so the YSS LT can see which tasks they can take on. A.S. Tangenberg said his folks can do that.

Mr. Buckley asked if there is anything YSS can do to get green tree thinning done through a Farm Bill CE. It was noted most of the Stanislaus Forest has been designated as a watershed specifically named within the Farm Bill. The Cold Springs area has a lot of NEPA work done. Mr. Buckley said YSS has a goal of adding some thinning to the Cold Springs project area.

The chair thanked everyone for their participation.

### **Next YSS General Meeting:**

**September 15, 2017 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

### **MEETING ATTENDANCE**

#### **Members**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Jeff Redoutey	Blue Mountain Minerals	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present
Linda Millspaugh	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	
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Michael Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association/4x4 in Motion	
Alisha Lomeli	Pacific Gas & Electric	

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Stuart Crook	Permitee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Pauline Turski	Pine Mountain Lake Association Board of Directors	
Joe Powell	PMLA/Alternate	
Mike Horvath	SFPUC/Natural Resources	
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Jon Sturtevant	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	Present
Keith Martin	SCTG/Alternate	Present
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
Jeb Brooks	SPI Alternate	Present
Bailey Hunter	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
Willie Dutra	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	
John Gray	TC/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present
Vicki Albrecht	TuCARE/Alternate	Present
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	Present
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	Present
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	Present
Jim Maddox	Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present

### LIASON MEMBERS

Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	
Nathan Graveline	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
Randi Jorgensen	SNC/Alternate	
Allen Johnson	SouthWest InterFace Team	
Scott Tangenberg	USFS Stanislaus NF	Present
Ann Denton	USFS/Alternate	Present
Marty Gmelin	USFS/Alternate	Present
Maria Benech	USFS/Alternate	

### COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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### OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Liz Peterson	Tuolumne County
Kevin Moss	TRT
Randy Hanvelt	Tuolumne County
Elliott VanderKolk	SNC
Dennis Serpa	Pacific Ultrapower
Rick Carter	Pacific Ultrapower
Barnie Gyant	USFS
Diana Craig	USFS
Jim Junette	USFS
Brian McRory	USFS
Todd Ellsworth	USFS
Katie Wilkinson	USFS
Nicole Williams	USFS
Paul Michel	NOAH