



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General  
Membership Meeting Summary  
March 4, 2016  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:**

1. Draft press release if/when SNC & WCB funds are awarded.
2. Obtain list of STF's proposed HUD grant projects and discuss prioritization and additional projects (Project WG to provide draft recommendations to STF and SNC).
3. Update YSS objectives.
4. VC Graveline and others to develop comments on WIP.
5. LT to consider field trip dates for Agency folks and Legislators as requested by Mr. Amodio
6. Send out revised draft charter language addressing further defining group consensus.

**MEETING GOALS:**

- To hear presentations/updates on current forest issues
- To discuss the CA biomass energy issues and the future of local biomass plant
- To discuss comments on the Watershed Improvement Plan Draft Strategy

**SUMMARY:**

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Chair Chris Trott welcomed the group. He shared the two main YSS goals include restoring the Rim Fire footprint and restoring resiliency to the green forest. He said the Leadership Team is pushing back the Draft Large Landscape Proposal as the focus currently is tree mortality and biomass issues.

**National Disaster Resilience Competition Update:**

Mr. Craig Pedro reported the county ended up with almost one billion dollars in recommended projects from stakeholders. This was reduced down to \$117M. The actual award of \$70 million includes \$28,604,459 for forest and watershed health (variance from ask of -\$11,395,541), community resilience center for \$19,755,000 (variance from ask of -\$35,245,000), and biomass facility/wood products campus for \$22,000,000. He said the funding is for only one center and the county has to choose the location. The bioenergy facility is intended to be a 3 MW plant, which is small, co-located with several small forest products businesses. Grant oversight for forest work and the biomass facility will be led by SNC in partnership with CalEPA and the STF.

Currently, work is underway on an agreement with HUD and the state partner CA HCD. April and May are the target for completion of contracts and on a parallel track, work will take place on sub-agreements. The maximum time extension, if granted, for completion of the projects is Sept. 30, 2022. April 8<sup>th</sup> there will be a kick-off in Sacramento and a local one within the county. HUD has indicated they will be very hands-on as they want to use this as a template for addressing future fire disasters.

Chair Trott requested YSS receive a list of the STF's recommended forest projects and have an opportunity to provide input. Mr. Pedro said the projects will not be chosen by the USFS, but rather by meeting the expectations of HUD and SNC. Mr. Tangenberg indicated that the STF would provide the originally submitted project list to YSS.

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### **SNC and WCB Funding Updates:**

Mr. Patrick Koepele said the existing grant from SNC for restoration planning is being wrapped up now. A grant for implementation for the projects in the planning effort was submitted to SNC for \$842,000 and was approved. All the projects are in the Lower Cherry Watershed. The WCB grant is \$3.5M for implementation of multiple wildlife-related projects. It is on the WCB May agenda for consideration.

### **Tree Mortality:**

Mr. Mike Albrecht said CA is in the worst drought in 1,200 years. 70M acres have died off in Western North America, but the mortality is new to CA. There is a task force that is addressing the issue in Tuolumne County. Unfortunately, there is no relief for private property owners unless they have trees that are threatening public infrastructure. There is an effort to coordinate county efforts with those of PG&E.

Mr. Fred Wong and Mr. Scott Tangenberg, USFS, said at this point STF is not nearly as bad off as the SNF where 50-70% of all trees are dead. In 2014, a new Farm Bill was passed which included an opportunity for the USFS to utilize a categorical exemption. Anywhere it is desired to apply this exemption, permission has to be granted from the chief of the USFS. The STF has received approval and is now moving forward with a project. The project must include collaboration which is why it is being brought before YSS.

Mr. Wong said foresters have been tasked with finding out where trees are the most susceptible to bark beetles and where there is the most opportunity for successful treatment. At this point, they are focused a mile east of Long Barn on public land in the Wrights Creek plantation.

Mr. Tangenberg asked a series of questions and said YSS members can send answers to [kkwilkinson@fs.fed.us](mailto:kkwilkinson@fs.fed.us). The questions are:

1. What do you like about the project? (Members said they like the proactive approach and that this area contains an important plantation into which significant money was invested.)
2. What concerns you? (Members said there is no mention of strategic fuel breaks. There is not enough being treated. There is a need for biomass and removal of slash or the FS is just creating a bigger problem.)
3. What additional information would you like?
4. How would you like to be involved?

Mr. Tangenberg said they are being cautious about how large of an area they are focused on at one time because of the CE. They are continuing to identify additional areas. It was requested they discuss additional areas with YSS. He added they are hoping to implement in Sept. They are using GTR220 where it lends itself to that design. They are treating roadsides and campgrounds to protect the public.

Mr. John Amodio and Mr. Taylor Miller said they have been involved in the CA Tree Mortality Task Force. Mr. Amodio is on the Healthy Forest and Resiliency Subcommittee and Mr. Miller is serving on the Bioenergy Task Force.

### **Draft watershed Improvement Strategy Discussion (WIP):**

Mr. Michael Pickard, SNC, said the WIP is essentially a program for which the Rim Fire was the impetus. The idea is to create a more coordinated effort region-wide in pace and scale. It is intended that the WIP be a centralized hub for data on completed projects in order to assist

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interested parties in comparing projects, how they are funded, and even grant applications. There would be a website that allows each project proponent to input their project data and manage it. The tool is designed for use by any stakeholder.

Watershed scale assessments will be finished this spring. The USFS is conducting its own assessments. There is a desire to understand the restoration needs of each watershed. RCDs will be the lead for private land.

Chair Trott asked how this program will help YSS. Mr. Pickard said it will bring more attention to the Sierra Nevada, increase coordination within the region, and provide the region with one voice.

Mr. Amodio said there are two pilot projects to be conducted through the WIP. One has been selected on the TNF and he believes the STF should be the second pilot project. Mr. Pickard said SNC is helping the USFS leverage for additional funds. There is a desire to move away from “random acts of restoration” to larger-scale coordinated projects.

Ms. Lindsay Mattos, TCRCD, said the RCD will be providing information on the private lands within the Tuolumne and Stanislaus Watersheds.

Vice-chair Nathan Graveline volunteered to coordinate comments on the WIP. Mr. Amodio and Ms. Stephanie Suess agreed to assist. Comments are due March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion:** VC Graveline moved, and Mr. Amodio seconded, a motion to endorse the SNC WIP. There were no objections offered.

### **USFS Updates:**

Mr. Tangenberg said the STF is proceeding with reviewing comments on the Reforestation DEIS and preparing responses. The Draft Decision is scheduled to be released on April 22<sup>nd</sup> which will start the clock on the 45-day objection period. The objection period is for stakeholders who are asking the Regional Forester to consider a different action. If there is a proponent for the Draft Decision or someone who wishes to propose a compromise, they can be included in the discussion. Chair Trott said the Reforestation Subcommittee will work on this.

Mr. Albrecht said he wants to be sure the HUD funds are not used to supplant USFS funds for work already planned.

Mr. Tangenberg said StNF will not be working on a Forest Plan revision this fiscal year. They are looking to begin large landscape planning in the fall.

### **Statewide Biomass Situation/Pacific Ultrapower Chinese Station:**

Mr. Steve Brink provided handouts to include the Task Force Website Tree Mortality Viewer, the Governor's Proclamation of a State of Emergency, Calforest's letter to Mr. Ed Randolph of the CPUC regarding Draft Resolution E4770, the preliminary summary of estimated tree mortality volume, and the state-wide biomass contracts overview. He said originally there were 66 power plants built in CA. There are only 21 biomass plants remaining. He noted agricultural waste is readily available, while forest waste is more expensive to retrieve. Sawmills also depend on biomass plants being in close proximity to them so it is cost-effective to offload the biomass materials.

Mr. Rick Carter, from Ultrapower, said open agricultural burning produces NO<sub>x</sub>, CO, SO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>, and THC. There is dramatically less (97%) emitted from biomass plants. After Ultrapower's

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“fixed energy price” amendment to their PG&E contract expires July 31, 2016 which is \$96.27MWH, it will drop to \$67.97MWH. Chinese Station was cash negative in 2015 with the current energy price. There is only enough capital to keep the plant open for one month after contract expiration. Ultrapower will be forced to close by August 31 if nothing changes.

It was noted YSS sent a letter to influential individuals citing the importance of keeping Chinese Station open. TuCARE has made this issue their focus for the year and are arranging a media event in the woods for later this month.

### **Recognition of AmeriCorps and National Civilian Community Corps (added to agenda):**

Mr. Seth Connolly introduced those present and thanked them for the work they are doing in the Rim footprint on behalf of YSS.

### **Forest Climate Action Team (FCAT), Sierra Nevada Alliance (SNA), Watershed Consortium Grant Proposal, CalFire GGRF Budget Item:**

Mr. Amodio reported learning through FCAT the prediction is for more droughts, longer droughts, and warmer droughts. FCAT is supposed to document forest health and how it is affected by climate change. There will be a draft document in a few weeks designed to help influence CARB’s thinking on the greenhouse gas issue as it relates to megafires.

One of the recommendations put forward on behalf of YSS is state agencies need to get out of Sacramento to really understand the forest and watershed issues. YSS needs to organize field trips and Mr. Amodio is requesting the Leadership Team determine dates for these trips.

He noted he is working with Ms. Lott on the Consortium Grant Proposal.

### **Meeting w/USFA Sec. Vilsack:**

No report was available.

### **Incoming Chair Trott-Future YSS Goals and Organization:**

Chair Trott said there were issues around the reforestation letter. Some YSS members who participated in the Reforestation Subcommittee were supportive of the position letter, but did not have authority to speak on behalf of their organization. The organization ultimately declined to support the YSS position. However, they “stood aside” and therefore the position letter was submitted with their respective organizations removed from the letterhead. It was suggested clarification on this definition of consensus be documented in the YSS Charter. Draft language will be sent out.

Chair Trott also shared the Leadership Team spoke about the importance of Dr. Stine being able to comment on YSS issues, from time-to-time. They authorized up to 80 hours of compensated time with a “not to exceed” stipend from the existing National Forest Foundation grant.

### **YSS Rim Fire Tree Planting Day:**

Ms. Clare Long said there are 30,000 trees in the ground. She thanked Mr. Connolly for managing the volunteer effort. YSS will be participating in a tree planting day on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Closing Remarks:**

It was noted on April 25<sup>th</sup>, there is an update in the Bay Area on the Rim Fire. It is put on by the Friends of the Berkeley Tuolumne Camp. Ms. Lott will send out a link.

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

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Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1-4PM

### MEETING ATTENDANCE Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	Present
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Jeff Redoutey	Blue Mountain Minerals	Present
John Romena	Buena Vista Biomass Power	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	
Linda Millspaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	
Lindsey Meyers	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	Present
Phil Coffin	FBTC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	Present
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	Present
Dusgty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Michael Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association/4x4 in Motion	Present
Paul Maben	Pacific Gas & Electric	
Kamran Rasheed	PG&E Alternate	
Stuart Crook	Permitee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/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
Rick Delvin	SCTG/Alternate	
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	
	SPI Alternate	
	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	
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	
Sasha Farkas	TCFB/Alternate	

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Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	Present
Stephanie Suess	TCRCD/Alternate	Present
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	Present
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	Present
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	Present
Jim Maddox	Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	

### LIASON MEMBERS

Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	Present
Nathan Graveline	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	Present
Linda Mazzu	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Allen Johnson	SouthWest InterFace Team	Present
Scott Tangenberg	USFS Stanislaus NF	Present
Ann Denton	USFS/Alternate	
Marty Gmelin	USFS/Alternate	Present

### COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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### OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Taylor Miller	Consultant
Rick Carter	UltraPower Chinese Station
Cynthia Barizenc	Tuolumne River Trust
Emily Finnegan	AmeriCorps/NCCC
Kara Kelly	Tuolumne River Trust
Trent Brown	Tuolumne River Trust
Basirat Sanni	NCCC
Amaji Johnson	NCCC
Georg Hernandez Mevia	NCCC
Eric Babbie	NCCC
Sterling Rayburn	AmeriCorps/NCCC
Clare Long	USFS
Jim Junette	USFS
Jacob Baker	USFS
Fred Wong	USGS
Michael Pickard	SNC