



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General
Membership Meeting Summary
November 18, 2016
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. Draft press release if/when WCB funds are awarded.
2. USFS to provide presentation of projects still in need of funding.
3. Set up meeting with YSS representatives, Ms. Benech, and the PSWRS to further discuss reforestation monitoring/research.

MEETING GOALS:

- To hear presentations/updates on current forest issues & NDRC
- To engage with a USFS researcher regarding reforestation monitoring/research

SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions:

Vice-Chair Nathan Graveline opened the meeting. He noted YSS has been organized for nearly six years. The YSS primary long-term goal has been, and still is, large landscape planning. He recognized a new YSS member, Pine Mountain Lake Association, represented by Ms. Pauline Turski.

Current and Potential Grant Status:

Mr. Patrick Koepele reported the NFF capacity grant has been completed and the final report submitted. Work provided through this grant included field trips, Sacramento engagement by Mr. John Amodio, large landscape planning efforts, and reforestation discussions. He said there are still funds remaining in the old RAC grant and there is an additional \$5,000 in the new RAC grant to continue to fund Ms. Carolyn Lott's facilitation and support services.

SNC provided \$850,000 through an implementation grant for restoration work in the Rim burn. Work on three high priority streams has been completed and work is underway on the remaining seven. The meadow and culvert work will begin next. The WCB awarded \$3.5M for reforestation work. There has also been a renewal of NFF funds to support volunteer tree planting. There is a pending grant with DFW for an increased planning effort for the LLP.

YSS Large Landscape Plan – Update from Plan Concept Review Committee:

VC Graveline, Chair Chris Trott, Deputy Forest Supervisor Scott Tangenberg, Supervisor Jeanne Higgins, and Mr. Koepele met regarding the LLP. Supervisor Higgins said the LLP is a priority for her, but not for the USFS. She said there is no extra money to start a major landscape level project. Mr. Koepele reported the USFS is focused on the Rim Fire, the Cornerstone projects, tree mortality, beginning the revision of the Forest Plan, Over-Snow Vehicle Plan, and the LLP. Work on the LLP is not funded.

VC Graveline said there is no funding for further development of the LLP or implementation of the plan if fully developed. This is hurdle YSS must deal with. Money is needed for analysis and assessment preferably using LIDAR, for NEPA, and for a large public engagement effort.

Mr. John Buckley said YSS collectively agreed there is a need to do increased pace and scale work on the forest. Recently, the Leadership Team spent a good deal of time talking about the

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LLP. He said all the team except for him are in favor of proceeding with the LLP. Mr. Buckley shared his concern about tree mortality and the uncertainty about the ultimate scope of the mortality. However, he said if Prop One funding is awarded, YSS needs to move forward. He said he believes YSS has an opportunity to achieve a lot of what is desired through the Forest Plan revision. He ended by saying YSS could influence some positive things through the Forest Plan.

USFS Updates and Discussion:

Rim Fire Reforestation Plan – Ms. Maria Benech said the FS is in a holding pattern because of HUD. The FS is going to contract out, utilizing internal monies, to site prep 1,200 acres in 2017. The FS is hoping HUD funds will be available for biomass removal but the FS has not yet chosen acres/units, etc. They are moving forward with the initial 1,200 acres as they want to move forward with something. Mr. Marty Gmelin said they have put in their nursery orders for 2018. It was clarified the only planting that has been done to date is the 200 acres of planting through TRT. Ms. Benech said if they get the HUD money, 1,000-2,000 acres can be planted in 2018. It takes a couple of years to site prep a planting area. It takes three seasons to plant. They will be spacing out the planting over all four alternatives' sites.

Mr. Buckley said there are approximately 21,000 acres within the ROD. He clarified the FS is only planning, now, for 2,000. Ms. Benech said the HUD funds are only going to cover a quarter to a third of the costs for reforestation. Ms. Benech said the reforestation of the 21,000 acres is a problem because of lack of funds.

Tree Mortality Plan – Mr. Dave Horak said Supervisor Higgins asked him to start the effort of putting together a long-term tree mortality plan and team. He said the GIS effort was the most amount of work. He added he is not sure there is such a thing as a long-term tree mortality strategy. Often by the time you get a tree mortality plan in place, the event is over. When they compared 2015 aerial surveys to the 2016 surveys, they cannot tell which trees within the Rim are dead from the long-term results of the fire or from the beetles. When prioritizing areas to treat, they had to include consideration of habitat for spotted owls and red-legged frogs, the proximity to CAL FIRE Priority One Zones, consideration of wildland/urban interface (WUI) defense zones, remapping existing and proposed fuel-breaks to increase connectivity, high resource values, and economics. Mr. Horak said the FS wants to get more Farm Bill funded projects. The SWIFT area is the highest priority, then the Me-Wuk 108 area, Cold Springs, and Cedar Ridge. In the Arnold area, all dead trees are on property boundaries.

Mr. Bill Haigh said there are dead trees on BLM lands very close to houses. BLM is concerned about their liability regarding trees falling on structures, etc. Mr. Horak said, for the FS, if the land is occupied by a permittee, the permittee is responsible such as in Pinecrest. If the tree is on FS land, and the FS is notified by the homeowner, the FS will take down the tree. The FS is working with Tuolumne County on trees along roads. The NRCS Jackson office will help private homeowners through the EQIP program:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ca/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=nrcseprd440606> .

The next step for the mortality plan is to determine the most suitable NEPA options. The FS wants to do as many Decision Memos as possible, utilizing standard EAs with Emergency Situation Determination, or Farm Bill CEs allowing up to 3,000 acres.

A member said SPI says after one year beetle trees have no value. The question was asked, "What does the FS plan to do if there is no market for the trees?" Mr. Horak said they are working on a contract for mastication and biomass.

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WCB/SNC Grants – The SNC grant was just shy of \$1M and the agreement is signed. It was hoped to do work in Sept., but it will not start until next July. Three of the ten springs are done. For the culvert, they are using an engineer from the Tahoe Forest and he will be training one of the local engineers for next summer. Deer habitat improvement should be implemented next summer.

The WCB grant agreement is ready to sign. The design work will be done in 2017 and implementation will be done in partnership with TRT. In the Rim, there is a lack of trees to put the owl structures in. Three meadows will move forward in 2017. The FS is working with TRT on one of the meadows. It takes a year to get permits so the remainder of the work will be done in 2018.

Personnel Changes/Replacements - Supervisor Higgins has taken a temporary assignment in DC. Mr. Tom Hall is coming to serve as Acting Deputy as Mr. Tangenberg is Acting Supervisor. There are three vacant ranger jobs – Mi-Wuk, Summit, and Calaveras. Ms. Mary Moore's job will be filled in February. Additional support staff will be coming for the reforestation program. The Assistant Fire Management position will be filled in April.

VC Graveline asked Mr. Joe Meyer to provide an update on Yosemite. Mr. Meyer said Yosemite is in the same situation as the Stanislaus and mortality is moving up in elevation currently up towards 7,000 feet. They are also seeing Red Fir and Cedar mortality, in addition to Pine. Red Fir is caused by water stress rather than bug kill. They have not noticed much mortality in Lodge Pole. Hazard trees are a big problem. The Park assumes they are liable so they are taking trees down. The funding source is the Resilient Landscapes Program: <https://www.doi.gov/wildlandfire/wildland-fire-resilient-landscapes-program> The Park has submitted a grant to treat 35,000 areas with prescribed burn. This acreage has not burned in 90+ years.

Mr. Meyer said it is known that overstocked forests are going to result in higher intensity forest fires, but there is less certainty about how drought is affecting the situation. It would be interesting to know how researchers see the bark beetle affecting forest management. He noted the Red Fir needs fire to propagate.

Sacramento Activities Update:

Mr. Amodio and Mr. Taylor Miller reported there was \$135M in greenhouse gas funds for forest health, but the legislature reduced it to \$40M and much went to urban areas. Mr. Amodio said they will be pitching again for money as there is still hope with two more years of leadership by Governor Jerry Brown. They are taking this opportunity to try to persuade the governor that saving the Sierras should be a legacy effort for him. They will look to the May revise as where funding might be earmarked. They will continue to help educate the public and increase public awareness.

The Forest Climate Action Team will be unveiling a final draft on the role the forest plays in affecting greenhouse gases. YSS will should comment on it. In regards to implementation of AB32, two years of improvement was lost through gases from the Rim Fire. Currently, a quarter of AB32 funds go to High Speed Rail. In relationship to HSR, the Rim Fire emitted the amount of greenhouse gas that HSR will save in its first 19 years of operation.

Mr. Miller said the PUC has been engaged in additional contracting for biomass power. The rules prohibit material coming from clear cut areas. There needs to be clarity as to whether this would apply to salvage operations areas. The product must come from Priority 1 and 2 areas.

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Mr. Amodio represents YSS on the Forest Health and Resiliency Task Force. SNC put forward a White Paper on the overall health of the forest and it has been well received. Basically, it states the Sierra forests are in a rapid decline in health and need a significant response to address the issues. <http://www.sierranevadaconservancy.ca.gov/our-work/state-of-the-sierra>

NDRC Projects and Timeline:

Ms. Angela Avery and Mr. Elliot Vanderkolk were in attendance on behalf of SNC. Ms. Avery introduced Mr. Vanderkolk who is handling policy and outreach for SNC and leading HUD grant management. They reported the HUD grant with CA is still not signed and it is eleven months since the award was announced. Only two of the 13 states, who were given awards, have agreements in place. However, SNC is continuing to act on the HUD award, so they hired Mr. Vanderkolk to lead the grant program for SNC. He will manage the movement of the contracts and the steps necessary to move forward as soon as the contract is signed.

Mr. Vanderkolk said he is trying to expedite subagreements so they will be ready to sign as soon as the contract is signed. He is working on a comprehensive outreach plan to be ready in early 2017. They also have to look at what has changed on the ground since grant was applied for approximately two years ago. They are working on pushing NEPA and CEQA efforts. They are trying to get NEPA approved by HUD.

Mr. Buckley asked about the biomass component wondering how permitting is going to be done within the grant timeframe, not alone building the project. Ms. Avery said no work has started on the biomass facility. The first year or so is going to be comprised of conducting a feasibility assessment and public outreach. The money expires in Sept. 2022, so work must be complete by March, 2022 for final invoicing.

Potential Research/Monitoring on Rim Fire Reforestation:

VC Graveline provided background on the connection between the submittal of the YSS alternative and included research/monitoring. Ultimately, the FS ROD contained the main components of the YSS submittal and was dubbed the "Community Alternative." The whole basis for the YSS support of the "Community Alternative" was that the four alternative treatment areas, and the no treatment area, would be monitored over time to provide a basis for determining which of the alternatives produced the best results given all the factors. Supervisor Higgins said she cannot require that the research be done. So, YSS has been trying to assist in moving the research and monitoring forward.

VC Graveline introduced Mr. Joseph Wagenbrenner from the USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station. Mr. Wagenbrenner said he is a hydrologist interested in soils and watersheds. He worked for three years on the Rim Fire salvage project looking at salvage effects on the watershed. He will also be doing research in conjunction with the tree mortality. He is looking for opportunities to work with YSS in fire and post-fire work. He explained the PSWRS has permanent salaries covered and they have \$5,000-10,000 for basic research and there are limited travel funds. So, they are expected to solicit funding for work. He said answering the YSS questions would not take a lot of dollars, but it would require long-term funding.

Mr. Buckley said one of the challenges is when YSS put forward the four alternatives they expected there would be similar means of comparisons for looking at conifer survival and economics. It was hoped there could be a look at this over the long term.

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Mr. Wagenbrenner said maybe short-term the focus could be on pulling together what is known research-wise and compiling baseline information. Then the alternatives could be revisited perhaps at 5-year intervals.

VC Graveline said YSS wants to pursue this, but would like set up a meeting with PSWRS staff and Ms. Benech.

Ultrapower Update:

Mr. Rick Carter said unfortunately he was not able to share much with YSS because of restrictions on public disclosure. The bidders must sign a nondisclosure agreement and cannot tell anyone if one bids or wins until the PUC makes the official announcement. PG&E has issued their advice letter with 19 bidders. Bernie Forest Products were awarded the PG&E contract. San Diego announced Honey Lake Power received their contract. Southern CAL Edison has not published their information yet.

Next YSS General Meeting:

Friday, January 20th, 10a.m.-2p.m.

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 | |
| John Romena | Buena Vista Biomass Power | |
| Steve Brink | CA Forestry Association | |
| Walt Kruse | Central Sierra Audubon Society | |
| 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 | |
| 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 | Present |
| Dusty Vaughn | GTH/Alternate | |
| Michael Damaso | Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association/4x4 in Motion | Present |
| Alisha Lomeli | Pacific Gas & Electric | Present |
| Stuart Crook | Permitee/Landowner | |
| Bob Brennan | PL/Alternate | |
| Mike Horvath | SFPUC/Natural Resources | |
| Michael Vroman | San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy | |

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|-----------------|--|---------|
| Peter Dean | PUC/HH Alternate | |
| Jon Sturtevant | Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group | |
| | SCTG/Alternate | |
| Brian Wayland | Sierra Pacific Industries | |
| Jeb Brooks | SPI Alternate | Present |
| Bailey Hunter | Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council | Present |
| Willie Dutra | TBM-WTC/Alternate | |
| Sherri Brennan | Tuolumne County | |
| John Gray | TC/Alternate | |
| Mike Albrecht | Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment | |
| Vicki Albrecht | TuCARE/Alternate | |
| Shaun Crook | Tuolumne County Farm Bureau | |
| Sasha Farkas | TCFB/Alternate | |
| Lindsay Mattos | Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District | |
| 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 | Present |

LIASON MEMBERS

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|------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| 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 | |
| Michael Pickard | Sierra Nevada Conservancy | Present |
| Randi Jorgensen | SNC/Alternate | |
| Allen Johnson | SouthWest InterFace Team | Present |
| Scott Tangenberg | USFS Stanislaus NF | |
| Ann Denton | USFS/Alternate | Present |
| Marty Gmelin | USFS/Alternate | Present |

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------|---------|
| Carolyn Lott | Carlson Consulting | Present |
|--------------|--------------------|---------|

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

| Name | Organization |
|------------------|--------------|
| Diana Fredlund | USFS |
| Carolyn Lanza | TCRCD |
| Joe Wagenbrenner | USFS |
| Pauline Turski | PMLA |
| Angie Avery | SNC |
| Maria Benech | USFS |

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|--------------------|-----|
| Elliott Vanderkolk | SNC |
| Megan Miranda | TRT |
| Taylor Miller | |