



## Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General Membership Meeting Summary November 17, 2017

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

1. Invite media to visit some project sites for purpose of authoring article on SNC & WCB projects.
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. (on hold pending application for funding by research partners)
4. Continue efforts to promote LLPP through Senator Feinstein's office.
5. Investigate CAL FIRE Greenhouse Grant opportunity suggested by Mr. Brink.
6. Organize another field trip with Dr. Erik Knapp to explain new findings from latest research.
7. FS to report back on FS law enforcement handling of illegal cannabis grows.

### **MEETING GOALS:**

- To further discuss the YSS involvement in a Master Stewardship Agreement
- To hear updates from the USFS
- To introduce new chair and vice-chair

### **SUMMARY:**

#### **Meeting Opening, Welcome, Pledge and Introductions:**

Chair Chris Trott welcomed the group and introductions were made.

#### **Review of Field Trip with Dan Morain, SacBee, Review of Reforestation Field Trip, Lessons Learned for application in NDRC Projects:**

Chair Trott said YSS representatives were joined by Drs. Peter Stein and Erik Knapp. Mr. John Amodio had urged Mr. Morain to write a story on the Sierra forest conditions. Chair Trott said Mr. Morain spent a full day on the trip and took videos. Mr. Morain is planning a series of articles. He has already written one editorial on the intricacies of forest management issues.

Chair Trott said one of the angles in analyzing the importance of forest health is the emission of greenhouse gas from fires. The Rim Fire released three times the greenhouse gas as was reduced from all other sources within the state. VC Graveline reported on the Reforestation Field Trip. He said Mr. Gmelin and Ms. Maria Benech showed the group four of the five alternatives. The trip provided a feel for how reforestation looks on the ground. The FS is still working on survival data.

There are real cost differences among the alternatives. Mr. Keith Martin noted a lot of emphasis is on replanting conifers as the oaks are regenerating naturally since the canopy cover has been removed so oaks get sunlight. Ms. Benech said that is why the FS is focused on conifers as they need to be replanted. The prescription includes protecting oaks.

Mr. John Buckley noted planting outcomes can be different based on their location within the forest. Mr. Jim Phelan said there needs to be detailed studies of what works and what does not work. Ms. Lott noted the comparatively better growth of plantings within burn pile residue. She said she is hopeful research can continue and lessons learned can be compiled.

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### **Financial Report:**

Mr. Seth Connolly reported on behalf of Tuolumne River Trust (TRT) who manages grants for YSS. The big grants are \$4.5 from SNC and WCB. The SNC grant is basically completed. TRT's compensation was \$11,000 for administration and TRT is saving a couple thousand to use for additional weed pulling. The WCB grant is in the permitting stage. The NFF grant was renewed for \$30,000 and helps to pay for tree planting and trails work. There are about 100 project locations where work is being done in YSS's name. They are looking for additional funding for facilitation.

### **Update on Master Stewardship Agreement Process and Determination of Level Support:**

Chair Trott reminded the membership the idea of developing and signing an MSA with the FS came up during the field trip with Mr. Bernie Gyant. This was his suggestion of a vehicle to help implement the Large Landscape Plan. The MSA is a relationship document, but projects come after the agreement is in place. The "Partner" with the FS is supposed to put in a 20% match. Chair Trott said the LT met with the FS and the county to explore how to work this out. There was a need by YSS to be sure if the county is the partner that YSS has a significant role. It was suggested the county be the legal entity to sign the MSA and YSS oversee, manage, and vet projects. The county is better at seeking funds. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the county and YSS has been drafted and distributed to YSS members.

It was noted the FS would rather have the county be the partner as they have longevity. However, the county does not want to manage and implement the MSA. It has been agreed that TRT would be the managing entity for the county and report to the county. YSS would propose, to the county, the projects that have consensus.

Ms. Liz Peterson said the county is requesting the document be renamed Letter of Agreement (LOA). She said the county will subcontract with TRT to manage the effort. The county will minimize any fees. YSS is to be the Project Advisory Committee.

Mr. Michael Pickard asked why the MSA could not be between the FS and TRT. Mr. Randy Hanvelt said the county can access funds YSS cannot get and the county will not be involved if the county is not the MSA partner.

Mr. Connolly said the county will have legal responsibility. TRT will share administration fees with the FS.

Mr. Amodio said YSS should trust the county will operate according to the agreements, even if it is not a legally binding document which the LOA is not. It was also noted the county will have responsibility for CEQA compliance.

Forest Supervisor Jason Kuiken said he is supportive and willing to help. It noted there is little risk through the MSA. The risk comes with the SPA supplemental project agreement.

Mr. John Buckley posed whether the county is the right partner entity. He also wondered how the relationship between the county and the FS influences the decisions of the FS. He noted the FS still must find the 80% to match the 20% partner share. He added, from his experience, the county has some different priorities than the conservation community. He said it is unclear how it will ultimately play out, but he is willing to agree with the MSA. Mr. Amodio said there are no guarantees. He noted the regional office said they plan to use collaboratives to direct investment whenever possible.

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Mr. Hanvelt said this is the only path he sees to assist in increasing pace and scale. He said the county must trust the FS and YSS.

FS Kuiken said it should be kept in mind “in-kind” counts towards partner match.

Chair Trott said the LT has vetted the proposed agreement and come to agreement on wording the MOU with the title change to LOA. The process now is to send it to county counsel and then back to the YSS LT. It will then go to the county’s Natural Resources Committee (they agreed, in concept, to this). On Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> it will go to BOS.

The Chair asked if anyone was opposed to the LT providing guidance for the MSA. There was no opposition voiced. Mr. Hanvelt said grant writing should be done in parallel.

**Agreement:** There was consensus to include all the YSS area in the MSA and move forward with the MSA, but the “Partner” needs to be confirmed.

Mr. Buckley recommended acting to allow the LT, with others who wish to participate, to determine who the Partner should be. There was consensus to authorize the LT to act on behalf of YSS.

### **NDRC:**

The agencies now can start spending. An objection was received from the Center for Biological Diversity. Payment is going to compensate people to do layouts, etc. NEPA approval must still be acquired. Work cannot start until the objection is dismissed. The first contract should be for fencing.

\$26M must be spent by 2022. Biomass is a different pillar and they are moving forward with their own work. The Biomass Utilization Facility feasibility study should be awarded by end of December. Phase 2 is site identification and selection and NEPA and CEQA. The plant must be in operation by 2022.

### **Update on Pacific Ultrapower:**

Mr. Rick Carter, the plant manager, said the plant restarted operation in March and is under BIORIM contracts. There is a requirement for the first year to use high priority fuel. Next year it will need to be 60% high priority fuel. He voiced concern as to whether they will reach the 60%. They will need 130-140 green tons of high hazard fuels. They will need to buy logs which cost \$20 a green ton. The fuel requirement is based on a calendar year. If the plant cannot achieve 30% there is a reduced fallback price.

Mr. Buckley said the importance of biomass to YSS is helping the health of the forest and it is cleaner than burning on open land. FS Kuiken said he will work with staff to try to figure out how to deal with the supply issue. He noted it is fortunate to have an industry member able to take material unlike many other areas.

### **Sacramento Update:**

Mr. Amodio said he has seen evidence of movement. YSS has been involved in the Forest Carbon Plan which is just about completed. However, Mr. Amodio said it is not a plan of action. The Scoping Plan from Resources has included recognition of forest issues, but CARB still is not funding efforts. Mr. Amodio said the Little Hoover Commission took on forest management issues and YSS participated.

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The first funding through Greenhouse Reduction funds was for the Trinity Area Watershed Center. They received \$1M from the state to match \$3M from the FS but had to back out the prescribed burn. SNC also received funds. The money brings infrastructure challenges. SNC received about \$3.3M for work in the Tahoe area.

Mr. Amodio said State Bond 5 would add a lot of funds that could be available for forest health. He was at a good presentation by Mr. Gyant where he emphasized the importance of collaboratives. SB 623, if passed, would assess a public goods charge for watershed health and DACs.

Another dialog has started through an effort called Elevating Rural Communities. This come out of an RCRC push for economic development.

### **USFS Reports:**

Forest Supervisor Kuiken shared his background. He emphasized his goal to make the forest healthy again through mechanical thinning and prescribed burning. He acknowledged the need to increase pace and scale.

Mr. Mike Albrecht emphasized this forest is the home of six forest product industries and there is only one other one all the way to the Mexican border. He said the prediction is there are only two years before those industries are lost.

Mr. Steve Brink said the FS and Deputy FS need to keep track of the saw timber contract. He reminded them during the 2005 FS review it was noted production must be increased. Currently the FS is harvesting roughly 15% of growth. This has resulted in a 15% increase in density per acre.

FS Kuiken said the Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) intends to move forward with the Arnold and Avery area for the Farm Bill CE and they are exploring H108 for level two and three roads to include in green thinning planning efforts.

Mr. Buckley said most of dead trees on Level 2 and Level 3 are still there. He questioned whether they can be made available for biomass. DFS Tangenberg said they moved most of the dead trees this year to sawmills through small sales. Mr. Brink noted Plumas completed a CE in less than 90 days. Funding was just acquired to do Cottonwood IDIQ. (The Province Zone includes the Sierra, Sequoyah, and Stanislaus for production.)

It was noted funding is needed for the Cold Springs project and is estimated to be \$1-2M. There is a need for funding for transportation of biomass for HUD grant.

Mr. Buckley said where illegal cannabis grows are present and removed, toxic materials are left and can cause tertiary poisoning. He asked if there is a mechanism to clean this up. DFS Tangenberg said FS investigators indicate the frequency of illegal grows has declined over the last few years, but he does not know the level of cleanup. He said it costs tens of thousands of dollars to call in hazmat crews. He will be revisiting this with the regional leadership team. There is a thought of qualifying FS employees for hazmat work. DFS Tangenberg said he will report back, next meeting, on the cannabis issue from the FS law enforcement viewpoint.

VC Graveline commended the FS on changes made to how they are managing fires. DFS Tangenberg said they had to reassess employee safety and the aggressiveness of fighting fires during the drought. He added last year's rainfall did afford them some opportunities to use fires to their advantage. The forest had about 50 named fires. Many were suppressed because of

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conditions and some went out on their own. He said managing fires is more than observation as sometimes crews must go in and fight fire to prevent a particular spread. Mr. Allen Johnson added sometimes it is not always up to local the FS as the regional office can override the local decision. DFS Tangenberg said a Google tool is being perfected to track smoke flow.

A handout was provided detailing the status of projects within the SNC and WCB grants.

### **End of Term Comments, Introduction of New Chair/Vice Chair:**

Chair Trott reviewed the 2016-2017 Goals and Objectives, noting those for which progress had been made. He offered comments on the meaningfulness of his time as chair. Ms. Lott presented him with a gift on behalf of the membership.

Chair Trott introduced the 2017-2018 chair, Mr. Graveline, and noted the new vice-chair will be Mr. Patrick Koepele.

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

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting has been cancelled. The next meeting will be Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>.

## MEETING ATTENDANCE Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
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	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	
Linda Millsbaugh	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	Present
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	
Stuart Crook	Permittee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	

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Jon Sturtevant	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	
Keith Martin	SCTG/Alternate	Present
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
Jeb Brooks	SPI Alternate	
Bailey Hunter	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	Present
Willie Dutra	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Sherri Brennan	Tuolumne County	Present
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	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	Present
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Patrick Koepele	TRT/Alternate	
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	Present
Jim Maddox	Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present

### LIASON MEMBERS

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

### COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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### OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Randy Hanvelt	TC BOS
Liz Peterson	TC CAO
Rick Carter	Pacific Ultrapower
Liz Gregg	CSERC