



Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General Membership Meeting Summary March 15, 2019

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. For the next agenda, add USFS presentation on timber sales, broad plans for prescribed fire and an overview of how YSS is adding to FS work rather than overlapping with what the FS is already planning to do.
2. Invite media to visit some project sites for purpose of authoring article on SNC & WCB projects and visiting first MSA project.
3. Organize a field trip to see the SNC and WCB projects and a field trip to revisit various planting method areas within the Rim.
4. Regularly agendize update on NDRC grant.

MEETING GOALS:

- Discuss potential projects for funding
- Receive updates on ongoing activities
- Hear presentation on USFS large landscape planning effort

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome, Pledge and Introductions:

Vice-Chair Patrick Koepele announced that Chair Nathan Graveline has taken a position as the Big Game Supervisor for Fish and Wildlife in Sacramento. Therefore, he will no longer be chairing YSS, making Mr. Koepele the chair.

Chair Koepele led the Pledge of Allegiance and then asked for introductions.

TRT Financial Report

Chair Koepele said there is a pending DFW Prop One grant for \$3.5M and a pending Dept. of Conservation grant for a Watershed Coordinator for \$235,000.

The unused SNC residual of \$24,000 will go back to the Prop 84 pot. The Chair asked if YSS could reapply for these funds. Mr. Michael Pickard said currently an applicant no longer must go through a competitive process for the \$50-60,000 grants for forest and meadow restoration. The CEQA side needs to be categorically exempt and the project must be innovative in some way. The Wildlife Committee will pull together their notes and talk with Mr. Pickard about applying for funds. Mr. Pickard said the SNC Community Resiliency Grant is non-competitive and he can get pre-approval of concepts. Guidelines are online. Applications need to build capacity, not sustain capacity. SNC has started funding some CEQA/NEPA analysis.

USFS Large Landscape Plan/Prioritize Watersheds

Supervisor Jason Kuiken explained that High Value Resources & Assets (HVRAs) will be prioritized and the FS is looking for assistance in identifying the HVRAs most important to YSS collectively. In addition to HVRAs, he asked what else should be a criterion for ranking? They are looking at 2021 and beyond. He said they would like to stay at 15 or less criteria. They are

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also having this conversation with ACCG. As far as a timeline, he wants to prioritize the landscape within the next 3 months. They want to start aligning with grant opportunities and this prioritization will also kick-start the large landscape process.

The questions he had are: “What do we want the landscape to look like and act like in 15 years and what are the tools we need to get there?” Supervisor Kuiken wants to look at new science to best inform work on the landscape. He said it is also about relationships and understanding and moving forward together. He underscored it is necessary to increase the pace and scale on the landscape. The Supervisor wants to have this process completed by July 2020.

Mr. John Buckley reminded the FS that there was a conversation like this about ten years ago. Mr. Buckley wondered how this is different. Supervisor Kuiken said this process is to move from that type of conversation into a GIS exercise. They also want to look at the landscape beyond the forest boundary. HUC6 and pods are ways to break the landscape into units. In the upcoming process, the FS wants to do NEPA on the whole landscape.

A summary of the process and suggested discussion questions were distributed.

The Purpose and Need for this integrated process is to use the USFS PSW Region Ecological Goal to retain and restore ecological resilience of the NF lands to achieve sustainable ecosystems that provide a broad range of service with a pace and scale significant enough to reverse current trends.

STF Forest Plan has goals for fire and fuels management to include reducing threats and reintroducing fire, combined with strategic placement of fuels treatments across broad landscapes. They want to develop something that is geospatial, incorporates wildfire risk assessment process, uses HVRA's coupled with risk factors, and identifies and prioritizes large scale project areas.

HVRA's include human lives, homes, wildlife habitat, power, water & communication infrastructure, and recreation/administrative infrastructure. A member asked why watersheds and waterways are not included. Another member also encouraged the Forest Service to include timber as an HVRA.

Risk Factors include wildfire behavior, erosion hazard, insects and disease (still evaluating last).

Operational Considerations include timber locations, land ownership, cooperators treatment, STF treatments, planned treatments, HUC6/POD “containers,” and maintenance treatments. HUC6 is a subwatershed.

Scale is a project area of approximately 30,000 – 40,000 acres. FSim (Fire Simulator) modeling is a robust program to determine burn probability. LIDAR can be fed into the model when LIDAR is completed.

CA Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) indicates trees that have a relationship to habitat.

Supervisor Kuiken asked if there were general comments regarding the STF 5-Year Integrated POW Prioritization Process. People wondered how this is going to speed up the NEPA process. There was concern some of the data was not current enough to paint an accurate

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picture. The Supervisor said given the FS does not have all current information, it is still great to set up the methodology and work at the conceptual level. He said some of this is about trade-offs and it is hard to understand without quantitative goals. A member asked of if the FS can build in numeric goals. It was also noted there is a need for economic metrics to understand acres treated and how that equates to the market. Also, it is important to keep Williamson Act contracts viable.

Supervisor Kuiken moved to the second question which was, “Should the HVRAs, risk factors, and operational considerations be utilized based on relative importance? If yes, then in your estimation, how should they be considered (please list)?” Members commented three overlapping levels could be human impact – loss of life and memories, FS helping to sustain economic survival, and how certain areas of the forest are more important to the overall health of the forest.

The next question was, “Should the subwatershed (HUC6) be used to delineate projects instead of the PODs? Please explain.” Comments included they prefer watersheds to PODs, but can see if watershed slopes are very different, PODs might be useful. Since north-facing slopes have traditionally not been managed, given changes in fire behavior they are susceptible now and should be prioritized. High value timber does not seem to be called out as a priority. Can the FS integrate climate change projections?

The last question was, “Are we missing any criteria? Should the missing criteria be added to or replace existing datasets?” Comments included the information factored into calculations does not show the effects of the Rim Fire, the drought, and insect damage.

The USFS is still open to comments on the criteria or any portion of the presentation. However, comments need to be received prior to May 1st. Ms. Lott will send out a reminder. Comments should be sent to: rhjohnson@fs.fed.us and cewell@fs.fed.us

County Wildfire Initiative

Ms. Liz Peterson said fire safe communities is one of the BOS priorities. She distributed a copy of the plan. She said the plan is focused primarily on private land and includes three main components: education/outreach, projects, and regulatory advocacy.

The county is starting a series of meetings throughout the county as part of the education/outreach component. Ms. Sarah LaPlante said the Pinecrest Permittees are very interested in evacuation. Evacuation plans are also important for Air B&Bs.

USFS Donnell Fire Salvage, Ferguson Fire Update

Ms. LaPlante and Mr. Todd Newburger from the FS provided the update. Mr. Newburger is working on post-fire treatments for the Donnell Fire. The FS already awarded an add-on sale along Fence Creek and Clark Fork Roads. They are in the process for awarding hazard tree sales along 108 for a combined total of 5M board feet. Work should take place June-October.

They are in the NEPA planning process for post-fire treatment. They are looking at salvage timber units up to about 250 acres and rehabilitation along system roads, repairs to infrastructure, fences, etc. Mr. Mike Albrecht said the acreage sounds very low. Ms. LaPlante said the 250 acres does not include salvage along the roads.

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There is still a forest closure in place for most of the burned area. There are different conversations with permit holders versus the public. Also, they are doing grooming on H108 for access for snowmobiles.

Mr. Jim Junette said the Ferguson Fire on the Stanislaus is about 20,000 acres. There was very little timber loss. They are doing some NEPA to reburn the footprint on about 12,000 acres. They left dozer lines and plan to maintain them as strategic fuelbreaks.

Supervisor Kuiken added there has been road damage this winter, but the USFS is not aware of the location of all of it. He requested people who observe road damage to take a picture and provide the location and direct it to the district ranger. That also includes treefall.

Reforestation Update – Meadows, Springs, Wildlife Habitat, and Volunteer Projects

Mr. Seth Connolly reported there has been roughly \$5M in funding provided where TRT was acting as the fiscal agent. TRT has been building up their capacity and have \$5M coming in from Cal FIRE. Ms. Peterson will be taking on fiscal management and TRT will hire someone to help manage the project for the county.

SNC Rim Fire grants are now closed. WCB has been the largest at \$3.5M and is about 80% done. TRT is increasingly involved on-the-ground helping to implement. The plan for the remaining funds will include a few more meadows which will bring the total up to about 20 meadows. NFF is a series of smaller grants that supported the nearly 3,000 volunteers who have helped. There will be about 130 more volunteers tomorrow with Berkeley Family Camp. The volunteers have logged 45,000 hours in volunteer work so far. They will work on trails in the next few months.

Mr. Scott Gelfand commented the Berkeley Family Camp is the primary connection between the Bay Area and the Stanislaus Forest. The city drawings for the new camp should be complete this year. A preview of the design will be in May. The bid will go out to Tuolumne County for contractors. It will take approximately two years to build. It will be a \$60M project. The goal is to be open in 2022. They are trying to raise money to replant and will introduce human-made shade structures.

Ms. Benech said through the NRDC grant there has been awarded about \$9M for biomass and piling. Site preparation spray and noxious weed eradication will be awarded in May. They will plant in 2020. It is about 4,300 acres they are working on. They received a SNC grant for \$380,000 for noxious weed eradication and surveys on 107 small populations around the Rim. This work will happen mainly in 2020.

The HUD grant related to the wood product campus is still ongoing. Planning is still continuing for the community center, as well. Nothing has been started as of now.

Other:

Ms. Ann Denton, USFS, announced her retirement and acknowledged the accomplishments of YSS and how great it has been to work with this group.

Next YSS General Meeting:

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting will be Friday, May 17th.

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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	
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	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	
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Michael Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/ Stanislaus Trail Bike Association/4x4 in Motion	Present
Dave Evans	Natural Resources Conservation Service	
Alisha Lomeli	Pacific Gas & Electric	
Rick Carter	Pacific Ultra Power Chinese Station	Present
Dennis Serpa	PUPCS/Alternate	
Stuart Crook	Permitee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Michael Vroman	San Francisco PUC-Hetch Hetchy	
Peter Dean	PUC/HH Alternate	
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
Jeb Brooks	SPI Alternate	Present
Dore Bietz	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
	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	

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Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	Present
Keith Martin	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	Present
Kevin Rice	SCTG/Alternate	Present
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	
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	
	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
Rob Grasso	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
Randi Jorgensen	SNC/Alternate	
Allen Johnson	South West Inter Face Team	Present
David Evans	USDA	
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
Sarah LaPlante	USFS/Alternate	Present

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Brittany Dyer	American Forests
Liz Peterson	Tuolumne County
Kurt Wolken	TRT
Randy Hanvelt	ACL
Diana Fredlund	USFS
Todd Newberger	USFS
Jim Junette	USFS
Rebecca Johnson	USFS
Carol Ewell	USFS