



Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative General Membership Meeting Summary January 17, 2020

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. Develop 18-19 YSS accomplishments document.
2. Mr. Connolly to write up press release with photos for NFF grant.
3. Invite media to visit some project sites for purpose of authoring article on SNC & WCB projects and visiting first MSA project.
4. Draft YSS values for prioritization of projects.
5. Schedule a YSS field trip to see Cedar Ridge prior to beginning of implementation.
6. Organize a field trip to see the SNC and WCB projects and a field trip to revisit various planting method areas within the Rim.

MEETING GOALS:

- Presentation on YSS LT “Areas of Focus” recommendations
- Receive updates on ongoing activities
- Hear 108 FireSafe Council project overview

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome, Pledge and Introductions:

Chair Patrick Koepele led the pledge and asked for self-introductions. Attendance was affected by the weather.

YSS Supported Projects & Grant Updates:

Updates on MSA projects -

Mr. Jason Smith (TRT) said Granite reforestation efforts have now stopped for weather. The Granite Thin layout and cruise contract is awarded, and contractors will start cruising the site prior to the spring. That sale will be advertised late spring. Strawberry will begin as soon as the archeology report is finalized this spring with hand piling and burn prep work. These are active. South 108 and TwoMile are completed.

The FS asked if YSS would like to take on the Mt. Lewis Plantation Thinning Mastication Project. These are very dense stands.

Mr. John Buckley supports the project. However, he wonders if this effort will compete with something else YSS wants funding for and expressed a need to be able to prioritize projects. Mr. Michael Jow said the idea is to use stewardship funding from another completed project for this. The Chair reminded the membership to date YSS has heavily relied on FS recommendations and that we do need a prioritization system in place, but that we don't currently have that and it's important to move ahead with projects rather than wait.

Supervisor Kuiken said in the short-term the FS does not have an answer on how to prioritize, but they are working on how to prioritize long-term with help from the Rocky Mountain Research Center coming forward in the spring. Mr. Buckley says if it is either a project like Mt. Lewis or protecting communities, the latter would be a higher priority. S. Kuiken said Mt. Lewis houses a major communication tower which would be a very high priority during a wildfire.

Mr. Buckley added separately from the FS, YSS must strategically look at the values YSS supports which may or may not end up being the same as what the FS puts forward.

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The Chair said he would like YSS to move ahead with this project now as it may be a year before YSS has established criteria for prioritization.

Agreement: Through consensus, it was determined to move the Mt. Lewis project forward under the MSA.

Mr. Seth Connolly said the SNC Rim Restoration Project is completed. Regarding the WCB Rim Restoration, there is an amendment submitted requesting to use funds to repair a culvert. The DFW Rim Fire Watershed Health Improvement Project is in the flagging stage. This should be finished in the next two months. The bulk of the grant will be implemented in 2021-22. The current NFF grant is over 2/3rds done. This consists of tree planting and trails with over many volunteer hours put in so far. Mr. Buckley suggested Mr. Connolly write up a press release with photos.

The chair said YSS has obtained over \$18M in state grants and \$200K from NFF to date. YSS has good credibility and is a well-known collaborative.

108 FireSafe Council Firebreak Discussion:

Mr. Glenn Gottschall, from the 108 FireSafe Council framed the discussion as “What if the Camp Fire Happened Here?” He showed a map that represented a 20-year history of fires in Tuolumne County.

He said there is an overload of fuels in the forest. TuCARE is supporting this firebreak effort and will steer the private contribution portion. The firebreak would run from the North Fork of the Tuolumne, along MiWuk/Sierra Village to Cedar Ridge and down to Columbia. It is 27 miles long and a mile wide. They do not yet know what timber sales would result and help support the project.

Once completed, this would protect communities from prescribed burning if it got out of control. It would also be helpful in high winds as high winds prevent spreading fire retardants. Existing fuelbreaks are not connected.

The council is proposing three phases. They would start with \$50,000 to fund some demonstration areas within the private property zone to stimulate private property owner buy-in. Phase Two would cost \$1M-\$4M to begin work on a 300-500 ft. fuelbreak on private land. Phase Three would range from \$4M-\$23M to expand the width of fuelbreak on private land. A member noted a mile-wide fuelbreak in all areas may be overkill.

The Chair noted from a fuelbreak master planning standpoint, the location makes sense. However, the council needs to drill down into what the best science shows is the benefit of a full mile-wide fuelbreak. They may want to have a narrower fuelbreak and do work inside the area rather than just on the perimeter.

Mr. Gottschall is to come back to YSS with an update on progress.

Leadership Team Recommendation for “Area of Focus” in Response to B. Gyant

Request:

The Chair said YSS wants to develop a pipeline of projects to increase pace and scale of work on the forest. The Leadership Team (LT) met with Mr. Gyant and the ACCG and Dinkey Collaboratives. Mr. Gyant asked each of the collaboratives to come back with their idea of an “area of focus.” The constraint is limited dollars for large landscape planning and work.

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The LT is proposing a “short-term plan,” to complete the Cedar Ridge CE, and two CEs in Mt. Provo/Mt. Lewis and the Middle Fork of Stanislaus. If YSS is successful in funding these projects through grants, the FS can work on middle and long-term plans and projects.

The Planning Area could be the middle-term project and consist of a 40,000-80,000-acre area and would need NEPA analysis. This “Bridge Plan,” as the LT is calling it, could contain some conditions-based actions to build trust with this approach. It would take place in years three to six.

The Large Landscape Plan would be the third phase and would be up to a couple hundred thousand acres with NEPA and take place in year six-sixteen.

There are three potential areas to look at for the “Bridge Project.” Mr. Byron Krempl, TRT, has done some GIS analysis to compare the options. There is a North 108 Project Area of 59,000 acres of SNF land with scattered private lands. 12,772 acres or 21% could theoretically be harvested for timber. This area has a nexus to communities.

The second area is 3N01 from Long Barn to Cherry Lake and would be a one-mile-wide buffer. Approximately 2,684 acres could be harvested for timber – many areas are excluded due to wildlife in this area.

The Red Cloud Project Area is within the YSS boundary, but outside of Tuolumne County so outside of the MSA. There are 12,667 acres of FS land and 600 acres are theoretically harvestable but are scattered so are not suitable for logging.

North 108 and 3N01 have significant canopy proportionally. There is a relatively proportional area for harvest, but more net acres with North 108. North 108 has the highest proportion of canopy that could be burned in a fire. Red Cloud has a lot of shrub and grasses that could burn.

The Chair observed only one of the proposals meets the 40-60K acre size. It also meets most of the criteria shown through the modeling. The LT will continue to work with the FS on the North 108 project area.

Mr. Kevin Rice said North 108 has about 10x the canopy at risk and it is important to have more merchantable products. Mr. Jim Phelan said the human safety factor must play into the decision-making.

Agreement: There was consensus that the LT take this to the FS in draft form to obtain feedback, work with the general membership for consensus, and then finalize the draft for submission to Mr. Gyant.

Break

Stanislaus National Forest Landscape Planning:

Supervisor Kuiken said he was going to postpone this discussion until he can meet further with the LT.

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Forest Service Update:

Mr. Jow said the stewardship contract was awarded for 9M board feet on Looney. The SNF has awarded 20M board feet this fiscal year.

Mr. Todd Newburger said he has the signed CE for Cedar Ridge and is waiting for funding. It includes a variety of treatments and mine closures. Mr. Buckley suggested arranging a field trip for YSS before treatment and/or doing something for the Cedar Ridge community. The FS is doing additional surveys this year in Rock Creek. The project would include 17M total board feet of timber.

Prather/Medusa is part of the NFWF grant for NEPA work. This should be completed in the next few months. Revisions had to be made to the original NEPA. In general, there were some units where the FS wanted more prescribed burning and additional areas for potential thinning. They added about 1,000 acres.

Ms. Maria Benech spoke about the HUD-Funded Projects. She said the over \$9M in contracts includes 2,852 acres of fuels reduction, 580 acres of biomass removal and piling and is ongoing. 1,600 acres of noxious weeds have been treated. There is another \$9M this year in contracts. This will include site prep spraying on about 2,400 acres. There will be follow-up spraying of noxious weeds. The new fuels reduction work is primarily off 301S. 1,660 acres will be planted this year. NEPA and CEQA are underway for the fuelbreaks. Almost none of the fuelbreaks were within the Rim footprint so they were not covered under the Rim NEPA. The work will be one contract implemented by the USFS.

Quite a bit of range work was done in 2019 and will continue with fencing in 2020. The Biomass Utilization Facility loans are moving forward. CRC received \$5M outside of HUD so they can build a facility in Groveland and one in Tuolumne City.

Other:

Mr. Rice announced Sierra Club National lawyers have advised that the local Sierra Club cannot be a member of YSS but can be a participant. Ms. Lott will adjust the website and letterhead to reflect this.

Next YSS General Meeting:

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting will be Friday, March 20th.

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	Present
Linda Millspaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present

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	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	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	
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	
Jeb Brooks	SPI Alternate	
Dore Bietz	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
	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	
Jim Phelan	Tuolumne County Sportsmen	Present
Keith Martin	Sierra Club – Tuolumne Group	
Kevin Rice	SCTG/Alternate	Present
John Amodio	Tuolumne River Trust	
Patrick Koepfle	TRT/Alternate	Present
Seth Connolly	TRT/Alternate	Present
Jim Maddox	Yosemite Deer Herd Advisory Council	Present

LIASON MEMBERS

Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	
	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
Rob Grasso	NPSYNP/Alternate	

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Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	
	SNC/Alternate	
Allen Johnson	South West Inter Face Team	Present
Jason Kuiken	USFS Stanislaus NF	Present
Beth Martinez	USFS/Alternate	Present
Michael Jow	USFS/Alternate	Present
Sarah LaPlante	USFS/Alternate	
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
Glenn Gottschall	Highway 108 FireSafe Council, TuCARE
Jason Smith	TRT
Marcus Long	TRT
Liz Bransan	TRT
Reese Warne	Sierra Outdoor School
Todd Newburger	USFS