



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
Collaborative General Membership
Meeting Summary
January 15, 2021
Video Conference**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

1. Invite media to visit some project sites for purpose of raising public awareness on SNC & WCB projects and visiting first MSA project.
2. Schedule a YSS field trip to see Cedar Ridge area prior to beginning of implementation.
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.

MEETING GOALS:

- Update YSS Goals and Objectives
- Receive Grant and Forest Updates

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome, Pledge and Introductions:

Chair Brian Wayland opened the Zoom video meeting and roll was taken. Ms. Carolyn Lott announced the names of the new representatives for Tuolumne County and explained conflict with board orientation prevented their attendance today.

Thank You to Previous Chair:

The Chair thanked Mr. Patrick Koepele for his service. Mr. Koepele said it had been an extremely rewarding experience and quite a bit had been accomplished. YSS gave him an engraved pen and keepsake box. Mr. John Buckley reminded the group Mr. Koepele will continue to serve on the Leadership Team. He also gave a special thanks to Nathan Graveline for joining the meeting and noted that Nathan has been missed at YSS due to his job in Sacramento.

Objectives Update for 2021:

In his introduction of the Leadership Team's draft Goals and Objectives, Vice-Chair Buckley noted there are always various differing opinions and interests within YSS. The group easily could spend a lot of time arguing over what is best. However, the positive thing about YSS is that there is no interest in victories for a particular side, but rather that everyone aims for the group's collective achievements.

VC Buckley reviewed the draft Goals and Objectives and requested any comments be submitted by the end of January.

Overview of Golden State Natural Resources Project:

Mr. Koepele reported on the meeting the LT had with the sponsors of this project. He said the property for the project has already been purchased and is located at Highway 108 and J59. Regarding costs, Mr. Koepele said as a non-profit, they will have access to grants.

After the description of the project was given, a member stated the scope of the GSNR project is huge. He said it would take 20-25 new chipping operations of large magnitudes to handle all the product. He added it is an excessively big leap to go from the concept to actually be

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shipping wood pellets by 2023, which is their goal. The proponents also intend to produce enough energy to run the plant and that will take additional biomass chips.

It was also mentioned the project proponents do not intend to put anyone out of business and want to be a forest resiliency company, not just a pellet company. The proponents have stated they plan on transportation of about 160 truckloads per day, all year long. This is a huge amount of product to get out of the forest.

Mr. Kevin Rice said there is agreement there must be increased pace and scale. However, he noted groups such as the CA Sierra Club believe massive biomass projects like this are going to end up requiring widespread forest treatments similar to clear cutting to meet demands. He pointed out that education of special interests and the public will need to be part of the project process in order to reduce concerns.

A member noted it is good there is a Master Stewardship Agreement with the region. There is a challenge in shipping green biomass, and they have tried to locate within proximity of raw product. If they can do 50% of what they intend, it could help to reduce forest fuels for the Sierra Nevada's forests.

Update on Projects by TRT:

Mr. Byron Kreml said TRT's new website has an interactive map that shows all the projects currently underway through the partnership with TRT. It can be embedded in the YSS website. The new map was created by two SNAP workers. The Sierra Club funded one of the positions.

A summary overview provided by Mr. Kreml included reforestation of 400 acres in the Granite project area that will be ready to plant in the spring. The Granite Thin project is close to releasing the call for bids. Treatment units funded through WCB received bids which are higher than expected, but they still should be able to implement 1,800 and 2,300 acres. These are not the same units that ended up in litigation. Project work over at Mt. Lewis will include approximately six weeks of fuel reduction work with a benefit of protecting the cell tower. Near Pinecrest, the Strawberry Burn is currently focused on completing hand lines to prep for burning hopefully later this year. The FS should be able to burn about 1,000 acres. There are about 1,000 acres of thinning left through CFW and 600 acres of reforestation through the CFW funding for Jawbone Ridge.

Update on Projects by USFS:

Supervisor Jason Kuiken announced the SERAL effort won an internal agency award. It was given recognition regionally for looking at the landscape differently and for the Forest staff and others all working collaboratively. The award is for the full collaborative, including YSS. There are still hurdles to work through to get additional projects done within the SERAL landscape.

Cedar Ridge – Ms. Sarah LaPlante reported the county received funding to begin work on the Cedar Ridge fuel reduction project. They need to survey the boundaries and develop the scope of work. Thinning treatments and biomass removal should start this year. It is partially dependent on archeology and botany surveys, and boundary flagging. Tuolumne County will work with the landowners.

SERAL: Mr. Michael Jow said the FS will work with TRT to get other projects onto the TRT mapping tool. Currently, the FS is refining the proposed action and generating alternatives. The FS is also working with the ForSysX team. This scenario planning tool will help determine the priority projects based on values.

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The FS is hoping to have the alternatives developed by the end of February and then will meet with the YSS LT and the YSS general membership. After that, the comment period will begin. This planning effort is a top priority for the region. Mr. Jow said they are hoping for a decision this FS fiscal year with some form of implementation beginning in the winter or spring of 2022.

The ForSysX model is a prioritization and optimization model. The team has been compiling the data and getting it ready to input into the model. The FS will be looking to YSS for feedback. The FS is hoping to refine the proposed action and alternatives in March 2021.

A member asked how the FS will prioritize treatments. Mr. Jow said fire response is one of the metrics, meaning how the landscape will be affected by fire. They will also consider how far the landscape has departed from the desired condition and address spotted owl habitat. The model will optimize options and rank the whole area.

The landscape will be broken into Potential Wildfire Operations Delineations (PODs) and stands within the PODs. They will consider which area contributes most to solving the problems. The hope is to use this across the landscape to identify the next priority area. Eventually, this procedure will apply to other forests across the region. Collaboratives are key to establishing partners for grants and agreement on projects.

A member stated more needs to be done to assure NEPA is compliant with CEQA to facilitate increased grant opportunities. Mr. Jow said this needs to be considered in the future so NEPA translates across to CEQA. It is not difficult to attain this goal if you plan for it up front. He said the FS will work with Mr. Michael Pickard from SNC on this.

A question was asked regarding whether the FS is beginning work on the next area for planning. Mr. Jow said that is not happening for any specific area, but the base layers of ForSysX will be useable to help prioritize selection of the next area. Recent FS NEPA regulations allow for determination of NEPA adequacy for applying the NEPA analysis done in one area, to another area, if there are similar activities and effects.

A question was raised as to whether modeling is going to stop at the FS boundaries. Mr. Jow said the FS analysis will in some ways cross over to private lands. It is important to open opportunities for all-lands grants.

A member wondered about overlap with Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) land. Mr. Jow said the FS has not looked at specific treatments on private lands yet, but hopefully Mr. Waylund will help with this. Chair Wayland added SPI is developing defensible fuelbreaks. Mr. Glenn Gottschall said the Highway108 Fire Safe Council is looking forward to working with them, as well.

Prather-Medusa and Calaveras District projects – District Ranger Ray Cablayan said McKee Hill may go into a little bit of the north area of SERAL. The FS has completed some of the surveys for McKee Hill. The separate Prather-Medusa fuel reduction project is about to enter the objection period. The EA is just being released. 5,687 acres are proposed to be treated.

VC John Buckley said one of the high priorities of YSS is to protect communities. He pointed out both McKee Hill and Prather-Medusa are quite far from high-risk communities. He said he hopes the FS can keep in mind the importance of the community-protection priority. Mr. Cablayan said the Prather-Medusa project received specific funding which encouraged the FS to take this project on.

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Vegetation Management Report – It was noted that details included in Fiscal Year 2021-2022 report were sent out with the agenda.

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Stanislaus National Forest

January 15, 2021

Stanislaus NF Fiscal Year 2021 Vegetation Mgmt. Program

Project (District)	Anticipated Quarter Award	Estimated Volume (MBF)*	Fuels Treatment Acres	Status
Black Springs IRTC (Calaveras RD)	2	11,600	1,014	Reoffered , in advertising. Award Feb 2021
Granite Plantation SPA (Groveland RD)	2	5,549	1,555	To be implemented through TuCo MSA. SPA in to Grants and Agreements. RFP should be out for bid Jan/Feb 2021.
CDFW Plantation Thin (Groveland/Mi-Wok RD)	3		1,100	PreCommercial thinning /mastication within Rim funded through CDFW Grant. In contracting.
Cedar Ridge Fuels Maintenance (Mi-Wok RD)	3		2,000	To be implemented through TuCo MSA. SPA, complete - landline and resource surveys and flagging needed (through MSA).
Arnold Avery Fuels Maintenance - CCI grant (Calaveras RD)	2		914	Implement through partner agreement with CHIPS. RFP out soon for Q2 award.
Arnold Avery Fuels Maintenance - SNC/PGE (Calaveras RD)	1		800	Contract awarded through Muledeer Foundation. Work started.
Prather Medusa Fuels Reduction Plantation Thin (Calaveras RD)	4		500	Objection period to start in February, Decision expected May 2021. NFWF grant to be implemented through Mule Deer Foundation (MDF)
Trout Creek (Summit/Mi-Wok RD)	4	15,000	1,633	In Prep: finishing up flagging, cruising and road package.
Fore (Calaveras RD)	4	3,800	450	Prep and cruising complete, road package to be completed in summer 2021.
HUD Reforestation Fuel Reduction Mechanical Site Prep 2021 (Groveland RD)	3		1,000	In Contracting.
WCB Rim Reforestation Fuel Reduction (Groveland RD)	2		2,000	Implementing under MSA; RPFs in, award Jan/Feb 2021.
Forestwide Rx Burning			6,000	Actual acres will be highly variable and dependant on burn windows and available resources. Includes 2,000 acres of pile burning
FY 2021 Total		35,949	18,966	

*includes biomass at a 2:1 CCF to MBF conversion

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Stanislaus National Forest

January 15, 2021

Stanislaus NF Fiscal Year 2022 Vegetation Mgmt. Program

Project (District)	Anticipated Quarter Award	Estimated Volume (MBF)*	Fuels Treatment Acres	Status
Rock Creek (Summit/Mi-Wok RD)	1	8,000	1,000	In Prep: finishing up flagging, cruising and road package.
South Medusa (Calaveras RD)	1	9,000	800	Part of Prather Medusa decision. Objection period to start in February, Decision expected May 2021. Prep for Contract in FY 2021
North Medusa (Calaveras RD)	1	10,000	1,000	Objection period to start in February, Decision expected May 2021. Prep for Contract in FY 2021
SERAL Phase 1 (Summit/Mi-Wok RD)	3, 4	18,000	3,000	NEPA Decision expected Summer/Fall 2021. Start prep for contract in FY21. Utilizing MSA for surveys.
Forestwide Rx Burning			4,600	Actual acres will be highly variable and dependant on burn windows and available resources. Only includes 800 acres of pile burning which is likely to increase.
FY 2021 Total		45,000	10,400	

COVID Impacts on Treatment Teams – The FS was able to work out a lot of processes last year. They are still working through the shortage of vehicles caused by reduced number of passengers allowed under COVID restrictions. COVID may affect the hiring of temporary employees. The FS does not see COVID restrictions having a major impact on treatment efforts. Mr. Jim Junette added, currently, most fire staff are teleworking. They are still doing field work, but they keep each crew away from other crews. They are not doing any burning right now because of the Governor’s order. Activities seem to vary forest to forest.

Regarding salvage and restoration efforts, the Stanislaus must work with the Sierra and Sequoia Forests as the three forests are in the same local region management zone. This means they access the same funding pool. The Sierra and Sequoia are planning salvage efforts and fire restoration after this past summer’s massive wildfires in those Forests. Stanislaus Forest staff still stated those efforts should not compete with the Stanislaus veg management plan.

Mr. Jow said the FS is focusing on a fireshed, so they have prioritized the SERAL landscape. They are not just focused on timber sales, but on all the treatments necessary. They want to get this accomplished before moving to another area. He added the MSA projects have efficient processes for timber sales. The FS is about to offer the Granite Thin. This is the first opportunity for product removal through the MSA.

Great American Outdoors Act – Mr. Todd Newburger said this opportunity came out from Congress in early August and it offers \$30-\$50M per year for five years in Region 5. The initial focus is on deferred maintenance, especially on recreation-linked features. The FS submitted proposals for funding for fiscal year 20-21 and have also made proposals for 21-22. They have begun planning for the final three years.

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The first year of funding received for the Stanislaus is \$750,000 specifically for deferred maintenance. The award covers activities on all three districts. Along 108, they are focused on access upgrades to the Column of the Giants. On the Groveland District they will do rehab on Sweetwater Campgrounds and access to Rainbow Pool, toilet upgrades, and grading at a recreational area at Cherry Lake. For year two, they put in a lot more projects and will know what is funded in March.

A member said there is a great need for deferred maintenance on recreation sites. He asked if there will be new development as there is heavy demand from the public. He also asked if funding allows for planning and NEPA for new projects. Mr. Newburger said they are still sorting this out. So far, the focus has really been on already identified deferred maintenance needs of existing facilities.

Mr. Dwight Follien noted the Groveland mountain bike trail is on the GAOA list. He also wondered about the process for reporting a pot grow. The response was to report it to the Sheriff's Office if it is on private land or to FS law enforcement if it is on FS land.

Next YSS General Meeting:

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting will be Friday, March 19, 2021.

MEETING ATTENDANCE Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Randy Hanvelt	Associated California Loggers	Present
Jeff Redoutey	Blue Mountain Minerals	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present
Linda Millsbaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
Catilyn Rich	CSERC/Alternate	Present
Bailey Hunter	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of MeWuk Indians	
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	
Jody Trott	CTBC/Alternate	
James Maddox	Fish and Game Preservation Committee	
Scott Gelfand	Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp	
Phil Coffin	FBTC/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	Present
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Ethan Billigmeier	Hetch Hetchy Water and Power	
Michael Esposito	HHWP/Alternate	
Glenn Gottschall	Highway 108 Fire Safe Council	Present
Karen Caldwell	H108FSC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	

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Jim Phelan	Mule Deer Foundation	
Dave Evans	Natural Resources Conservation Service	
Matthew Waverly	Pacific Gas & Electric	Present
Rick Carter	Pacific Ultra Power Chinese Station	
Dennis Serpa	PUPCS/Alternate	
Stuart Crook	Permittee/Landowner	
Bob Brennan	PL/Alternate	
Rees Warne	Sierra Outdoor School – Clovis Unified School District	
Brandy Lively	SOS – CUSD/Alternate	Present
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
Jeb Brooks	SPI Alternate	Present
Diana Beasley	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	Present
Eric Juncker	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
David Goldemberg	Tuolumne County	
Kathleen Haff	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	Present
Patrick Koepele	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
John Amodio	TRT/Alternate	Present
Byron Krempl	TRT/Alternate	Present

LIASON MEMBERS

Bill Haigh	Bureau of Land Management	
Mark Abraham	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	Present
Nathan Graveline	CDFW/Alternate	Present
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	Present
Rob Grasso	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
Allen Johnson	South West Inter Face Team	Present
Jason Kuiken	USFS Stanislaus NF	Present
Beth Martinez	USFS/Alternate	Present
Michael Jow	USFS/Alternate	Present
Jim Junette	USFS/Alternate	Present
Sarah LaPlante	USFS/Alternate	Present
Ray Cablayan	USFS/Alternate	Present
Maria Benech	USFS/Alternate	

PARTICIPANTS

Keith Martin	Tuolumne Group Sierra Club	Present
Kevin Rice	TGSC	Present

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

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Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Sarah Husby	CSERC
Todd Newburger	USFS
Andrew Welsh	USFS
Carinna Robertson	USFS
Julia Stephens	TRT
Robert Heim	TRT
James Hart	TRT
Liz Peterson	Tuolumne County
Simi Bhangoo	TC