



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions  
Collaborative General Membership  
Meeting Summary  
May 21, 2021  
Video Conference**

**FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:**

(The following were brought up as possible options for field trips if the pandemic situation improves sufficiently and field trip opportunities end up being timely.)

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.

**MEETING GOALS:**

- Share project and funding updates
- Hear presentation on fire and vegetation trends
- Receive USFS updates

**SUMMARY:**

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

Vice-Chair John Buckley opened the Zoom video meeting and roll was taken.

**Project Update:**

Mr. Byron Kreml reported and will send the project spreadsheet to Ms. Lott for distribution. Please refer to the spreadsheet for specific updates. It was noted TRT represents the county, who represents YSS. TRT handles contract management and provides some of the on-the-ground oversight and work. SPI has fuel reduction projects going on that are sometimes mistaken as FS/YSS projects, such as along the railroad grade.

**Update on Funding:**

Chair Brian Wayland joined the meeting.

Mr. Patrick Koepfle reported on the CAL FIRE direct action process (funds left over from prior funding rounds). On behalf of YSS, a \$5M proposal for fuel management features in 5 PODS (Potential Operational Delineations) of the SERAL footprint was submitted. The USFS is bringing \$2.8M to augment the project.

There was also a competitive CAL FIRE round and another \$5M proposal was submitted. This is targeting continued work in the Rim Fire footprint for reforestation and thinning. Given the fact the current CAL Fire grant has prescribed fire that has not yet been completed, it seemed more strategic not to ask for additional funds for more prescribed fire at this time.

Ms. Liz Peterson and Mr. Kreml led a tour for CAL FIRE representatives. CAL FIRE really liked the PODs approach. Fuel Management Features is the term used instead of fuelbreaks as it is seen as a forest health element rather than fuelbreaks which are seen as defensible space work. CAL FIRE was shown some of the fuel reduction work proposed in the competitive grant. There are approximately 20,000 acres of work under the MSA which is unique to YSS as it is across two watersheds.

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Mr. John Amodio said he was on the Forest Management Task Force call yesterday and CAL FIRE said they have decided on the direct-action grants, so YSS should hear soon.

The Governor and State Legislature put some surplus funding into forest management through SNC. The LT talked with Ms. Angela Avery about a biomass project that would subsidize hauling biomass. It was a \$1.5M grant but was not awarded. Mr. Michael Pickard said he was disappointed it was not funded. He will follow up with the head of the Scoring Team and see if there can be a meeting set up with the YSS LT to help understand why this proposal did not make the cut.

### **USFS Updates ForSys:**

Supervisor Jason Kuiken said it took longer than anticipated to get the modeling results from ForSys and this will impact the timing of the draft EIS for SERAL. He said the USFS wants to demonstrate what they are doing and why. They also want to show the effects of potential fire on the landscape through a fire simulation (FSIM) model.

Mr. Michael Jow said the base layer is almost complete. On the broader landscape, the USFS will be able to lay out where treatments can meet certain objectives and run various scenarios. They will share this information with the YSS LT and show the trade-offs between some of the alternatives in order to determine the proposed action.

For the July YSS meeting, Supervisor Kuiken is hoping to bring a SERAL presentation for the full YSS membership. He said what ForSys really allows is the ability to look at how values like habitat and fire can be balanced. It is a decision-support tool.

### **Power Point Presentation: “Fire and Vegetation Trends in California: Putting the big picture in context.”:**

The slides for this presentation can be found at:

<https://yosemitestanislausolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

Dr. Hugh Safford is the Regional Ecologist for the USFS PSW Region and is involved in research with UC Davis. Some of the key points from his presentation were:

There is an increasing accumulation of deforested areas that will stay deforested for a long time. It also means this land is removed from preferred habitat for wildlife. Part of the reason for this is CA conifers generally do not spread their seeds more than about 300 feet. Conifers that do survive are likely to burn in the future. Major expansion of grassland is projected for much of CA due to frequent fires in forests and shrublands. Many areas of persistent shrubland that succeeded to conifers under fire suppression may return to shrubs.

Most of the loss of Spotted Owl habitat, Pacific Fisher, and Black Backed Woodpecker is from fire, not logging. Compared to historic fire levels, fire has been lower than what occurred historically. But high severity fire has greatly increased.

There is a need to figure out how to use fire, to a much greater degree, on the landscape. The powers that be still have not learned that all fires should not be put out. There must be a serious thought process to figure out how to get forests thinned to a point where we are not going to lose thousands and thousands of acres per year. People need to stop being upset if there is 10-15% canopy tree mortality in prescribed burn as that is far less than what would naturally happen in fire.

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### **Other USFS Updates:**

SERAL Update – Supervisor Kuiken said the aim with SERAL is to work together with YSS towards resiliency. He is aiming for two decisions with one analysis. Decision One is around priority PODs 1-5 and fire management elements which include 6,400 acres of fuelbreaks. This would take place under an Emergency Situation Determination (ESD). This would allow implementation prior to the public objection period ending. Decision Two is on the remainder of the area with work in PODs 6-17. This should come out mid-winter. The Draft EIS should be out mid-July because of the ForSys delay. Mr. Andy Welsh, USFS, said they are working on survey and boundary work so the work in PODS 1-5 can begin as soon as the ESD is approved. Supervisor Kuiken said there is more money requested in the President's 2022 federal budget that would help fund SERAL.

Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) Projects – Supervisor Kuiken said the final list for 2022 projects has not been received. Fiscal year 2021 projects are moving along. The final 2022 list will be sent out when received. Fiscal year 2023 proposals are due in July.

Other – Mr. Ray Cablayan, USFS, said the Prather-Medusa decision was signed in March. They are waiting for the final SPA agreement with the Mule Deer Association. McKee Spotted Owl Surveys are being conducted.

### **Information about June 30<sup>th</sup> Field Trip:**

Mr. Buckley and Ms. Maria Benech are working on a trip out into the hot burn section of the Rim Fire area. There are a lot of different projects, in different phases, funded by different funders. This narrowly focused trip will look at successes, challenges, and needs within the high severity burn area. This is for YSS members. It is not a field trip to bring in politicians and the media. Also, this will not be a field trip for low clearance vehicles.

Details will be forthcoming, but tentatively the plan is to meet at the Supervisor's Office at 9:00 a.m. with a 9:30 departure time. The anticipated return is at 3:30 p.m.

Chair Wayland closed the meeting at 12:42 p.m.

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

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting will be Friday, July 16, 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	
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present
Linda Millspaugh	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	

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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	
Karen Caldwell	H108FSC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	
Michael Beckman	Friends of Pinecrest	
Douglas Wiele	FOP/Alternate	
Dave Holland	FOP/Alternate	
Mike Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/Stanislaus Trail Bike Association, 4x4 in Motion	Present
Jim Phelan	Mule Deer Foundation	Present
Dave Evans	Natural Resources Conservation Service	
Matthew Waverly	Pacific Gas & Electric	Present
Rick Carter	Pacific Ultra Power Chinese Station	
Dennis Serpa	PUPCS/Alternate	
Rees Warne	Sierra Outdoor School – Clovis Unified School District	Present
Brandy Lively	SOS – CUSD/Alternate	
Brian Wayland	Sierra Pacific Industries	Present
Hannah Grabowski	SPI Alternate	Present
Diana Beasley	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
Eric Juncker	TBM-WTC/Alternate	Present
David Goldemberg	Tuolumne County	Present
Kathleen Haff	TC/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present
Vicki Albrecht	TuCARE/Alternate	
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
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	
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
Rob Grasso	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
Allen Johnson	South West Interface Team	Present

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Jason Kuiken	USFS Stanislaus NF	Present
Beth Martinez	USFS/Alternate	
Michael Jow	USFS/Alternate	Present
Jim Junette	USFS/Alternate	
Sarah LaPlante	USFS/Alternate	
Ray Cablayan	USFS/Alternate	Present
Maria Benech	USFS/Alternate	Present

### PARTICIPANTS

Keith Martin	Tuolumne Group Sierra Club	Present
Kevin Rice	TGSC	Present

### COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
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### OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Julia Stephens	TRT
Sara Husby	CSERC
Todd Newberger	USFS
Andy Welsh	USFS
Ben Campbell	TRT
Madeleine Page	TRT
Jason Hart	TRT
Liz Peterson	Tuolumne County
Dr. Hugh Stafford	USFS
Robert Heim	USFS