



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
Collaborative General Membership
Meeting Summary
November 19, 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 about projects that have been funded by SNC & WCB projects and perhaps visit a MSA project site.
2. Schedule a YSS field trip to see YSS/USFS work being done at Cedar Ridge.
3. Consider if there is sufficient interest for organizing a YSS field trip to see the SNC and WCB project sites when timing is positive.

MEETING GOALS:

- Share project and funding updates
- Hear Dr. Eric Knapp's "Burning in Plantations" presentation
- Receive USFS updates

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome, Pledge and Introductions:

Chair Brian Wayland opened the Zoom video meeting and roll was taken.

Consideration of New Member:

Ms. Carolyn Lott shared that Golden State Natural Resources had submitted a new member form and qualified to be considered for membership.

Agreement: There was agreement to accept Golden State Natural Resources as a new member.

Project Update:

Ms. Peterson introduced Mervet Mitri who is working on the MSA for Tuolumne County. The county has received, on behalf of the MSA, approximately \$28M as displayed on the spreadsheet sent out in advance of the meeting.

Mr. Byron Krempl reminded the group of the interactive project map on the TRT website. He also provided a spreadsheet of project status which can be opened with Adobe here:



MSA Project Update
11.2.21 (1).pdf

Mr. Krempl said cultural and botanical surveys and common stand exams are all underway within SERAL. Of the 117,000 acres, the EIS expects about 40,000 acres of implementation.

Ms. Julia Stephens provided an overview of the Strawberry Burn Project. Contracted hand crews are currently preparing the land for USFS burning of about 200 acres. The FS should begin burning in early spring.

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Phase III Reforestation within the Rim footprint is in the mastication phase with 2,500 acres in preparation of planting. In 2023, they will plant 680,000 trees within 2600 acres of this area, and it is completely due to the efforts of YSS. There will be approximately 300 trees planted per acre. The reforestation strategies were described in the 2014 Rim Fire EIS.

In the 2,300-acre Cedar Ridge Fuel Reduction Project area, thinning will be conducted by two contracted crews. YSS was told that contractors can buy new equipment because of the contracts.

The Cold Springs project should start in the next few months.

TRT is working on a restoration project on Jawbone Ridge and the FS's planned broadcast burning is taking place currently.

Mr. Scott Gefland praised not just the amount of work done by TRT, but the quality of the work done to include working with hundreds of volunteers brought in from the Bay Area by the Berkeley Camp. Rebuilding of the Berkeley-Tuolumne Camp started four years ago. It is on track to open summer of 2022. TRT will start working on trails with them. He said it is a success story and YSS has had a lot to do with that.

Ms. Beth Martinez said increasing staffing capacity is a priority for the FS. Fire season is no longer reflective of historic fire models and is longer and more extreme. Also, the FS has plans for increasing prescribed burn crews.

Mr. Buckley suggested a lengthier discussion on staffing at the next General Membership Meeting.

Ms. Peterson suggested a Cedar Ridge field trip soon.

Potential Funding:

Mr. Patrick Koepfle said the State has dedicated a huge amount of money to forest efforts. There is a good chance of receiving capacity building funds for grant writing and other tasks. Staff is recommending approval of \$350,000 over 3-4 years.

There is about \$200M of Rim Fire work that still needs to be done. Because it was one of the first mega-fires, YSS is on the leading edge for funds. In overall YSS planning, the State is looking at pilot areas for financing work in a new way. The LT will put together a high-level plan that speaks to why the YSS area is well-positioned to be one of the pilot areas.

Keystone Pellet Plant Update:

Mr. Chris Trott said Golden State Natural Resources has purchased the former SPI site in Jamestown. They secured a 20-year MSA from the Forest Service for biomass collection throughout Region 5. GSNR aims to be a forest resiliency company and rural job creator. The plan is to create jobs through pellet facilities. The pellets will be exported through the Ports of Stockton or Richmond. They will go to the Pacific Rim and possibly Western Europe to augment and/or replace the use of coal.

Mr. Terrance Rogers, from GSNR, said the facility in Jamestown will be a 300,000 metric ton facility. They also closed escrow on property in Lassen County. They are currently developing CEQA documents. The biggest challenge is the transportation piece. Pellets will go on rail to Oakdale and be transferred to another rail line and taken to the port. The facilities will be privately financed. A third-party certification is required by some of the importers.

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Update from SNC on HUD Grant:

Mr. Elliot Vander Kolk said SNC has been working on the HUD grant for approximately five years. They still have three applicants in environmental review for the biomass piece of the project. One is a small pellet project (Camage Project). The other two projects are redoing their site plans as they found seasonal wetlands on their sites. One is a biochar plant, and one is a pole plant.

Mr. Michael Jow stated there was an overall poor Rim Fire reforestation survival rate because of the extremely dry weather. 900 of 1,200 acres have been replanted. The fuelbreak contract is out for responses. There are about 700 acres for fuelbreaks. Cal FIRE is working on private land fuelbreak contracts. Next year they plan to plant about 2,600 acres and have about 1.5M seedlings requested. They are on pace to finish up with the grant funding in 2023.

Strategies for Under-burning in Plantations:

Dr. Eric Knapp provided a presentation explaining the use of prescribed fire to improve the resilience of forests. He said the structure of plantations can pose some challenges for the young, planted conifers successfully surviving a wildfire. Bole char and crown scorch are a source of fire-caused tree mortality. He said plantations are not set up to survive fire.

The Whitmore fuel reduction study demonstrated the benefit of mastication. After mastication, the ground was treated ½ with herbicide and ½ with burning. Some of the residual woody material was incorporated into the soil and some manually removed. Mastication got rid of the dense understory of manzanita, but the site was revegetated by poison oak. All treatment knocked down manzanita, but only herbicide affected the poison oak. The prescribed burn killed 66% of small trees which would have had to be thinned eventually. A lot of manzanita seedlings re-sprouted, but they died from shading by the plantation trees. Studies of tree growth with treatment showed no evidence that tree growth was reduced.

Most trees survive using well-planned broadcast burning. When it comes to wildfires, there is better survival of plantation trees if burned plantations had prescribed burning in the previous 8-10 years. Nighttime burning can reduce scorch and may open more windows for warm season burning. Dr. Knapp as well as YSS would be okay with having some of the plantations have more mosaic patterns.

Mastication alone is not a fire preventative method as you are basically converting live fuel to dead fuel. This is where burning is useful. When it comes to planning for the level of plantation tree survival that is desired, studies show that more than seasonality, it is the intensity of the prescribed fire that affects mortality.

USFS Update:

Mr. Michael Jow said the FS is still on track to hopefully publish the DEIS on December 3rd for a 45-day public comment period. They are planning to have public meeting before Christmas (but it could be in early January). In March/April they should be ready to issue the final EIS and draft decision. They are still waiting to hear about the Emergency Declaration Situation as the Chief will weigh public comments before issuing the EDS. At the earliest, projects should be ready to begin implementing in May.

Supervisor Jason Kuiken said Dr. Knapp's presentation is key to the kind of treatment planned for SERAL. The infrastructure bill highlights the use of PODS and engaging collaboratives.

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Next YSS General Meeting:

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting will be Friday, January 21, 2021.

MEETING ATTENDANCE Members

| Name | Organization | Attendance |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| Jerry Jensen | American Forest Resource Council | |
| Jerry Fouts | American Motorcyclist Association, District 36 | Present |
| 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 | |
| Linda Millspaugh | CSAS/Alternate | |
| John Buckley | Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center | Present |
| Catilyn Rich | CSERC/Alternate | |
| Stephanie Suess | Chicken Ranch Rancheria of MeWuk Indians | |
| Chris Trott | CT Bioenergy Consulting | Present |
| Jody Trott | CTBC/Alternate | |
| Jim Dambacher | Dambacher Construction/Landowner | |
| Karl Dambacher | DC/Alternate | Present |
| Scott Gelfand | Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp | Present |
| Phil Coffin | FBTC/Alternate | |
| Michael Beckman | Friends of Pinecrest | Present |
| Douglas Wiele | FP/Alternate | |
| Dave Holland | FP/Alternate | |
| Greg Norton | Golden State Natural Resources | |
| Kevin Cann | GSNR/Alternate | Present |
| Dwight Follien | Groveland Trail Heads | |
| 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 | |
| Jeb Brooks | Left Coast Land Clearing | |
| Sasha Farkas | LCLC/Alternate | |
| Mike Damaso | Merced Dirt Riders/Stanislaus Trail Bike Association, 4x4 in Motion | |
| 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 | |

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| 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 | |
| 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 | |
| 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 | |
| Nathan Graveline | CDFW/Alternate | Present |
| Greg Gerstenberg | CDFW/Alternate | |
| Joe Meyer | NPS, Yosemite National Park | Present |
| Rob Grasso | NPSYNP/Alternate | |
| Michael Pickard | Sierra Nevada Conservancy | Present |
| Jason Kuiken | USFS Stanislaus NF | Present |
| Beth Martinez | USFS/Alternate | Present |
| Michael Jow | USFS/Alternate | Present |
| Jim Junette | USFS/Alternate | |
| Sarah LaPlante | USFS/Alternate | |
| Ray Cablayan | USFS/Alternate | Present |

PARTICIPANTS

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------|
| Keith Martin | Tuolumne Group Sierra Club | Present |
| Kevin Rice | TGSC | |

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------|---------|
| Carolyn Lott | Carlson Consulting | Present |
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

| Name | Organization |
|----------------|--|
| Liz Peterson | Tuolumne County |
| Sarah Bolnik | Rural Counties Representatives of California |
| Eric Knapp | USFS |
| Julia Stephens | TRT |
| Marvet Ritri | TC |

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|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Haily Gleason | TRT |
| Emma Burt | TRT |
| Elliott Vander Kolk | SNC |
| Sherri Brennan | TC Farm Bureau |
| Dave Wright | Lying W Sustainable Motor Sports |