



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions  
Collaborative General Membership  
Meeting Summary  
March 18, 2022  
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.

**MEETING GOALS:**

- Bureau of Land Management Presentation
- SERAL Update
- SNC Priorities Presentation
- Tuolumne Berkeley Camp Presentation

**SUMMARY:**

**Meeting Opening, Welcome and Introductions:**

Chair Brian Wayland opened the Zoom video meeting and roll was taken. Ms. Carolyn Lott noted the new representatives for BLM are Mr. Jerry Martinez and Mr. Jason Schroeder. The new representatives for Blue Mountain Mineral are Mr. John Salkowski and Ms. Lauren Mitchell. Mr. Mike and Mrs. Vicki Albrecht are now representing Associated California Loggers. Mr. Randy Hanvelt is the new representative for TuCARE. There were no objections to acceptance of new members to YSS, Mr. Etienne Patenaude representing Tuolumne BioEnergy and Ms. Kristina Rylands and Ms. Holly Warner representing Upper Merced River Watershed Council.

Mr. Patenaude said he is working through the biomass utilization fund to bring an integrated system to recover biomass that would have been pile burned. The plant will be on Camage Avenue and will produce pellets for the market. CEQA and NEPA are done, and he is working on permits and finalizing the loan. They will break ground as soon as permits are finalized.

Ms. Kristina Rylands said the Upper Merced River Watershed Council is a nonprofit working in Mariposa County to protect and enhance the Merced River Watershed from the headwaters to Lake McClure. The group was started in 2001.

**Project Update:**

Mr. Byron Kreml reported on the progress of projects. The project spreadsheet can be found at: <https://yosemitestanislausolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

Ms. Liz Peterson noted the county now has a list of 15 contractors, who responded to the RFQ, that can begin work immediately. The fuelbreaks, within SERAL, should be done by next December. The contractors can work on other projects once the other decisions are signed. Contracts for the Cold Springs project will also be issued to these contractors. Ms. Mervet Mitri

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will open the RFQ process quarterly so qualified contractors can be added. Currently, eight contractors on the list are local.

The project interactive map is available at: <https://www.tuolumne.org/habitat>

### **Update on Potential Funding Opportunities:**

Mr. Patrick Koepele said there are two grants from SNC, one for \$380,000 and one for \$40,000 that have been recommended for funding for capacity building. There is also an application to SNC for \$5M for fuelbreak work. He added that Mr. John Amodio has been working hard to advocate for block grant funding and has made some headway.

### **Bureau of Land Management Presentation:**

Mr. Gerald Martinez, the Fire Management Officer for the Motherlode Field Office, provided the update. He said BLM manages about 1,000 scattered parcels over the Motherlode District. Historically, they have not had much funding. The bipartisan Infrastructure Bill has pumped a lot of funds into BLM and the Motherlode office received the lion's share of the funds for CA.

Currently they have a programmatic environmental assessment for hazard tree reduction and tree removal for fuelbreaks. Determination of NEPA adequacy allows the second action. They can tier off the programmatic EA through defensible space applications found here: <https://yosemitestanislaussolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

An Environmental Fuels Assessment covers 85-90% of the Motherlode. It authorizes hand and mechanical treatment, herbicides, and burning. It also authorizes a categorical exclusion for 1,000 feet of a linear feature such as infrastructure or roads, up to 3,000 acres per project.

BLM entered a Good Neighbor Authority with Tuolumne County in 2018. This allows BLM to work with local, county, and state governments to do projects adjacent to or near BLM land. Projects are prioritized in consultation with Ms. Peterson, Cal FIRE, and Mr. Glenn Gottschall. Cal FIRE is the responsible party for fire protection on BLM. Ms. Peterson added when TC looks at prioritizing, their goal is to tie BLM projects into other ongoing or planned projects.

### **SERAL Update:**

Supervisor Jason Kuiken said SERAL is YSS at work, collaboratively planning a large project. The Record of Decision (ROD) for PODs 6-17 fuelbreaks and fuels reduction is open for public comment. There is a Forest Plan amendment within this ROD. The first ROD Supervisor Kuiken will sign will be to implement fuelbreaks in PODs 1-5 on 6,700 acres on the north side of Highway 108. PG&E and TUD have some areas within these PODs and are responsible for their property. Contracts can be executed in approximately 1½ weeks from signing of the ROD. The third ROD is condition-based treatment that includes unknown invasive species and salvage due to various potential environmental conditions and fire.

Most of the work in the first ROD will begin as soon as contracts are signed. The funding is secured, and contractors are in line. He would like to see a field trip to the SERAL project area.

Supervisor Kuiken said he will be on a temporary assignment starting April 4<sup>th</sup>. He will work remotely with the Washington Office.

More information about SERAL can be found at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=56500>

### **Timeline for Next Steps:**

Ms. Sarah LaPlante will provide a timeline presentation at the next meeting.

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### **Categories of Comments:**

Ms. Katie Wilkinson said they have received comments and concerns about thinning in CA Spotted Owl areas and old growth areas. Some comments state the FS is not restrictive enough in its approach to the return to Natural Range of Variation and others commented the FS is not aggressive enough. There were also comments about condition-based actions and the use of herbicides.

### **Prescribe Burn Update:**

Mr. Michael Jow said the burning to date has been successful. Portions of the broadcast burn at Strawberry are still on the table. The FS has been able to burn over 800 acres this fiscal year. It has mostly consisted of under burning in Groveland with an additional 2,500 acres of pile burning also being done.

Concern was voiced about only broadcast burning 800 acres to date when there are approximately 72,000 acres of burning in SERAL. Mr. Jow said utilizing fuelbreaks and PODs will help compartmentalize burning and allow the FS to apply prescribed fire at a larger scale. Funding should be available to adequately prep which will enable burning.

There is still a lot of implementation planning that has to be done before large scale burning can take place as the increased pace of burning the FS needs to do in SERAL, compared to the current level of burning, is immense.

There was much discussion by the FS about the need to have time to plan and the need for a lot more staff. Comments from YSS reflected the importance of utilizing contract staff to get the SERAL work done.

### **SNC Priorities for 2022**

For information on SNC priorities, please view the presentation at:

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

### **Berkeley-Tuolumne Camp Reconstruction Project:**

Mr. Scott Gefland showed a video featuring the rebuilding. He thanked TRT, YSS, and the FS for partnering with them, especially with planting. The opening day is June 27<sup>th</sup>, and the ribbon cutting is June 4<sup>th</sup>. Watch the video here: <https://yosemitestanislausolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

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

The next regularly scheduled YSS General Membership meeting will be Friday, May 20, 2022.

## MEETING ATTENDANCE

### Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Jensen	American Forest Resource Council	Present
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Associated California Loggers	Present
Vicki Albrecht	ACL	
John Sulkowski	Blue Mountain Minerals	Present
Lauren Mitchell	BMM/Alternate	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Association	

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Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	
Linda Millspaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	
Catilyn Rich	CSERC/Alternate	Present
Joanna Prtillo-HSU	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of MeWuk Indians	
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	
Jody Trott	CTBC/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	Dambacher Construction/Landowner	
Karl Dambacher	DC/Alternate	
James Maddox	Fish and Game Preservation Commission	Present
Scott Gelfand	Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp	Present
Phil Coffin	FBTC/Alternate	
Michael Beckman	Friends of Pinecrest	
Douglas Wiele	FP/Alternate	
Dave Holland	FP/Alternate	
Greg Norton	Golden State Natural Resources	
Kevin Cann	GSNR/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Ethan Billigmeier	Hetch Hetchy Water and Power	Present
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	
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	
Diana Beasley	Tuolumne Band Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
Eric Juncker	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Etienne Patenaude	Tuolumne BioEnergy	Present
David Goldemberg	Tuolumne County	Present
Kathleen Haff	TC/Alternate	
Randy Hanvelt	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present
Lindsay Mattos	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Patrick Koepele	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
John Amodio	TRT/Alternate	Present

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Byron Krempf	TRT/Alternate	Present
Kristina Rylands	Upper Merced River Watershed Council	Present
Holly Warner	UMRWC/Alternate	

### LIASON MEMBERS

Jerry Martinez	Bureau of Land Management	Present
Jason Schroeder	BLM/Alternate	
Mark Abraham	CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife	
Nathan Graveline	CDFW/Alternate	
Greg Gerstenberg	CDFW/Alternate	
Joe Meyer	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
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	Present
Ray Cablayan	USFS/Alternate	

### 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
Mervet Mitri	"
Jessi Baker	American Forest Foundation
Sarah Bolnik	Golden State Natural Resources
Julia Stephens	TRT
Andy Welsh	USFS
Haily Gleason	TRT
Emma Burt	TRT
Terrance Rogers	Golden State Natural Resources
Katie Wilkinson	USFS