



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
Collaborative General Membership
Meeting Summary
January 19, 2024
Forest Supervisor's Conference Rooms**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

- Prescribed Fire Field Trip

MEETING GOALS:

- Update on Projects – TRT and TC
- MSA 2023 Achievements Report
- USFS Updates

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome and Introductions:

Vice-Chair John Buckley opened the meeting and began introductions. Chair Liz Peterson joined the meeting.

Project Updates County/YSS:

Mr. Ben Campbell, TRT, said a Forest Health Grant was applied for last week. The \$7M applied for is for work on approximately 4,064 acres of treatment. Pile burning and arc site treatment is proposed in partnership with two of the Me-Wuk Tribes. Part of the proposal includes targeted grazing using virtual fencing collars. It is designed to demonstrate an innovative option for maintenance of fuelbreaks in partnership with landowners.

Various other efforts include prep work for additional Rim restoration projects and awards for Boney Flat Meadow restoration (\$340,000) and Sierra Meadow restoration at Murphy Ranch (\$300,000).

Mr. Campbell proceeded to share 2023 accomplishments under the Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA). You can find that report here:

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

Chair Peterson noted the county is working with Access Tuolumne County to create an overview video of YSS/TRT/Tuolumne County/USFS work on the landscape. She also directed the group's attention to the SERAL 2.0 support letter submitted to the FS by the Leadership Team.

You can view the letter here: <https://yosemitestanislaussolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

Forestry Challenge Update:

Ms. Diane Dealey Neill provided an update on Forestry Challenge. Forestry Challenge is an academic event for high school students in technical forestry and current forestry

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topics. Regional events funnel into a state championship.

Fall Summary:

- 538 students
- 113 teachers
- 127 teams
- 71 schools
- 63% female

Championship:

- April 17-19
- Pinecrest
- 32 teams
- 23 schools



USFS Updates:

Supervisor Jason Kuiken announced STF will receive \$57M for the fiscal year for SERAL 1.0 and 2.0. The size of the award is because of the partnership with the YSS collaborative, the MSA, and the ability to work through challenging issues and accelerate work. The first year of SERAL funding was \$21M. Last year funding for SERAL was \$54M. Approximately half of this year's funding will be for the implementation of SERAL 2.0. Some monitoring is included.

SERAL 2.0 – Scoping was completed last fall and the STF received a number of comments. Supervisor Kuiken clarified that none of what he was sharing was a decision, but rather how he is thinking about the main areas of concern. The Hazard Tree portion of the scoping will likely move over to the Forestwide Hazard Tree Program thereby removing it from the Emergency Action Determination (EAD).

Herbicide use on fuelbreaks is being analyzed and will be deliberate when used. They will not be utilizing broadcast herbicide applications but rather targeted use to reduce the percentage of brush in a given area. Brush species will remain, but not in such a high concentration. This will increase the ability to put fire down and reduce the potential for higher flame lengths. The primary criteria being discussed is applicable to 13,800 acres of fuelbreaks which include roadside treatments and strategic fuelbreaks. Strategic use of herbicides is particularly helpful on main ridges where there is the greatest need. They are still refining locations. When prescribed fire can be used it will be at the top of the list. A member stated he hopes the FS looks to innovative options and removes herbicide use.

Regarding the Emergency Authorization Determination, the FS are still considering what they leave in and what they take out.

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They have been looking at a lot of research on Diameter at Breast Heights (DBH). They are not generally looking at reducing DBH limits. They should have included that proven rust resistant sugar pines need to be protected. (Through natural genetic variation, about 3-5% of sugar pines and western white pines possess a genetic resistance to the blister rust fungus.) There are six in the project area.

The next steps include release of the EIS in early February followed by the comment period. The Record of Decision should be out in early May.

Supervisor Kuiken said it is worth noting that nationally, Environmental Impact Statements take about four years. The length of time for the SERAL 2.0 EIS is aggressive. They want to get the fuelbreaks in as soon as possible. He is still considering whether he will break up the decision.

Mr. Michael Jow said in response to comments about roads, the FS is considering which roads should be in the forestwide plan and which should be in SERAL 2.0.

Mr. Brian McCrory reported on the status of SERAL 1.0. He said 2,500 acres of fall burning was completed and they continue to carry out pile burning. Close to the same amount of mechanical treatment was completed. He noted the Wildfire Crisis Strategy (WCS) focused on the first ten large landscapes nationally. There is more information on the WCS here:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/stanislaus/fire>

Supervisor Kuiken provided an overview of the Forestwide Mountain Bike Trail Project noting they are adding certain trails into a mountain bike system. They are still considering which trails should be included and which should permit e-bikes and which class of e-bikes should be allowed. They have identified over 300 miles of potential trails. There are no public documents yet, but they are aiming to release scoping documents in 2024. He also said the FS is open to a recreation collaborative.

A member asked how the Mountain Bike Trail Project will interface with the Travel Management Strategy. He queried why 4 x 4s, and now potentially e-bikes, can use the road system but motorcycles cannot.

Mr. Jim Junette highlighted there have been eleven burn days so far this year.

Mr. Jow reported on Ackerson Meadow restoration which is a collaborative effort with Yosemite National Park. It is being called the largest restoration project in the Sierra's because of the amount of fill being used. Phase one of mechanical treatment is complete. They are restoring between 80-90 acres of wetland and will protect and improve over 190 acres total. This is one of the most important meadows because of the variety of rare and at-risk species there.

Regarding Rim restoration, mechanical site preparation has been completed on 1,323 acres. They will plant 420,000 trees this year. They have a budget of \$1.4M for this year. They were pleased with the 75% survival rate for 2023. They need to find funding for monitoring, especially to monitor 5-year survival rates.

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Sacramento Update:

Mr. Koepele reported for Mr. John Amodio. Mr. Amodio recently attended a webinar about the current state budget situation. The take-away is that it will likely affect the availability of state funding for our efforts.

Mr. Wade Crowfoot, in a meeting, said statewide last year 380,000 forest acres were treated across the state and the goal is 1M. However, the 380,000 acres is double previous years.

The proposed climate bond, which could have forest funding, will not likely go before the voters until November 2025.

Other:

Ms. Caitlin Henry reminded the group that AB 338 goes into effect in 2027 and will require prevailing wage for fuel reduction work. She said the county is still waiting to hear what the definition of fuel reduction work is for purposes of this regulation.

Next YSS Meeting: March 15, 2024

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

| Name | Organization | Attendance |
|---------------------|--|------------|
| 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 | |
| Lauren Mitchell | BMM/Alternate | |
| Steve Brink | CA Forestry Assoc., American Forest Resource Council | |
| Walt Kruse | Central Sierra Audubon Society | Present |
| Linda Millsbaugh | CSAS/Alternate | |
| John Buckley | Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center | Present |
| Stan Dodson | CSERC/Alternate | Present |
| Joanna Portillo-HSU | 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 | |
| James Maddox | Fish and Game Preservation Commission | Present |
| Jerry Jensen | Forest Landowners of California | Present |
| Diedre Bryant | FLOC/Alternate | |
| Scott Gelfand | Friends of Berkeley Tuolumne Camp | |
| Phil Coffin | FBTC/Alternate | |
| Gary Donnell | Friends of Pinecrest | |
| Douglas Wiele | FP/Alternate | |
| Dave Holland | FP/Alternate | |
| Terrance Rodgers | Golden State Natural Resources | |

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|-------------------|---|---------|
| Sarah Bolnik | GSNR/Alternate | |
| Dwight Follien | Groveland Trail Heads | |
| Dusty Vaughn | GTH/Alternate | |
| Ethan Billigmeier | Hetch Hetchy Water and Power | |
| Michael Esposito | HHWP/Alternate | |
| Jeb Brooks | Left Coast Land Clearing | Present |
| Sasha Farkas | LCLC/Alternate | |
| Mike Damaso | Merced Dirt Riders/Stanislaus Trail Bike Association, 4x4 in Motion | Present |
| Jim Phelan | Mule Deer Foundation | Present |
| Sara Vaughn | National Forest Foundation | Present |
| Dave Evans | Natural Resources Conservation Service | |
| Matthew Waverly | Pacific Gas & Electric | |
| Jon Donais | Pacific Ultra Power Chinese Station | Present |
| Dennis Serpa | PUPCS/Alternate | |
| Rees Warne | Sierra Outdoor School – Clovis Unified School District | Present |
| | SOS – CUSD/Alternate | |
| Hannah Grabowski | Sierra Pacific Industries | Present |
| Richard Gaiser | SNF Grazing Permittees Association | Present |
| Robert Wells | TBM-WTC/Alternate | |
| Etienne Patenaude | Tuolumne BioEnergy | |
| David Goldemberg | Tuolumne County | |
| Jaron Brandon | TC/Alternate | Present |
| Liz Peterson | TC/Alternate | Present |
| Randy Hanvelt | Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment | Present |
| Shaun Crook | Tuolumne County Farm Bureau | |
| Glenn Gottschall | Tuolumne County Fire Safe Council | |
| Karen Caldwell | TCFSC/Alternate | |
| Matthew Lun | Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District | |
| Diana Beasley | Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council | Present |
| Patrick Koepele | Tuolumne River Trust | Present |
| John Amodio | TRT/Alternate | |
| Ben Campbell | TRT/Alternate | Present |
| Kristina Rylands | Upper Merced River Watershed Council | |
| | UMRWC/Alternate | |
| Brain Wayland | Wayland Forestry | Present |

LIASON MEMBERS

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Jerry Martinez | Bureau of Land Management | |
| 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 | |

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|-----------------|---------------------------|---------|
| 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 | Present |
| Brian McCrory | USFS/Alternate | Present |
| Ray Cablayan | USFS/Alternate | |
| Jose Hernandez | USFS/Alternate | |
| Shawn Winstead | USFS/Alternate | |

PARTICIPANTS

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------|
| Keith Martin | Tuolumne Group Sierra Club | Present |
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COLLABORATIVE STAFF

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

| Name | Organization |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Caitlin Henry | Tuolumne County |
| Sean Hembre | " |
| Diane Dealey Neill | Forestry Challenge |
| Bill Youngman | Mule Deer Foundation |
| Katie Wilkinson | USFS |
| Tom Hofstra | Tuolumne County Resident |
| Garrett Grebe | Tuolumne River Trust |
| Theo Boettcher | " |
| Cailey Bauer | " |
| Jackson Brooke | " |
| Holly Heath | " |
| Rian Land | SPI |
| Lindsay Mattos | TC Resource Conservation District |
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