



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
Collaborative General Membership
Meeting Summary
March 15, 2024
Forest Supervisor's Conference Rooms**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

- Prescribed Fire Field Trip

MEETING GOALS:

- Update on Projects – TRT and TC
- County Storyboard
- USFS Updates

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome and Introductions:

Executive Director Carolyn Lott opened the meeting and began introductions. Chair Liz Peterson joined the meeting.

Project Updates County/YSS:

Mr. Jackson Brooke provided the report sharing that TRT has been doing hiring to help with upcoming projects. TRT appreciated the USFS help with the training of new staff.

Botanical surveys have begun in SERAL 1.0 and will be coming up in SERAL 2.0. The landline surveys contract is in place. The Greater Valley Conservation Corp. is helping with survival surveys for last year's plantings. They are assessing units for replanting feasibility. They will do a blend of easy and more challenging units. They are also finalizing development of a mechanical prep RFP. They will help the Groveland Ranger District with their planting. Volunteer reforestation days will be March 23rd and March 30th with April 6th as a fallback day if they are rained out on the 23rd. The event page on the TRT website has signup information. They also have a hand release contract to help with non-herbicide areas of planting.

SERAL Phase 3 is the next big project and TRT is working on an RFP for Italian Bar and Jupiter, which includes federal and private property.

When asked about drones, Mr. Brooke said they have not used drones yet for heavy lift planting assistance. They could make it optional in new contracts.

Mr. Jim Junette added there are 2,049 acres of replanting by the USFS and additional acres either for release or additional planting to go to contract. Looking at the Rim as a whole, there are about 10,000 acres with NEPA that have no contracted work at this point. They will also assess natural regeneration and what work needs to be done to make the natural regeneration sustainable. The region has a big target coming for regeneration in the coming years. Survival surveys can be done at one, three and five years. The total number acres planted or with

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funding for planting is between 13,000-14,000 acres varying from 200 trees per acre to 444 per acre.

Forestry Challenge Update:

Ms. Diane Dealey Neill gave a recap of Forestry Challenge and said the students' experiences include going out into the forest and being taught to use data collection tools and how to collect data. 32 teams are coming to the Stanislaus Forest for the state championship. She noted there is more going on in the Stanislaus Forest that is positive than any place in the state. They will arrive on Wednesday the 17th of April. The topic is: Create a manual for maintaining fuelbreaks. She is looking for treatment-based experts who can explain the pros and cons, cost, and appropriateness of various maintenance techniques. She also needs people who can answer questions as participants start working. She needs a total of 33 judges and has about half so far. The event will be held at Camp Sylvester. You can sign up to volunteer here:

<https://forestrychallenge.org/championship-volunteer-registration/>

County Storyboard:

Mr. Sam Zabell provided the presentation. Chair Peterson noted this project was requested by the Board of Supervisors and the Office of Emergency Services spearheaded much of it. The idea was to show projects completed or underway throughout the county no matter who is the implementor. It is titled Fuels Treatments in Tuolumne County and is available at the county's GIS website and can be found here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fe8b91465c6b4001b39e0569d2e93381>

There are many layers to include high fire severity zones, population areas, and a jurisdictional map. The USFS is shifting from traditional strategies to the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. There are photos depicting desired conditions. There is also a map of communities that are at risk as they have 30+ residences with only one way in and out.

The Fuels Reduction Project Tour shows all the fuels reduction projects taking place with Tuolumne County and they are displayed by agencies. There is also a dashboard of acres treated and the amount of funding awarded.

USFS Updates:

Mr. Brian McCrory spoke to SERAL 1.0. He said the Mt. Knight project RFP received bids and they are in the process of awarding 2,000 acres of treatment, fuelbreaks and fuels reduction. The Horseman Project around Lyons Reservoir and County Bar RD is 400 acres of timber removal, 500 acres of mastication and road reconstruction. It is out for bid now. Bald Mt. is 1,000 acres of timber removal, 500 acres of biomass removal and the remainder in mastication. It will go out to bid after Horseman.

Ongoing contracts include one awarded for POD 2 last year and there are about 2,000 acres remaining to be completed. SERAL G-Z landline surveys have begun. Arch and botany surveys will begin soon.

The FS is working with the county on additional fuelbreak work and planning for SERAL 2.0. Spring burning is planned. Approximately 47,000 piles have been created. They will focus mainly on Cedar Ridge. They hope this fall to burn where the fuelbreaks will be in SERAL 2.0. Mr. McCrory said preburning helps with the final fuelbreak products. They are also planning on Sandbar Flat for this fall.

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Regarding the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, the DC office is doing an economic analysis on what costs have been on the landscape to date.

Supervisor Jason Kuiken spoke about the limitation on FS funds based on congressional and department rules and regulations. He said the public wonders why funds cannot be used however the FS chooses. He said there are many, many buckets of funds and the funds are restricted to the use spelled out in the provisions. He named a number of the major categories:

- USFS Operational
- Research & Development
- State & Private Forestry
- National Forest System Lands
- Lands Management
- Capital Improvement and Maintenance
- Land Acquisition
- Wild and Fire Management (the largest category)

Each one of the budget line items have their own rule sets. Things cannot be moved around without permission from Congress.

Mr. Michael Jow reported on the SERAL 2.0 EIS. The information on SERAL 2.0 can be found here: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=63557>

SERAL 2.0 is approximately 162,000 acres with the majority on USFS land. The scoping comment period began February 15, 2024, and ends April 1, 2024. The Draft Record of Decision (DROD) is expected at the beginning of May. After 30 days, the final ROD will be issued in June 2024.

The EIS was done under the Emergency Action Determination (EAD). The Secretary of Agriculture determines if a project qualifies for use of the EAD. The EAD only requires a no action alternative and one action alternative. Some portions of SERAL 2.0 were not included in the EAD and will be subject to the regular objection process. For example, salvage will be in a separate EIS. Hazard trees will be part of the Forestwide Salvage Project.

Changes were made based on scoping comments. The FS reduced the amount of forest thinning. They refined locations for proposed herbicide maintenance. They dropped fuelbreaks within wild and scenic corridors. They added some language to narrow thinning around Rust Resistant Sugar Pines. See the website for more information.

The Ackerson Meadow project is on Evergreen RD and is shared with Yosemite National Park. This is the largest meadow restoration ever done in the Sierras. Phase One was completed. The entire project is grant funded. It required 156,000 cubic yards of fill. There will be a presentation on this project in May.

The FS is looking at a forestwide meadow restoration NEPA, a noxious weed treatment NEPA, and prescribed burning NEPA, as well.

Sacramento Update:

None was given.

Other:

The Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC) has decided not to participate any longer as an official member of YSS and will focus on participation in the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) among other activities.

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A member asked about when the Stanislaus Travel Management Plan will be updated. Supervisor Kuiken said he has no plans to redo it at this time. He would like to discuss dispersed camping in the future, but he is focused on fire issues at this time.

Mr. Randy Hanvelt said Mr. Mark Peck visited TuCARE. Mr. Peck has started a program in the Northern Montana area following the example of YSS.

Next YSS Meeting: May 17, 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 Millspaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
Joanna Portillo-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
Jerry Jensen	Forest Landowners of California	
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	Present
Sarah Bolnik	GSNR/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Ethan Billigmeier	Hetch Hetchy Water and Power	
Joy Meller	HHWP/Alternate	Present
Jeb Brooks	Left Coast Land Clearing	
Sasha Farkas	LCLC/Alternate	
Mike Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/Stanislaus Trail Bike Association, 4x4 in Motion	Present
Jim Phelan	Mule Deer Foundation	Present

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Sara Vaughn	National Forest Foundation	
Dave Evans	Natural Resources Conservation Service	
Matthew Waverly	Pacific Gas & Electric	
Jon Donais	Pacific Ultra Power Chinese Station	
Dennis Serpa	PUPCS/Alternate	
Rees Warne	Sierra Outdoor School – Clovis Unified School District	
	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	Present
David Goldemberg	Tuolumne County	
Jaron Brandon	TC/Alternate	
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	Present
Matthew Lun	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Diana Beasley	Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council	
Patrick Koepele	Tuolumne River Trust	
John Amodio	TRT/Alternate	
Ben Campbell	TRT/Alternate	
Kristina Rylands	Upper Merced River Watershed Council	
	UMRWC/Alternate	
Brain Wayland	Wayland Forestry	

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	
Rob Grasso	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	
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	

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Shawn Winstead	USFS/Alternate	Present
Marcie Easter	USFS/Alternate	Present

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	"
Bobbi Jo Donham	"
Corrine Hume	"
Anna Fagioli	"
Diane Dealey Neill	Forestry Challenge
Gary Whitson	CalFIRE
Sam Zabell	Tuolumne River Trust
Leale Armes	"
Madelyn Guillaume	"
Jackson Brooke	
Julia Stephens	"
Pat Laeng	USFS
Beck Johnson	"
Dan Guse	"