



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
Collaborative General Membership
Meeting Summary
May 17, 2024
Forest Supervisor's Conference Rooms**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

- Prescribed Fire Field Trip

MEETING GOALS:

- Update on Projects – TRT and TC
- Learn about Tuolumne BioEnergy Project, Forestry Challenge Championship, and Beaver Analogues
- USFS Ackerson Meadow Presentation, Biomass Haul Study, & Other Updates

SUMMARY:

Meeting Opening, Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Liz Peterson opened the meeting and introductions were made. Mason, Burce, and Girard was recognized as a new member.

Tuolumne BioEnergy Project:

Mr. Etienne Patenaude presented the project. He said the project was funded through the HUD Resiliency Grant. They also received equipment funding from Cal FIRE and a grant backed by USDA. The plant allows forest materials to be manufactured into stove pellets instead of pile burned. He said they will do their own chipping and generate their own energy. A feedstock study done by CT Bioenergy demonstrated there is enough feedstock to sustain the plant.

One piece of equipment they will be using is a mobile debarker. The mobile chipper can take up to 20" diameter logs and has a side dump and an onboard scale. They will use a belt trailer and dump the material at their facility on 15007 Camage Avenue in Sonora.

They will generate power onsite. The belt dryer that will be installed is the best available technology for limiting dust emissions. The plant capacity will be 32,000 tons of pellets per year. The only emissions source onsite will be the diesel trucks coming and going. They will sell wholesale, not retail.

Through the Mother Lode Job Training program, they will hire 25 people. They are hoping to expand into helping industries use pellets to generate energy. There are no additives in the pellets. They also plan to apply for a sustainability rating.

The plant will cost \$14M. The soft start target is October 15, 2024. They will also take away wood waste for free. Their haul radius will be 50 miles. They will be able to take up to 44,000 tons of input per year.

When questioned about competition with GNSR, Yosemite BioEnergy, and Tuolumne Biomass Mr. Patenaude said there is no competition in the finished product but there is in source material. However, there should be plenty of source material if the forest continues to be maintained. You can find the full presentation here:

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

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Forestry Challenge Update:

Ms. Diane Dealey Neill provided an overview of the competition. Forestry Challenge is an academic event for high school students in technical forestry and current forestry topics. Regional events funnel into a state championship. They ran fall sessions at 71 schools. The championship event was on the Stanislaus and 125 students from 23 schools participated. The focus topic was fuelbreak management. You can learn more about the championship here under Forestry Challenge Overview: <https://yosemitestanislaussolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

The winning team from Visalia presented their project via Microsoft Teams. The students developed flowcharts to analyze what type of treatment at what cost would be best to use on fuelbreak maintenance across the landscape. They are presenting to the Regional Office of the USFS on May 31st. You can see their presentation here under Forestry Challenge Winning Presentation: <https://yosemitestanislaussolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

Meadow Restoration & Beaver Dam Analogues:

Mr. Patrick Koepele shared a visual of a healthy meadow. He said an unhealthy meadow has a stream that does not allow as much water to percolate. Using a process-based approach, which means using a natural method to improve waterflow instead of machinery, a meadow can be restored. If something like a beaver dam is installed, one can reinstitute something more natural which results in a more naturally complex habitat. The process that simulates beaver dams uses handwork to put in a series of poles to anchor the structure. This process is much cheaper than restoration using machinery.

It was noted not all meadows are suited for this type of restoration because of the extent of the damage. It was also noted that some meadows have been lost because of encroachment of conifers. Meadows assist in helping to stop wildfires.

You can find Mr. Koepele's presentation here under Process Meadow Restoration: <https://yosemitestanislaussolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

Project and Funding Updates:

Ms. Caitlin Henry and Mr. Ben Campbell provided an update. More planting will take place in the Rim over the next couple of years. Between 750,000-1M seedlings will be planted during that time.

Archeological surveys are almost finished in SERAL 2.0. Fuelbreaks can be started when the surveys are completed. A new Cal FIRE grant for approximately \$7M was awarded.

When the NEPA is ten years old for the Rim, the NEPA will need to be looked at to see if a supplement must be developed. It costs approximately \$220 per acre for planting and \$250 per acre for herbicides. Hand release is more expensive. Seedlings are about \$.40 per seedling. There is also a cost for monitoring. Site prep is about \$2,100 per acre.

The county is finishing up an outreach video that should be done in a couple of months.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Here is the grant overview:

Federal or State Funds	Grantor	Grant Name		Amount Awarded
State	Cal Fire	Forest Health CCI 2018	\$	5,000,000.00
State	Cal Fire	Forest Health CCI 2021	\$	4,999,846.96
State	Cal Fire	CCI 2023-HELO	\$	1,669,927.94
State	Cal Fire	Forest Health CCI 2023	\$	6,998,414.98
State	Wildlife Conservancy Board (WCB)	Reforestation	\$	4,700,000.00
State	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience	\$	3,572,738.13
Federal	United States Forest Service	Forest and Watershed Resilience	\$	5,753,132.54
Federal	United States Forest Service	YSS Opportunity Area	\$	7,575,335.00
Federal	United States Forest Service	Stanislaus Landscape	\$	13,012,094.00
Federal	United States Forest Service	Infrastructure	\$	4,999,999.99
Federal	United States Forest Service	IRA Fuels Stewardship	\$	3,700,000.00
Federal	Bureau of Land management	BLM/Yankee Hill	\$	442,800.00
			\$	62,424,289.54
Pending Agreement				
Federal	United States Forest Service	IRA Fuels Stewardship	\$	26,034,986.00
State	Cal Fire	Forest Health CCI 2024	\$	6,999,626.52
			\$	95,458,902.06

USFS Presentations:

Ackerson Meadow- Most of the meadow was privately owned during the last 150 years. The part that was private was acquired and donated to Yosemite NP. It is the largest meadow project ever done on the Stanislaus. The gully has gotten to 100 feet wide and 14 feet deep in places and is about three miles long.

The full presentation is here: <https://yosemitestanislaussolutions.com/meetings-events/collaborative-documents/>

You can see photos and learn more about the project here: <https://www.nps.gov/yose/getinvolved/ackersonmeadow.htm>

Biomass Haul Subsidy – Mr. Brian McCorry said there was a pilot project last year and this year they will combine grants into one funding source. There is up to about \$25M for the 2024 program with the applications due in June. Locally, Pacific Ultra Power was the pilot last year. The FS hopes other local facilities will put in proposals. This is to remove excess material that is not already being subsidized. Transportation grants are limited to applications by the FS.

Mr. Steve Brink said there will not be awarded proposals until July. When someone is awarded, then the FS will evaluate what constitutes a reasonable contract term to get the work done. There must be an existing contract with the FS to utilize this funding source.

SERAL 1.0 Status of Implementation and Funding - Supplemental Project Agreements (SPAs) are in place with some modifications with Tuolumne County, the Great Basin Institute, and the Institute for Bird Population. These SPAs equal approximately \$28M. There are currently five mechanical contracts operating on the landscape. The Mt. Knight fuels reduction project was awarded and started. Over 3,000 acres will be completed this year with mechanical treatment. The I Bar Unit at the South Fork area behind Lyons Reservoir has been awarded. They are soliciting proposals for Bald Mt. Prescribed burning behind Mt. Elizabeth is underway. They may have to postpone Cedar Ridge burning until the fall. A lot of burning has been completed at Bear Mountain. They have completed treatment on 21,000 acres of the Stanislaus Landscape from 2022 – present which includes SERAL 1.0.

SERAL 2.0 Update – Ms. Beth Martinez said May 31st is the date for the final EIS and draft ROD. They must wait 30 days until the ROD can be signed. The Hazard Tree EA has been put on the back burner for now until after the May 31st date.

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

The CA Spotted Owl will be listed and today was the final due date to get all of projects analyzed to see how this will affect the projects and what can be consulted on under a programmatic agreement. The hope is that through this programmatic agreement with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service the FS can continue under the current EIS. The consultation package for SERAL 2.0 has already been submitted.

Other – Project Activity Level (PAL) ratings now are A through E. A new system will be in place in July and will allow contractors to assess local weather conditions. This Industrial Fire Precaution Level (IFPL) will have four levels with different restrictions for each level.

For the G-Z project, resource surveys have started. Road reconstruction design work has started, as well. Everything is on schedule. They will start mastication this fall.

Sacramento Update:

Mr. Koepele reported for Mr. John Amodio. He said the state budget has complicated things. The May revise is cutting a lot of programs and clawing back money allocated for projects but not spent. Most of the Cal FIRE grants are safe. It sounds like the SNC grants are going to be okay. He doesn't know yet if there will be an impact on the meadow grants. This situation has put conversations around sustained funding on hold.

Other:

Ms. Lott asked that people reflect on how far YSS has come in achieving goals. There was a time when contracting forest work out was only a conversation. Now it is a reality. Ms. Martinez reminded people that a lot of what is happening on the Stanislaus is not happening across other forests.

SNC grant - SNC reached out to YSS and wanted to fund increased capacity. The grant will be used to do on-the-ground recon specifically on fuelbreaks. Information needs to be collected on the status of fuelbreaks on private lands. This would allow assessments of what is needed. \$302,000 will provide baseline data on fuelbreaks and set up a monitoring plan.

The county has been notified that they will likely receive the grant applied for in partnership with UC Merced to do watershed monitoring and establish a baseline. The goal is to also to acquire funding to monitor post-treatment conditions.

Dos Rios Ranch in Modesto will be the next CA State Park. You can learn more about it here: <https://www.parks.ca.gov/NewsRelease/1268>

Prescribed Fire Field Tip – Members want to see how things look post-treatment and also want to see the trees that were damaged near Strawberry that are greening back up. There is also interest in seeing the Quarry Fire area. Ms. Lott will work with Ms. Martinez.

Next YSS Meeting: July 19, 2024

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Associated California Loggers	
Vicki Albrecht	ACL	

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

John Sulkowski	Blue Mountain Minerals	
Lauren Mitchell	BMM/Alternate	
Steve Brink	CA Forestry Assoc., American Forest Resource Council	Present
Walt Kruse	Central Sierra Audubon Society	Present
Linda Millsbaugh	CSAS/Alternate	
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	
Sarah Bolnik	GSNR/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
Ethan Billigmeier	Hetch Hetchy Water and Power	
Michael Esposito	HHWP/Alternate	
Sasah Farkas	Left Coast Land Clearing	
Jeb Brooks	Mason, Bruce, & Girard Natural Resource Consultants	Present
Mike Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/Stanislaus Trail Bike Association, 4x4 in Motion	
Jim Phelan	Mule Deer Foundation	Present
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
Jaron Brandon	Tuolumne County	Present
Anaiah Kirk	TC/Alternate	
Liz Peterson	TC/Alternate	Present
Randy Hanvelt	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

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	
Laura Hiler	TMWTC/Alternate	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	Present
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	
Beth Martinez	USFS/Alternate	Present
Michael Jow	USFS/Alternate	
Jim Junette	USFS/Alternate	
Brian McCrory	USFS/Alternate	Present
Ray Cablayan	USFS/Alternate	
Jose Hernandez	USFS/Alternate	
Shawn Winstead	USFS/Alternate	Present

PARTICIPANTS

Keith Martin	Tuolumne Group Sierra Club	Present
Joanne McCullough	TGSC/Alternate	

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Carlson Consulting	Present
--------------	--------------------	---------

OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Caitlin Henry	Tuolumne County
Bobbi Jo Donham	"
Corinne Hume	"

Summary: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions General Meeting

Anna Fagioli	“
Diane Dealey Neill	Forestry Challenge
Sue Naramore	CA Housing & Community Development
Gary Whitson	Cal FIRE
Pat Laeng	USFS
Curtis Kvamme	“
Thomas Meyor	“
Hailey Gleason	“
Angie Avery	SNC
Alex Geritz	“
Bob Thompson	Tuolumne River Trust
Ande Myers	“
Lauren Smith	“
Charis Hernandez	High Sierra Timber Management