



**Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions
General Membership Collaborative Meeting
Meeting Summary
January 16, 2026**

MEETING GOALS

- **Projects Update**
- **Sierra Business Council Presentation**
- **USFS Updates**

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

- Quarry and Peak Fires Field Trip
- Presentation by CHIPS
- G-Z Field Trip
- Presentation by CDFW

Meeting Opening, Welcome, and Introductions

Chair Patrick Koepele opened the meeting and asked for introductions. He also announced the retirement of Mr. Chris Trott and offered thanks for his years of service to YSS.

Projects Update

Dr. Ande Meyers, Yosemite Rivers Alliance (YRA) provided an update. The slide presentation can be found here: [YRA Project Update Presentation](#). She said Seral Phase 3 is about half complete. The Part 2 contract is active. They are wrapping up the final part of SERAL 1.0. These are all fuel management features with a combination of WUI and wildland management. Excelsior was amended (SERAL 2.0)

Site-preparation and reforestation continue in the Rim burn scar. Two of three contracts have been completed. The final planting/release should begin March 2026. It will be close to the 120 corridor between Buck Meadows and Cherry Lake. It is currently hovering around 700 acres.

Ms. Caitlin Henry, Tuolumne County, said they are working with the Tribe for added burn capacity. They are submitting applications for Prop 4. The BLM application for fuelbreak work was awarded. They applied for SNC funding, and they should hear in March how much will be awarded. They are working on a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation application and looking for funding for roadwork. Climate-based solutions funding is supposed to be released soon based on passage of AB35.

Meadow Restoration

Ms. Julia Stephens, YRA, said Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grants supported several planning projects for meadows. They are all shovel-ready with permits and planning in

hand. They did some high level planning for monitoring as now there is a higher requirement for how success is measured.

Sierra Meadow Partnership has worked in conjunction with YRA. YRA is doing process-based restoration work for most of the work which uses materials found at and around the site. They are also implementing some beaver dam analogues.

For the Boney Flat Meadow, they worked with Greater Valley Conservation Corp. They are in the final year of the work under this grant. They are using process-based restoration structures (PBR). You can learn more about PBR at: [Process Based Restoration](#) They removed invasive species and encroaching conifers. . California Department of Fish & Wildlife has provided funding support.

In Cottonwood Meadow they may need to do some channel fill work. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provided funding. They need more funding for fencing. They have begun implementing Phase One. Plumas Corp assisted and provided guidance.

All the Rim meadow restoration projects were completed prior to 2021 on about 15 locations, and they now need some adaptive management work and were funded for this. YRA is collaborating with both Tribes for assistance in the work. CSERC has helped with fencing design and implementation. Columbia College has also assisted with saw work.

Jawbone Meadow planning and design was covered in the Rim Fire NEPA. Sierra Meadow Partnership is funding the work and YRA is working with Trout Unlimited and the Tuolumne Band.

Through a grant with the National Forest Foundation, YRA will ramp up volunteerism this summer.

Mr. Michael Jow thanked Ms. Stephens and YRA and said without them there would not be anything like this happening for watershed restoration. The USFS has lost a lot of their staff who would have focused on this work. You can view her presentation here: [Meadow Restoration Update 26-1](#)

Beaver Integration Group (BIG)

Ms. Stephens reported on the work of BIG. There is uncertainty about how many beavers existed historically in the watershed. There is a movement in California to reintroduce beavers in areas where they were eliminated over time. The BIG subcommittee was formed under the Tuolumne-Stanislaus Integrated Regional Water Management Authority which is funding staff support. BIG is exploring the feasibility of beaver reintroduction and looking at potential sites.

Sierra Business Council/Wildfire Solutions Coalition

Mr. Steve Frisch provided the presentation which can be found at: [SBC Wildfire Solutions Coalition Presentation 26-1](#)

This effort officially started in June of 2025. They are looking at long-term funding to implement CA's wildfire resilience strategy. It is not appropriate for the members of the state task force to advocate for funding as they are mostly state agency folks. So there needed to be a group that could do advocacy. There is open membership for the coalition with an executive committee.

Wildfire costs \$117 billion, on average, in damage per year. 2025 was more like \$40B. Wildfire is likely to be twice as prevalent 50 years from now. Bonded money is twice as expensive as General Fund money. The goal is \$2.5-3B in wildfire mitigation money by 2030. Funding for wildfire response in the 2026 Cal FIRE budget is approximately \$4B.

Wildfire risk mitigation is the number one reason for cost increases in insurance and utility rates. This impacts the real estate market and the overall economy.

The Coalition has been looking at several different funding mechanisms. 68% of Californians polled agreed there is some need, or a great need, to scale up wildfire mitigation funding to mitigate the risk. Right below the importance of affordability issues in the polling was wildfire and wildfire-related issues. 71% of CA voters polled were supportive of the CA Wildfire Action Plan strategies.

Funding at a local level has begun to pass. The \$3B goal does not have to come solely from state sources. There is also a need to advocate for federal funding. The CA Wildfire Fund (CWF) has about \$14B in it (to pay for catastrophic losses from wildfires).

The Coalition polled voters on whether they would support 1-2% of the General Fund in addition to cap and greenhouse gas funding going to wildfire mitigation. There was higher support in Northern CA and the Inland Empire.

The Coalition is asking legislators to:

- Pass an exemption to the APA (Administrative Procedures Act). (The California Administrative Procedure Act is a law that governs the creation of administrative regulations in the state of California.)
- Appropriate additional Prop 4 wildfire funds
- Protect \$200M from Cap-and-Invest Program if Greenhouse Gas Resource Fund (GGRF) revenues decline
- Scale GGRF investment in wildfire and nature-based climate solutions

Organizations interested in joining the coalition can do so at: [Join the Coalition](#)

USFS Update

Mr. Brian McCorry introduced Mr. Andy Welsh, Acting District Ranger for the Sugar Pine District. Mr. Thomas Meyer is Acting District Ranger for the Groveland District. Supervisor Kuiken is meeting with the chief in DC along with all national forest supervisors. They have not yet received a full reorganization plan from the USDA. Ms. Jacqueline Buchanan is the

Regional Forester for Region 6, Acting Regional Forester for Region 5, and is supervising the Acting Regional Forester for Region 10.

The Appropriations Bill increased hazardous fuels funding but overall, the funding budget is flat. The FS is still under the continuing resolution, so they have limited funding available.

Almost 20,000 acres were treated in 2025. They have completed 5,000 acres of prescribed fire in the Stanislaus Landscape since 2022.

Mr. Michael Jow said the two districts, Summit and Miwuk, were officially designated as the Sugar Pine District.

There will be broadcast burning on Cedar Ridge over the next couple of weeks of about 500-600 acres.

The Forest Service priorities are fire suppression, active forest management – timber and fuels related work, reforestation, and then recreation.

They are making good progress in implementing SERAL. Horseman Trail and Tunnel are closed out. The Bald Mountain sale, Lyons, and Rushing Meadow are active. G-Z Project upcoming work includes modification to add another treatment area. The modification to Bald Mountain is to add the Berry sale. They are working on the Bumblebee sale and put out a request for information. Part of that contract will include optional areas in the Marble Mountain (SERAL 2.0) area.

The target for the Stanislaus Forest is 39M board feet in 2026. Region 6 will likely have a forest-to-forest target. ACCG (Amador Calaveras Consensus Group) will become a bigger part of forest work.

Reforestation is a hard target at 20,000 acres in the region with the Stanislaus Forest at 1,500 acres.

Mr. Meyer said prescribed burning began on the Groveland District at the beginning of the year. They have planned 585,000 trees to plant with 1,300 acres for new planting and revisiting 2,200 acres for interplanting (in previously planted areas). About 4,000 acres of preplanning with grubbing and chemical prep is planned. They will also do some fuelbreak maintenance work.

Other

March 19-20 is the CA Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force Meeting at Chicken Ranch. All YSS members are encouraged to attend. Registration will be available soon at: [Task Force Meeting Registration](#)

Mr. Jerry Fouts said there has been unbelievable progress in the forest maintenance. Italian Bar Road is a county road that is in real need of maintenance. There is a missed opportunity for recreational activities if this road is not improved.

Mr. Mark Abraham, CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, said they have started collaring deer on the Groveland District. This is one of the only locations in the state. They have now moved to the Stanislaus Drainage. In spring they will do bear den site checks and collar the mother.

Adjournment

Chair Koepele thanked those attending for their participation.

Next Meeting

Meeting of the Wildfire Task Force on March 19, 2026, and Field Tour on March 20, 2026.

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Members

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jerry Fouts	American Motorcyclist Association, District 36	Present
Dave Pickett	AMA36/Alternate	
Mike Albrecht	Associated California Loggers	
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	
Tom Parrington	CSAS/Alternate	
John Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Present
Stan Dodson	CSERC/Alternate	
Joanna Portillo-HSU	Chicken Ranch Rancheria of MeWuk Indians	
Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy Consulting	Present
Jody Trott	CTBC/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	
Dave Holland	FP/Alternate	
Terrance Rodgers	Golden State Natural Resources	
Sarah Bolnik	GSNR/Alternate	
Dwight Follien	Groveland Trail Heads	
Dusty Vaughn	GTH/Alternate	
	Heartwood Biomass	
Cody Dunlap	Heartwood Biomass	

Ethan Billigmeier	Hetch Hetchy Water and Power	
Joy Mellera	HHWP/Alternate	
Jim Dambacher	James R. Dambacher Construction/Landowner	Present
Jon Donais	Jamestown Energy	
Dennis Serpa	JE/Alternate	
	Mason, Bruce, & Girard Natural Resource Consultants	
Chris Shull	MB&G NRC/Alternate	
Rubie Teffeteller	MB&G NRC/Alternate	
Mike Damaso	Merced Dirt Riders/Stanslaus 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	
Wes Whited	PGE/Alternate	Present
Rees Warne	Sierra Outdoor School – Clovis Unified School District	Present
	SOS – CUSD/Alternate	
Hannah Grabowski	Sierra Pacific Industries	
Rian Jurado	SPI/Alternate	
Richard Gaiser	SNF Grazing Permittees Association	
Robert Wells	TBM-WTC/Alternate	
Etienne Patenaude	Tuolumne BioEnergy	Present
Jaron Brandon	Tuolumne County	
Anaiah Kirk	TC/Alternate	
Liz Peterson	TC/Alternate	Present
Randy Hanvelt	Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment	Present
Shaun Crook	Tuolumne County Farm Bureau	
Jerry McGowan	Tuolumne County Fire Safe Council	
Karen Caldwell	TCFSC/Alternate	
Matthew Lun	Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District	
Lindsay Mattos	TCRCD/Alternate	Present
Diana Beasley	Tuolumne Me-Wuk Tribal Council	Present
Laura Hiler	TMWTC/Alternate	
Patrick Koepele	Tuolumne River Trust	Present
Ande Meyers	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	
David Miyako	NPS, Yosemite National Park	
Rob Grasso	NPSYNP/Alternate	
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Present
Jason Kuiken	USFS Stanislaus NF	
Andy Welsh	USFS/Alternate	Present
Michael Jow	USFS/Alternate	
Katie Wilkinson	USFS/Alternate	Present
Brian McCrory	USFS/Alternate	Present
Marcie Easter	USFS/Alternate	Present
Ray Cablayan	USFS/Alternate	
Jose Hernandez	USFS/Alternate	
Shawn Winstead	USFS/Alternate	
Thomas Meyer	USFS/Alternate	Present
Pat Laeng	USFS/Alternate	

PARTICIPANTS

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

COLLABORATIVE STAFF

Carolyn Lott	Executive Director	Present
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OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

Name	Organization
Caitlin Henry	Tuolumne County
Sara Daniel	Tuolumne County
Steve Frisch	Sierra Business Council
Jim Moak	USFS