

Meeting Synopsis

On Monday, August 15 the BHCCFWG met for a full group meeting. The day began with a presentation on Tribal partnerships and sovereign Tribal status with the US Forest Service.

Two additional time sensitive issues were added to the agenda including a biomass power plant discussion and information about Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 1 Grants. USFS representatives discussed preliminary vegetation and wildlife surveys occurring within the Crossroads HFRA. A new subgroup was formed to address recruitment of additional members and outreach to the community. Many conversations returned to the issues of tree mortality, vulnerable biomass markets, and the scope of restoration in light of wildfire.

Attendees

Daniel Cardenas	Dave Hays	Wade McMaster*
Michelle Coppoletta	Kristy Hoffman	Lauren Miller
Don Curtis	Jonathan Kusel	John Owen
Crystal Danheiser	Trish Ladd	Patricia Puterbaugh
Marissa Fierro*	Doug Lindgren	Aaron Rieffanaugh
C. Fletcher	Lori Martin	Todd Sloat
Ann Grasso	Jason Mateljak	

*Present at Pre-Meeting Session

Action Items

- [J. Owen](#) to revise May notes and post approved version. **DONE**
- [K. Hoffman](#) to update group on funding status of March, 2017 Prop 1 grant round.
- [C. Danheiser](#) to look into draft protocol for fungi surveys and provide update.
- [J. Kusel/Sierra Institute](#) will provide updates on biomass negotiations and policies.
- [J. Kusel/Sierra Institute](#) to notify of SB1122 interconnection policy amendments.
- [G. Mayer](#) to share Plum Project IDT notes. **DONE**
- [A. Grasso](#) will inform the group about the sites chosen by Washington Office representatives and any questions they have for the Collaborative.
- [D. Hays](#) to contact J. El Kouarti regarding participation in the Recruitment Subgroup. **DONE**
- [Sierra Institute](#) to explore outreach to Tree Mortality Task Force (TMTF) representatives.
- [D. Hays](#) to contact P. Giacomini regarding WO visit.
- [Sierra Institute](#) to revisit the initial outreach strategy, forward to Outreach Subgroup.

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Pre-Meeting Session: Brown Bag Lunch Presentation on Government to Government Relations and the Pit River Tribe’s Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) – W. McMaster, USFS

- W. McMaster is the USFS Tribal Relation Program Manager for the Plumas and Lassen National Forest. He is also a member of the Wintu Tribe and serves on the Tribal Council.
- Tribes maintain a unique political status; they have ceded much of their aboriginal territories in exchange for lifelong protections of their cultural and natural resources.
- Trust Responsibility is a legal obligation of the United States to protect Tribe’s way of life.
- Initially the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) were the only Federal Agencies with tribal policies. [Executive Order 13175](#) (pdf 72 kB), signed in 2000, extended the roles and responsibilities for tribal consultation to all federal agencies.
- The Pit River Tribe and Lassen National Forest
 - The Pit River Tribe is a specific political entity—a trustee with special interest from the Federal Government. The USFS manages land for multiple uses and maintains a special relationship with the Pit River Tribe.

- The Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) gives special consideration to tribally-proposed Stewardship Contracting or other Projects on Forest Service or BLM land adjacent to Indian trust land; it also allows the Pit River Tribe to raise capital.
- Collaboratives serve an important function in communication between the Forest Service and Tribes. All members of the Collaborative have agreed to sit at the table as equal and valued partners.
- The Forest Service is required to consult with federally recognized tribes on all projects, including projects from the Collaborative. Tribes help identify sacred sites and contribute Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).
- A Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) was signed in 2015 and includes the following partners:
 - Pit River Tribe
 - Lomokatsi Restoration Project
 - Lassen, Modoc, and Shasta-Trinity National Forests.
- For the MSA, Lomokatsi will provide the initial job training and additional organizational and implementation capacity to the Pit River Tribe. When the Tribe develops the experience to self-sustain, Lomokatsi will step back into a consultation role.
- D. Cardenas noted that this MSA is a far reaching tool and unique in terms of partnership with three different National Forests. The Pit River Tribe is in the process of another MSA with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).
- P. Puterbaugh inquired about Tribal Consultation and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). C. Danheiser stated that Tribal Consultation is part of the NEPA Process.
 - D. Cardenas noted that tribal meetings can be separate from other required public meetings under NEPA.
- In order for consultation to take place, Line Officers and tribal leaders must be present.
 - D. Cardenas stated that different agencies approach consultation differently, as do tribes.
- M. Fierro emphasized the value of the TFPA in outlining methodologies for advancing tribal interests in a meaningful way.
- A. Grasso mentioned a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pit River Tribe. Also, there is an opportunity to incorporate TEK into the Plum Project.
- M. Fierro elaborated on TEK benefiting restoration projects. The presence of Tribes throughout restoration areas accounts for specific knowledge of an ecosystem and historical conditions; the knowledge can be integrated into species protection and restoration.
- D. Curtis inquired about the organizational structure of the Pit River Tribal Council.
 - The Tribal Council has no president or elected leader.
 - “Officers” are elected but do not sit on the council. The Chairman, for example, is an elected official who signs off on documents and is the speaker on behalf of the tribe.

Approval/modifications:

- The May meeting notes were approved with a modification to the language regarding survey requirements for Fruit Growers Supply Co. and USFS. The notes will reflect that standards for each entity are similar, but overall not the same. **ACTION ITEM:** J. Owen to revise May notes and post approved version.

- Two additions were made to the August agenda: information on Prop 1 grants from Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and a discussion concerning local biomass plants; the August agenda was approved with these additional topics.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Proposition 1 Grants

- SNC is receiving pre-applications for Prop 1 Grants through September 1, 2016.
- There are alternative deadlines on March 1, 2017 and September 1, 2017. K. Hoffman anticipates a lack of funding for the March, 2017 deadline and recommended pursuing the September, 2017 deadline for Prop 1 grants. **ACTION ITEM:** K. Hoffman to update group on funding status of March, 2017 Prop 1 grant round.
- L. Martin inquired about the impact that proposed Marijuana Legislation ([Proposition 64](#)) on SNC's administration of Prop 1 funds.
 - K. Hoffman acknowledged that discussions are ongoing regarding marijuana cultivation and forest health; SNC has not received any grant applications related to marijuana cultivation to date.
- D. Cardenas asked if SNC grant applicants are solely responsible for consulting tribes regarding their proposal. K. Hoffman clarified that applicants are required to consult tribes in their project's vicinity and provide a narrative of the consultation process in their grant application. Additionally, SNC has responsibilities to notify tribes, county governments, and other relevant entities in the vicinity of a potential project after an application has been received.
- T. Sloat proposed a further conversation about consultation in the context of grant timelines. **Future Meeting Topic**

Voting Procedure Clarification

- In addition to individuals representing themselves, the group agreed that a single affiliation can have different representatives (one per voting decision) voting on behalf of the affiliation, with the expectation that each individual is informed, engaged, and willing to contribute to the group process.

Updates on Crossroads Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), Categorical Exclusion (CE) Surveys

Vegetation

- The analysis of Crossroads HFRA vegetation is in the preliminary stages.
- The area will require more brush removal than overstory removal; this raises the issue of where to put the removed material.
- The Four Corners area is predominantly pine and mixed chaparral. Restoration for this area is largely dependent on the biomass market.
- The initial HFRA polygons total approximately 3,000 acres. Removing areas of steep slope (not suitable for mechanical treatment) reduces the total to approximately 2,500 acres.

- P. Puterbaugh raised the issue of removing material. What steps can be taken when there is no biomass market?
 - C. Danheiser stated there is no definitive answer. It is difficult to balance tree mortality, restoration, and the economic incentives of removing the material.
- J. Kusel deferred to D. Lindgren to discuss contractor incentives for removing material.
 - D. Lindgren noted that markets are vulnerable at this time and options are limited for biomass plants in northern counties. Dead trees lose value the longer they sit and the best option is to get timber sales out in a timely manner.
- D. Lindgren inquired about the project sites in the Lake Britton area; specifically, if the Pit River Tribe has given input on cultural sites.
 - C. Danheiser stated there has not been consultation with the Pit River Tribe, but it is scheduled to start soon.
- P. Puterbaugh asked about the USFS protocol for archaeological sites in project areas.
 - USFS will often “flag and avoid;” however, there are different techniques that do not impact the timing of implementation.
- A. Grasso noted that there is a tribal crew doing thinning in the “Old Four Corners” area near Black Ranch Road.
- M. Coppoletta discussed a recent General Technical Report that addresses landscape scale restoration of black oak. The report is [available here](#).
- J. Kusel inquired about the spread of tree mortality to northern areas of California. D. Curtis and others noted that the landscape is changing, seemingly every week. M. Coppoletta added that from an ecological research standpoint, it is difficult to stay ahead of the changing conditions.

Wildlife

- There will need to be a Limited Operating Period (LOP) in the project area north of Lake Britton an account of bald eagles and goshawks.
- A recent survey detected a juvenile goshawk in an area bordering McArthur-Burney Falls State Park. The nest has not been discovered. A Protected Activity Center (PAC) is created a quarter mile around juvenile detections to maintain the animal’s breeding cycle.
- T. Sloat asked if floristic/botanical surveys were underway.
 - Allison Sanger, USFS Botanist, and her crew were out conducting surveys.
- A. Reiffanaugh believes the surveys will be completed and reporting out next August (2017).
- The goshawk surveys have extended beyond the National Forest boundaries into the State Park. L. Martin noted that there is a collection permit required for surveys within park boundaries from outside organizations including the USFS. The collection permits are mainly a way of sharing information between outside organizations and the State Park. The State Park has no issue with USFS goshawk surveys extending into the park if required.
- At the field tour on May 24, A. Sanger, mentioned a draft protocol from the region regarding fungi surveys. C. Danheiser agreed to look in to the draft protocol. **ACTION ITEM:** C. Danheiser to look into draft protocol and provide update.

Hand out collaboration and facilitation evaluations

- Evaluations regarding Sierra Institute's facilitation services and Collaborative group processes were distributed/received.

Biomass Power Plants:

- A [summary](#) (pdf 200 kB) distributed at a recent Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNIFCI) meeting provides a list of various bioenergy plants in CA, their operation status, Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) expiration date, etc.
- The group deferred to D. Lindgren for details on Burney Forest Power (BFP).
 - BFP has given 60 days-notice of closure to the employees of the cogeneration (cogen) plant and the sawmill is likely to follow.
 - The sawmill has told D. Lindgren they will not accept material past two weeks or 24 loads, whichever comes first.
 - At least 150 people are employed in the BFP cogen plant and sawmill.
 - Honey Lake Power (HLP) is a bioenergy plant without a sawmill. HLP has also stopped accepting material.
- J. Kusel discussed the politics influencing BFP and similar plants. Both sides of the CA legislature are in negotiation, but the process is mired. **ACTION ITEM:** J. Kusel/Sierra Institute will provide updates on biomass negotiations and policies.
- D. Cardenas discussed avenues for a community to raise capital and purchase a bioenergy plant. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) also has an order that allows minority owned businesses to procure a more favorable PPA.
- Forest Carbon Credits were discussed. Approximately 15% of the anticipated revenue from carbon offset payments was acquired by the State this year, creating a large deficit.
 - The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is hesitant to address the benefit of carbon offsets in regards to forest restoration and wildfire prevention; however, they have recognized that black carbon from wildfire is a significant issue.
- T. Sloat gave details on the Hat Creek SB-1122 bioenergy project.
 - There is a System Impact Study (SIS) under review by PG&E.
 - The project is in "the queue" dependent on a down payment.
 - The down payment is not feasible; however, there is trailer bill language (SB-840) that could potentially solve this issue.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Sierra Institute to notify of interconnection policy amendments.

Stakeholder Synopsis, How is this Working?

Referencing Sierra Institute's [Stakeholder Synopsis](#) (pdf 402 kB) and [Collaboration White Paper](#) (pdf 437 kB)

- P. Puterbaugh described the Stakeholder Synopsis as a good assessment of what the Collaborative is trying to achieve; the Collaborative is increasingly more involved in projects and progressing.
- J. Kusel proposed a visioning session as a future meeting topic, using the Stakeholder Synopsis as a foundation for the discussion. **Future Meeting Topic**
- The group acknowledged past frustrations in relationships with the USFS. The White Paper is seen as a valid expression of concerns.

- D. Cardenas alluded to documents similar to the White Paper that analyzed the performance of Collaboratives associated with the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). There were often “misplaced expectations” on behalf of the Collaboratives, USFS, and communities. It was also noted that Collaboratives existing before the CFLRP tended to be more productive than those formed in response to the program.
- C. Danheiser understands the frustrations of Collaborative members in regards to timing and implementation of projects, but she assured that things are moving forward.
- C. Danheiser suggested involving Collaborative and community members in small projects that are more tangible (e.g. streamside restoration), or going on impromptu field trips to visit current restoration sites. The USFS is open to collaborative members visiting current project sites.
- P. Puterbaugh liked the idea of getting on the ground and seeing the projects.
- A. Grasso indicated there is a list of proposed projects to be discussed at the next meeting. The Collaborative can weigh in on these projects—many of the sites are active restoration sites.
- D. Curtis expressed concern over the timing of restoration projects. Furthermore, there is disconnect between Collaborative members and the projects--only two members took advantage of a field trip to the Plum Project.
- P. Puterbaugh asked if the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) notes were available for the Plum Project. **ACTION ITEM:** G. Mayer to share Plum Project IDT notes.
- T. Sloat suggested identifying the needs of each Collaborative member—what keeps them coming—and working to address those at meetings. **Future Meeting Topic/incorporate into strategic planning**

Washington Office (WO) Visit and Partnership Coordinator Update

- The tentative schedule for WO representatives is as follows:
 - October 6, 2016
 - 8:00 am – 9:30 am, USFS meeting
 - 9:30 am – 12:00 pm, Meeting with Collaborative Partners
 - 12:00 pm – 4:30, Field Tour
- The WO representatives will choose the sites for the field tour. **ACTION ITEM:** A. Grasso will inform the group about the sites chosen by the WO and any questions the representatives have for the Collaborative.
- The WO visit is a good opportunity to have a frank discussion with WO and Regional Office representatives.
- The Partnership Coordinator position will be open to applicants no later than the second week of September. The position is “temporary, not to exceed” and will end when CFLR funding concludes (approx. 4 more years).

Establish a Recruitment Subgroup to Invite Additional Members/Stakeholders

- The group discussed outreach to recreation users and providers (e.g. snowmobile user groups, Pacific Crest Trail users/advocates).
- The following Collaborative members volunteered to participate in the Subgroup:
 - T. Sloat
 - K. Hoffman

- D. Hays offered to recruit Lassen NF Public Affairs Officer Joyce El Kouarti for the Subgroup.
- **ACTION ITEM:** D. Hays to contact J. El Kouarti regarding participation in the Recruitment Subgroup.

Identification and Prioritization of Future Meeting Topics

Future Meeting Topics (including those added 8/15/16)

- NRCS and CalFIRE funding opportunities (B. Darley on CFIP/CALFIRE; Melinda Graves, P. Johnson and others)
 - Monitoring work group recommendations
 - Establishing a working group for logo?
 - Recreation/tourism District opportunities (A. Grasso)
 - Group visioning
 - Tree Mortality Task Force (TMTF), presentation/update from representative
 - Tribal consultation for grants
- Recent Tree Mortality Task Force (TMTF) and County Wide Task Force meetings were well attended. A proposition was made to invite a representative from the TMTF to attend a Collaborative meeting and provide information and updates. [Link to June, 2016 TMTF Public Outreach webinar](#) (youtube). **ACTION ITEM:** Sierra Institute to explore outreach to TMTF representatives.
 - P. Puterbaugh inquired about Pam Giacomini, Shasta County Supervisor, and her current role in the Collaborative. It was noted that P. Giacomini is aware of the issues facing the Collaborative and maintains interest. The suggestion was made to reach out to P. Giacomini and receive recommendations for additional Collaborative members.
 - D. Hays volunteered to contact P. Giacomini and provide details of the WO Visit. **ACTION ITEM:** D. Hays to contact P. Giacomini regarding WO visit.
 - Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) was suggested as a future meeting topic, dependent on substantial updates. It was noted there is little to report on GNA other than an existing pilot project with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and CAL FIRE.
 - D. Curtis mentioned that local communities would like know more about the Collaborative and suggested inviting the local newspaper to detail BHCCWFG activities.
 - J. Kusel suggested dedicating this topic to newly formed Outreach Subgroup.
 - The group was in agreement that, at minimum, there should be a newsletter, article, or similar available for community members.
 - T. Sloat asked the group to revisit the initial BHC outreach strategy to inform the Outreach Subgroup's planning. **ACTION ITEM:** Sierra Institute to revisit the initial BHC outreach strategy.

Scheduling/Next Steps

- Collaborative members agreed on Monday, September 26, 2016 for the next full group meeting. **Action Item:** Sierra Institute to determine meeting time/location.