

# BURNEY-HAT CREEK COMMUNITY FOREST AND WATERSHED GROUP FIELD TOUR & MEETING NOTES: TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2016

## Meeting Synopsis:

On Tuesday, May 24, 2016, the Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest Group met for a full-group field tour and meeting. Field tour sites included private, state, and federal lands. The sites were representative of tree mortality throughout the area, and prompted discussion regarding survey requirements and pace of work in light of drought and insect infestation effects on the landscape. The group prioritized the delineation of CE boundaries in the subsequent sit-down meeting, and decided to hold June webinar to review and finalize the updated boundaries. Other discussion topics included voting eligibility and protocol, the recent NFF Collaborative Workshop, and the outlook for Burney Forest Power.

## Meeting Attendees

Shane Compton*	Dave Hays	John Owen
Don Curtis	Kristy Hoffman	Patricia Puterbaugh
Crystal Danheiser	Jonathan Kusel	Aaron Rieffanaugh
Peter Feller	Trish Ladd	Allison Sanger*
Keith Greenwood	Dean Loftus*	Todd Sloat
Ryan Hadley	Lori Martin	Skip Willmore
Karen Harville*	Jeff Oldsen	

\*Present at field tour only

## Action Items

- [C. Danheiser](#) to determine NEPA requirements on FS land managed by State Parks.
- [A. Sanger](#) to make inquiries into the draft protocol from Region 5 regarding fungi surveys.
- [Sierra Institute](#) to organize willing members for a review panel of partnership coordinator applicants.
- [Sierra Institute](#) to determine options for scheduling Brown Bag Lunch regarding government to government relations for the Pit River Tribe and the USFS.
- [Sierra Institute](#) to explore outreach, research into potential CA markets for small diameter trees
- [D. Hays](#) agreed to provide updates regarding Washington USFS Office visit to CFLR this year.
- [Sierra Institute](#) to doodle and organize webinar to review updated CE polygon network.
- [A. Rieffanaugh](#) to revise boundaries for polygon review webinar.

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## Field Tour Notes

### Fruit Growers Stop

- Fruit Growers Supply (FGS) adjacent Timber Harvest Plan (THP) is approximately 3,500 acres.
- The comparison of THP standards between the USFS and FGS were discussed. FGS contracts surveys for wildlife, plants, and archaeological features within their THP. It was noted that certain standards are similar for the USFS and FGS but are different overall.
- The timeline for FGS THPs is typically 9 months for submission and an additional 3 months until implementation (approximately 1 year from scoping to implementation). The process has been accelerated in response to drought and bug kill.
- FGS has a good mill and contractor for removed material; however, the opportunities for biomass are limited. Blue Lake Round Stock is a CA company that uses small diameter trees for dowels and grape stakes and is a potential outlet for the material.
- There is a need for USFS and CAL FIRE to work together on prescribed burns. The risks are typically considered too high (cost recovery liability) for private landowners to conduct prescribed burns.
- The group was made aware of the “site” productivity assessment. The area was described as site 4 ground, or less than 1 ft/year growth.
- FGS is trying to be proactive and adapt to the rapidly changing forest conditions.

### Point 1

- Point 1 is at an intersection of State Park and USFS land. The area is off the highway and has access to the Pacific Crest Trail. It is considered a priority in relation to the Wild and Urban Interface (WUI).
- The area has had basic surveys and does not have old growth. The area likely includes plants of special interest, but they do not require mandatory assessments.
- Prescribed burning was discussed as a potential treatment on the site; USFS expressed a willingness to implement a prescription burn in the area.

- McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park (State Park) representatives described their work in the area as competing for resources with other projects. The State Park has multiple projects that are in various phases of completion. There is a lack of technical staff members to complete management plans for the State Park.
- There was a suggestion that State Park representatives seek partnerships with nonprofits for grant writing and management.
- D. Lofthus expressed frustration with the concept of cumulative effects and its limitations on landscape scale work. He pointed out that the threshold calculations for cumulative effects are deterrent in light of rapidly changing forest conditions.
- There is an opportunity for funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to the CFLR. There is also a connection with Prop 1 funding to the watershed elements in the area (Lake Britton, streams).
- Outreach to Cal Trans should be explored in relation to the areas along highway corridors. USFS noted that they communicate with Cal Trans and they are responsive to sites that need attention.
- S. Willmore described conflict between the State Park and contractors over prescription methods and compensation. As a result, there is a multitude of trees unnecessarily left on the land, discouraging tourism and increasing fire risk.

#### Point 5

- Point 5 is an overlook North of Lake Britton. Tree mortality is very evident from the vantage point.
- Land ownership is comprised of USFS and PG&E.
- The area near Clark Creek is close to a community that would benefit from restoration work; however, the area has highly erodible soils, steep slopes, and is known bald eagle habitat.
- Identification of bald eagle habitat triggers a Limited Operating Period (LOP). An LOP may restrict work to the months of September and October, depending on eagle nesting behavior. It is noted that PG&E actively conducts nesting assessments in the area.
- A question of timing was raised and whether any implementation could happen before 2018. USFS noted that delineating strategic boundaries would shorten the time frame.
- Group members expressed concerns over timing and collaborative input. Contradictions in survey scheduling and past USFS projects that excluded collaborative group input were mentioned.
- C. Danheiser stated the need for a focused CFLR team within the district. Current USFS representatives are limited by other NF priorities.

#### Point 3

- Area is adjacent to Long Meadow near Burney Creek.
- The NEPA for the area is assumed to be over a decade old. The surveys are no longer valid and conditions have changed significantly.
- There is evidence of tree mortality near the intersection of Long Meadow and Burney Creek; this is considered atypical even for drought stricken areas. This area was included in the polygons previously discussed by the Collaborative.
- A. Sanger (District Botanist) described the potential for endangered plant species in the area's vernal pools and near Burney Creek. Plants need to be identified and a critical habitat designated. Typically, there is a 300 ft. buffer placed around such plants to exclude them from prescription work. There is the possibility of hand treatment within the buffer zone.
- USFS noted that the requirements of the Northwest Forest Plan are not well known for the area.

- Fungi surveys were mentioned as a limitation, because they require at least 2 years for surveys. A. Sanger mentioned a draft protocol within the Region to avoid extended fungi surveys.  
**ACTION ITEM:** A. Sanger to make inquiries into the draft protocol regarding fungi

## Afternoon Meeting Notes

### Approval/modifications:

- The group approved the April Meeting Notes.
- The group approved the May meeting agenda, emphasizing the delineation of CE boundaries as a priority.
  - It was noted that some items (White Paper) were not included in the “prioritization of future meeting topics” agenda item and should be discussed at a later date.

### Review of April Action Items (information)

- The group received a list of affiliations and representatives identified in the group charter. The list details voting eligibility for each affiliation based on the standards set forth in the group charter.
- Assessing voting eligibility occurs within the calendar year. It was determined that all listed parties are eligible (from January 1<sup>st</sup>) until the point at which participation falls below 50%. There is clarification needed from the group whether the eligibility is assessed per annum or on a rolling basis (i.e. someone who has not attended 50% of meetings prior the existing meeting may not vote).
- It was noted that W.M Beaty and Associates and current representatives were not included on the list; there was general support from group members to add W.M. Beaty & Associates to the list of voting members.
- The issue was raised concerning different individuals representing an organization and their voting rights. The group expressed an understanding that multiple representatives can maintain voting eligibility for an affiliation, with the expectation that each individual is informed, engaged, and willing to contribute to the group process.
- The group discussed the voting eligibility of 3 affiliations including: Burney Fire Department, Cal Trout or Fall River Conservancy, and the Stewardship Council. It was concluded that although outreach will continue towards these organizations, they will be removed from the current voting eligibility list. These changes are reflected in the updated list (see Appendix A).
- J. Kusel emphasized the importance of having clearly defined voting procedures.
- A suggestion was made to require opponents of a voting item to present alternatives for discussion amongst the group before the decision is finalized.
- The group approved the requirement of a quorum of 7 active voting members for votes to be official. This includes voting action through emails.

### Discussion of field tour and key issues

- The group set priorities for delineating the CE boundaries including:
  - Areas that are likely to have a positive effect on the Wild and Urban Interface (WUI)
  - Excluding areas that will trigger significant limitations to the pace of work

- Highway corridors (outside the purview of Cal Trans) were discussed as having direct benefits to WUI areas. It was noted that Fruit Growers Supply maintains the largest ownership along Highway 89.
- The area with bald eagle habitat (Point 5) will be the most difficult to treat as far as timing is concerned. USFS agreed that moving the boundaries to exclude this habitat would be ideal, but also indicated that doing work within the habitat is feasible.
- The group revisited a discussion concerning cooperative timber sales between the USFS and State Parks in reference to Point 1. It was agreed that a combination of projects could increase contractor bids and that it is feasible to have the sales occurring simultaneously. The question of NEPA requirements on FS land managed by State Parks was raised.
- **ACTION ITEM:** C. Danheiser to determine NEPA requirements on FS land managed by State Parks.
- Commercial activity was debated. USFS indicates there are ways to deal with forest material outside of saw logs and biomass. Private contracting representatives emphasized the need for commercial incentives, in light of drought and bug kill, to achieve landscape scale goals.
- S. Willmore noted that disputes over prescriptive methods on State lands have limited incentives for contractors.
- Concern over the collaborative involvement in projects was discussed. Past projects were not considered collaborative by some members in the group. USFS expressed the need for a dedicated CFLR team within the district to address the issue and ensure involvement.
- Concerning the timeline and FY 2017: USFS does not want to give specifics regarding the timeline but ideally would conduct analysis in Summer 2016, write the necessary documents through winter, and conduct work in Summer 2017. USFS representatives set an expectation to be transparent and communicative regarding the status of the anticipated summer surveys.
- Communication was emphasized not only for surveys, but for the status of infrastructure as well. Burney Forest Power is an example of infrastructure about which the group should be kept informed.
- USFS Supervisor noted the advantage of fewer projects moving faster, and that the current discussion of boundaries within the collaborative is a practical and feasible approach. The is willing to prioritize projects within the CFLR that can move forward quickly.

### Finalization of CE polygon network

- The group approved the polygon network, pursuant to modifications agreed upon through field and meeting discussions. There is agreement these will be reviewed and may be modified/finalized in a webinar.

### NFF Workshop Highlights and Report Backs

- Many of the workshop attendees were USFS employees from various regions.
- Sierra Institute presented methods and insights from two analyses at the workshop
  - *USFS Acquisition Mechanisms and Potential for Increased Local Contracting*
  - *USFS Collaboratives and Local Benefit: What's Local Anyways?*
- There will be a roadshow accompanying the rollout of *USFS Acquisition Mechanisms and Potential for Increased Local Contracting* this summer and fall, which will include a stop at the BHC Collaborative.
- The issue of the Burney Forest Power (BFP) and its impact on the community was raised. There have been contract extensions to other bioenergy facilities but the future of BFP is unclear.

There is an understanding that the impacts of a BFP closure will have lasting effects within the community and on local economy.

### Identification and Prioritization of Future Meeting Topics

- The group discussed an outreach notice from A. Grasso regarding a partnership coordinator position for the CFLR. It was noted that USFS is currently looking internally for someone to dedicate to the CFLR. There is the possibility of including group members in a review panel for applicants. **ACTION ITEM:** Sierra Institute to organize willing members for review panel.
- CFLR budgets are intended to be collaborative and transparent. Dave Hays stated the agency's willingness to provide detailed budget and funding information.

#### Priority Items:

- Brown bag lunch regarding government to government relations for the Pit River Tribe and the USFS. **ACTION ITEM:** Sierra Institute to determine timing options for scheduling Brown Bag Lunch.
- What does the group want to be done in 2017, especially in terms of that first quarter? How might the group visioning develop over the long term?

#### New Items:

- Exploring alternative markets for biomass (biochar, grape stakes, dowels), looking to other collaboratives for ideas (e.g. [Four Forests Restoration Initiative](#)) **ACTION ITEM:** Sierra Institute to explore outreach, research into potential CA markets.
- New forest plan revision, discussing collaborative involvement in scoping and commenting.

#### Previously listed Items yet to be covered:

- NRCS and CalFIRE funding opportunities (B. Darley on CFIP/ CALFIRE; P. Johnson and others)
- White Paper: Collaboratives and the USFS.
- Collaborating on the 2016 CFLR Annual Report (A. Grasso needs a template of a form by the end of the next meeting).
- Presentation on the Pit River Tribe's Master Stewardship Agreement.
- Monitoring work group recommendations. [Report anticipated in Fall 2016.](#)
- Establishing a working group for logo?
- Stakeholder Synopsis; 30,000 ft Discussion: How is this working?
- A working group to recruit additional members/ stakeholders.
- Local Contracting with Region 5/Acquisitions Management.

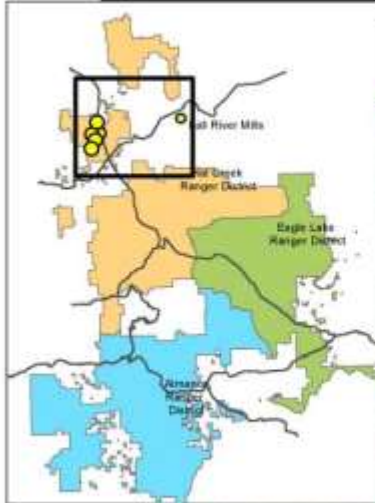
### Future meetings/additional notes:

- Dave Hays spoke about a visit from the USFS National Office to the CFLR. **ACTION ITEM:** D. Hays to provide updates regarding Washington office site-visit.
- USFS estimates new boundaries will be completed by early June. **ACTION ITEM:** A. Rieffanaugh to revise boundaries and update timeline if needed.
- Group agreed to attend a webinar to review the updated polygons. **ACTION ITEM:** Sierra Institute to send doodle, organize meeting date for webinar.
- Availability for a full group meeting is limited until August.

APPENDIX A

# Possible HFRA within Tentative Crossroads Project Area

## Hat Creek Ranger District | Lassen National Forest



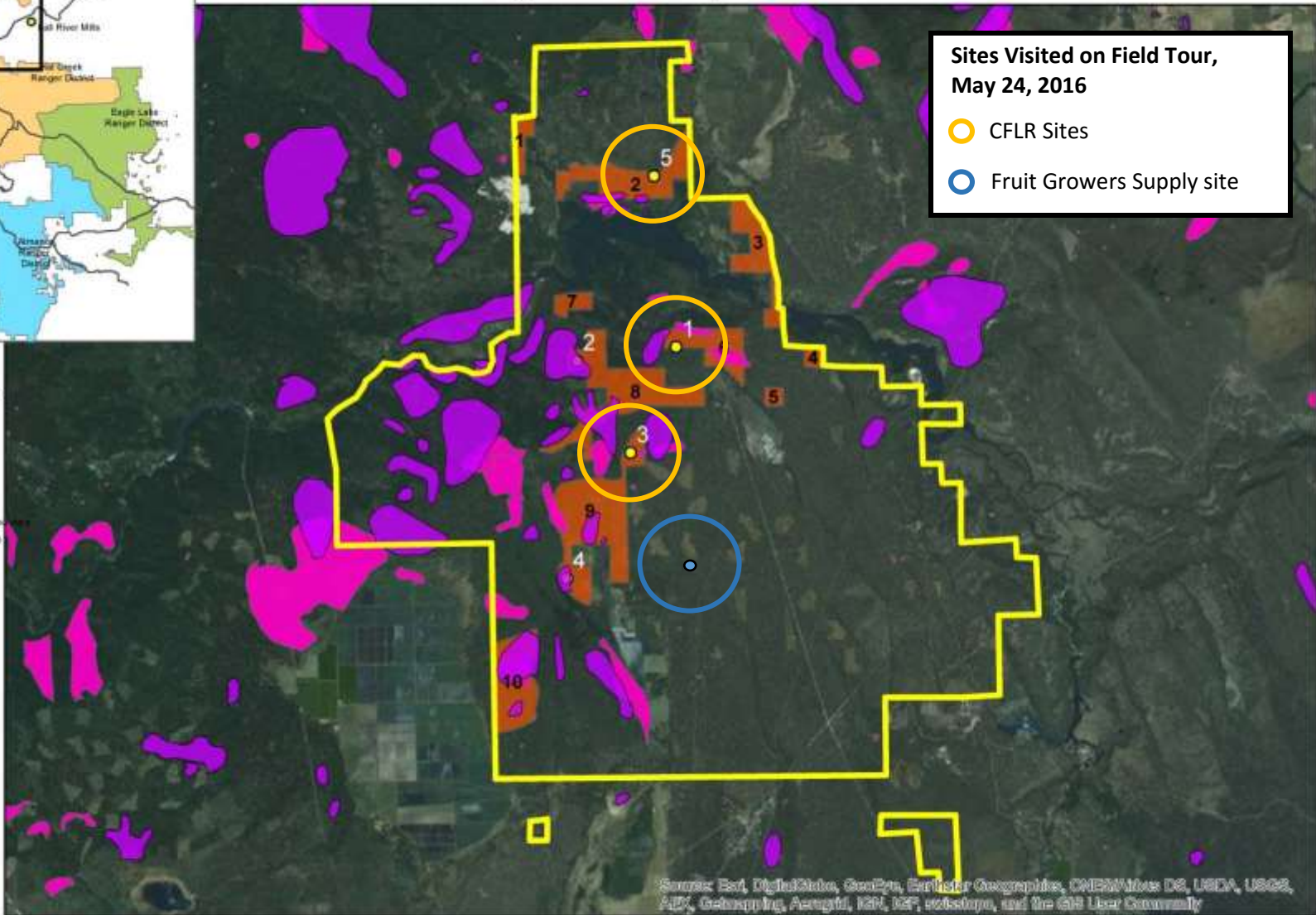
**Sites Visited on Field Tour, May 24, 2016**

- CFLR Sites
- Fruit Growers Supply site

Shasta Trinity National Forest  
(Administered by Lassen NF)

**Legend**

- Tentative\_crossroads\_footprint
- Tentative\_HFRAS\_10\_15
- ADS15
- ADS14
- Field Trip Stops



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroVig, Geoport, IGN, CNR, IGN, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community



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## APPENDIX B

### Field Tour Photos

#### Fruit Growers Supply (FGS) Site



19 individuals joined the morning field tour. Dean Lofthus (FGS) spoke about his organization's proactive management in light of drought and bug infestation.



The adjacent FGS Timber Harvesting Plan is approximately 3,500 acres. The group found that the surveys done on FGS land are similar to those required on federal land.

#### Point 1



Point 1 was considered a high priority for the Wild and Urban Interface (WUI), it also encompasses a section of the Pacific Crest Trail. As evidenced above, dead and dying trees are prevalent, as well as downed trees on the forest floor.



State Park representatives discussed the need for more technical staff to complete work in the area. The idea of a cooperative timber sale with the adjacent USFS land was considered to increase contractor bids.



Point 5



Point 5 is an overlook of Lake Britton. Tree mortality is evident throughout the Lake's perimeter. The area is known bald eagle habitat and would require a Limiting Operating Period (LOP) depending on eagle nesting behavior. PG&E currently conducts eagle nesting assessments for the area.

Point 3



There was heavy tree mortality along the road to Long Meadow at Point 3. The area near Burney Creek at the far end of the meadow also had signs of mortality, which was considered unusual even in drought conditions.



Allison Sanger, USFS botanist, described the necessary documentation for endangered plant species. *Orcuttia tenuis* (Slender Orcutt Grass) was mentioned as a species that would require attention in the area.