

Meeting Synopsis

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met on Monday, March 21st, 2017 for a full-group meeting. A State and Private Forestry representative presented on the Good Neighbor Authority and potential CFLR applications for this mechanism were discussed. The group reviewed a preliminary “vision statement” and provided feedback on the underlying values, objectives, and goals. The tentative schedule of the Lassen/Modoc Forest Plan revision was presented. Additionally, Subcommittees were formed to address funding, use of prescribed fire, and the Burney Gardens project.

Meeting Attendees

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Janine Book | Ryan Hadley | Dean Lofthus |
| Steve Buckley | Kristy Hoffman | Jason Mateljak |
| Patti Clinton | Pete Johnson | Jeff Oldson |
| Michelle Coppoletta | Bobette Jones | John Owen |
| Garrett Costello | Jason Ko | Patricia Puterbaugh |
| Don Curtis | Jonathan Kusel | |
| Peter Feller | Trish Ladd | |

Action Items

- **Jason Ko** to sequence/share CAL FIRE planning process for GNA. **DONE**
- **Sierra Institute** to schedule subcommittee phone calls for April, 2017. **DONE**
- **B. Jones** to provide a Program of Work spreadsheet at the next full-group meeting.
- **J. Owen** to add new members to the BHC email list. **DONE**
- **Sierra Institute** to share SNC workshop dates when available.

Table of Contents

Meeting Synopsis.....1

Meeting Attendees1

Action Items1

Meeting Notes.....2

Approval/Modifications2

Implementing the Vision: new mechanisms2

 GNA Presentation: Jason Ko2

 Recreation Planning4

 Prescribed Burning5

 Burney Gardens.....6

Visioning discussion continued6

 Program of Work Overview7

Monitoring Working Group updates	7
Forest Plan Revision Overview	8
Funding Opportunities	8
Online Documentation	9
Future meeting topics, scheduling, and closing remarks	9
Appendix A	10
FS-CALFIRE Agreed Process for GNA SPA development and review	10
Appendix B	11
Preliminary vision statement and subcategories.....	11

Meeting Notes

Approval/Modifications

- The meeting notes from Monday, January 30th were approved by group members. P. Johnson offered to highlight spelling errors prior to final distribution.
- The March Agenda was approved by group members
 - J. Kusel thanked the Agenda Subcommittee for their commitment to reviewing and modifying the agenda prior to full-group meetings. All group members are welcome to join this subcommittee; if interested contact John Owen at jowen@sierrainstitute.us.

Implementing the Vision: new mechanisms

- Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) has been discussed for some time within this group. T. Sloat gained valuable insight from a presentation ([view powerpoint](#)) by Karl Welch of Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wisconsin; the CNNF project effectively increased the pace and scale of harvesting and restoration activities on federal land.
- A pilot GNA project on Lassen National Forest could provide the same benefits. A state agency partners could supplement planning costs, which would ultimately be reimbursed through timber sales.
- GNA is applicable when the USFS has identified a project area but does not have the capacity to implement. This group has the opportunity to utilize recent spatial analysis data (see [meeting notes 1/30/17 – Forest Vulnerability Map](#)) and identify an area for a pilot project.

GNA Presentation: Jason Ko

- Jason Ko is the Climate Change and Ecosystem Services Program Lead for USFS – Region 5. Jason works within the State & Private Forestry organization of the USFS in Vallejo, CA.
- J. Ko described an online Q&A for Good Neighbor Authority available [here](#).
- At its core, the GNA allows the USFS to work with state agencies. GNA enables the state agency to work as an authorized delegate on federal land.
- GNA is not reciprocal; the authority does not allow USFS staff to work on state lands.
- GNA falls under two categories:
 - 2014 Farm Bill
 - 2014 Appropriations Act

- GNA activities include forest health and restoration in accessible areas; no new construction is permissible.
- The appropriations act allows for road reconstruction on adjacent lands.
 - The appropriations act will expire in 2018.
- GNA can be used for personnel. For example, a state biologist can work on federal lands.
- Funding can be considered additive; program dollars can be reinvested in forest restoration and planning.
- GNA has some similarities to stewardship contracting for timber operations. A state agency can perform marking with approval from the USFS silviculturist.
- Timber sales to a state agency are not permissible; the state agency can, however, administer a timber sale as they normally would. This process is variable depending on the state and is outlined in the GNA agreement.
- GNA is intended to encourage a collaborative approach; it creates an opportunity to integrate multiple land ownerships into singular projects and alleviate access issues (i.e. crossing boundaries).
- The USFS is ultimately responsible for the NEPA decision on a GNA project. However, most of the work up to the decision can be done by the state (e.g. timber marking, environmental analysis, biological assessment, etc.).
 - It is best practice to clearly define the role of the state agency and USFS in the scope of work.
- GNA does not include a source of funding. Possible funding mechanisms include:
 - CAL FIRE GGRF grant program
 - Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership
 - Landscape Scale Restoration funding
- The South Fork of the American River (SOFAR) Cohesive Strategy Project developed a five-year SPA, with a project value of approximately \$900k. The GNA agreement consists of two fuel break projects along the El Dorado National Forest border and in/around communities on the HWY 50 corridor.
- The Sierra National Forest (SNF) has a GNA project focused on hazardous tree removal. The thrust of this project was allowing CAL FIRE staff to go onto USFS lands. The SNF agreement also incorporated the Wyden Amendment, allowing USFS staff to work on adjacent private lands.
 - Only one year is defined of this project. The goal is to amend the agreement each year.

Q & A

- If all the work is done on federal land for GNA, does CEQA still need to be covered in planning?
 - Yes, CEQA needs to be completed; however, in the case of CAL FIRE GGRF, NEPA would suffice because it covers the greenhouse gas portion of CEQA.
 - K. Hoffman added that Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) grants all require CEQA.
- Does there need to be a Master Agreement in place? Can RCD's partner with a forest for GNA?
 - A master agreement is not required to implement GNA with a state agency. Stand-alone projects are permissible through GNA.
 - Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) are not able to create a GNA agreement; however, the California Department of Conservation (DOC) has expressed willingness to work with RCDs as a pass-through for GNA.
- At what level are GNA projects planned with CAL FIRE?

- Forests work with a CAL FIRE unit to develop a scope of work; the Sierra NF and El Dorado NF projects were both developed at the unit level. See **Appendix A** for description of process.
- **Action Item: Jason Ko** to sequence/share CAL FIRE planning process for GNA.
- Does GNA change the duration of the funds?
 - Funding is treated the same as other USFS agreements.
- Has GNA been used to hire monitoring staff for the USFS?
 - There is precedent for hiring monitoring staff on a temporary basis; the forest is essentially reimbursing the state for their staff.
- One important aspect of GNA is that there is no match required. A state agency can be sole-sourced to do the work without providing match – most other agreements require a 20% match for comparison.
- T. Sloat and others asked if Lassen NF leadership would be interested in a NEPA-ready “package” from the Fall River RCD to start the GNA process.
 - J. Book said LNF would be interested. The process would most likely require oversight from the supervisor/region at each stage of development; she envisions an iterative process of development and review up to the point of a final decision.

Recreation Planning

- Garrett Costello was introduced to group members. Garrett is working with T. Sloat of Fall River RCD and will be focusing on recreational opportunities in the Burney-Hat Creek area.
- G. Costello’s goals include:
 - Meeting with agency and private representatives interested in recreation projects.
 - Developing a comprehensive report on recreation in the Burney-Hat Creek area.
 - Contact Garrett at **gcos01@gmail.com** for more information
- D. Curtis asked if the recreation planning includes meeting with user groups.
 - Tammy Taylor, USFS recreation officer, has a few partners that she is planning on working with. Examples include OHV, equestrian, and mountain biking user groups.

Implementing the Vision: priority projects

- The Agenda Subcommittee met in March and discussed “group vision” as it relates to the BHCCFWG. Following that discussion, a preliminary vision statement was derived from previous group visioning exercises as a tool for discussion.
- Preliminary Vision Statement for the BHCCFWG:
 - *The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group aims to increase the pace and scale of forest health initiatives through collaborative discourse, planning, and implementation; initiatives extend beyond forest health to address social and economic disparities in the area.*
- B. Jones would like to consider more specificity beyond “forest health”. Adding resiliency would be a more concrete term.

- T. Sloat mentioned the value of generality when communicating with the public. “Resilience” may be too specific for those not involved in forestry.
- “Forest health” may also have some negative connotations, potentially leaning towards environmentalism.
- Group members generally agreed that sustainability was missing as a key term within the vision statement.
- The groups discussed other subcategories of the “vision” including values, focus areas, and strategic objectives. The full list of items within these subcategories can be found in Appendix B.
- P. Puterbaugh believes that fire on the landscape should be included in group values.
 - S. Buckley affirmed this value and suggested “reintroduction of widespread fire” to emphasize scale.
- In response to the strategic objective of “get crossroads finished”, J. Book emphasized the need to diversify the efforts of the collaborative. In other words, if the group dedicates a majority of their time to planning Crossroads, other projects moving forward (e.g. N49) are overlooked.
- T. Puterbaugh mentioned that she visited the N49 area and there was no indication of underburning occurring.
 - To that point, J. Book further emphasized the need to diversify the efforts of the Collaborative to focus on implementation in addition to planning.
- J. Kusel suggested having “project implementation” as a strategic objective. Specific projects or “goals” can then fall under that heading.
- T. Puterbaugh recalls not having the desired amount of input on N49 planning; for this reason, the group has dedicated more time to planning for Crossroads. Does implementation typically not go forward as planned?
 - J. Book acknowledged that there are funding issues for forestry crews; additionally, there are not enough foresters to meet the demand for marking. Ultimately, the pace and scale is suffering on both sides (planning and implementation).
- J. Kusel asked what Collaborative members can do to ensure that project implementation moves forward.
 - There was general agreement that the USFS has a responsibility to keep group members apprised of implementation barriers; if issues arise in the implementation phase, time should be dedicated at meetings to address the issues.
- S. Buckley added to the discussion regarding communication.
 - The monitoring briefs are a good example of how the USFS can communicate a project’s status. This concept could be expanded to include other projects including timber sales, restoration, etc. **Future Meeting Topic**: Communication Model for ongoing projects.

- CAL FIRE has been directed from the top-down to increase prescribed burning efforts on private land.
 - P. Feller said that this is a good concept, however, CAL FIRE still has issues with capacity (manpower) and liability for implementing this directive.
- P. Johnson said that there was a robust CAL FIRE program for prescribed burning on private land throughout the 90's that waned over the years. There is a renewed interest in this type of program.
 - Landowners in the area are generally not aware of this new CAL FIRE program. This could be a good time to get the word out and gain some support.
- J. Kusel suggested forming a prescribed fire subcommittee to continue the conversation. Volunteers included.
 - P. Feller, T. Puterbaugh, P. Johnson, B. Jones, and S. Buckley.
 - **Action Item: Sierra InSTITUTE** to schedule a Prescribed Fire Subcommittee phone call.

Burney Gardens

- J. Oldson was in communication with Shasta County regarding road maintenance around Burney Gardens. Shasta County declined the opportunity to improve the road.
 - Ultimately, the value of Burney Gardens may not support the cost of road maintenance.
- There is an opportunity to leverage Snow Mountain, a USFS project, with Burney Gardens. There is limited time left on the Burney Gardens THP and this would be a good opportunity to revitalize the efforts.
- A subcommittee was formed to address Burney Gardens including the following members:
 - P. Johnson, D. Lofthus, R. Hadley, B. Jones, and J. Oldson.
 - **Action Item: Sierra InSTITUTE** to schedule Burney Gardens Subcommittee phone call.

Visioning discussion continued

- B. Jones shared an update on the Crossroads project.
 - The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) has been organized and the Eagle Lake Ranger District is loaning foresters for the effort.
 - The stand exam date is set.
 - The objectives are still being finalized, with the intention of holding a public meeting in September or Fall 2017.
- The Plum project is progressing.
 - All the necessary data is in at this stage.
 - The Proposed Action/Purpose and Need (PAPN) is under development.
 - The public will be involved in the scoping process.
- B. Jones also discussed the Badger project, which is in the pre-planning stage. There was an existing Environmental Assessment (EA), however, the Reading Fire of 2012 interrupted the process.

- The Badger project is “far left-side”; in other words, there is more analysis required to determine a suitable project area.
- Conducting a watershed analysis, status of roads, and developing broad objectives could potentially occur this summer.
- Specific objectives could be developed in Summer 2018.

Program of Work Overview

Implementation

- The Sunshine Project is moving forward; this includes mastication and biomass removal.
- There is a large-scale reforestation effort underway in the Eiler fire footprint. There are reforestation efforts planned for the Reading and Bald fire areas as well.
 - The reforestation is demonstrating some interesting techniques; both conventional and cluster planting are planned.
- Sluicebox is being planned for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2017.
 - Currently, there are some capacity issues in USFS engineering and there is road reconstruction needed.
- R. Hadley asked if Sluicebox be developed as a stewardship contract.
 - There is a conversation internally regarding stewardship contracts. One of the grants and agreements staff members is retiring, so there may be some difficulty with a stewardship contract.
- Whittington is being planned for 2018, but will be marked in 2017.
 - R. Hadley asked if Whittington is mainly plantations.
 - The Whittington areas is not solely plantations.
- Regarding the North 49 (N49) Project
 - Completing surveys on N49 is a “pinch point” for moving forward. There is currently not enough USFS staff to complete the surveys.
- T. Puterbaugh asked why there are biologists working on Crossroads and not N49 if that project is further along and requires those specialists.
 - R. Hadley provided more context to the survey requirements on N49. Initially, the timber sales were a three-year contract but the Eiler and Day fires disrupted the process. The contracts were extended to account for salvage material resulting from the fires; however, because the initial three-year timeframe elapsed, a new round of surveys is required.
 - J. Book affirmed that salvage efforts slowed down the regular Program of Work.
- B. Jones will provide a table and additional notes on the 2017 Program of Work. **Action Item: B. Jones** to provide a Program of Work spreadsheet at the next full-group meeting.
- D. Curtis mentioned an area on the south side of Old Station that was supposed to have a prescribed fire. The USFS thinned the area but no burning has taken place. **Action Item: B. Jones** will follow up on the status of the prescribed fire in the area south of Old Station, along Hat Creek by the vista point.

Monitoring Working Group updates

- M. Coppoletta discussed the final version of the monitoring strategy.
- The monitoring strategy was given a final review at a web-meeting in February by the monitoring working group and other Collaborative participants.

- The strategy is now ready for full-group approval, to be followed by final approval from LNF leadership.
- The strategy is labeled “1.0”, indicating that it is open to revision at regular intervals.
- M. Coppoletta has been having discussions with the Sierra Institute regarding socioeconomic monitoring. Socioeconomic monitoring is currently the only major component missing from the strategy.
- P. Johnson asked if the prioritization process had any interesting outcomes.
 - M. Coppoletta said there were some differences in priorities for USFS and Collaborative members. For example, “implementation monitoring” was more important to group members than the USFS respondents.
- G. Costello asked about the duration of CFLR funding for monitoring.
 - CFLR funding for monitoring will extend five years beyond the completion of the program (approximately 2024).
- The monitoring plan was accepted by the Collaborative. The plan will be given to LNF leadership for final approval.

Forest Plan Revision Overview

- The Lassen/Modoc forest plan revision is currently in the “science synthesis” stage. More information on the science synthesis can be found [here](#) (USFS website).
- The next phase is considered the “pre-assessment”; this includes public, local government, and tribal involvement.
- K. Hoffman asked when the pre-assessment phase is supposed to begin.
 - The pre-assessment should begin at the end of the year (2017). The goal is to have a draft out in Fall 2017, with a final document prepared for Spring 2018.
- What role will the CFLR play in planning? Will there be public involvement in the process?
 - The CFLR and BHCCFWG can provide input into the pre-assessment phase.
 - There will be regular public meetings concerning the revision but nothing definitive has been scheduled at this time.
- P. Clinton requested to receive CFLR and BHCCFWG information. **Action Item: J. Owen** to add P. Clinton to the BHCCFWG email list.

Funding Opportunities

- The CALFIRE GGRF program concepts are due on April 7th; it is a three to four-page concept proposal.
 - The program is focused on combining a mosaic of projects to produce an overall carbon benefit.
 - There is \$25 million available.
 - J. Ko noted that CALFIRE has improved their coordination with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to implement this program effectively.
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SN) Grant Updates
 - The Proposition 1 (Prop 1) grant deadline is September 1, 2017; there is \$7.5 million in funding available.

- SNC is accepting public comments for the guidelines and will be revising them as needed. The primary changes from the last grant round include funding for meadow encroachment, and certain tree mortality projects.
- There will be SNC grant writing workshops in Alturas and Susanville in the coming months and are open to all. **Action Item: Sierra Institute** to share the SNC workshop dates when available.
- J. Kusel noted the importance of being timely with letters of support. If BHCCFWG participants, or their organizations, are asked to write a letter, it is helpful to have it completed in a reasonable amount of time.
- The group decided that a funding subcommittee would be well suited to determine which funding to seek, who is responsible for preparing applications, and what the appropriate timelines are.
 - **Action Item: Sierra Institute** to schedule a Funding Subcommittee call for April, 2017.

Online Documentation

- J. Owen described the Sierra Institute's efforts to reorganize their online resources.
- J. Kusel asked participants to take a moment and view the BHCCFWG section of the [Sierra Institute website](#), and formulate any comments or feedback to be shared with J. Owen.

Future meeting topics, scheduling, and closing remarks

- T. Ladd informed the group that State Parks worked with D. Lindgren of Tubit Enterprises to chop wood that was initially planned for burning; the chips went to Burney Forest Power.
- G. Costello discussed plans for a new biomass facility in Burney. G. Costello is coordinating communication and outreach regarding the project.
- For scheduling, the group agreed that subcommittees will meet in April, with a full-group meeting to follow in May.
 - May 9th was chosen as a tentative date for the next full-group meeting.

Appendix A

FS-CALFIRE Agreed Process for GNA SPA development and review¹

- 1) FS Forest Program Manager and CAL FIRE Unit Chief work together using the R5 template on a draft.
 - a. The FS unit is encouraged to contact Connie, Jason, and other R5 GNA core team members to work through any questions and the appropriate use of GNA for projects and how to appropriately express the goals of the project through a GNA lens
- 2) This draft is reviewed by CAL FIRE HQ (Matthew Reischman - Matthew.Reischman@fire.ca.gov) for budget and SOW
- 3) A revised draft is sent to RO AQM (Connie Zipperer - czipperer@fs.fed.us) for review
- 4) Any proposed changes from Connie are sent back to the CALFIRE HQ, the FS unit and CAL FIRE Unit Chief for concurrence.
- 5) FS and CALFIRE agree on SPA text
- 6) Connie signs a final draft
- 7) Matthew signs
- 8) The Forest Supervisor signs

¹ Excerpt from *USFS Region 5 Good Neighbor Authority Update*; August 2, 2016. Courtesy of Jason Ko, Ecosystem Services Program Lead, USFS Region 5.

Appendix B

Preliminary vision statement and subcategories

Vision Statement:

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group aims to increase the pace and scale of forest health initiatives through collaborative discourse, planning, and implementation; initiatives extend beyond forest health to address social and economic disparities in the area.

Values:

- Working across ownership boundaries (all-lands approach)
- Incorporating ecological restoration goals (e.g. heterogeneity, resiliency)
- Embracing the opportunity to share and learn (attending meetings regularly)
- Maintaining interest and momentum despite setbacks
- Increase economic and social development
- Establishing a legacy for the group

Focus Areas:

- Large landscape projects
- Infrastructure improvements
- Recreation
- Public outreach
- Funding/leveraging
- Staffing and capacity

Strategic Objectives:

- Get Crossroads finished
- Define and enhance the bug salvage program within the district
- Create a timeline, specifically for budget
- Create a model/template for future collaborative efforts
- Grant funding for thinning and chipping on private land (residential landowners)
- Incorporate youth development into project planning
- Increase the amount of interpretive sites