

Meeting Synopsis

The Burney-Hat creek community Forest & Watershed Group (BHCCFWG) met for a full-group meeting on Tuesday, May 30th at the Hat Creek Ranger District office in Fall River Mills, CA. Biomass utilization initiatives were discussed, including the Fall River RCD's project and recent grant award. Group members continued a process of developing a vision statement and identifying group values. USFS staff provided a schedule of proposed and ongoing projects for group members to review. Funding needs were discussed for the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), a new mechanism for all-lands work, and the ongoing Burney Gardens Timber Harvest Plan (THP).

Attendees

Janine Book
Steve Buckley
Deb Cesmat
Michelle Coppoletta
Garrett Costello
Ryan Hadley
Peter Johnson

Bobette Jones
Chantz Joyce
Jonathan Kusel
Doug Lindgren
Lori Martin
Jason Mateljak
Debbie Mayer

Dale Newby
Jeff Oldson
John Owen
Patricia Puterbaugh
Todd Sloat

Action Items

- **G. Costello** to send meeting announcement for HWY 89 recreation corridor meeting. **DONE**
- **Sierra Institute** to include McArthur-Burney Falls State Park staff in funding subcommittee correspondence. Add state parks/crossroads to subcommittee agenda. **DONE**
- **Hat Creek staff** to map potential project areas (Badger, Snow Mountain, Backbone, etc.).
- **Chantz Joyce** to contact PG&E regarding Burney Gardens.
- **J. Kusel** to inquire with UC representatives regarding community forest in Burney Gardens. **DONE**
- **Sierra Institute** to look into federal community forest funding. **DONE**
- **Sierra Institute** to share monitoring briefs online when available.
- **M. Coppoletta** to share meeting notes from Monitoring Working Group when available.
- **Sierra Institute** to schedule field tour date for July. **DONE**

Meeting Notes

Approval/modifications

- The meeting notes from March 21st were approved by group members.
- The May 30th agenda was approved as presented.

SCALE Outcomes / RCDI & Biomass Update

- Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement (SCALE) is a mechanism for collaboration between collaborative groups working on landscape-scale forest restoration and community improvement across California. SCALE initially formed as a collaboration between the three CFLR projects in California.
- T. Sloat mentioned the value of discussing barriers and lessons learned with people from all over California; many collaboratives face the same issues that the BHCCFWG does.
- The SCALE meeting included a conversation on local contracting and employment. Nick Goulette (Watershed Research and Training Center) and Steve Wilensky (Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions) discussed their longstanding work to increase local employment and community well-being.
- J. Kusel mentioned the value of having top USFS leadership in the room. Bernie Gyant, Deputy Regional Forester for Region 5, was present throughout the meeting and engaged with participants. B. Gyant emphasized the USFS' commitment to collaborative partnerships moving forward.
- The Sierra Institute's Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) is a project geared to address poor socioeconomic conditions in rural, forested communities and the increasing threat of catastrophic wildfire throughout the state. Through RCDI, the Sierra Institute provides organizational and technical capacity building assistance to multiple community organizations working on forest biomass utilization projects.
- The RCDI meeting that took place on May 16-17, 2017 had over 50 participants.
- T. Sloat talked about a \$5 million grant award from the California Energy Commission (CEC) for the Fall River RCD and Burney-Hat Creek Bioenergy Project. The funding will go a long way to getting the project online.
- T. Puterbaugh inquired about the remaining challenges for the bioenergy project.
 - T. Sloat said that gasification is the newest, most efficient technology and is expensive. Furthermore, scaling gasification down to 5 MW or less has not been proven to work.
- J. Kusel spoke about the rationale behind small-scale bioenergy facilities. Numerous small-scale facilities around the state would greatly reduce the transportation costs and time required currently to haul biomass. The economics of small-scale systems is improved with the heat derived from burning, which can be used for co-located businesses and forest products operations.
- SCALE meeting notes can be found [here](#) and RCDI notes [here](#).

Implementing the Vision

- The group engaged in an exercise to write a vision statement that would effectively communicate the purpose of the collaborative.

Preliminary vision statement:

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group aims to increase the pace and scale of landscape health and resiliency through collaborative discourse, planning, an implementation across ownership boundaries. The group's influence extends beyond landscapes to address and improve community well-being.

Values:

A list of values previously derived by group members was displayed. J. Kusel asked members to suggest other values that are missing from the list. Suggestions included:

- *Protecting ecological and economic capital*
- *Protect and maintain community health and safety*
- *Leveraging ecological services and improving the ability to capture benefit from them*
- *Technological development to further best practices/community development*
- *Adapting to changing conditions (e.g. climate change) with an emphasis on sustainability*
- The group agreed to continue “visioning” exercises to maintain momentum and interest with group members (longtime and new) going forward.

Program of Work / NEPA ready projects

- B. Jones handed out a project list detailing the program of work for the CFLR. This document can be found in Appendix A.
- B. Jones outlined the preliminary process for the Badger project. A transportation analysis is required before the project area is defined, after which it will be approximately two years until implementation. The hope is to conduct wildlife/botanical surveys concurrently with project design.
- G. Costello mentioned a stakeholder meeting for the HWY 89 recreation corridor improvement. The meeting will be held on June 28th, 2017 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm in the Hat Creek Ranger District conference room. **Action Item**: G. Costello to send meeting announcement for HWY 89 recreation corridor meeting.
- B. Jones said the Badger project design should include an all-lands approach. There are opportunities to collaborate with Lassen Volcanic National Park (LAVO) which is adjacent to the

project area; incorporating LAVO goals and objectives and potential to share crews would greatly benefit this project.

- M. Coppoletta asked if the Reading Fire footprint would be clipped (i.e. omitted) from the project area.
 - Paul White, USFS forestry technician, has nearly finished replanting efforts in the Reading Fire area. The “cut and deck” has also been completed and the decks sold. Additional treatments should take place in the Reading Fire footprint, however.
- D. Newby commented on the project titled “Eastside underburn”. The project is shown as 800-1200 acres. This underburn is part of a blanket NEPA document and will remain on the program of work indefinitely – it is primarily maintaining Quincy Library Group (QLG) project areas.
- A question was asked about underburning in N49. Will there be prescribed burns or machine piles?
 - Most of the area will not handle an underburn. This is due to the residency time of the duff layer.
- J. Book mentioned ongoing conversations with LNF leadership regarding NEPA capacity across the forest. Every district does not have a complete NEPA team. Dave Hays asked LNF district rangers to bring priority projects to the next LNF NEPA meeting and begin a discussion of how NEPA resources can be allocated across districts. Badger and Snow Mountain will be presented as priority projects for the Hat Creek District at this meeting.
- M. Coppoletta talked about a new GIS framework for communicating project information. ArcGIS online provides a web-based map that can be viewed publically. There could be, for example, a proposed treatment map detailing certain projects. Currently, there are a few examples of this mapping tool available to view [online](#).
- R. Hadley asked if Crossroads will require a categorical exclusion (CE) or environmental assessment (EA).
 - B. Jones replied that there won’t be a decision until scoping occurs. If there are issues encountered during scoping, the project could be potentially pushed out of a CE into an EA.
- Regarding Crossroads, J.Kusel said that the group initially set out to do a CE to expedite the project. However, surveys slowed things down to some extent. At this point, it is important to consider best practices in terms of scoping and determining the appropriate level of environmental review.
- The Crossroads IDT planning drafts are not available for distribution, but things are in pretty good shape. The team is currently modifying boundaries to fit more WUI areas – the previous boundaries were stopping short. Also, riparian areas were excluded in the previous boundaries and that is being reevaluated.
- In reference to Crossroads planning, is there a different approach the USFS might take for similar projects in the future?

- B. Jones responded that there are varying preferences and styles amongst USFS staff. In this case, it is the current staff's inclination to decide on a tool after scoping is completed.
- T. Sloat is wondering if other land management entities should be involved in the HWY 89 recreation corridor planning. At some point, there will likely need to be a recreation subcommittee formed to link stakeholders, planning, and funding. **Future Meeting Topic:** Recreation Subcommittee
- J. Kusel asked USFS staff if NEPA resource sharing on LNF will ultimately be a “tug of war” between districts.
 - J. Book indicated there may be some leverage with the CFLR designation on the Hat Creek District. At this time, there are two fire settlement funds that are highly prioritized within LNF.
- B. Jones added that the project list (see Appendix A) only shows projects within the CFLR boundaries. There are other projects across the forest that have priority as well.

Funding, GNA & planning processes

- There was a grant proposal submitted to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). There could be SNC funding for up to \$100k for fuel reductions on Big Lakes. Action Item: Funding subcommittee to get clarity on SNC deadlines for fuels reduction grant proposals.
- D. Curtis mentioned that prior to the Reading Fire (2012) the district had a grant to build a campground near Old Station at Potato Butte – is that plan still viable?
 - B. Jones said, at this point, there is no money connected to Potato Butte and it is in early planning stages. However, Potato Butte is part of Badger and the NEPA can be done concurrently for both areas.
- T. Sloat discussed the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). Next steps could include putting a consulting team together to survey, assess, plan, write, and administer a GNA project. The idea is to use both federal and private consulting staff to prepare NEPA.
- Ideally, there would be a large sum of money available for planning, possibly from CAL FIRE. If the GNA project has enough value, the revenue can be reinvested into further planning. There may be an opportunity to fold in private landowners as well, to trade private timber for fuels reduction work and thus increase the value of the overall project.
- Next steps in terms of policy would include the state parks. Currently state parks cannot use the value of timber to reinvest in treatments.
- B. Jones asked if there was any money available for planning in the Crossroads/State Parks area. USFS staff has already completed many of the required studies for the USFS land leased by state parks, as well as the state parks property where the PCT intersects.
 - T. Ladd is working on advancing new projects. State parks was augmented \$50k for hazardous tree removal – this was completed – it is now time to move forward. **Action**

Item: Include McArthur-Burney Falls State Park staff in funding subcommittee correspondence. Add state parks/crossroads to subcommittee agenda.

- The Badger project is a good candidate for NEPA surveys. SNC offers survey grants that could be applied to this work. It would be beneficial to start these proposals sooner than later.
Subcommittee Topic: SNC funding for surveys
- T. Sloat asked if the value of timber in national parks be used for planning.
 - It is possible. However, it should be noted that there is no GNA in the Department of Interior yet.
- Is it possible to put Whittington funds into Badger or Snow Mountain?
 - Whittington is profitable. If there was a stewardship contract, then the funds could be reallocated to another planning project; the project would, most likely, need to be designated before the contract is signed.
 - It was noted that stewardship receipts cannot be used for planning.
- Are there areas near Whittington that need treatment?
 - Backbone was originally part of Whittington; it was thinned and is now a “nice little sale”.
- More information is needed on the stewardship process, as well as the various potential project areas discussed. It would be beneficial to have a follow-up call/meeting with maps and area descriptions. **Action Item:** Hat Creek staff to map potential project areas (Badger, Snow Mountain, Backbone, etc.).

Burney Gardens THP, next steps

- There is a roadblock with the PG&E property on Burney Gardens. PG&E retains the largest property within Burney Gardens.
 - Chantz Joyce (Stewardship Council) said there were issues with transferring the fee title from PG&E to Humboldt State University (HSU) – HSU will not receive the fee title. There are still ongoing conversations about college level activity on this property but probably not within the timeframe of the THP. **Action Item:** Chantz Joyce to contact PG&E regarding Burney Gardens.
- J. Kusel asked what the possibilities are for having the PG&E property be the first step towards a community forest? This would require a transfer of ownership to another entity.
 - D. Lindgren is interested in pursuing this option.
 - C. Joyce noted that at this stage in the process, it would be difficult to bring a new partner into the equation. Does anyone in the UC system have an interest in taking this on? **Action Item:** J. Kusel to inquire with UC representatives regarding community forest in Burney Gardens.
- Fall River RCD just went through a year-long process to modify their existing agreement for the McArthur Swamp. The RCD was not initially interested in the Burney Gardens property, but it may be the appropriate vehicle at this point.

- P. Johnson stated that there are federal dollars available to purchase fee title for community forests. **Action Item:** Sierra Institute to look into federal community forest funding.

Prescribed Fire Subcommittee outcomes

- P. Johnson tried to get in touch with Shane Larsen of CAL FIRE to discuss new prescribed burning initiatives on private land. There likely won't be any more information until the next meeting.
- D. Mayer, Hat Creek District fuels officer, presented on the state of prescribed burning in the district.
- The minimum acreage that is worth burning is probably around 300 acres. Anything below that threshold requires the same amount of work and is considered inefficient.
- Prescribed burning is not necessarily prioritized. The crews burn as much as possible within a given burn window. Windows can be infrequent as was the case in recent years (drought).
- Regarding air quality issues, Shasta county is very fortunate. The local air quality management district is understanding of the avoided costs in terms of prescribed burning versus wildfire. That said, if there is too much smoke the area could enter "nonattainment" (i.e. substandard air quality under federal/state regulations).
- Prescribed fire is dependent on NEPA. Wildfires have interrupted some large-scale burns under NEPA; for example, the Bald Fire burned up nearly half of the Eastside project, which was scheduled for 58k acres of prescribed burning.
- Fuels officers have to consider fall vs. spring burning. Spring has a good response, although it is not considered part of the natural fire regime. However, recently, the district is losing the spring burning window because the grass is greening more quickly than in previous years.
- S. Buckley mentioned SNC funding for prescribed burns. There are other foundations that provide funding for this activity, but they typically require NEPA to be completed.
- Managed fire is a tool that allows naturally occurring fires to burn to some extent. Managed fire is harder to implement in this area, largely because of topography. There are not enough natural features to "catch" a wildfire within this area.
 - There are areas where managed fire is appropriate, but there is also the consideration of private lands which rely on the timber.
- S. Buckley said LAVO has burn plans that are ready to implement. LAVO has a fire ecologist that is very experienced in the area. The funding perspective is important, LAVO and partners should explore ways to elongate the funding to accommodate burn windows.
- J. Book asked how many contiguous acres the district fuels team is willing to burn.
 - D. Mayer said 1,000 acres is about as big as the projects go at one time.

- Is it possible to burn along the USFS/LAVO boundary?
 - If NEPA is completed, there could be burning along that boundary. It is necessary to determine boundaries and coordinate with the park for an all-lands approach.
 - S. Buckley mentioned the possibility of sharing wildlife biologists to complete surveys in this boundary area.

Monitoring overview and updates

M. Coppoletta handed out a new monitoring brief on “Investigating the effects of post-fire salvage logging on soils in the southeastern Cascades”. The full brief will be made available online. **Action Item:** Sierra Institute to share monitoring briefs online when available.

J. Kusel discussed, briefly, the history of socioeconomic monitoring for Burney-Hat Creek. In 2010, the Sierra Institute conducted a stakeholder and socioeconomic assessment. It should be noted that this baseline data was in the midst of the economic recession post-2008. The original report is available [online](#).

Sierra Institute also included the Burney-Hat Creek CFLR in an analysis of USFS contracting; this study showed where contracts were going relative to CFLR’s and the local communities associated with them.

For future socioeconomic monitoring, it will be important to look at the impacts of bioenergy projects in the area, and retroactive and prospective opportunities available to locals through CFLR activities.

The next steps for the monitoring working group include taking a look at the previous socioeconomic report and discussing what sorts of questions and indicators should be used going forward. Eventually, there will need to be an organization contracted to do the monitoring work. **Action Item:** M. Coppoletta to share meeting notes from Monitoring Working Group when available.

HWY 89 recreation corridor updates

G. Costello gave updates on the HWY 89 recreation corridor planning. A variety of stakeholders have already been engaged but there are others that should be contacted. There are several volunteer groups that are willing to participate in recreation projects. G. Costello has also prepared a grant list for funding in the following year.

One priority is seeking Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) funding and generally increasing ADA access throughout the corridor.

G. Costello would like to form a subcommittee following the next meeting. Also, if anyone has stakeholder or funding information to share, please contact Garrett at gcos01@gmail.com

Future meeting topics

- The annual CFLR report will be compiled in August. B. Jones asked for information on activities/projects within the CFLR. Information should include, at least, location, purpose, and cost. B. Jones indicated estimates would be appropriate.

- The group discussed the next meeting date. It was decided that a field tour for Badger would be beneficial. July 11th and 12th were chosen as tentative dates for the field tour. **Action Item:** Sierra Institute to schedule field tour date for July.

DRAFT

Appendix A
Program of Work for FY 2017-2018

BHCCFLR Activities	Project	Achievement	Project	Achievement
	2017		2018	
Implementation	Eiler Machinepile	300	Eiler Machinepile	500 acres
	Eiler Reforestation	1,612 acres	Eiler Reforestation	500 acres
	Sluisbox TFS	893 acres	Whittington	1,240 acres
	Sunshine Thinning and mastication	401 acres	Big Lakes Fuel Reduction	150 acres
	Eastside Underburn	800 acres	Eastside Underburn	NA
	Reading Pole Burning	576 acres	Highway 89 Recreation Corridor	interpretive signs/maintenance
	Reading Underburn	500 acres	Plum Hand Thin and mastication	
	Whittington Mastication	NA	Shooter Site prep, machine pile, and burn	
	South Station	200 Acres	Panner Site prep, machine pile, and burn	
			Claim Lumper Site prep, machine pile, and burn	
Implementation Prep	Whittington	Layout, mark, cruise, wildfire surveys, specified road package	Plum	Layout, mark, cruise, wildlife surveys, specified road package
			49er	Layout, mark, and cruise 650 acres
Watershed	West Prospect Resurfacing Cornez Lake	2 miles Working on SIR to Boulder		
NEPA	Plum EA	PAPN out for scoping	Crossroads	Decision
	Crossroads	PAPN out for scoping	Highway 89 Recreation Corridor	PAPN out for scoping
Project Design	Badger	Identifying project area and collecting data for TAP, watershed, and stand exams (if possible)	Badger	Start surveys and write PAPN
	Highway 89 Recreation corridor	Evaluating recreation improvements and new opportunities	Snow Mountain	Identifying project area and collecting data for TAP, watershed, and stand exams (if possible)