

## Meeting Synopsis

At the May 2018 Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group (BHCCFWG) meeting, members provided updates on the most recent SCALE meeting, the Fall River RCD's proposal to Cal Fire's Climate Change Initiative (CCI) grant program, the Crossroads Project and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) grant award, Plum Project scoping, and ecological monitoring. The group discussed opportunities and hurdles related to adding Crossroads and Manzanita Chutes to a Master Stewardship Agreement. Members participated in a visioning exercise to brainstorm landscape priorities, and members explored the idea of expanding the collaborative boundary. Other items included outreach and information sharing, GIS capacity, and the need to incorporate more recreation projects on the landscape.

## Attendees

Andrew Lee  
Don Curtis  
Doug Lidgren  
Garrett Costello  
Greg Mayer

Janine Book  
Jonathan Kusel  
Kaily Bourg  
Lori Marin  
Michelle Coppoletta

Patricia Puterbaugh  
Ryan Hadley  
Steve Buckley  
Todd Sloat

## Action Items

- K. Bourg to resend March 2018 meeting notes to full group for approval at July 2018 meeting.
- S. Buckley to send Lisa Worthington (CalTrans) contact information to G. Mayer and J. Book.
- G. Mayer to share project boundaries with T. Sloat and group when they are complete.
- G. Mayer to share more information (proposal?) regarding the partnership with a UNR group to a conduct climate change adaptation in the North 49 area.
- M. Coppoletta to send monitoring activities documents to the group.
- K. Bourg to contact 34 North GIS firm to present at next meeting.
- G. Costello to send collaborative webpage to K. Bourg to send out to group for comment.

## Meeting Notes

### Introduction/Approvals

- Since several attendees did not have a chance to review the March meeting notes, the group decided to move meeting notes approval to the July meeting.
- The May meeting agenda was approved.

### Project Updates

#### *SCALE Update*

The Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement (SCALE) meeting on May 7-8 attracted great participation and many new faces, including a lead from CalTrans. The meeting fostered discussions about the NEPA process, building local capacity through Master Stewardship Agreements, and the role of collaboratives in Environmental Analysis and Decision-Making (EADM) processes, project identification and planning, and

programs of work. Distinguishable speakers and sessions included a presentation from Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), Ashley Ames, regarding their recent report, "Improving California's Forest and Watershed Management," and a panel with Bernie Gyant, Deputy Regional Forester, R5, and Matthew Reishman, Assistant Deputy Director Cal Fire. Bernie encouraged collaborative involvement with the NEPA process.

- Landscape-scale conversations are reaching a point of convergence - things are starting to fit together. There was also a discussion on Lidar coverage.
- A presentation from the USFS Regional Environmental Coordinator, Laura Heirholzer, recognized that EADM is not happening at the pace that is needed. There is a focus nationally to make NEPA timelines more efficient.
- G. Mayer noted the need for increased local and internal efforts on increasing efficiency.
- J. Kusel, acknowledging capacity challenges, underscored the notion of the partner process and the pressure on the agency to produce and deliver. A purpose of SCALE is to bring together institutions and collaborative groups to discuss needs.
- The group discussed an opportunity to partner with CalTrans to do thinning along the highway.  
**Action Item:** S. Buckley to share CalTrans contact, Lisa Worthington, with J. Book and G. Mayer.  
**Future Meeting Topic:** Opportunities to do thinning along the highway through partnership with CalTrans.

#### *CCI Update*

Discussing the CCI letter of support (LOS) process, T. Sloat proposed developing a comprehensive LOS representative of the collaborative in lieu of collecting individual LOS.

- **Decision:** After extensive discussion, the group agreed to the development of a general LOS describing CCI projects, including a list of collaborative members by entity name, and stating that the BHCCFWG collaborative is in support of the proposal. Individual letters may accompany the general letter if there are specific projects or interests an individual supports.
- Language for the LOS will be developed and circulated for comments and recommendations. Modifications will be made accordingly.
- G. Mayer is working to complete project boundaries on GIS. They are 95% done. **Action Item:** Once completed, G. Mayer will send project boundaries to T. Sloat and make them available on a database for future initiatives.

#### *Crossroads Update*

The Fall River RCD was awarded an SNC planning grant for Crossroads. It was proposed that Forest Service (FS) would complete the Proposed Action/Purpose Need (PA/PN) and scoping, and the Fall River RCD would finish the NEPA, using the same team that did NEPA for the Cove Project.

- P. Puterbaugh asked whether the Cove Project team underwent NEPA training or workshop.
  - For the Cove project, each specialist got paired with a FS staff through a mentoring process.
- J. Book noted that FS will contribute the archaeology and wildlife surveys and reports.
- Though a partner completes NEPA, the FS is still responsible for it and a signature is required. J. Book provided that if using the Farm Bill CE is a possibility, the collaborative, or RCD, would provide the analysis but FS is responsible for writing the decision memo.

#### *Plum Update*

The Plum project is still in public scoping phase. It has received 3-4 comments so far.

- Scoping and PA/PN are sometimes used interchangeably. One or the other has to be completed.

- The Plum timeline includes having the analysis done by the end of the fiscal year and a draft EA early in the fall, prep all service work next year with contracting by January.
- J. Book explained that comments during scoping are welcome, but increased commenting extends the timeline. Specific comments are appreciated.

#### *Round Table Sharing*

- G. Mayer shared about a group from University of Nevada Reno (UNR) conducting a Sierra Nevada wide study on adaptive silviculture in climate change. Because there is a current NEPA with North 49, they have proposed to use the area as a control in the study.
- P. Puterbaugh asked about the status of the Lassen National Forest (LNF) partnership coordinator - it is still in the works. The first of three phases of hiring have been completed.
- The LNF is experiencing shifting leadership. A new acting forest supervisor, Nate Rousso, will begin a 120-day detail as acting supervisor of LNF. None of the projects have been removed from the program of work and, at this time, the district has enough resources to continue movement.
- Internal staffing on the district is on a good trajectory with hiring foresters. The new hires are currently trainees. The district does not have enough barracks space or office space.
- Some recognized the importance of partnering and contracting with the agency to speed processes up. It is important for the collaborative to keep pushing the partnerships to work through the FS's traditional way of working in silos.
- G. Costello took monitoring photos at Burney Gardens in early May. He also shared about an environmental education program he is involved with, "Talk about Trees," though the California Forestry Foundation. View more here: <http://www.calforestfoundation.org/talk-about-trees/>.
- J. Book mentioned that the SPI local forester for the Burney Gardens area met with Ted McArthur at the Forest Supervisors office to discuss how SPI can help drive common goals forward in the Burney Gardens, Backbone, Snow Mountain, and Whittington areas. J. Book particularly noted SPI's enthusiasm and alignment of goals with FS.

#### *Monitoring Update*

The monitoring working group recently met to discuss amendments to the CLFR ecological monitoring strategy. The plan is reevaluated every year, which drives monitoring activities.

- The working group recommended three changes: dropping a botany-related question, revising a question regarding how thinning impacts wildlife patterns, and adding a question addressing how much of the landscape is within the range of accepted forest health.
- The monitoring working group decided to further refine the changes after the meeting, and share the updated monitoring plan with the group to review before the July meeting, when the documents will be recommended for approval. Once the collaborative approves, the plan will be given to the line officer to sign.
- The region has done a large GIS analysis, and including parts of this area. There are most likely data layers available. Lidar data is incredibly useful in revealing forest structure to the specificity of individual trees.
- Some questioned the necessity in updating the monitoring plan each year. While M. Coppoletta believes it important to keep the planned updated, there is no time crunch and it can be discussed at the next meeting. J. Book suggested bringing a draft to the next meeting to check in where the forest is on leadership.

- J. Kusel recommended documenting the adaptive improvement process and inclusivity into an appendix in the plan. J. Book recommended including what and who the changes are attributed to and what they are based on.
- The group benefits from these monitoring conversations regardless of the CFLR.
- M. Coppoletta presented a monitoring brief of a project at Big Lake regarding the impact of thinning treatments on aquatic habitat and announced that the monitoring working group will meet after the meeting to discuss socioeconomic monitoring.

### Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA)

- T. Sloat: At last meeting, the group talked about the utilization of MSA. There was broad support. We have the possibility to advance Manzanita Chutes and Crossroads within an MSA. For Crossroads, the SNC can be leveraged as a match. The RCD worked with Mule Deer Foundation to prepare a grant for Manzanita Chutes. It is a great opportunity to test the MSA water and gain experience.
- J. Kusel: Sierra Institute is setting up an MSA with the Lassen, the Plumas, and the Modoc as a result of the work with the South Lassen Watershed Group (SLWG).
- The Crossroads and Manzanita Chutes projects were discussed as being added to a Stewardship Agreement. The FS has requested the Collaborative to write the NEPA for Crossroads, using SNC funds as match. The FS will prepare the PAPN and conduct scoping, while the Collaborative will conduct the effects analysis and prepare the draft CE or EA. The FS told the RCD they would contribute 80K for the additional NEPA work, but this turned out not to be possible as the funds they identified (i.e., Forest Health dollars) can only be used for implementation. Therefore, the FS intends to add implementation funds to the Manzanita Chutes project, both from CFLR dollars (60K), and from Forest Health (54K). J. Book and G. Mayer will work with the Collaborative to figure out another approach to augment the NEPA funds needed to complete Crossroads. The Collaborative felt they could have a CE completed by early 2019 for Crossroads.

### Visioning Exercise

J. Kusel presented a visioning exercise similar to one advanced years before. In reviewing previous goals stated for one year, most have been accomplished.

The group participated in a visioning activity in which each participant listed one or more goals or objectives for the group. Objectives were then prioritized by each person placing seven priority dots on their top choices. Below are the results.

- (8)\_\_\_Increased forest product output (locally)
- (7)\_\_\_Do more MSA work and utilize private sector resources
- (7)\_\_\_More community awareness of what's going on in the forest; community acceptance (with focus on schools)
- (7)\_\_\_Develop 3 new NEPA teams/ develop NEPA partnerships
- (6)\_\_\_Continue all-lands approach & momentum of group post-CFLR
- (5)\_\_\_Results of monitoring efforts have been used to improve/alter way to do business
- (5)\_\_\_Used all the maps (e.g., vulnerability, etc.) to plan projects/ utilize spatial analysis
- (4)\_\_\_Restorative use of fire
- (4)\_\_\_Renew the existing utility facilities (existing biomass) and add two new facilities
- (4)\_\_\_Proactive, not reactive landscape dynamics and process driving decisions

- (4) \_\_Shows socioeconomic progress in rural communities
  - (4) \_\_Don't lose sight of the goals ("the whole enchilada")
  - (3) \_\_Concrete examples of past success stories and document press—forward success
  - (3) \_\_Effectively leverage the power of the collaborative to utilize the Farm Bill CE
  - (3) \_\_Complete the plan, implement plan; community awareness
  - (1) \_\_Fulfill the objectives that grants awarded required including match required
  - (1) \_\_Group has whole life cycle of projects
  - (1) \_\_Stable funding moving forward
  - (1) \_\_The ability to be agile with contracts, NEPA surveying implementation
  - (1) \_\_Post-fire restoration
  - (1) \_\_Develop a consistent message across partners
- Some members recognized that visioning priorities identified do not address water quality, water yields, or forest thinning.
  - The assembly person in Yolo County will meet with staff upcoming to discuss biomass energy and best ways to inform legislature staff on how to best utilize climate change funding to advance landscape-level improvement.
  - J. Kusel posed the question, where should energy of the group be dedicated? Connectivity of treatments? Is there a next generation of projects?
    - Badger, backbone, and Snow Mountain will keep Hat Creek Ranger District busy for a decade.
    - T. Sloat recognized the need to determine group priorities if CCI dollars are awarded.
    - The group discussed sustainable forestry and a ceiling with local infrastructure regarding logging and timber processing capacity. SPI is building a new sawmill, representing potential to increase capacity to process timber.
    - S. Buckley discussed the Eiler and Bald fires and opportunities to restore fire regimes. Seven to ten years is a fire cycle. How many acres are we not burning?
    - The group can use CFLR funds for fire re-entry, and to some extent, already does. There is particular interest for fire reentry in North 49 area.
    - A participant highlighted that recreation is also part of the "whole enchilada" and should be discussed.
    - T. Sloat discussed using CEs on plantations, which could help meet a lot of the above identified priorities.
    - Planting on the Eiler fire was rather unsuccessful last summer due to the late contract and dry summer. However, this year with a wet spring, trees are surviving.
    - The group discussed jobs associated with restoration economy and supporting capacity through plant materials contracts. CalForest trees are twice as good.
    - M. Coppoletta discussed a recent study that revealed that 40% of old forest in the Moonlight Fire footprint has been converted to shrub complex conditions. The Moonlight Fire burned close to 65,000 acres in the Plumas in 2007. Large shrub fields cycle into more high severity fires with landscapes burning multiple times.
  - J. Kusel asked if the conversion issue influences the priorities of the group. What are the implications to where and how to prioritize work on the landscape?
    - J. Book discussed the need to have a balanced portfolio. Timber sales can leverage funds for other projects that don't fund themselves.
    - S. Buckley discussed breaking up the continuity of the landscape to gain time. Areas of continuous forests are at high risk – the group can prioritize those areas.

### Priorities Discussion

- The group discussed risk adversity in Northern and Central California versus places elsewhere in the country. On average, 2% of FS activities nationwide are appealed. However, the rate is much higher in Northern California. Future Meeting Topic: How can the group address risk internal to the agency to support forward movement?
- The group discussed the usage of CEs, recognizing their quick and targeted nature and the need to be strategic in the timing of project implementation (i.e., allow time for the watershed to rest).
  - CE's have the potential to distract from the full landscape.
  - There are tradeoffs to using CE's, including risk that they can be taken away.
  - In moving forward, the group might consider having an EA going while simultaneously working on CEs.
  - **Future Meeting Topic:** What might the group do in terms of CEs?
- The group brainstormed landscape priorities:
  - Implement one project well, document lessons learned, adapt and repeat.
  - Pick a project with a timber sale to feed the sawmill and recruit extra money.
  - Implement projects into Thousand Lakes because it has a recreation component.
  - T. Sloat presented the Cove Fire Salvage project as an example of a collaborative doing NEPA. The group might consider convening two NEPA teams. The forest district expressed apprehension and fear of implementing too much at once.
  - Backbone could possibly be the next CE, however the group might consider selecting a plantation for the next CE (Lost Plantation). If the RCD puts efforts on the east side, some feel that may distract from work on Backbone. Others feel confident that they can simultaneously happen, with two years of surveys hopefully funded by CalFire dollars.
  - The District is moving forward on the Plum project; however, fires have impacted the rate of implementation, and planning too far into the future may distract the District from the present.

### Boundary Expansion Discussion

- G. Mayer led a discussion on changing the boundary of the collaborative. Backbone and Snow Mountain are still important to finish. G. Mayer suggested that if the group will start doing CEs, next year may be a great opportunity to expand the boundary to the whole Pit River watershed.
- L. Martin raised attention to the boundary cutting through McArthur Burney Falls State Park. **Decision:** All agree that the collaborative group will recognize a boundary inclusive of the entire State Park, whether that is incorporated into a new CFLR or not.
- G. Mayer proposed having two boundaries: the CLFR boundary, which is federally designated, and a collaborative boundary. There is opportunity for the collaborative to think more broadly.

### Next Steps

- The group discussed developing a next line-up of activities and laying out a schedule of work, including putting together NEPA teams.
- There is an opportunity to build socioeconomic opportunities and incorporate more recreation projects. G. Costello reported forward movement with the Vista Point sign, and will follow up with other projects' statuses at the next meeting. The sign could include forest health projects and Hat Creek restoration, and have some mention of collaborative work. **Future meeting topic:** Discuss recreation projects.



- In terms of human capacity, the group needs pursue GIS capabilities. GIS can enable stand exams.

### Outreach and Information Sharing

- The group identified the need to develop a consistent message in outreach.
- To address internal information-sharing, the group discussed the following options: Cloud Vault, Share Point, and Google Drive. **Action Item:** K. Bourg to create a trial Google Drive to be shared with the group and discussed at the next meeting.
- T. Sloat recommended that the group consistently recruit new members. **Future Meeting Topic:** Collaborative member recruitment strategy
- G. Costello put together a webpage about the collaborative on the RCD's website. **Action Item:** G. Costello to share webpage with K. Bourg to send to group for comments.

### GIS Capacity

- The group's goal is to be able to look at data spatially. M. Coppoletta is looking into starting a map on ArcGIS online with the regional office.
- In terms of developing a way to share GIS data among collaborative members, M. Coppoletta asked about what data people are interested in.
- The FS uses DataBasin to share files internally.
- T. Sloat suggested that the group needs one individual who has time and can work with all the partners. An NGO would be the best entity to house a GIS person.
- T. Sloat recommends inquiring about the GIS service 34North, a GIS firm that developed its own software to analyze every kind of dataset to conduct large-scale spatial analyses. **Action Item:** K. Bourg to contact 34North GIS firm to invite them to present GIS services at the next BHC meeting.
  - One question for the firm would be, is their work proprietary? What would the collaborative own if something failed?
  - What information would private landowners be willing to add onto the layers?
  - Other factors to consider: What is the cost and how interactive is the technology?
- Regarding Lidar coverage, there is a widespread desire to obtain coverage for the entire Region 5. Lidar coverage was mentioned at the most recent SCALE meeting by Bernie Gyant and Matthew Reishman.
- The South Lassen Watershed Group is including GIS and Lidar coverage in their CCI proposal. Obtaining Lidar abilities can improve ability to do archaeology.
- **Future Meeting Topic:** Continued GIS discussion

### Closing Remarks/Future Topics

- **Action Item:** K. Bourg to send out a doodle poll to schedule the July meeting.
- Future meeting topics include: Further discussion about use of CEs, continued GIS capacity conversation, recreation projects, and developing a consistent message for outreach.