

**South Lassen Watersheds Strategic Planning Meeting IV**  
Friday, July 14th, 2017; Almanor Ranger District Conference Center; 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

### Meeting Synopsis

Over twenty participants met at the Almanor Ranger District office for the fourth strategic planning meeting for the (tentatively named) South Lassen Watersheds Group. After reviewing the history and purpose of the meetings, participants laid out potential projects and how they may connect; there was particular interest in expediting fuelbreak work. Funding opportunities were discussed, with emphasis on the upcoming Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 1 grants. Agency representatives agreed to compile GIS information for the next strategic planning meeting to coordinate project planning across the landscape.

### Attendees

Janie Ackley	Ken Holbrook	Aaron Rieffanaugh
Lynn Campbell	Nick Kent	Ken Roby
Laura Corral	Mike Klimek	Scott Rosikiewicz
Carlos Espana	Ron Lunder	Aaron Seandel
Carl Felts	Jason Mateljak	Erick Stemmerman
Lorena Gorbet	Mike Mitzel	Sherrie Thrall
Ryan Hilburn	Jim Richardson	Ryan Tompkins

### Action Items

- **N. Kent** to share outcomes of the July 26<sup>th</sup> Almanor West field tour.
- **Sierra Institute** to send announcements of upcoming events presented by attendees. **DONE**
- **Sierra Institute** to schedule next strategic planning meeting for September, 2017.
- **Agency (USFS and NPS) staff** to provide GIS layers for planning discussion at the next strategic planning meeting.
  - **Sierra Institute** to schedule call with agency staff to coordinate GIS layer acquisition.
- **Sierra Institute** to contact PG&E representatives regarding attendance at SLWG meetings.
- **All participants** to brainstorm a title for the collaborative group.
- **Sierra Institute** to share previous meeting notes online. **DONE**
- **Sierra Institute** to share approved contact list of participants. **DONE**

### Meeting Notes

#### Meeting Purpose and Desired Outcomes

- J. Kusel welcomed the participants and gave a brief history of the Lake Almanor Watershed Group (LAWG) and the foundation of the current strategic planning meetings.
- LAWG was formerly known as the Almanor Basin Watershed Advisory Committee (ABWAC). ABWAC served as an advisory body to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors to address water quality, land use, and critical habitat issues in the Lake Almanor Basin. ABWAC ended their official relationship with the Board of Supervisors in 2013 but continues to pursue the original mission as LAWG.
- LAWG members recognized an opportunity to expand their scope and fold in other stakeholders to collaborate on watershed management.
  - The current meetings are operating as an unfunded effort, although, there is no shortage of interest or opportunity for collaboration amongst participants.

### Summary of Outcomes

- N. Kent discussed a CAL FIRE grant that he and Sierra Institute submitted a proposal for since the last meeting. The proposal was for approximately \$4 million but was ultimately not funded.
- N. Kent also described an opportunity to utilize the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) with CAL FIRE and the US Forest Service. GNA enables national forests to enter into agreements with state agencies to implement activities on federal lands using state, federal, or private funding.
  - There is a field tour planned for July 26<sup>th</sup> to assess the area and discuss opportunities. **Action Item: N. Kent** to share outcomes of July 26<sup>th</sup> Almanor West field tour
- Another grant proposal was submitted to the PG&E communities program for facilitation/coordination funds.

### Project Ideas

- N. Kent described some specific areas identified for treatment including:
  - The entire west shore of Lake Almanor
  - Linking fuel breaks on private (commercial) land
  - Meadow restoration projects in collaboration with Tehama County RCD
- M. Mitzel noted that SPI is very interested in “connecting the dots” – it is important that the fuel breaks go across boundaries.
  - The concept of “fireshed” was raised. It is another way of thinking about the landscape to address wildfire risk.
- E. Stemmerman said there is \$3 million available from the Storrie Fire; the money is not restricted in its use. This group should consider the possibilities for leveraging the Storrie funds and invest in all-lands work.

- C. Espana mentioned the need for a fuelbreak on the Almanor peninsula. There is forestland that was intended for residences, however, it is currently not in use.
  - Participants recommended speaking with the Plumas Fire Safe Council, as well as talking with property owners in proximity to the planned fuelbreak.
- C. Felts spoke about the IRWM. There is potential for funding activities related to forest and watershed health. This group can have an impact on the ultimate direction of the funding.
- K. Roby discussed a draft assessment of the fisheries in the Feather River basin. The assessment identifies priority areas for habitat protection and improvement. Whirling disease, affecting trout populations, was discovered in Goodrich Creek; preventing the spread of the disease to Mountain Meadows and Almanor is a priority. Much of the fisheries improvement will require partnerships to implement.
  - Vincent Rogers, lead fellow on the fisheries assessment, will present the findings to LAWG on September 13<sup>th</sup>. **Action Item: Sierra Institute** to send announcement of fisheries assessment presentation.
- J. Mateljak spoke about LVNP's current projects and how they interconnect.
  - Northwest Gateway, on the north side of Manzanita Lake, has had ongoing mechanical thinning to mitigate wildfire risk. The park has implemented 450 acres so far and another 800 acres will go out to bid in fall 2017.
  - On the south side, Flatiron Ridge and Sifford Lakes are project areas that could be combined with LNF and other ownerships for collaborative projects.
- K. Holbrook discussed the Maidu Summit Consortium's (MSC) interest in collaboration.
  - The MSC is developing land management goals for the Humbug Valley property. There is potential to incorporate this area into fuelbreak connectivity.
  - MSC has acquired 160 acres off HWY 89 towards Butt Valley. Part of the vision for this area is to have it serve as a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) demonstration site.
- J. Kusel noted the unique opportunity to integrate TEK as part of the guiding principles of this collaborative group.
  - J. Richardson also mentioned the NPS commitment to partner with tribes – to share knowledge and provide employment opportunities.

### Funding Opportunities

- L. Campbell discussed the SNC Prop 1 grants and answered questions. SNC has \$25 million to award throughout the Sierra Nevada.
- What is the timeline for expenditure of the funds?

- The timeline for expenditure is three years long at least.
- CEQA considerations:
  - CEQA needs to be completed for SNC funding.
  - If there is a project with NEPA completed, SNC can be asked to complete the CEQA; however, projects with CEQA completed will have an advantage.
- Category II grants are also available for planning purposes. There is a prime example of a Category II funded project in the Genesee valley, which has subcontracted Plumas Audubon to complete the survey work.
- Other funding opportunities include CAL FIRE State Responsibility Area (SRA) funds. These funds are limited to the protection of habitable structures. USFS land may not apply in all cases.
- Plumas and Lassen Resource Advisory Committees (RACS) are accepting proposals for Title II funds. The deadlines for proposals are in mid–August, 2017.

#### Project Ideas II

- Almanor West was mentioned again. The project is very visible (near roads and campgrounds) and is relatively easy to implement.
  - Participants generally supported going forward with the work on Almanor West as proposed by N. Kent.
- E. Stemmerman spoke from the USFS perspective, saying there is no NEPA currently done on the west shore of Almanor, but there is definitely interest in accomplishing it.
  - Collaboration will be essential to complete the NEPA. The Almanor District does not have the capacity to complete NEPA on the west shore at this time.
- L. Corral added there are additional opportunities for stewardship contracting in Almanor West. If the projects can be completed economically (i.e. with timber value) the receipts can be reinvested into other restoration activities.
- J. Kusel addressed the need for balance between landscape planning and implementing projects quickly. There is a recognized need from the majority of participants that a long-term strategy for the region should be in place. That said, there should be ongoing tangible efforts that keep people motivated and interested in group activities.

#### Next Steps

- The group asked agency staff (USFS and NPS) to provide GIS layers at the next strategic planning meeting to facilitate planning discussions.

- R. Tompkins described a comprehensive map created by the Plumas National Forest that shows past, current, and planned project boundaries.
- **Action Item: Agency (USFS and NPS) staff** to provide GIS layers for planning discussion at the next strategic planning meeting. **Action Item: Sierra Institute** to schedule call with agency staff to coordinate GIS layer acquisition.
- Several participants agreed that PG&E should be present at future meetings. Joe Wilson was identified as a good contact for this group. **Action Item: Sierra Institute** to contact PG&E representatives regarding attendance at SLWG meetings.
- There was some discussion on the official name of the group.
  - South Lassen Watersheds Group may unintentionally denote a focus on Lassen County specifically.
  - **Action Item: All participants** to brainstorm potential names for the group.

#### Closing Remarks

- K. Holbrook discussed an initiative of the MSC to document efficiencies in the service program around tribal consultation. Ideally, MSC would like to create a process that is efficient, standardized, and professional. **Future Meeting Topic: Tribal consultation process.**
- Sierra Institute staff were asked to make the previous meeting notes available online. Also, there was a request to share contact information of meeting attendees for offline conversations. **Action Item: Sierra Institute** to share previous meeting notes online. **Action Item: Sierra Institute** to share approved contact list of participants.