

Meeting Synopsis

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group (BHCCFWG) met in October to continue discussing the development of a strategic plan. The meeting kicked off with an introduction from the new acting Lassen Forest Supervisor, Chris Schow. Group members provided updates regarding the status of the Manzanita Chutes, Crossroad, and Burney Gardens projects. A subcommittee formed to discuss opportunities for more flexible funding for prescribed fire programs, and the group discussed the challenges of obtaining carbon modeling for the Fall River RCD's application to the California Climate Investments grant program. The group identified the need to include more private and state project information in the draft strategic plan and will continue to advance its development.

Attendees

Dan Bell
Janine Book
Steve Buckley
Michelle Coppoletta
Kristy Hoffman

Pete Johnson
Chantz Joyce
Jonathan Kusel
Andrew Lee
Jason Mateljak

Greg Mayer
Joe Puentes
Patricia Puterbaugh
Chris Schrow
Todd Sloat

Action Items

- J. Book to send an electronic copy of the Plum EA to K. Bourg to circulate with the full group. DONE
- T. Sloat to send draft MSA to J. Book for review. DONE
- K. Bourg to schedule a fire funding subcommittee call. DONE
- G. Mayer to check with the enterprise team to determine time and cost for CCI modeling.
- D. Bell to send M. Coppoletta GIS data for the state park's thinning project to include in the Burney-Hat Creek Basins maps.
- K. Bourg to develop a new strategic planning draft to share with group before the next meeting.

Meeting Notes

Introduction/Approvals

- July meeting notes were approved with the modification that "green cell" is changed to "green sale" throughout.
- The October meeting agenda was approved with the following additions: Master Stewardship Agreement update, monitoring proposal announcement, and Sierra Nevada Conservancy funding.

Project Updates

Introduction of New Acting Forest Supervisor

- Chris Schow, the new acting forest supervisor, moved into the position the previous week and acknowledged the challenge facing Lassen National Forest having gone through three acting supervisors in 2018. C. Schow comes to the Lassen from the regional office as Deputy Director of Fire and Aviation Management. He expressed intent to provide consistency with previous

supervisors, beginning with spending time with Lassen National Forest staff and attending the collaborative meeting, and helping the forest and partners to maintain work.

- J. Kusel gave a brief history overview of the group for C. Schow's reference.

Manzanita Chutes

- Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) used internal dollars to implement road engineering work. In a recent conversation with MDF, they expressed interest in pursuing additional implementation dollars to implement Manzanita Chutes through a statewide application for California Climate Investments (CCI). **Future Meetings Topic:** What is the best strategy for Manzanita Chutes implementation.
- G. Mayer shared about the recreational opportunities in the plantation site, and referenced the adjacent sledding park and bathroom/parking facilities. Roads in the site will be maintained as level 1 and designated for nonmotorized vehicle use only.
 - G. Mayer has started to funnel money in to both projects, hoping it will allow them to move forward. One component of the project involves engineering road system to navigate the plantation. The plantation is adjacent to a sledding park, and facilities such as restrooms and parking could be used for recreation.

Crossroads

T. Sloat discussed the Crossroads project as it currently demonstrates the challenges associated with having broad partnerships where Forest Service (FS) and partners have different priorities. For example, writing the Proposed Action Purpose Need (PAPN) for the Whaleback fire salvage was made priority by FS, changing the schedule of the originally proposed activities for the crossroads project.

- The Whaleback CE is out for scoping, and a decision should be made shortly--hopefully January. With the changes in scheduling, SNC funds were readjusted so that the RCD could meet the schedule. T. Sloat noted that having an EA completed in the springtime would be ambitious, and it hasn't been decided yet whether crossroads will be an EA or CE. J. Book and T. Sloat agreed they would be happy to see it as a CE. There is a new fuels category template that may give more flexibility in the Farm Bill regarding insect and disease. In terms of timing, if scoping goes out in January, the EA vs CE decision will be known in February.
- The wildlife survey has been completed; however, the timeline regarding the archaeology survey is unclear. The Fall River RCD was under the impression that the arch survey would be completed and finalized by the Forest Service. J. Book noted complications in getting it done, and offered that FS may be able to conduct the survey in the spring or next field season. T. Sloat mentioned that the RCD did not budget for the archaeology survey and would have to find funds to backfill. About 400 acres need to be surveyed; it's the report writing that is the larger challenge.
- P. Puterbaugh recognized that the conversation about whether crossroads would be a CE started 1-2 years ago.
- G. Mayer asked if the FS could switch the PAPN over the RCD? T. Sloat responded that it is a possibility. If funding is a challenge, it would have to be caught up in the environmental analysis.
- The group discussed the tradeoff with bringing on a new writer vs. someone familiar with the project. T. Sloat is most inclined to get the archaeology survey completed sooner, and is hopeful that Bobette will be freed in January to have it finalized by April or May.

Burney Gardens Update

C. Joyce gave a brief update on the fee title for Burney Gardens.

- Recommendations will be presented to the board in January.

- The RCD's intent is to redo the Timber Harvest Plan (THP) because it has expired. One challenge regards the different private landowners that will also require an updated THP for work.
- G. Costello added that the Burney Gardens meadow restoration project completed 2 years ago looks good.
- Bernie Gyant (FS Deputy Regional Forester) is looking to work with Sierra Pacific Industries where lands are adjacent for restoring spotted owl habitat; Burney Gardens is a good example of that already happening.

SCALE Meeting Reminder

J. Kusel reminded the group about the Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement (SCALE) meeting scheduled on the following Monday-Tuesday in Weaverville. This will be one of SCALE's first regional meetings; the goal is to offer regional meetings as well as meetings in Sacramento with a policy focus.

Plum Update

The draft EA will be sent for scoping in the upcoming weeks; it is currently sitting at the writer editor's office. **Action Item:** J. Book will send an electronic copy to K. Bourg to send to the full group. The collaborative offered to submit a letter of support if needed.

Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) Update

Todd has developed draft MSA for the Fall RCD, modeled after the template used for the Pit RCD.

Action Item: T. Sloat will send the draft MSA to J. Book to review.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Update

K. Hoffman provided an update on SNC programs and funding.

- Proposition 68 passed in June. In addition to forest health grants, SNC is working on grant guidelines for land conservation projects, which currently has a funding pool of \$8 million. SNC will be hosting a grant guideline workshop in Redding on November 5th.
- There is currently \$1.6 million for recreation and tourism. SNC is also working to develop a capacity building direct funding program (i.e., awards will not be made through a competitive grant process). They are looking to support projects that are collaborative in nature; project concepts will have to go before the board in December to hit the ground in January.
- If proposition 3 passes in November, SNC would receive \$250 million for forest health projects.

Fire Funding

The group discussed the status of fire safe councils in Lassen, Plumas, and Shasta. There is not currently a fire safe council in Shasta County. A. Lee mentioned that there is interest in forming one, and NRCS has been contracting third parties for planning and oversight for implementation.

- The group discussed the current support for prescribed fire programs. Are there revolving funds to support prescribed fire? In terms of SNC funds, there is not anything outside of the regular grant program. K. Hoffman will explore options; however, SNC does not typically support entities through general operating funds.
- S. Buckley mentioned LVNP's model of having a revolving fund where prescription rolls onto the next person. **Future Agenda Item:** Revolving funds
- The group determined that, if needed, BHCCFWG can submit a letter of support to SNC to consider a more flexible program for funding prescribed burning activities, recreation, and tourism.
- The group decided to form a subcommittee to continue the fire funding conversation, discuss the fluidity to move resources quickly to where they are most productive, and determine the most

appropriate scale. C. Schow offered to share his knowledge of the Region's current program for fire funds. **Action Item:** K. Bourg to schedule a fire funding subcommittee call (Chris, Todd, Kristy, Michelle, Steve, Jason).

CCI application

T. Sloat provided a quick update on the CCI proposal progress. A few members of the team participated in a call a couple weeks prior to discuss challenges with the modeling effort. Lindsay, who was helping with the carbon modeling will be leaving Lassen National Forest, requiring that another means for completing carbon modeling be established.

- M. Coppoletta suggested contacting the Spatial Informatics Group, which offers carbon modeling and other GIS analyses. It would also be beneficial to bring Jason Ko back into the conversation.
- T. Sloat reported that Chris Christofferson is working to get a silviculturalist on the Modoc trained.
- The group discussed and questioned the process for considering support to hire external contractors—what can we do with our current agreements that we have in place?
 - G. Mayer suggested taking money from one project to put into another. In terms of contracting, the FS would likely have to go through the enterprise program. **Action Item:** G. Mayer to check with the enterprise team to determine time and cost.
 - T. Sloat emphasized the short timeline with fulfilling all the components of the CCI grant, and stressed the urgency to know whether enterprise teams have the capacity and understand the consequences of shifting funds. C. Schow is unsure of the tradeoffs. G. Mayer noted that the enterprise teams are likely understaffed, and recommended looking at all mechanisms to weigh the cost.
 - J. Book expressed curiosity if this issue is happening region-wide and whether there is a mechanism at the regional level. Someone recommended that Joe Sherlock might be a good contact.

Strategic Planning Discussion—part I

K. Bourg reviewed the draft plan that she compiled and that others reviewed. She requested feedback and other area that need attention.

- G. Mayer noted that it came out very good. M. Coppoletta suggested clarifying how guiding principles and objectives were distinct from one another.
- S. Buckley suggested adding the Northwest gate project to the project list, and to include the park service in the list of partners.
- Other components to add include: Timber Harvest Plans, private project areas, projects with CCI grant funding, other partners' projects, prescribed fire, watersheds, recreation and tourism. **Action Item:** K. Bourg to develop another draft before the next meeting, one that is tighter and more reflective of everyone in the group.
- P. Johnson recommended matching projects with objectives.
- **Action Item:** K. Bourg to send out updated strategic plan draft prior to the next meeting.

Map Presentation by Michelle Coppoletta

M. Coppoletta presented multiple maps she developed based on a wish list of elements from the collaborative. Maps included: Wildfire Risk within the Burney Hat Creek Basins CFLRP (Burn Probability odds and Flame length); USDA Forest Service, Forest Health Protection: Treatment Priority Map on slopes greater than 35% and less than 35%; Hazardous Fuels Treatments Accomplished between 2001-2018; Thinning

Treatments Accomplished between 1999-2018; Fire History in the CFLRP; and Fire Return Interval Departure.

- M. Coppoletta discussed the challenges for the FS to share interactive maps through arc GIS online; PDF format is currently the best way to share maps. Links to corporate data are available for online download on the FS Geodata clearinghouse.
- G. Mayer noted that they are beginning to geo reference pdfs to post on the website, which can be downloaded on Avenza to navigate projects. Maps available on the following weblink: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/lassen/landmanagement/gis/?cid=FSEPRD571517>
- M. Coppoletta asked about how the collaborative uses the mapping information, and whether there is demand for overview maps or access to the data. Both forms of access are appropriate for members of the collaborative, as the ability to manipulate the data to answer immediate questions can be useful.
- M. Coppoletta drafted two briefs to describe information displayed on the maps. **Action Item:** M. Coppoletta to share pdf maps and summary briefs with K. Bourg to circulate with the full group.
- C. Schow commented on the risk assessment work at the regional level, which is influencing the forest plan revision assessment on the Lassen, encouraging management of fire in a way that identifies risk. Where landscape is burning far less, bring prescribed fire into those areas.
- D. Bell noted that the state park began thinning projects the previous week. **Action Item:** D. Bell to send M. Coppoletta thinning project information to include in the map.
- The group discussed wanting to also include projects on private lands and other agencies on the maps to support the group's landscape-level objectives. Before sharing data, check in with M. Coppoletta on the format.
- C. Schow noted that an anchor point for this conversation might be with Chris O'Brien's work to develop a memorandum of understanding with SPI regarding spotted owl preservation. The goal is to work in concert with SPI, including sharing of mapping information.
- J. Kusel attended a meeting a few weeks ago with all the major timber landowners in the north state, noting that a map inclusive of all projects is doable. Maps can tell a powerful story, and sharing data across landownerships could increase protection across the landscape for wildlife protection, including the general owl population.
- S. Buckley noted that consistency is key, as well as inclusion of adjacent lands. The South Lassen landscape is 600,000 acres. From the LVNP's standpoint, it's a matter of what flows north and what flows south. Considerations of adjacent lands are important as we talk about these landscape scale efforts, and are important for resource advising. More detailed maps can be made available to fire managers, supporting multiple objectives.
- Someone noted that data sharing across land ownerships might be a SCALE issue.
- The group discussed the possibility for NRCS to aid with GIS data sharing; however, there are strict restrictions on privacy protection. There may be opportunity to generalize information as reports are aggregated to people on the county level scale.
 - Where confidentiality has been promised, it will be maintained; however, is there a possibility to develop information with the knowledge of how it will be used? This becomes an issue of outreach and how to best articulate the value of the data, one of which is that it contributes to the ability to leverage funding.
 - Returning to viewing the map, the group discussed priority treatment areas. Highest priority contains areas historically pine dominated with mixed conifer that have converted to primarily conifer, and second priority is fir dominated areas with high density.

- All thanked Michelle for producing the maps. J. Kusel encouraged the group to think about the best way to pull together the different strategic planning efforts together (e.g., maps, objectives, etc.)

Strategic Planning II

J. Kusel presented the question, how ought we be thinking about projects in terms of timing and landscape priorities?

- J. Book raised concern about the Badger project, expressing uncertainty in how it will materialize. The project would benefit from a cooperative ID team field trip. Perhaps Badger ought to be a joint Forest Service-National Park Service project.
- G. Mayer recalled putting Badger on hold for five years when the Reading fire came through. At that point in time, the FS was well on track to complete NEPA and the PAPN; the stand exams were completed but the project paused. The FS consulted an enterprise team to figure out what amount of acreage was burned at moderate or less and to determine appropriate next steps. FS is hoping to have the information by next year.
- In terms of CCI projects, T. Sloat summarized the goal to advance the projects put into the CCI proposal, and besought ideas for including any other projects (park projects, private projects, etc.) that could strengthen the list.
- The group discussed the Backbone project and the lengthy planning process. Mule Deer Foundation is looking to put more money into Manzanita Chutes. Mule Deer Foundation is looking for implementation projects to support; in the Plum project the mahogany sage area is of interest, but will take effort to restore so that deer and elk are using for habitat range.
- J. Kusel recognized how the group toggles back and forth between landscape scale and individual projects. How do we look at this suite of projects over the next 10-20-30 years? How does it play into the forest plan revision?
- Some questions group members posed included: Are we mixing apples and oranges with projects needing NEPA and having NEPA already? Why aren't we putting the whole CFLR as the project? Why are we individually naming projects and not the whole landscape?
- C. Schow wondered how the deliberations of the group influences the forest plan revision. He noted that risk assessments from the fire standpoint of new forest plan undergoing revisions aligns well with what he has heard thus far at this meeting. Old forest plans did not have as rigorous of a fire element. But bringing fire as an ecological objective aligns well with the forest plan, working toward "the whole enchilada."
- Currently the CCI application calls for the identification and carbon modeling of individuals projects. The group wondered if it is possible to model the entire watershed. The individual project approach is likely to more easily measure carbon benefit and other outcomes.
- S. Buckley discussed that a big component is research, and that if there are research dollars, perhaps the group ought to identify projects that need stand exams. Perhaps the whole landscape could be included in a stand exam, however, the portion of the watershed that is out of the range of variability should be considered. Stand exams can be done with ground base lidar. **Future Meeting Topic:** Identify areas in need of stand exams.
- J. Kusel asked how might the group best think about these issues, noting that the group is challenged to discuss in depth without adequate time. Perhaps a first step is to respond to those things that have the highest priority with consensus of the group supporting it.
- The group discussed the priority status of the Eiler-Bald re-plantation, Backbone-planning, and Tamarack-road fuel break. The Bald and Eiler interval for reentry for burning is 8-10 years out now.

Backbone has value and can generate receipts to develop new projects, representing an opportunity to be a demonstration forest.

- Whittington should be completed and marked by the end of November; FS anticipates to execute the timber sale next year.

J. Kusel presented the question, is there a sufficient number of projects on the landscape? Are there other projects the group wants to pursue?

- There is some disagreement about whether a sufficient number of projects are identified. Some perceive that the landscape is covered in projects while others believe there are still many projects that have yet to be planned, such as one in the Thousand Lakes area.
- One member recognized the value to begin talking about the projects in terms of timing, with less focus on having to agree about “the where.” There is a pacing issue and a “how-to” conversation.
- G. Mayer added that in terms of challenges with timing, FS has spent 12 years on N49 project. Though there is a NEPA, the project is still not done. The question remains of how to increase the pace and scale on these projects. G. Mayer added that it is difficult to look outside of the projects already in the queue when there is already a timeline challenge. How can work best balance addressing wildfire risk and maintaining wildlife habitat in optimal time.
- T. Sloat and J. Kusel recommend a day meeting to strategize and determine the bottlenecks. One bottleneck is that the forest’s targets don’t always align with the district’s targets. **Future Meeting**
- Next steps the group discussed include:
 - Identify where there are opportunities to expand work.
 - Secure resources to get CCI application moving.
 - Establish NEPA crews.
- G. Mayer apologized regarding barriers to projects stemming from FS timelines and lacking capacity, and noted that some projects (e.g., Backbone) might benefit from having collaborative complete them.
- J. Book noted that forest, district, and regional targets have to be met, and that the district has to pace work so that they can deliver. There is benefit in identifying projects that are not solely on forest service land; there are other opportunities to restore the landscape.

Outreach

- G. Costello proposed that the group develop 3-5 messages that each partner can consistently present about the collaborative mission on media outlets.
- G. Costello also proposed the idea to plan a volunteer day for pulling weeds with the collaborative and community members.
- Questions for the group to consider: What is the group’s recruitment strategy? How does the group get more private landholders at the table? What do they come away with?

Closing Remarks, Next Steps

- J. Book requested that at the next meeting the group discuss the future of the CFLR and what the group may need to do to ensure that it is included in the next budget. Additionally, the group should discuss a plan for if BHCCCFWG does not receive CFLR support once the current 10-years expires.