



South Lassen Watersheds Group Planning Meeting X
 Tuesday, December 4th; Almanor Recreation Center, 11:00 - 14:00

Meeting Synopsis

The South Lassen Watersheds Group (SLWG) met in Chester, CA to discuss the group’s Memorandum of Understanding, the work of the Maidu Summit Consortium (MSC), and opportunities for collaboration among stakeholder groups.

Attendees

Steve Buckley	Lassen Volcanic National Park	Les Hall	MSC
Ryan Burnett	Point Blue Conservation Science	Ken Holbrook	MSC
Laura Corral	Lassen National Forest	Nils Lunder	Feather River Land Trust
Ben Cunningham	Maidu Summit Consortium (MSC)	Dan Martynn	Natural Resources Conservation Service
Carlos Espana	Almanor Recreation and Park District	Trish Puterbaugh	Lassen Forest Preservation Group
Carl Felts	Lake Almanor Watershed Group; Upper Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management	Ken Roby	Feather River Trout Unlimited
Lorena Gorbet	MSC	Alisha Wilson	MSC
Brad Graevs	Feather River Resource Conservation District		

Action Items

The Sierra Institute will:

- Notify all stakeholders of revisions to the MOU and collect electronic signatures
- Assist in the production of a brief (1-3 pages) guiding document regarding Maidu Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in the context of SLWG
- Convene a natural resource/plant propagation subcommittee meeting
- Circulate the SLWG mailing list omitting those who would like to be excluded

Meeting Opening

Previous meeting notes (September, 2018) and the meeting’s agenda were accepted by a vote.

For future meetings, the Sierra Institute will print a hard copy of the previous meeting’s minutes in addition to circulating via email.

Meeting objectives were established and included continuing a conversation that has been ongoing - both within the group and the strategic planning subcommittee - regarding engagement of the MSC and their work, and meaningful integration of Maidu TEK.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The most recent version of the MOU was presented to the group for approval. Though the MOU can be revised at a future date, a signed MOU provides the group and associated stakeholders additional legitimacy in funds applications. Furthermore, the MOU commits stakeholders to working cooperatively and building consensus.

MSC representatives sought clarification regarding interaction of the organization with the SLWG based upon existing MOU language. Maidu TEK is a thought pattern and philosophy that is specific to the Maidu people and the MSC would like to see this explicitly recognized. It was agreed upon that the existing reference to TEK be amended to include “Maidu people.” The resulting text, with highlighted revision, reads: “In project planning and implementation, participating members agree both to seek integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge **of the Maidu people**, and to work with other stakeholder groups as appropriate.” It was determined that this revision is in keeping with the spirit of the document, providing clarification for, rather than altering the meaning of, the existing language.

As discussed, the mention of TEK does not imply that each SLWG project incorporate this set of practices, rather that Maidu TEK is a component of the overall landscape vision of the group via the MSC’s involvement, and that individual projects may incorporate this approach to a greater or lesser extent based on the MSC’s engagement with, and capacity for, that particular project. MSC representatives indicated that the properties they will manage will utilize TEK singularly and universally and that, though the approach and philosophy might bleed into the work of other groups, the MSC does not currently have the capacity to provide consultation to each landowner and associated project.

A few final clarifications were made. The first was regarding the “Forests, Fuels, and Fire” section of the MOU. It was agreed upon that “watershed health” in item 4 implicitly includes “forest health,” as the term “watershed” is meant to incorporate all biotic and abiotic components therein. The second clarification was in regards to the term “managed wildfire.” It was determined that this encompasses any use of fire to meet management objectives, including anthropogenic (i.e., prescribed) fire. No revisions were made to these portions of the document.

The MOU as presented, with the aforementioned revision, was unanimously accepted by the group. **Stakeholders not present at the meeting will be made aware of this revision and presented with a final copy when asked for signature.** It was agreed that the MOU will *not* be revised periodically due to attendant logistical complexities for those requiring formal organizational review. *It is incumbent upon those signatories who would like to suggest changes to the MOU to present these revisions to the group and/or to the Sierra Institute for inclusion on a future agenda.*

It was recognized that the accepted revision does not fully address the original concern (i.e., a clearer illustration of the interaction between the MSC and TEK practice and the SLWG group). However, the established purpose of the MOU is to create specific meaning for the group with sufficient generality to be applicable to all stakeholders. Rather than more explicitly addressing Maidu TEK within the MOU, the SLWG, under the leadership of the MSC, will create a

document that better defines Maidu TEK within the context of the group, as well as the group's goals in engaging with this philosophy.

MSC representatives requested further clarification regarding the nature of planning and project development within the SLWG, specifically whether there would be a SLWG plan which determines the administration of all projects or whether SLWG project endorsement and affiliation is more informal. The SLWG is undergoing strategic planning efforts with the aim of increasing cohesion between projects, but there is no requirement that individual stakeholders pursue projects within the context of that plan. Additionally, the SLWG has explicitly recognized in their MOU that landowners must manage based upon their own unique requirements, and that their involvement in SLWG does not compel them to undertake certain actions. Signing the MOU does, however, represent a good faith effort that the stakeholder will come to the table and work to build consensus.

MSC Presentation

**Note: A field tour to the Tásmam Kojóm site was originally planned. However, based on road conditions and visibility, the group opted to discuss related topics but postpone a field visit until spring.*

Introduction to Tásmam Kojóm

The MSC expects to be transferred fee title ownership of 2,325 acres near the west shore of Lake Almanor (Tásmam Kojóm Maidu Cultural Park) in early spring of 2019. In preparation for this land transfer from Pacific Gas & Electric (via the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council), the MSC is working to finalize a Land Management Plan (LMP). Project planning involves both contractors (e.g., Ascent Environmental) and TEK experts, including practitioners of Maidu descent and Maidu elders.

Goals and proposed actions

The property in question includes forest, meadow, and riparian acreage, all in need of restoration. The MSC's guiding principle in developing land management and restoration plans has been to envision the pre-European contact landscape and to develop a long-term plan that restores these conditions to the best of their ability. Restoration planning will be developed with the recognition that the landscape is an integrated whole.

Restoration work will begin with sanitation cutting and fuels reduction as a first step toward increasing forest health and heterogeneity, facilitating significant reductions in canopy cover, and reintroducing vegetative diversity in the understory. These actions will also help to achieve management goals related to native plant use, management for wildlife habitat, and the reintroduction of low- and moderate-intensity fire. The MSC plans to apply for additional SNC funds for implementation after approval of a Cal Fire non-industrial timber harvest plan exemption. This exemption covers harvesting activities targeting the removal of dead, dying, and diseased trees and/or aimed at reducing vertical and horizontal fuels continuity with positive impacts for fire spread and intensity.

The MSC plans to utilize plant stock to increase the abundance of native plants on site, including oak species. Impacts to meadow acreage, including conifer encroachment and the effects of overgrazing and road development on vegetative success, will also be addressed using a variety of techniques.

Application of Maidu TEK

In response to a question regarding the use of mastication and other modern forestry techniques to achieve restoration goals (as outlined in the Forest Management Impact Assessment), MSC representatives shared that the pace and scale required to meaningfully restore this landscape necessitates the use of a broad range of techniques. Fundamentally, Maidu TEK is a suite of techniques and applications guided by a philosophy, and its use at this site will require that TEK practitioners spend time on the land and allow the experience to speak to them. However, the current condition of the land necessitates triage work capable of creating baseline conditions conducive to more traditional practices. Thinning, chipping, piling and burning, mastication, and other techniques are needed to open the forest sufficiently to allow for safe burning and to facilitate other management goals, including understory diversity and wildlife habitat.

Public engagement

The Tásmam Kojóm Maidu Cultural Park will serve as a demonstration site for the process of a Tribe reclaiming and restoring ancestral lands with local community involvement. The MSC hopes to engage interested parties throughout the region and state in the restoration work being done at the site. To this end, interpretive infrastructure will be incorporated within a 10% development envelope, including campsites, an amphitheater, cabins, and a visitor's center. A trail network will also be developed.

Local plant materials

MSC representatives made mention of a plan to install a temporary, mobile greenhouse on site. Various stakeholders have a vested interest in local seed production and there is existing infrastructure in Plumas County and the surroundings, much of which is underutilized. Additionally, some stakeholders have existing funding that could be utilized to support student interns or other staffing assistance, though it was recognized that a facility capable of providing materials to multiple organizations would likely require some full-time staff.

Much of the existing infrastructure is associated with the Plumas Unified School District and Feather River College. New and existing opportunities abound for the involvement of local youth in seed production, both as a means of education and a step toward regional professionalization of plant materials work. **A meeting with interested parties will be convened to develop a strategic vision and next steps.**

Additional opportunities for engagement

Various stakeholders offered the assistance of their organizations in achieving the MSC's stated goals. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can assist in facilitating pre- and non-commercial work upon the completion of property transfer.

Lassen Volcanic National Park (LVNP) is a unique source of higher-elevation native plants in the region, traditionally utilized by the Maidu people. LVNP also contains sites of spiritual importance to the Maidu people. MSC representatives noted that a large amount of cultural resources from the Prattville area are held by the NPS. The MSC would like to see this issue addressed.

MSC representatives shared that SLWG stakeholders interested in increasing their engagement and collaboration with the MSC are invited to that organization's board meetings. Board meetings take place the second Tuesday of the month from 1:00 - 3:00p at the MSC office in Chester (289 Main Street Chester, CA 96020).

Closing Remarks

Action items were established as listed on page 1 of meeting minutes. A Doodle poll will be circulated to establish the next meeting date.