

BURNEY-HAT CREEK COMMUNITY FOREST & WATERSHED GROUP  
MEETING NOTES; MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2019; 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

## Meeting Synopsis

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met for a full-group meeting on Monday, March 11, 2019. The group discussed the use of Stewardship and Fire Assessment to model the effects of treatments. The group had a strategic planning session looking at all projects on the landscape, and signed a Letter of Support for Designation by Prescription as an avenue to address Forest Service personnel capacity.

## Attendees

Steve Buckley  
Michelle Coppoletta  
Garrett Costello  
Pam Giacommini  
Max Haney  
Kristy Hoffman

Pete Johnson  
Jonathan Kusel  
Andrew Lee  
Dean Lofthus  
Debbie Mayer  
Greg Mayer

Jeff Oldson  
Jim Richardson  
Mary Rickert  
Hilary Sanders  
Todd Sloat

## Action Items

- G. Mayer to send Letter of Support (LOS) for continued CFLR funding.
- M. Haney to check in with Ed Murphy regarding obtaining a fuelbreaks layer. If Ed cannot provide layer, then K. Hoffman to check in with John Tangenberg.
- J. Kusel to share Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) for marking crew with T. Sloat.
- H. Sanders to mail LOS for designation by prescription to Forest Supervisor on the Lassen NF.
- G. Costello to edit logo designs for H. Sanders to circulate.
- H. Sanders to schedule subcommittee call with S. Buckley, M. Haney, D. Lofthus, G. Mayer, J. Richardson, regarding spring tour.

## Meeting Notes

### Approvals and Modifications

- January meeting notes approved with the modification to note that Fruit Growers Association has a Large Scale Master Stream Bid Alteration Agreement in the Institutionalizing NEPA section.
- March meeting agenda approved.

### Project and Partner Updates

- J. Kusel and G. Mayer introduced Chris Christofferson, not present, as Acting Forest Supervisor on the Lassen National Forest (NF), usually District Ranger on the Big Valley Ranger District on the Modoc NF. The furlough delayed a permanent Forest Supervisor position being flown.
- While Janine Book is Acting District Ranger in Shasta Lake Recreational Area, Joe Hoffman is Acting District Ranger on the Hat Creek Ranger District.
- H. Sanders is taking Kaily Bourg's position with the group, as well as assisting with CFLR Socioeconomic Monitoring.
- MSA update: G. Mayer submitted a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) with Fall River Resource Conservation District (RCD) two weeks before the meeting, and resubmitted the day before the meeting to provide more information requested by Grants and Agreements. The Lassen NF already has MSAs with Sierra Institute and Mule Deer Foundation.
  - T. Sloat clarified that Crossroads is under the Mule Deer Foundation MSA and will be transferred to Fall River RCD if successful. There may also be California Climate Investment (CCI) funds available for additional support.

- G. Mayer commented that Forest Service (FS) resources have decreased. There once were 60 people other than fire staff. Resource staff totals three. Agreements allow FS to work with partners in different ways to bring money in and do work on the ground.
- GNA Workshop: T. Sloat reviewed the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)/Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) workshop in Sacramento. Both are flexible agreements allowing partners to work with the FS. T. Sloat estimated 150 people in attendance with equal FS staff and partners.
  - Takeaway: Washington Office and Regional Office resolved that timber sale revenue can be used for NEPA planning.
  - Takeaway: FS wants to increase pace and scale but don't have necessary staff, so need to find ways to get additional help.
- Plum: The Forest Supervisor approved the EA and Draft Decision Notice/FONSI. Formal objection period begins Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>. The Center for Biological Diversity wrote a letter and G. Mayer expects they will comment. Lassen NF is starting work with Lassen Volcanic National Park on a new project, Badger, and hopes to continue increasing pace and scale.
- A. Lee said that Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working on the new Farm Bill.
- Burney Hat Creek Basin CFLR Project: There is \$70 million in CFLR funds to be distributed to three collaboratives in California over five years. Collaboratives may receive funding for five years, two years, or not at all. G. Mayer expects BHCCFWG will be funded for two or five years.
  - J. Kusel expects the region will support collaboratives in some way if not through CFLRP.

#### **Prescribed Fire/Stewardship and Fireshed Assessment**

- K. Hoffman presented the opportunity for group members to submit prescribed fire projects to SNC to compile for CALFIRE crews to complete. CALFIRE will work through a list of projects. Projects could be part of another plan and there is a possibility CALFIRE would get to it first.
  - Information needed includes acreage, whether pile burning, best burn season, NEPA/CEQA status, other funding sources, and can be on public or private land.
  - D. Mayer brought up that CALFIRE has six fire use crews to do these projects. D. Lofthus said that will increase to 10 crews. Each crew member is a fully trained fire boss, although how many people on each crew is unclear.
- M. Rickert announced upcoming events: Board of Forestry meeting March 13<sup>th</sup> 3-7 pm, Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) Scoping Meeting March 18<sup>th</sup> 10 am-12 pm, and community defensible space workshop March 26<sup>th</sup>, all at Shasta County Board of Supervisors' Chambers.
- S. Buckley introduced a paper from Pacific Southwest Research Station, *Stewardship and fireshed assessment: a process for designing a landscape fuel treatment strategy*, as a starting point for talking about Stewardship and Fireshed Assessment (SFA), a process for analyzing data in the context of prioritization and decision making. SFA is an iterative model that can be automated and built into ARCGIS. Stakeholders and modelers digitally model fire behavior with different treatments to find the most significant impacts on the landscape. There is a need to start thinking beyond a few big projects about what we want to see in 5-10 years, working through issues, and challenging assumptions.
  - D. Mayer pointed out that many models were run for fire in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, but that is not representative of how hot fires are now. Sierra National Forest ran hotter models in the 97<sup>th</sup> or 98<sup>th</sup> percentile. M. Coppoletta said that the most recent modeling included private land and was modeled on 90<sup>th</sup>. There was a question of whether it would be useful to ask the Regional Office to run the models at 97<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  - There was discussion of the accuracy of the models (hard copy maps available at meeting). Several members agreed that models are useful as a comparative tool that help to think about relative risk and how to strategize. J. Oldson questioned the basic

assumptions of some of the models. D. Mayer pointed out that current models are based on the Rothmill spread equation from 1977 with some assumptions that don't reflect what's really on ground. J. Kusel maintained that models should not be relied upon exclusively but can be helpful especially in conjunction with knowledge of those familiar with the area, and can be essential to obtaining funding.

#### **Partnership Progress: Where We're at and Strategic Planning I**

- G. Mayer reported that a map has been completed for a six-forest veg program, a planning tool that allows resources to be moved around between six forests.
- CCI Update: T. Sloat reiterated that the Fall River RCD requested CCI Forest Health funds to include Crossroads, Manzanita Chutes, Jackrabbit THP, equipment purchase, and workforce training program with Shasta College.
- Crossroads Update: The Forest Service has completed survey work and will transition to partners to do NEPA. A draft Proposed Action, Purpose and Need (PAPN) is close to being completed. The process for Forest Service review is uncertain due to leadership changes.
  - LIDAR data is being used. There was some discussion of using data that was obtained using CFLR funds. M. Coppoletta offered to work with the data.
- Manzanita Chutes Update: The engineering contract has posed a challenge. Road system engineering supposed to be done Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>. The project is permitted and has some funding, and was included in the CCI application for funding for fuels treatment.
- The Letter of Support (LOS) for continued CFLR funding was reviewed, approved and signed.

**-Lunch-**

#### **Partnership Progress: Where We're At and Strategic Planning II**

- Two maps showing projects on the Lassen NF were displayed. G. Mayer gave updates of the status of some of the projects shown.
- There was a discussion of how to move projects forward in light of limited funding and personnel. G. Mayer said the goal is to do a mix of contract and agency marking. Plum is 800 acres of contract work and different types of jobs that timber sales won't pay for.
  - The Lassen NF has two markers on staff and no applicants this year. About 20 are needed. A three-member enterprise team was used but did not complete all work. G. Mayer is working to recruit from a local high school. D. Lofthus mentioned there is a general shortage, private industry is having trouble hiring as well.
  - T. Sloat mentioned a need for truck drivers and heavy equipment operators. An 8<sup>th</sup> grade forestry elective and future 11<sup>th</sup> grade natural resources/forestry class are being developed. M. Rickert suggested kids who do Forestry Challenge as a pool to tap into.
  - G. Mayer has five new hires, and will train one or two as silviculturists. However, hiring details for only four months is a challenge. J. Kusel suggested going to the regional office to explore options, and expressed the value of beginning to addressing bottlenecks.
  - Contracting with CFLR dollars is an option. J. Kusel suggested the Sierra Institute pilot marking crew as a way to get work done. He made it clear he was not trying to solicit work for Sierra Institute.
  - M. Haney suggested Designation by Prescription (D by P) as a way to get more work done. G. Mayer said contracting officers are resistant, but the next two projects (Plum and Whittington) will be D by P with a little marking
  - M. Coppoletta brought up the need to build internal capacity. Markers determine the future reality of the forest and need to make a livable wage especially as prescriptions

become more complex. The qualifications for GS5 are a combination of education and experience, and being a qualified cruiser. Shasta College has a two-year training program.

- There was a conversation surrounding FS capacity to provide specialist reports and review FS work done by partners. T. Sloat brought up the possibility of using CCI dollars to add cooperative positions to increase capacity. G. Mayer identified personnel as a challenge because Hat Creek only has one biologist. He also acknowledged the need to do FS work as well as assist/work with partners. Alternate authorities could allow someone else to sign off on things. J Kusel said he sees the agency learning about internal barriers, but there is a need for alternatives to get CCI work done.
- The conversation shifted back to the map and to Lassen Volcanic National Park (LVNP). J Richardson pointed out a circle of projects around LVNP, which represents a large-scale vision connecting the park to forest and private lands in strategic ways.
  - S. Buckley pointed out that LVNP has a vegetation staff of four for less than a quarter of the size of the Hat Creek Ranger District. LVNP focuses on preservation and constantly does research. They have shifted from looking at individual species to focusing on the system with Lassen as wilderness core, and want to return to fire as dominant driver. J. Richardson said the wilderness plan is two years on hold, and the Fire Management Plan covers the whole park any year. SPI is also moving toward landscape perspective.
- Every WUI and fuelbreak needs to be on map to show aggregative work and identify linkages and gaps. G. Mayer is working on a storyboard of all projects. **M. Haney will check with Ed Murphy to find a fuelbreak GIS layer. K. Hoffman can ask John Tangenberg if necessary.**
- G. Mayer said the FS will be contracting to complete work this year and will do IDIQ contracts or MSAs if they can't hire. S. Buckley mentioned that nonprofits can put in on IDIQs, which allow multiple contractors. T. Sloat said that if the group gets a CCI grant, they will have flexibility and everyone will be happy as long as 20% match is met. **J. Kusel offered to share the Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) Sierra Institute developed for a marking crew.**
- J. Oldson motioned to send a Letter of Support to the Forest Supervisor of the Lassen NF in support of Designation by Prescription to address the slow pace of work in light of an increase of high-severity fire. M. Haney seconded. Motion unanimously approved.
  - P. Giacommini left to print the letter to be signed before the end of the meeting.
- The Hat Creek Ranger District Recreation Program is having a hard time hiring. G. Costello is working one day per pay period to augment capacity. People are needed due to fire risk.
  - M. Coppoletta suggested looking into small grants for partnership funding for Wilderness Study Areas, although they do not cover hiring.

#### **Future of the CFLR**

- The group agreed that the Future of the CFLR was sufficiently covered in previous sections.

#### **Outreach Strategy/Public Events**

- Three draft logos were reviewed. **G. Costello will rework designs to review at the next meeting.**
- G. Costello proposed having a Facebook page with many admins so that different stakeholders can post regularly. **Further discussion was deferred to the next meeting.**
- The group will plan to do a Spring Tour early in the summer. Several options were mentioned, including tying in visits to nearby sites such as Backbone, Northwest Gateway, and Lost Creek. **S. Buckley, M. Haney, D. Lofthus, G. Mayer, and J. Richardson will form a subcommittee to plan.**
- G. Costello proposed including Whitmore Fire Safe Council. They are active on social media.
- **The Project Communication agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.**