

South Lassen Watersheds Group Meeting

Tuesday March 31, 1:00 - 3:30pm
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Synopsis

The South Lassen Watersheds Group met virtually for the first time to provide updates on California Climate Investment projects, share progress in mapping analysis and available information from 34 North and Deer Creek Resources, and discuss different approaches for increasing the pace and scale of work on the landscape.

Attendees

Ron Lunder – Mountain Meadows Conservancy
Zeke Lunder – Deer Creek Resources
Mila Bock – Sierra Institute
Laura Corral – Lassen National Forest
Michael Hall – Feather River RCD
Kyle Rodgers – Sierra Institute
Russell Nickerson – Lassen National Forest
Bennie Johnson – Collins Pine
Meredith Hackleman – Meadow Valley Fire Dep.
Ken Roby – Trout Unlimited – Feather River
Alisha Wilson – Maidu Summit Consortium
Noah Abramson – Sierra Institute
Wolfy Rougle – Butte County RCD
Paul Lackovic – Deer Creek Resources

Hannah Hepner – Plumas FireSafe Council
Trish Puterbaugh – Lassen Forest Preservation Group
Brad Graevs – Feather River RCD
Sherrie Thrall – Chamber of Commerce
Steve Debonis – Sierra Pacific
Amye Osti – 34 North
Lorena Gorbet – Maidu Summit Consortium
Jim Richardson – Lassen Volcanic National Park
Dale Knutsen – AWCC Firewise
Andrea Craig – The Nature Conservancy
Sheli Wingo – US Fish and Wildlife
Jonathan Kusel – Sierra Institute
Dov Weinman – Sierra Institute

Action Items

- Follow through on 4FRI meetings and additional approaches to scale.
- Sierra Institute to support subcommittee in advancement of strategic plan.
- Dov to send draft outline for the strategic plan.
- 34 North to provide passwords to participants who want to access the data platform.

Meeting Opening

Dov provided a pre-meeting introduction and tutorial to the Zoom platform. There were no modifications to the previous meeting notes. Ken motioned to approve the minutes, Trish seconded, and the notes were approved.

Dov outlined the meeting objectives: update about CCI funded projects (Robbers Creek and West Shore); 34 North presentation of progress with GIS modeling; and SLWG planning efforts and a future look at 4FRI as an example for landscape scale work.

West Shore and Robbers Creek

Kyle Rodgers explained the moving timeline for getting the EA out to the public at the beginning of May. It's contingent on how things change in the next weeks, and Russell explained the current situation with the FS working through various issues and closures. The interdisciplinary team expects the Robbers Creek project to have similar delays to West Shore.

Collins Pine work is moving forward with their projects (Rock Creek and Childs Meadow). Bennie shared that through collaborative relationships made with the SLWG, Collins Pine has been permitted to access one of their Childs Meadows sites via USFS access roads, allowing them to bypass fragile wet meadow habitat.

Jim shared that Lassen Volcanic National Park is following directives that vary from day to day, but overall the LVNP is closed and most employees are teleworking. Some essential field staff (roads crew, LE, maintenance) are permitted to work, but largely field operations are suspended. Russell shared that the Forest Service was in a similar position. Most employees are working from home, and they are working out the implications of COVID-19 as they look to bring on seasonal staff.

SRWDP and 34 North CCI Grant

Amye Osti provided an update on work with the Sacramento River Watershed Program – which is relatively close to the SLWG boundary – and how 34 North will be working with collaboratives in the future. Their platform is currently password protected, but it's something that Amye can provide to interested participants. Right now, users can build off of baseline maps for collaborative mapping, slope suitability and WUI maps for more specific for project planning. There's a wide of tools users can use to analyze geographical space and project-specifics. Project documents are associated with the project data on the platform and they're beginning to consolidate more data to build out a bigger picture on the regional level. They're continuing program development in this area with additional subregions within the Sacramento river watershed, and Amye mentioned they have ten different funding sources with various products coming from each of them.

Participants asked what it will take for the SLWG to get on board with this project as well as how can the collaborative support 34 North's work? Amye suggested that it's very helpful to contribute data suggest what data might be a useful addition.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Jonathan acknowledge that the strategic planning subcommittee, though largely a voluntary role, is vital because much of our funding relies on proposed future projects. The goal of developing a strategic plan has been to identify the principles and priorities and write them into a referable document, and to refine the strategic vision of the group. Dov shared the draft strategic plan as broken down by resource management areas and asked representatives from each area to share their status. When a CCI opportunity comes up we often say yes and want to get after certain projects but this strategic plan is a way for us to make sure we're consistent with the group's objectives.

Jonathan shared socioeconomic information from Sierra Institute, including results from the Upper Feather River Socio Economic assessment- a study that took 5 socioeconomic indicators to give an average socioeconomic score. Sierra Institute also developed a community "capacity score," defined as how well a community is set up to deal with internal/external factors and stressors. Combining the two scores gives a very different image in defining vulnerable communities in our area as compared to CalEnviro screen. The intention is to apply this modeling to the SLWG area with the expectation that highlighting the vulnerability of the

communities in that area will give us increased access to funding. Trish asked where we could review this report, JK said it will be made available on the SI website, and that we will share it through our notes.

Trish also asked to see the outline for the strategic plan – Dov will send out the next iteration of the plan outline for the full collaborative to view.

Forest, Fuels, and Fire – Zeke shared some of Deer Creek Resources’ work and the different weather stations they’re using to advance this work for the Forest, Fuels, and Fire section.

Ken shared work about the water resources section, mentioning that most of the work has been done in a sub-watershed analysis. Ken was quick to compliment Noah Abramson from Sierra Institute for his help in modeling watershed conditions. The biodiversity team mentioned there wasn’t much to report at this time but they plan to convene soon.

Sierra Institute has been working with Alisha from MSC to outline how Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) can be used in planning and implementation efforts. Alisha shared some of her outlined objectives for bringing historic voices and land use practices to the SLWG; these included adding an emphasis on historical people’s use on the land as well as their intellectual cultural rights, the inclusion of TKE methodologies in planning and implementation, and inclusion of MSC in meaningful consultation.

4FRI and Scaling NEPA

Kyle reiterated how SLWG is trying to progress toward landscape scale work with the West Lassen Headwaters Project area. Russell mentioned how their smaller group has worked to gather information on alternative approaches to landscape scale work, and Mila from the Sierra Institute shared about the specifics of the 4FRI effort with regards to size, collaboration, and their path forward document that outlines principles and operating guidelines for 4FRI. Russell and his team plan to continue conversations with members of the 4FRI group to potentially bring back information and lessons learned to the SLWG.

Meeting Wrap-up

Jonathan asked for general feedback on the Zoom platform. Paul suggested it reduced travel, and Zeke mentioned that the function to share screens helped with presentations. Alisha thought the meeting went well but mentioned that internet connectivity could be a challenge. Michael mentioned that the group chat is convenient for sharing resources and sending individual messages, while Wolfy added that Zoom has even more interactive features that we haven’t truly utilized. Wolfy also mentioned the potential for a digital divide between those who call in and those who are using video, which is something the group should consider moving forward.

Next meeting – Tuesday, May 26th.

Suggested Items:

Strategic Planning updates and work progress
Updates on 4FRI initiative