

South Lassen Watersheds Group Meeting

Tuesday December 1st, 1:00 - 3:20pm

Zoom

Meeting Synopsis:

The South Lassen Watersheds Group met virtually on Tuesday, December 1st to provide project updates for the West Shore, Robbers Creek, and other projects, discuss strategic planning for the new calendar year, and allow member organizations to share news, projects updates, and new opportunities.

Attendees:

Ron Lunder – Mountain Meadows Conservancy

Tom McCubbins – RCDTC

Alisha Wilson – Maidu Summit Consortium

Kevin Price – Sierra Institute

Ken Roby – Trout Unlimited

Lynn Campbell – Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Russell Nickerson – Lassen National Forest

Sherrie Thrall – Board of Supervisors

Michael Hall – Feather River RCD

Bennie Johnson – Collins Pine

Ryan Burnett – Point Blue Conservation Science

Laura Corral – Lassen National Forest

Chantz Joyce – American Forest Foundation

Steve Buckley – Lassen Volcanic National Park

Kristy Hoffman – Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Rob Rianda – Tehama County RCD

Niel Fischer – Collins Pine

Andy Smith – Pacific Gas & Electric

Todd Sloat – Fall River RCD

Spencer Lachman – Sierra Institute

Kyle Rodgers – Sierra Institute

Kevin Price – Sierra Institute

Jonathan Kusel – Sierra Institute

Dov Weinman – Sierra Institute

Meeting Opening:

Meeting started a few minutes after 1:00pm and participants introduced themselves. Entertain a motion to approve the minutes. Bennie motioned, Ken seconded and the minutes were approved. Ryan motioned to approve the agenda, Alisha seconded and the

Project Updates

Kyle provided updates on the West Shore Community Wildfire Protection Project, and mentioned the draft EA went out for public comment and the period closed at the end of October. They have largely seen positive comments and hope to be able to work sooner rather than later – project leads are planning to meet to discuss timelines. Russell mentioned they are responding to comments and that they did have a meeting with the American Forest Resource Council. They are working toward getting the decision signed. As the group moves for implementation, project leads hope to keep learning and figuring out how the group can collectively engage in the project. Sierra Institute is also working with Alisha and the Maidu Summit Consortium to work on the Maidu Forest Parcel and working on some potential cross-boundary treatment.

Ryan shared the new timeline for the Robbers Creek Watershed Restoration Project, with all the specialist reports being due this week. On May 20th they received approval for funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board and so project leads are now working back from that timeline. The EA is mostly written and they've gotten over some of the big humps such as the wildlife report. Currently, they're trying to go out for public comment period at the very end of the year and will meet our timelines for the approval of funding.

The Rock Creek Project is on schedule for implementation next fall. Next year is the last season for implementation. Childs Meadow is moving forward with an almost completed meadow restoration design, and project partners hope to apply for implementation funding this winter.

The National Park Service was able to burn all of their piles in the 1600-acre window. They're now looking at the expansion of Flatiron Project to work around Juniper Lake, and they were able to get about four to four and a half miles prepped with crosscut saws and support work along the roads of in-holders.

Sierra Institute and Lassen National Forest shared the process for the partnership evaluation. Russell emphasized the FS will infuse new NEPA changes into project partnerships by looking at stricter timelines, new report templates, and including more tables rather than longer writeups. Jonathan thanked the FS for their ongoing willingness to collaborate and acknowledged that the bumps in the process serve to help the SLWG and partnership adapt and improve.

Strategic Planning

Dov shared that at the end of October the Strategic Planning Subcommittee led workshops for the Strategic Plan's Resource Sections (Sustainable Economics; Forest, Fuels and Fire; Water Resources; Species and Habitat; and Community). Dov collected comments and input and bookmarked them in the google drive draft for further review. Sierra Institute will look to coordinate meetings with the section leads at the beginning of the year.

South Lassen Watersheds Group Boundary

Group members discussed the areas of Antelope Creek and Wolf Creek as possible inclusions into the SLWG boundary area. There is buy in from some land owners as well as the relevant partners in each respective area. Tom emphasized the importance that the SLWG coordinate closely with the Tehama County RCD to straighten out how they can complement each other's work and avoid duplicative efforts and competition. Lynn and Michael both suggested that there could be more cross-pollination and conversation with the Feather River Stewardship Coalition. Ryan suggested that their challenge comes from when they start writing more of the Strategic Plan and need to decide if it'll encompass all the priorities for the different groups across the boundary area. Ken added he felt like it was an oversight to exclude the Antelope Creek area, but group members agreed that it was important to talk with the major players. Dov will reach out to the appropriate contacts from SPI, Collins, and Plumas National Forest specifically to discuss the inclusion of these areas into the SLWG boundary. Dov and Jonathan will set up a meeting with Tom and the TCRCD to discuss the West Lassen Headwaters Project area. The group passed a motion that the boundary be further evaluated after Dov holds conversations with SPI, TC RCD, FRSC, etc. Tom motioned, Russell seconded.

All-Projects Map

Spencer shared his prototype map and indicated what the map might offer and be used for once they have enough project information from SLWG partners. Dov encouraged group members to respond to Spencer's email asking for more project specifics.

Project Planning 2021

With regards to thinking about advancing projects in 2021, Kyle asked group members if there were specific projects or area that seemed to be missing when looking at our collaborative map. Ryan suggested that the West Lassen Headwaters Project should still be on the table, and he also suggested that Tasmam Koyom was an extremely relevant area to the SLWG group. Kyle agreed, mentioning that different pieces could be broken off of the WLHP, such as private and public lands and non-industrial private landowners. Tom reiterated that gong big isn't always on the table, or pragmatic, but that it may be more interested in breaking off smaller components.

[American Forest Foundation](#)

Chantz provided an overview of AFF's work and shared that they had a grant from the USFS to bring a FS firehatched modeling tool to collaborative groups. This risk transmission assessment approach will potentially be piloted with one or two groups in California, where the USFS will work with the collaboratives to see if this tool can be married with local knowledge and help the group prioritize some of the work they're doing. The idea is that this tool and local knowledge within the collaborative might be able to influence each other. Jonathan asked Chantz what sort of outputs he envisioned, and he added that they expect they'll have map-based outputs that contribute to the group's prioritizing within the firehatched. Russell felt like it would be a good opportunity to provide some good input and feedback to the FS with regards to what things are important to the collaborative group. Given the fire season we recently experienced, Deb emphasized the importance of a tool like this in predicting the intensity and size of fires and in decision-making. Todd mentioned the benefits of using this tool between the joined geographies between the BHC and SLWG. There was general support from the group in moving forward with AFF.

[Partner Updates](#)

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Lynn Campbell mentioned that at the end of the year she will be retiring from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy after thirteen years. Kristy Hoffman will be taking her place in the North Central region. Lynn appreciates all the collaborative work being done within the SLWG. SNC's Board Meeting will be held on the 10th.

Alisha mentioned that the Maidu Summit Consortium's efforts continue on the Maidu Forest Parcel and the exemption permitting process. They are working on the Land Management Plan - one of the stipulations with the conservation easement with Feather River Land Trust – and they are right on track to get some implementation done this next year.

Wolfy mentioned the Butte County RCD's Upper Butte Creek Forest Initiative (August 2021) and that BC RCD will pursue supplementary opportunities through SNC and others to support more trails work. They also submitted a grant to CDFW to do some meadow restoration in Butte House Ecological Reserve.

Michael Hall mentioned that the Feather River RCD will expand to more projects with prescribed fire, underburning and piles. They're mostly looking at private land but may potentially be looking into projects on public land as well.



Jonathan mentioned that the Association of CA Water Agencies conference would be held December 2nd. They asked Sierra Institute to present on SLWG collaborative projects and link the work to biomass initiatives. the conference is tomorrow and the next day, they asked us to present on collaborative projects and our link to biomass work.

The group's next meeting is Tuesday, January 26. Agenda items might include American Forest Foundation, Strategic Planning for 2021, and an update on the All-Projects Map.