



USFS Collaboratives and Local Benefit: What's Local Anyways?

A Case Study Approach to Defining Local

April 2016

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Acknowledgements

Sierra Institute thanks the many who participated in this study for sharing their time and perspectives. We also thank Sheri Elliot, Pierce Tucker, and Marilyn Ladd of the USFS Pacific Southwest Region for their contributions and commitment to this work.

I. Executive Summary

An increasing number of United States Forest Service (USFS) initiatives involve improving triple-bottom line (economy-environment-social) outcomes and associated efforts to hire and/or contract locally. For example, two relatively new USFS programs, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) program and the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) are designed to simultaneously advance local socioeconomic prosperity and forest restoration. Successful improvement of local well-being requires clear delineations of the local areas of focus. However determination of what constitutes “local” to a project area or forest is often times inadequately specified.

This study defines “local” in the context of three CFLRs and one Cohesive Strategy project. Social science principles, biophysical boundaries, socioeconomic boundaries and conditions, as well as stakeholder perspectives are used to identify “local” areas for each of the case studies. The resulting recommendations are designed to enhance USFS’ implementation of local contracting as a means to more effectively improve local prosperity.

For this study, we conducted semi-structured interviews and focus group meetings with project collaborative members and nearby contractors. Informants included community (including tribal and non-tribal members), environmental, nonprofit, local agency, USFS, and industry representatives. We considered these interview data and corresponding geospatial data through the lens of community aggregation principles to identify the individual case studies’ local communities. We conclude the work by identifying commonalities, nuances, and a recommended methodology for delineating “local” going forward.

This study shows that (1) current USFS processes are inconsistent and generally inadequate in terms of awarding preference to local contractors; (2) a methodology grounded in social science best practices, including site specific research, is critical for delineating local; (3) there is significant overlap of the defining characteristics among these case studies; (4) these characteristics include: social, economic, and cultural ties to the landscape; school districts; and contractor capacity; (5) delineation of local often involves concentric areas, with a nucleus of communities that are considered to be local to the greatest degree, surrounded by a second, larger area also considered local, but to a lesser degree; (6) there is interest in developing contracting mechanisms that incentivize local investment; (7) when evaluating vendors, delineations of local should be used in the context of a preference, not a guarantee; and (8) contractor preference should be based on three factors: the location of headquarters, employee residency, and other socioeconomic contributions.

As movements such as “local hire,” “local food,” and “shop local” continue to permeate mainstream culture, the question of “What is local?” will continue to arise. This study’s methodology for delineating local can be applied to other natural resource management projects aiming to improve local socioeconomic well-being. Furthermore, similar methods could also be applied to non-resource management initiatives whether they are associated with governmental, nongovernmental and/or private sectors.

II. Background: Purpose

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Programs

The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Program, established by Congress with *Title IV of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009*, is designed to “encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes” (U.S. Forest Service). Beginning in 2010, this legislation calls for the United States Forest Service (USFS) to implement a 10-year national program. Since its inception, Congress has funded the CFLR Program through the Consolidated Appropriations Act: “[Of] the funds provided [to the USFS], \$40,000,000 shall be deposited in the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund for ecological restoration treatments as authorized by 16 U.S.C. 7303(f)” (Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012).

The program takes an all-lands approach to forest restoration, requiring that the USFS collaborate with diverse stakeholders to restore forest ecosystems beyond the boundaries of USFS land. In addition to restoring forest health and reducing the risk of catastrophic fire, the CFLR Program is mandated to improve socioeconomic well-being of local economies and communities. Section 4001 of the 2012 Title IV CFLR Program legislation details the purpose of the program (Section 4001, page 1):

The purpose of this title is to encourage collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes through a process that (1) encourages ecological, economic, and social sustainability... (4) demonstrates the degree to which... (B) the use of forest restoration byproducts can offset treatment costs while benefitting local rural economies...

The CFLR Program requires that CFLRs both benefit and monitor¹ local economies specifically through job creation (Section 4003, page 4):

...(7) benefit local economies by providing local employment or training opportunities through contracts, grants, or agreements for restoration planning, design, implementation or monitoring with (a) local private, nonprofit, or cooperative entities; (b) Youth Conservation Corps crews or related partnerships, with State, local, and non-profit youth groups; (c) existing or proposed small or micro-businesses, clusters, or incubators; or (d) other entities that will hire or train local people to complete such contracts, grants, or agreements....

The three CFLR Projects in California are included in this study: Amador Calaveras Consensus Group area (ACCG; 390,904 acres; Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests), Burney Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group (BHC; 369,036 acres; Lassen National Forest), and Dinkey Creek Collaborative (Dinkey; 154,000 acres; Sierra National Forest).

¹ The CFLR Program requires that CFLR’s monitor their restoration projects’ impacts on ecological, social, and economic conditions in local communities over time. All projects are required to use a “multiparty monitoring, evaluation, and accountability process to assess the positive or negative ecological, social, and economic effects of projects implementing a selected proposal” (Section 4003, page 8).

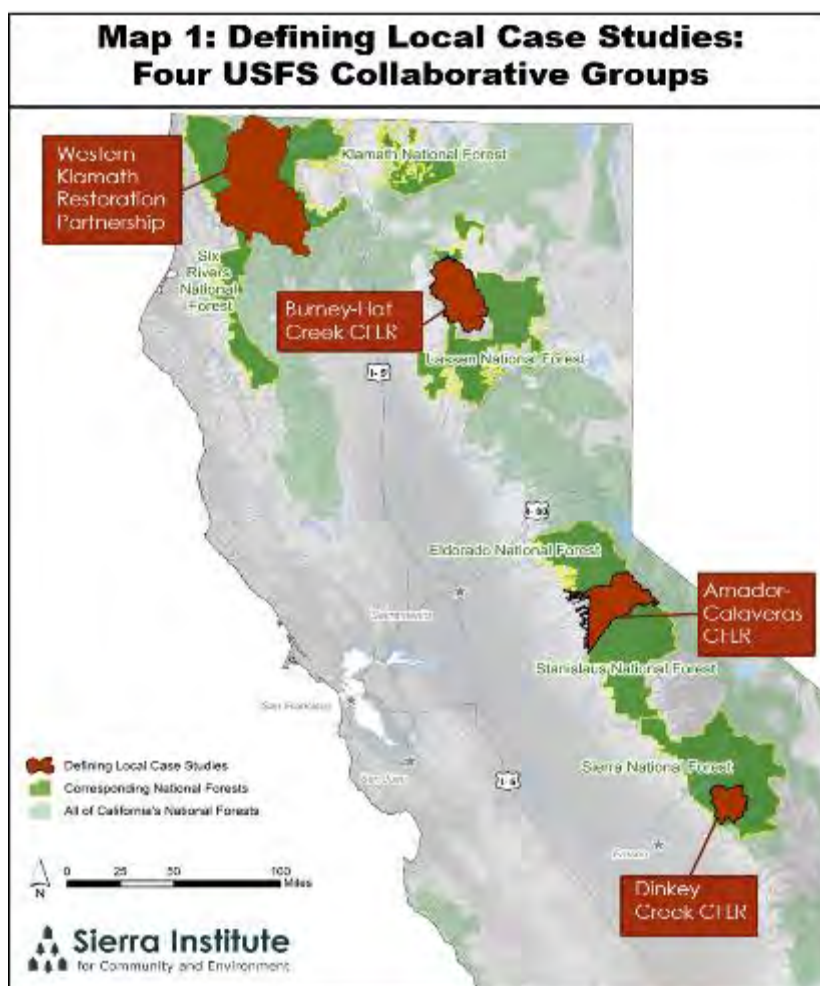
National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Collaboratives

All-lands, triple-bottom line focused USFS Collaboratives are not limited to CFLRs. *The Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009* (FLAME), H.R. 55441, directed the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to submit a report to Congress containing a cohesive wildfire management strategy.² The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, or Cohesive Strategy, seeks to: (1) restore and maintain resilient landscapes; (2) create fire-adapted communities; and (3) respond to wildfires using collaboratively developed methodologies. Much like the CFLR program, the Cohesive Strategy emphasizes inclusivity and collaboration between stakeholder groups in an all-lands, wildfire management approach.

One of the guiding principles of Cohesive Strategy projects is to improve communities' and individuals' capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire. Although this program lacks a mandate similar to the CFLR program regarding benefiting local communities, it does recognize the correlation between socioeconomic well-being and landscape resiliency (Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture , 2014).

There are two Cohesive Strategy projects in California, the South Fork American River Watershed Cohesive Strategic Landscape Project (“SOFAR,” 410, 000 acres; Eldorado National Forest) and the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (“WKRP,” 1.3 million acres, Six Rivers National Forest).

Map 1, *Defining Local Case Studies*, shows the location of three California CFLRs and the Western Klamath Restoration Project. These projects are the four case studies included in this report.³



² Unlike the CFLR Program, no funding is associated with the legislation for the formation of Cohesive Strategy projects.

³ At the time of this study, the South Fork American River Watershed Cohesive Strategic Landscape Project (SOFAR) had not yet formed its core collaborative, hindering the selection of informants. SOFAR was therefore not included as a case study.

Precedent for Local Preference

Legislation requiring USFS officials to consider local economic benefit associated with forest restoration was enacted long before the creation of either the CFLR Program or Cohesive Strategy projects. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the Northwest Forest Plan and the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative created the *Jobs-in-the-Woods Program*. This program linked funding for habitat restoration projects to the employment of locally displaced, former timber-industry workers (Kusel et al., 2002).

Under Title IV General Provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 (PL 112-74), USFS contracting authorities can give consideration to local contractors for certain tasks (p. 268).

...notwithstanding Federal Government procurement and contracting laws, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior (the ``Secretaries'') may, in evaluating bids and proposals, through fiscal year 2017, give consideration to local contractors who are from, and who provide employment and training for, dislocated and displaced workers in an economically disadvantaged rural community... Provided further, that the contract, grant, or cooperative agreement is for forest hazardous fuels reduction, watershed or water quality monitoring or restoration, wildlife or fish population monitoring, road decommissioning, trail maintenance or improvement, or habitat restoration or management.

Similar language appeared in a 2007 letter by former USFS Director of Acquisitions Management, Ron Hooper, regarding evaluation factors for contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements (p. 1):

When the Forest Service anticipates a contract, grant, or agreement for hazardous fuels reduction, watershed or water quality monitoring or restoration, wildlife or fish population monitoring, or habitat restoration or management, the Forest Service may include consideration of local contractors who are from, and who provide employment and training for dislocated and displaced workers in, economically disadvantaged rural communities].

The language in FY2003 Stewardship legislation as well as the 2014 USFS Stewardship Contracting Handbook (USFS, 2004) is consistent with the language offering a preference to local contractors.

Putting the Principle of Local Benefit into Practice

There are two immediate challenges of administering USFS contracts designed to benefit local: (1) in most instances, a consistent, scientific delineation of “local” has not been established and/or there is disagreement regarding what/where the local area is;⁴ and (2) vehicles for such contract implementation are unclear (Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, 2014). The first of these challenges is addressed in this report; the other is addressed in this report’s supplement, *USFS Acquisition Mechanisms and Potential for Increased Local Contracting*.

The Need for the Study

Decreases in USFS timber sales and the associated economic hardships have been acknowledged for quite some time. According to 2015 Congressional research (Hoover, 2015, p. 2):

USFS revenue—and consequently, revenue-sharing payments—peaked in the late 1980s. The FY1989 [US]FS 25% payments⁵... have declined substantially since FY1989, largely because of declines in federal timber sales..., but also due to a variety of factors. The decline began in the Pacific Northwest, owing to a combination of forest management policies and practice, efforts to protect northern spotted owl habitat, increased planning and procedural requirements, changing public preferences, economic and industry factors, and other values.

In its “Response to the Economic Analysis of Critical Habitat Designation,” the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment reported (2002, p. v):

There has been a dramatic loss of mills and wood products industry employment from 1990 to 2011. From 1990 to 2010, a total of 316 mills closed across the study area of Washington, Oregon and California.

Across the region, 32,924 jobs were terminated as a result of mill closures alone. By decade, the 1990s saw the greatest number of workers displaced as mills employing 17,976 workers closed over this period. From 2000 to 2009, another 13,951 employees lost their mill job. Another 979 workers were terminated between 2010 and 2012.

USFS timber receipts and the establishment and extension of the Secure Rural Schools Self Determination Act of 2000,⁶ serve as additional indicators of the economic decline in California’s forested, rural communities (Hoover, 2015; USFS 2014). Largely because of the decrease in

⁴ The Sierra Institute’s *Sierra Cascades All-Lands Enhancement* (SCALE) initiative is a program designed to identify and address California-based USFS Collaboratives’ barriers to success. The issue of “Defining Local” was initially identified by SCALE’s three participating Collaboratives in 2014. One Collaborative, the ACCG, has a working group to address this issue that produced a definition of local in the context of USFS contracting. This definition is discussed further in the Results/ACCG section of this report.

⁵ In accordance to the Act of May 23, 1908, 16 U.S.C. §500, the USFS pays 25% of its gross receipts to counties in which USFS land is located for roads and schools.

⁶ The Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Self Determination Act of 2000 provides counties an alternative revenue stream from the traditional “25% of gross USFS receipts.” This payment is calculated based on a historic 25% payment between 1986-1999. It should be noted that each of the USFS units included as case studies opted to use SRS payments in FY 2014, further underscoring these areas’ diminished timber receipts (USFS , 2014).

timber-related employment, rural populations are declining, tax bases are decreasing, and schools are closing (Moseley & Reyes, 2008). Accordingly, there is a need to develop strategies to spur economic growth in these areas. A USFS staff person articulated this trend and the USFS' responsibility in the following way (2015):

The mission of the USFS has changed in the last 50 years, yet communities around the Forests grew up with the assumption that the mission would be there to support the local timber economy. We have a responsibility for those communities that are suffering. The USFS needs to consider those communities' needs.

Collaborative members generally agree with this sentiment; one Collaborative member stated (2015):

[Collaborative projects like] these are things that really make a difference in whether local people will actually be able to make it in a place like this, when all the mills shut down 20, 30, 40 years ago. We had 22 mills and now we have none.

In the eyes of many informants, socioeconomic wellbeing is a thing of the past for USFS communities. Informants reflected that within these communities, there once were "good paying jobs; you could raise a family on those. Those jobs are no longer available" (Collaborative Member, 2015).

In the Dinkey area, "two elementary schools have closed in Auberry; all elementary students use a former middle school building, and the middle schoolers are now in the same building as the high school. An implication of this is that kids are busing one hour [each way to get to and from school]" (Contractor, 2015).

A similar sentiment was expressed in the WKRP project area. One Collaborative member stated (2015):

The era of the gyppo logger has passed, so a lot of those people who used to cobble together logging outfits and contract with the mills have either died or moved on. And the ones that are still here are so old that they're not really in a place to fill that niche. And the industry has trended towards the larger operators.

Because the Western United States continues to face heightened risk and impacts of catastrophic wildfire. The USFS itself stands to benefit from investing in local communities so that there are "healthy communities next to their forests that can serve them with a workforce that's ready and trained, and sober" (Collaborative Member, 2015).

The Small Business Administration (SBA) attempts to address this economic decline through the [Historically Underutilized Business \(HUBzone\) program](#). Under this program, a percentage of federal contracts must go to businesses located within HUBzones. The SBA designates HUBzones based on economic indicators, such as average income. During interviews for this report, several contractors and USFS personnel indicated that if a project qualifies as a HUBZone set aside, and contractors located within or near the project areas are not within a HUBZone, this program limits their eligibility to bid on the project regardless of their individual socioeconomic status (USFS Personnel Interviews, 2015 and USFS Contractor Interviews, 2015).⁷ For instance, in the Burney Hat Creek CFLR project area, contractors in the county of the project area (Shasta County) are ineligible for HUBZone-designated projects.

⁷ The Small Business Administration is the federal entity responsible for HUBzone delineations.

It is worth noting that there is a process to request re-examination of HUBZones. Although HUBzones are typically identified at the county level, there is precedent for more fine-grain (e.g., zip code) delineations of HUBZone communities. For more information, contact the [Small Business Administration](#).

Although some contractors voiced concerns that local preference could result in exclusion and/or a limit in competition, when interviewers explained that the concept is to provide a preference, not a guarantee, most expressed sentiments similar to one particular contractor's statement of "Let's get this thing rolling" (2015).

The enthusiasm and support for the economic revitalization of these economically challenged communities were evident in many interviews and further affirmation of the need for increased local contracting.

III. Literature Review

Delineating Local

In general, biophysical scientists have been more successful finding conceptual agreement about the delineation of forest stands or watersheds than social scientists have been in defining and delineating communities. The U.S. Census Bureau collects socioeconomic data at various units, including the state, county, census tract, and census block group level. However, even at the smaller units, these delineations often fail to adequately represent social communities due to their large scale or their inadequate representation of meaningful social units (Kusel, 1996, p. 364). Responding to the oft-used county level of analysis, Kusel states (1996, p. 370):

Community well-being cannot be assessed through county level analysis. Counties are too heterogeneous, and too often jobs associated with resources make up a small proportion of a county economy. Communities are a logical unit of study but pose methodological problems: clear identification of boundaries is often difficult, and data availability within these boundaries may be limited. Well-being analysis must often strike a balance between socially meaningful units of analysis and units for which data are available

Ostrom (2006) summarizes the variables of importance for delineating communities to be "on the basis of shared interests, values, and identities that are continuously being recreated and reinforced through interactive discourse and practice." She argues (p.67):

When viewed from a community development framework [. . .] identification and a sense of attachment to a 'locality,' be it material or symbolic, can be viewed as a way of building social networks and generating the social capital necessary to catalyze community action around improving markets and government policies.

Still, process, thresholds, and application of such delineations need to be clarified in order to be useful for land management projects.

The school district level is one unit for which high quality, annual data are available. Data collected include demographic, economic, geographic, and fiscal measures (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). When considering the numbers of students enrolled and the numbers of open schools, these data provide insight on population stability and student-to-school commuting distance, two important socioeconomic indicators. Public schools are also required to collect and report the number of students enrolled in the

National School Lunch Program (NSLP), also known as the *Free and Reduced Lunch Program*. This program provides eligible students with subsidized lunches; eligibility is based on family income (USDA, 2015). This metric offers current, rather than the traditional Census Bureau's decadal data, and reflects local socioeconomic conditions.⁸

Examples of Defining Local

Federal Acquisitions

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USFS currently have access to one contracting tool that requires the use of local preference- Stewardship Contracting.⁹ There are examples of how both the BLM and the USFS have defined local when using this tool. According to the BLM's 2012 Stewardship Project Guidance Handbook (p. 24):

The definition of local can vary significantly depending on the unique attributes and scope of each stewardship project. The definition must be considered in relation to the effect it would have on local and rural resource availability, prioritization of treatments, and the location of work under the stewardship contracts or agreements.

Although the BLM acknowledges that definition of local varies from project to project, it calls for the definition of local to be used consistently for each stewardship contract/agreement in a given area. It states, "the parameters of the local community must be defined for each stewardship project and be used consistently across all contracts and/or agreements used to accomplish the goals of that project" (Bureau of Land Management, 2015, p. 24).

BLM evaluation documents further explain that benefits to a local economy should be taken into account, including: (a) the plan for providing employment and training opportunities to people in local rural communities; (b) the use and involvement of local American Indian tribes, personnel, and business; (c) significant use of local businesses for product processing; and (d) that local knowledge and/or culture is integrated into a project such that the project is "embraced locally" (BLM Contracting Officer, 2015). One example BLM rating sheet gives this local benefit factor a weight of 30% (Bureau of Land Management, 2015).

The USFS, Chapter 20 (Stewardship Contracting) of the Renewable Resources Handbook states that USFS Stewardship Contracts must use a "best value" evaluation process that includes consideration of the benefits that potential contractors will provide to the local community. Factors used to establish, best value include contractors' "past performance, work quality, experience, technology, approach for performing the work, and benefits to the local community" (Section 60.5, pg. 16). In the context of Stewardship Contracting, the 2014 USFS Handbook suggests that both the "utilization of local workforce" and "capability and past performance" be used as evaluation criteria (Section 61.1, page 18). The Best Value Evaluation process and the potential to apply it to additional contract types is further described in this report's supplement, *USFS Acquisition Mechanisms and Potential for Increased Local Contracting* (USFS, 2004). Additional information on USFS and BLM contracting can be found in this study's companion report, *Federal Local Acquisitions*.

⁸ It should be noted that middle and high school students often opt-out of NSLP due to social norms, hence, elementary school NSLP data are more reliable (Dorn, 2012; Glantz, Berg, Porcari, Sackoff, & Pazer, 1994).

⁹ This form of acquisition is authorized by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

In terms of delineating local, the USFS' process is similar to that of the BLM's (USFS, 2004, Section 60.5, page 17):

The definition of local community is directly related to the project and community involved. In some cases, the local community might be defined by an area (for example within a 15- to 20-mile radius from the project area), while other times it might be described as a county, group of counties, HUBZone, and so forth.

USFS line officers are to determine what area is considered to be local. However, a later excerpt of the Stewardship Contracting handbook states (USFS, 2014, Section 63.15, page 26):

The identification of what constitutes a local community is pertinent both to collaboration and to evaluation of submitted stewardship proposals. The parameters of local community must be defined for each stewardship project and used consistently across all contracts and/or agreements used to accomplish the goals of the project. The definition of local varies significantly depending on the unique and varying scope of each stewardship project. It is generally not a function of NFS administrative boundaries. The definition must be considered in relation to the effect it would have on local and rural resource availability, geographical reasonableness, and the location of work under the stewardship contract or agreement.

Local Line Officers shall, based on consultation with appropriate sources, make the determination of local community. Unit Acquisition Management staffs routinely define local for procurement purposes using the Federal Acquisition Regulation as a guide and, therefore, can assist in determining the definition for stewardship contracting projects during the early stages of project development. Feedback from collaboration should also be considered in the determination of local community.

A survey of USFS Contracting Officers (CO) found that USFS COs have used the following measures to determine if a contractor is eligible for local preference (USFS Contracting Officers, 2012-2013):

- 1) Mileage from the project area: Contractors located within 25 miles of a CFLR project area¹⁰ are considered to be local (Region 1).
- 2) Counties:
 - Contractors from within any county that are completely or partially¹¹ within, or adjoining to, the CFLR are local (Four Forest Restoration Initiative, Region 3).
 - Contractors from within the eight counties most near the CFLR are local (Region 5 Contracting Officer, 2015).¹²

¹⁰ For non CFLR projects, a Region 1 Contracting Officer indicates that contractors within 120 miles of the project area are considered local.

¹¹ "Partially" is defined as having at least one acre of land within the CFLR project area.

¹² These data were not generated by the 2013 Evett survey; it was collected in a separate interview.

- 3) Unspecific: In many instances, including within Region 5, terms such as “near” are applied and are open for interpretation at the discretion of the Contracting Officer (USFS Contracting Officers, 2012-2013).¹³

Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project

In the development of the community delineations used in the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project, Census block groups were aggregated in order to overcome the barriers presented by individual census block groups. Specifically, individual block group boundaries often either split communities or needed to be combined in order to make up whole communities, as understood by local residents (Doak and Kusel, 1996). This same study, and others, indicate that county level aggregations are typically too coarse and contain too much internal variation to allow for a useful unit of socioeconomic analysis.

Local in the Context of Food

Studies of the local food movements present further insight on the consideration of “local” in the context of acquiring goods and services. Despite the geographically oriented name of the movement, “local” in the instance of food is qualified not only by the geographic proximity of the producer and buyer, but also by relationships¹⁴ and values (Eriksen, 2013).

One commonly used defining concept is “food miles,” or the distance that food travels from production to market. In the timber industry, the parallel metric would be “contractor miles.” A study of consumers and retailers’ preferences finds that the threshold “local food mileage” fluctuates from 100-400 miles, depending on product availability as well as consumer values (Dunne et al., 2010). Dunne et al. also find that political boundaries, such as states and counties, are inconsistent with “foodshed” boundaries, and they identify the importance of case-study specific delineations that involve assessing all stakeholders’ points of view.

Another study found that the Local Food Movement’s intentions are often mixed with efforts to support small-scale farmers, and when this is the case, “local” is defined by the size of production rather than just geographic location (Blake et al., 2010).

Additional Examples

Other studies have examined the challenges of defining a “local community” in the context of natural resource management issues only to conclude that delineating local is indeed difficult. For example, when considering an issue such as wild mushroom harvesting, the inherent transient, mobile nature of dispersed pickers and buyers reflects that “local” cannot be as simple as identifying the year-round residents living in close proximity to a project area (McLain and Jones, 1997).

¹³ Because many USFS Contracting Officers are no longer locally stationed this method is especially problematic as it relies solely on the Contracting Officer’s understanding of “nearby” communities and their socioeconomic connections to the landscape. It also requires a background in socioeconomics.

¹⁴ “Relationships” in this context refer to both actual and perceived relationships formed by shared connections to a physical place.

IV. Methods

Informant Identification

For each case study, Sierra Institute for Community and Environment (“Sierra Institute”) conducted semi-structured interviews with collaborative members and contractors. USFS Collaborative Coordinators (ACCG), Collaborative Facilitators (Dinkey), Collaborative Charters (BHC), and Leadership Team Members (WKRP) first identified a list of appropriate informants. Sierra Institute reviewed the recommendations and requested additional names when necessary to ensure that an invitation to participate in the study was distributed to at least one person from the following stakeholder groups: American Indian tribes, community members, nonprofit, local elected officials, timber industry (hereafter referred to as “industry”), and the USFS.¹⁵

In order to identify appropriate contractor informants, the Sierra Institute obtained contract data from the USFS Region 5 office, filtered it to only include the data that clearly related to the work of local Collaboratives.¹⁶ Sierra Institute then selected informants from this list, based on: proximity to the project area and frequency of awarded bids. See Appendix B, *Processes of refining USFS contract data* for more details on the selection of contractor informants and the refinement of those data.

Interviews

Semi-structured interview guides were developed (and revised in-between interviews using grounded theory) in order to collect information on what each informant considered to be “local” to the case study project area and why. Several different prompts were applied to generate this information, but the following prompt yielded the most characteristic-oriented responses (Collaborative Member Informant Interview Guide, 2015, p. 1):¹⁷

If you were to move to a new state next month and create a forest collaborative that intended to benefit “local,” how would you decide what and where is most local? What characteristics or variables would you take into account? What questions would you ask?

That question was then typically followed up with the following:

1. When considering the characteristics that you would use with your hypothetical collaborative, what areas and communities do you think are local to your collaborative?
2. Are there some areas/communities that you think are more local than others? If so, where and why?

¹⁵ In some cases, all stakeholder groups were not included because of scheduling conflicts or other reasons. Findings were circulated to these groups for comment, yet none were received as of April, 2016.

¹⁶ Contract data obtained from the USFS Region 5 office included contracts most related to Forest Collaborative activity, as identified by a USFS Region 5 Director of Acquisitions-appointed Contract Specialist and includes data from 2010-2014. These data were examined focusing on value and frequency of contracts by location. See Appendix B for more information on how these data informed the study.

¹⁷ See Appendix 1: Sample Interview Guides for more information and context.

3. When we talk about specific contracting vehicles and contracting patterns, do those boundaries still hold? What, if anything, should be different?

In-person interviews occurred between May and August of 2015. At least two contractors and five collaborative members per group were interviewed.¹⁸

Collaborative members were also asked to expand upon what should be taken into account. Discussion usually focused on the location of a contractor's headquarters, residency of their employees, geographic sources of their supplies, or other variables with potential socioeconomic impact.

Contractors were asked to explain their perceptions of the industry-related economic patterns in the area as well as their interpretation of the local contractors' capacity to (1) do the work; (2) employ locally; and (3) purchase their supplies locally.

Focus Groups and Data Analysis

Sierra Institute recorded and transcribed interviews. Interview data were then coded according to reoccurring, as well as unique, themes and points of view using NVIVO (version 10) software. Codes were developed and expanded iteratively throughout the analysis. Tools such as *Similar Words Frequency* were implemented as a means of assessing how well the nodes captured key principles, concerns, and concepts presented by informants; nodes were expanded accordingly to capture as many relevant themes as possible.

These data were analyzed in the context of each project area's surrounding geospatial features, previous research, and based on other social science principles. Geospatial features and boundaries examined include: Census block group boundaries, Census designated places, city boundaries, county boundaries, land-use/land-cover type, school districts, sites of contract awards, and watershed boundaries. Commute-sheds and other community aggregation units produced for the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project were also examined for the CFLRs.

In sum, delineations developed were based on geographic, economic, social, cultural, and natural features.

These delineations were shared with informants via web-based focus groups and then refined using the first and second waves of interview/focus group data, as well as geospatial data described above.

¹⁸ Informant sums were as follows: Dinkey- Five collaborative members, three contractors; ACCG- five collaborative members, three contractors; BHC: five collaborative members, four contractors.

V. Results and Recommendations

Individual Case Study Delineations

This study developed local delineations for four case studies: the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group, the Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group, the Dinkey Creek Collaborative, and the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership. Of the four cases, ACCG is the only one that has self-initiated and completed a local delineation process. Additional information on the ACCG project area and history is provided in order to describe this group's work and the somewhat differing results. Additional context regarding the Burney Hat Creek and Dinkey CFLRs' stakeholder history can be found in earlier studies conducted by the Sierra Institute.¹⁹

I. Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group

ACCG Cornerstone Project Area and its History

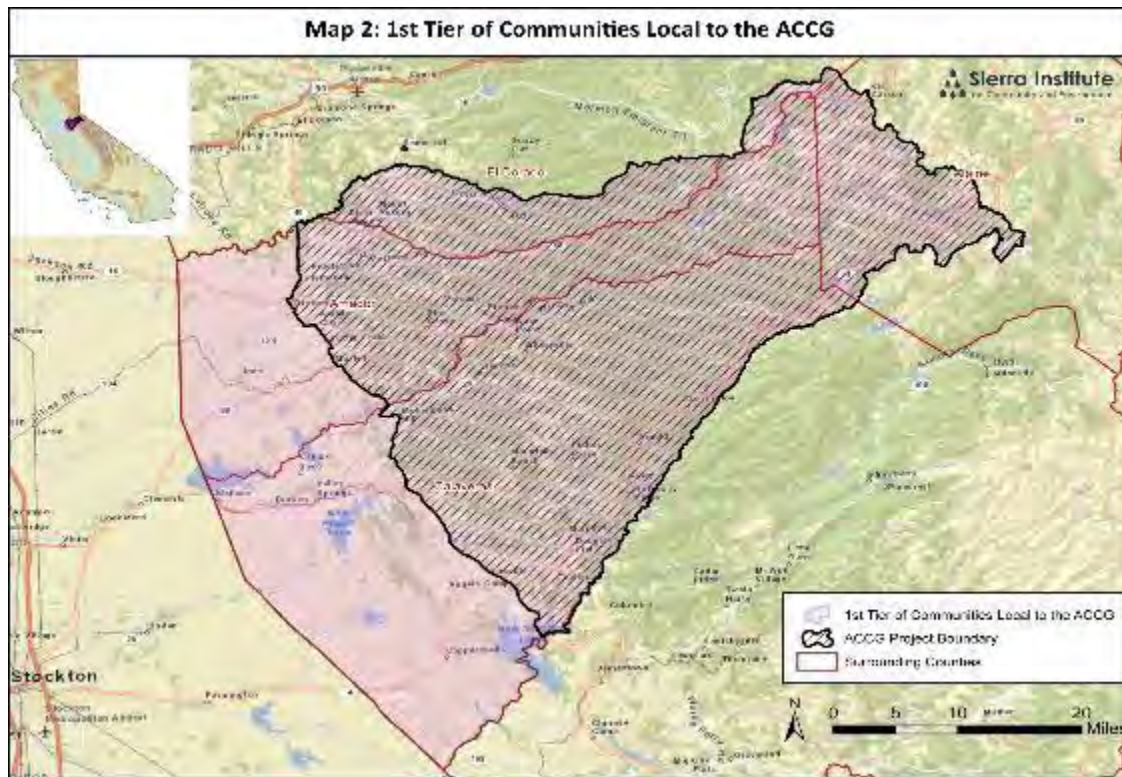
The ACCG CFLR began as the Calaveras (County) Consensus Group, a collaborative that focused on the Calaveras portion of the Upper Mokelumne watershed. It later expanded to include the majority of the Upper Mokelumne and Upper Calaveras watersheds, as well as a portion of the Upper Consumnes watershed. The resulting boundary corresponds to the Amador and Calaveras USFS Ranger Districts and the associated portions of Amador, Calaveras, and El Dorado Counties. Informants reported that the creation ACCG and its later establishment as a federally funded CFLR was led by residents from Amador and Calaveras Counties (Collaborative Member Interviews, 2015 & USFS Personnel Interviews, 2015).

Case Study Nuance: The Use of County-Level Units

As a general principle, the Sierra Institute recommends avoiding county-level definitions of local and instead recommends the use of boundaries. ACCG interviewees, however, stated that county-based units are appropriate for their collaborative project. This perspective appeared to be based on the informants' perception of the project area's rural, remote setting and the absence of clear socioeconomic units for which data are available.

¹⁹ Sierra Institute performed Stakeholder Assessments for both the [BHC](#) and [Dinkey](#) CFLRS in 2010 and 2013, respectively.

ACCG's 1st Tier: Amador and Calaveras Counties as well as the portions of Alpine and El Dorado County that overlap with the ACCG project area.



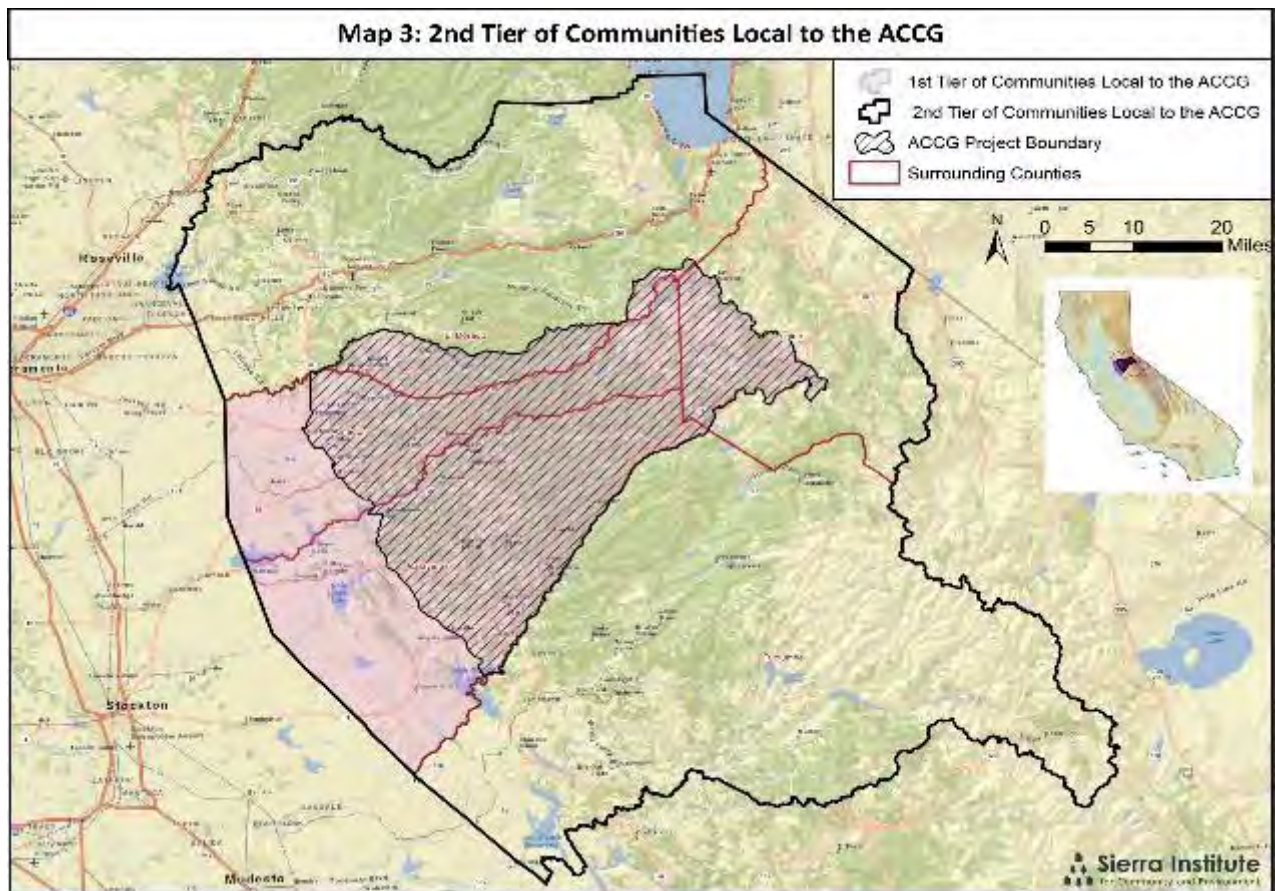
Map 2 shows that communities within this 1st Tier include all of Amador and Calaveras Counties, as well as the westernmost portion of Alpine County and a southern portion of El Dorado County. Areas included are based on geographic, socioeconomic, and historical data as presented in interviews, focus groups, relevant literature, as well as both ecological and socioeconomic geospatial data. The 1st Tier of communities are considered to have the strongest economic and social ties to the CFLR project area, compared to areas a part of Tier 2 and beyond, and are considered the “most” local. These connections include the evaluation of cultural/community ties to the landscape, timber, agriculture, commerce industries, and school districts.

The difference between the ACCG’s working definition of local and this study’s identification of the 1st Tier of local is the northern communities in El Dorado County, as well as Tuolumne County. These areas are excluded from Tier 1 because: (1) they were not part of the CFLR project area established by the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group; (2) based on past studies, El Dorado communities excluded from Tier 1 are oriented westward in relation to the ACCG watersheds, particularly in terms of commerce and commuting patterns (Doak and Kusel, 1996);²⁰ and (3) both El Dorado and Tuolumne Counties are linked to other USFS Collaboratives.²¹

²⁰ When asked, if community aggregations developed by the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem project of 1996 still hold true today, one informant responded, “The differences between the communities [in El Dorado county not included in Tier 1 compared to those within] are even greater today” (USFS Representative, 2015).

²¹ The SOFAR project of Eldorado National Forest and the Rim Fire Restoration Collaborative are located in El Dorado and Tuolumne Counties, respectively. Their location and USFS intention to implement similarly developed tiers and local contracting efforts within the context of those Collaboratives further supports the primary delineation set forth. It would curb the purpose of local benefit if contractors in Placerville (El Dorado County), for example, were considered to be within the primary tier of two separate Collaboratives.

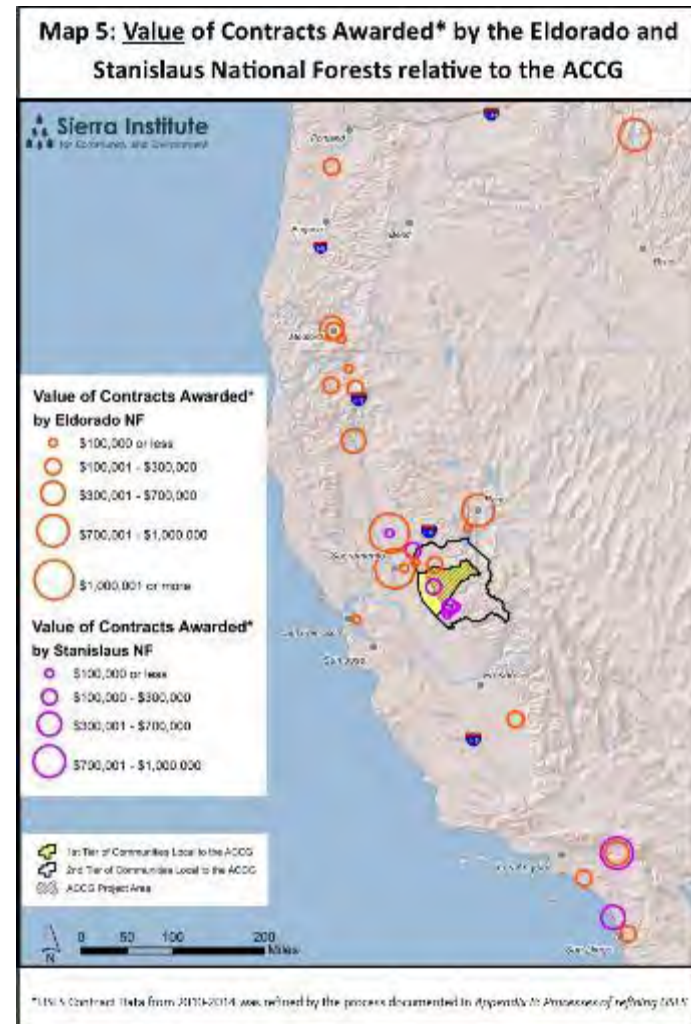
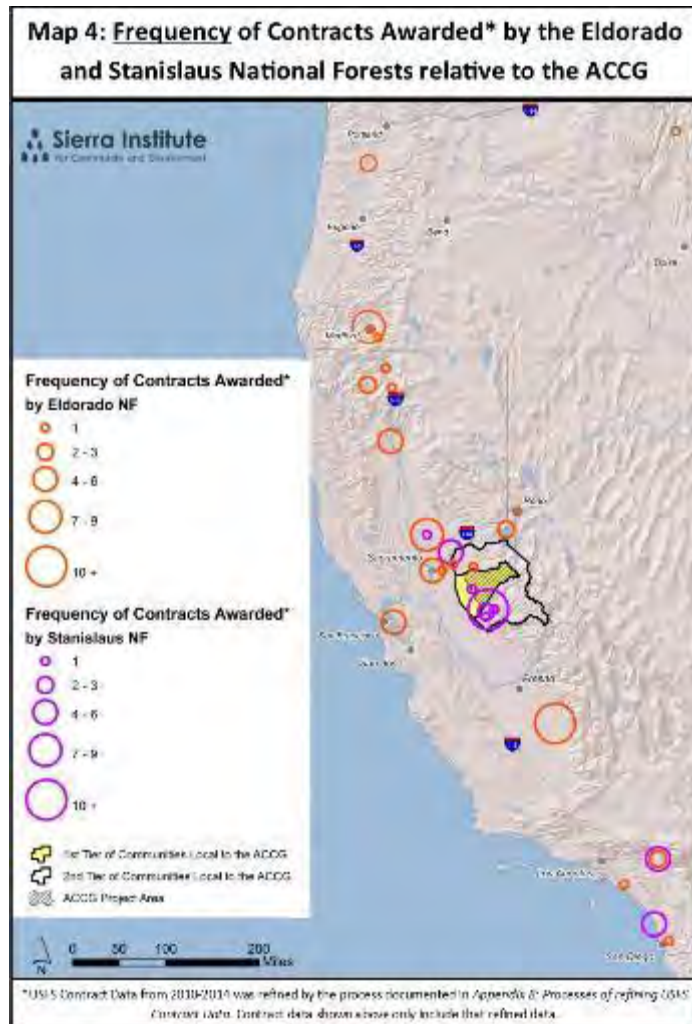
2nd Tier: The portions of Alpine and El Dorado Counties not included in Tier 1 and all of Tuolumne County



Sierra Institute determined that the remaining areas in Alpine and Eldorado Counties, along with Tuolumne County, are oriented to the project area, but to a lesser degree than those communities in Tier 1, and therefore are designated as 2nd Tier local communities. These are shown in Map 3, *2nd Tier of Communities Local to the ACCG*.

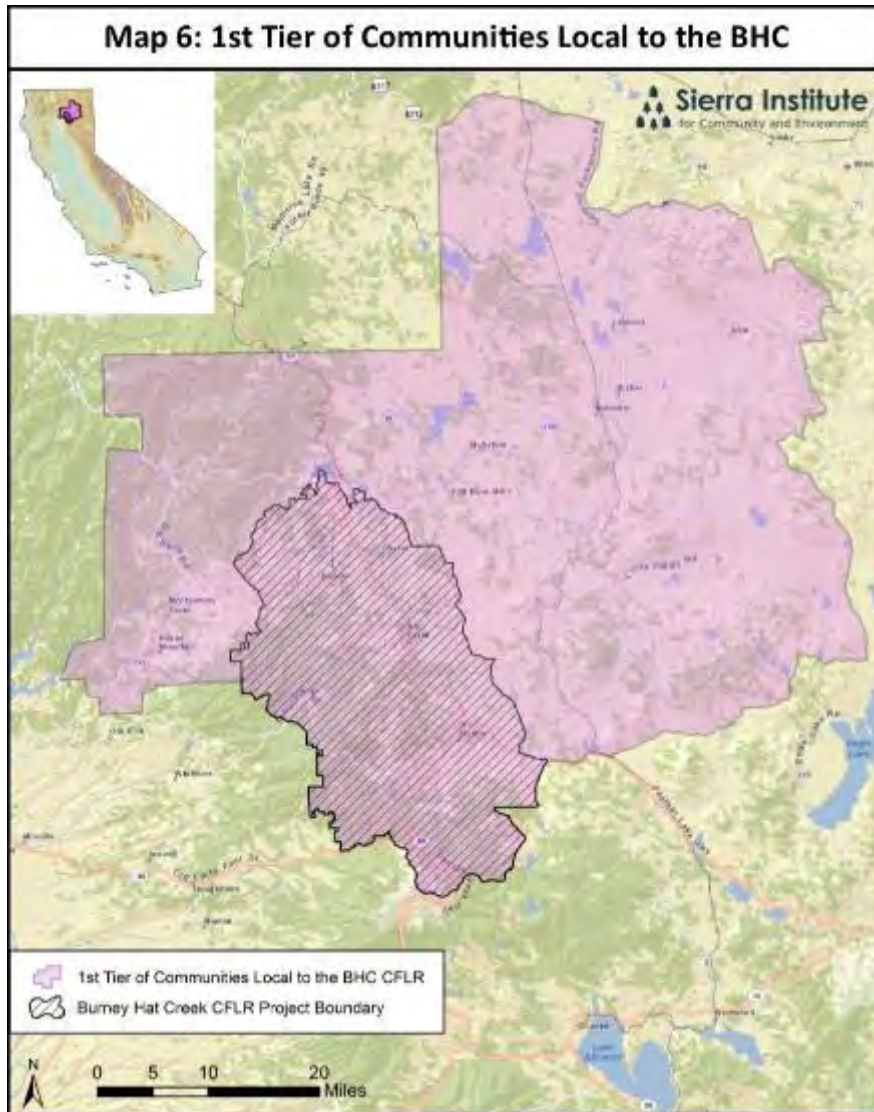
It is important to recognize that in 2014, the ACCG collaborative adopted a definition of “local,” with the concept that it would be used for Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity service contracts (Appendix C: *Local Benefit Recommendation Amador Calaveras Consensus Group*). This definition was developed by the ACCG operations work group and corresponds to the combined 1st and 2nd Tiers recommended here. Because there are numerous service contract types and tools that can integrate local preference, Sierra Institute does not recommend that a delineation be based on a single service contracting tool. More information on local contract types and tools can be found in this report’s supplement, *Federal Local Acquisitions*.

Maps 4 and 5 show recent Eldorado National Forest and Stanislaus National Forest contract awards, by the frequency and value of contracts, respectively, in relation to the local delineations presented above. As these maps illustrate, few contracts and little contract value have been awarded to contractors located within the 1st Tier. More, but still less than the majority of, the contracts are secured by contractors in the 2nd Tier. All contracting data maps in this report are based on contract types most similar to CFLR project work and do not represent all contracts awarded by these Forests between 2010 and 2014. See Appendix B: *Processes of refining USFS Contract Data* for additional information about how these data were collected and refined.



ii. Burney Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group (BHC)

1st Tier: Communities include Adin, Beiber, Burney, Fall River, Lookout, McArthur, Montgomery Creek, Nubieber, Old Station, Round Mountain and those within the outlined watershed and school district boundaries.²²



The BHC CFLR's 1st Tier of local communities are shown in Map 6. Communities in this area have significantly higher economic and communal ties to the BHC CFLR project than others and are considered by group members to be the most local. These connections specifically refer to the cultural/community ties to the landscape; the timber, agriculture, and commerce industries; and local school districts. The entire Fall River Unified School District as well as portions of the Antelope Elementary, Big Valley Joint Unified, Black Butte Union Elementary, Mountain Union Elementary, and Whitmore Union Elementary School Districts lie within this area. None of the 1st Tier area is south of the CFLR boundaries as most of the 1st Tier lies predominantly north and east of the CFLR. This is due largely to topography and watershed boundaries, with the hydraulic features flowing mostly to the north. Also, the

southwest portion of the CFLR includes a large portion of Lassen National Park, around which there is very little inhabitation. Communities most tightly linked to the CFLR landscape are those in the sprawling north and northeastern Modoc Plateau country. Communities to the southwest, south, and southeast of the CFLR were found to either be more connected the cities of Redding, Quincy, and Chico than to the CFLR project area.

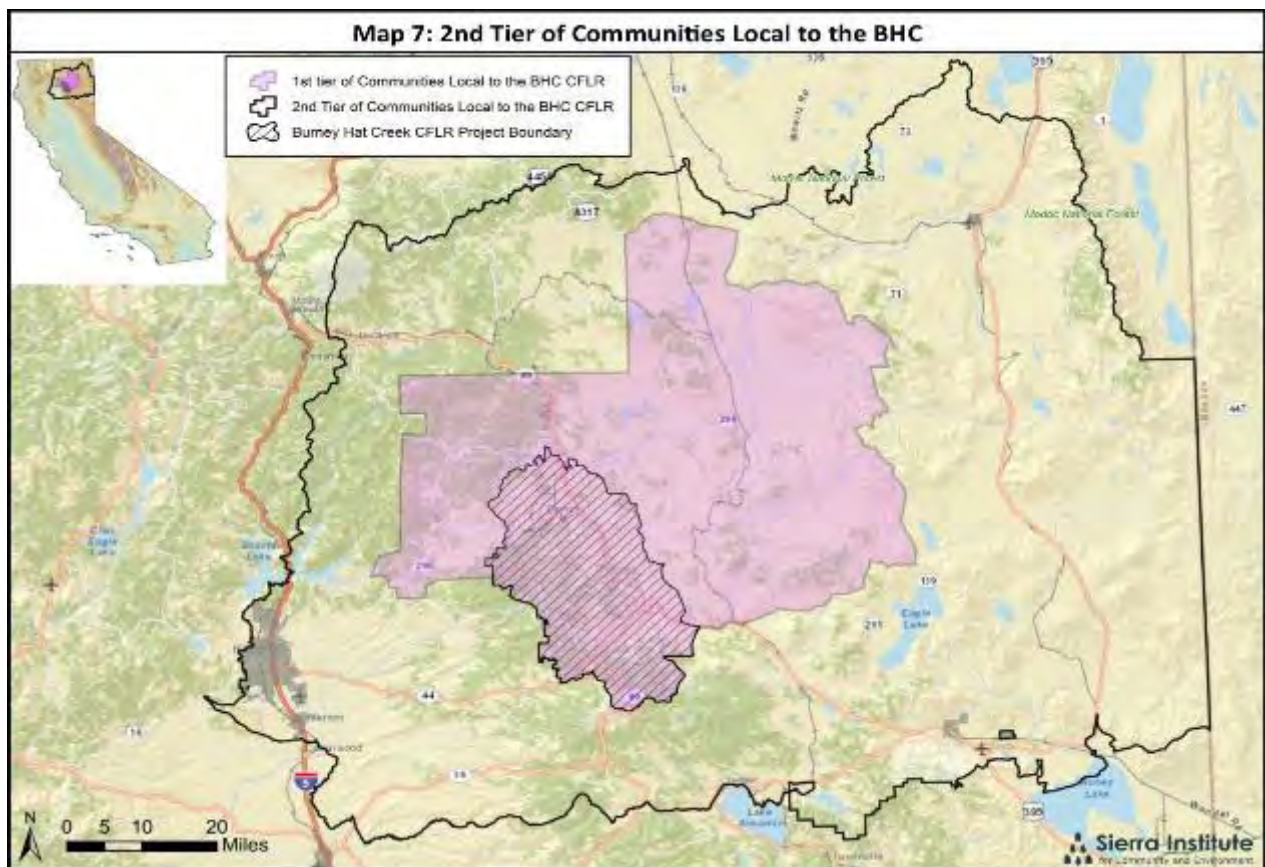
The west side of Tier 1 is more truncated than the east side because communities are oriented to the City of Redding. Distance and travel time appear to be trumped by geography and easy access to Redding.

²² This list of communities is not exhaustive.

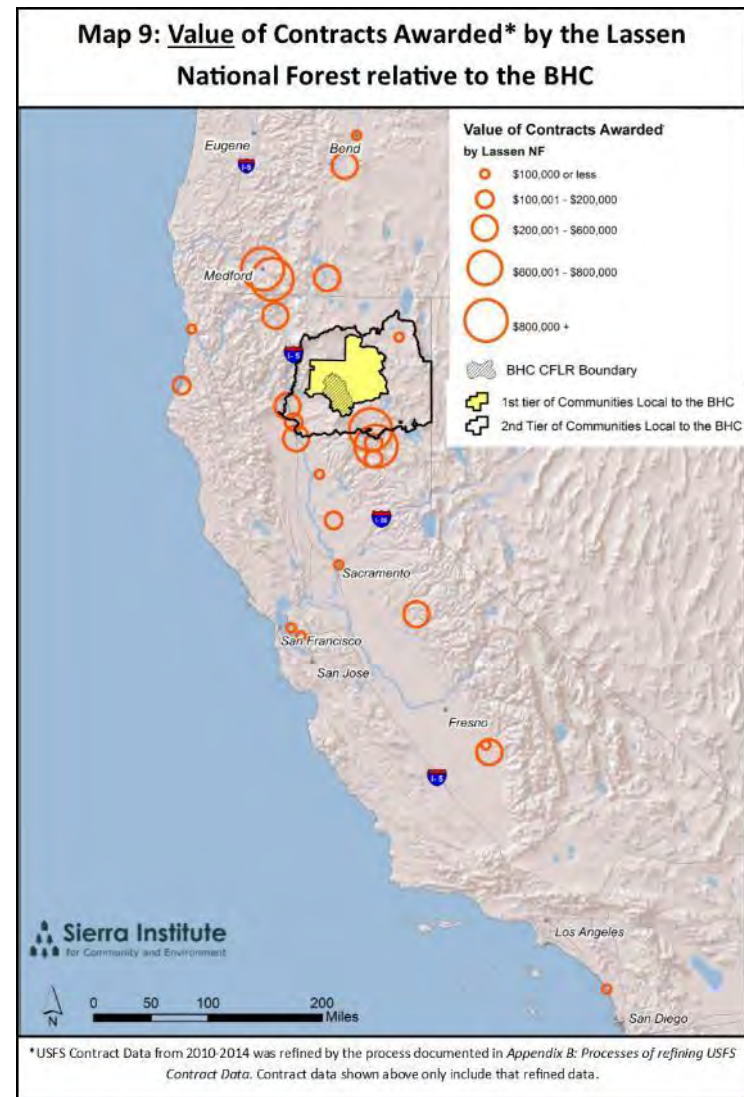
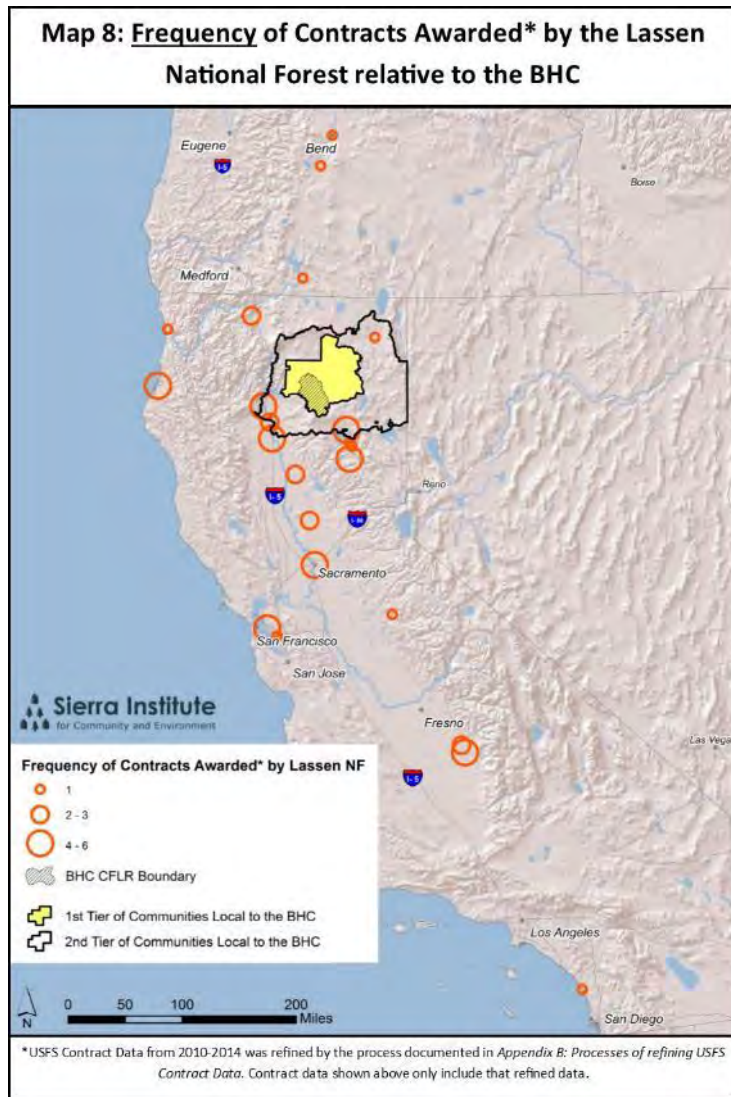
While some informants recommended that tiers be based on commuting distance, a principle also seen in some studies. Sierra Institute does not recommend local delineations based solely on commuting distance for two reasons: (1) these patterns are taken into account in many of the informants' suggested delineations and therefore are intrinsically part of the "economic patterns" considered; and (2) travel times and/or commuting mileage does not always align with relevant socioeconomic units and relationships.

2nd Tier: Communities including Anderson, Redding, Mount Shasta, Chester, Westwood, and Susanville.

The 2nd Tier communities and area shown in Map 7 are based on similar social and economic patterns described above. They are 2nd Tier because of their lesser linkage to CFLR activities compared to 1st Tier communities. One informant described this Tier as running along the portion of the I-5 corridor that parallels the BHC project area "until you run out of trees" (Collaborative Member, 2015). Although that particular informant stated that he employs "contractors out of Redding, their bases are not in these [1st Tier] micro communities that are starving to death because there's nothing there" (Collaborative Member, 2015). Informant data like these suggest that Redding contractors are local to the BHC project area, but to a lesser degree, particularly regarding dependence, than contractors living within the 1st Tier. There remained some ambiguity among respondents regarding the southernmost boundary of Tier 2 and the communities that lie just beyond this boundary.

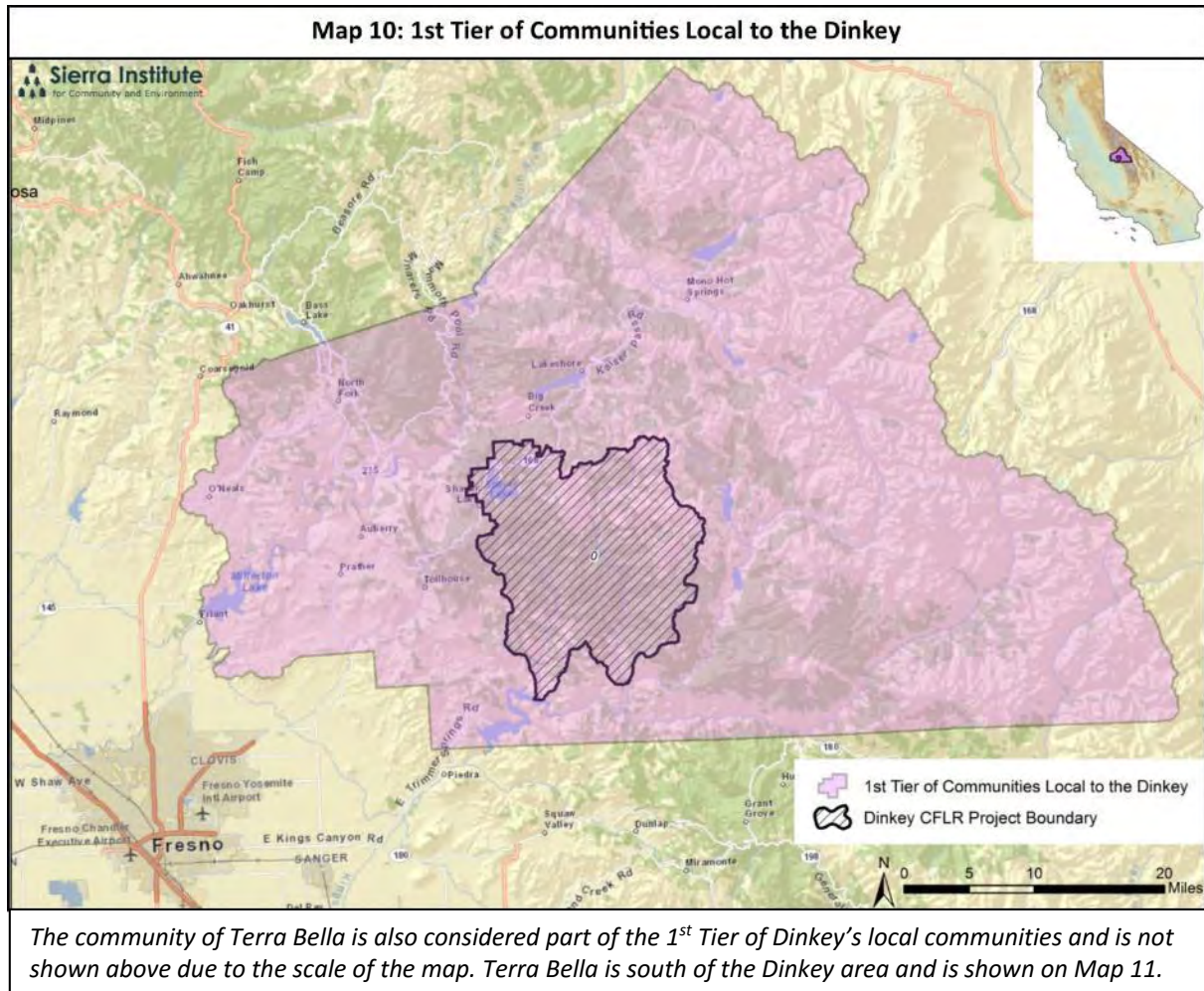


Maps 8 and 9 show recent Lassen National Forest contract frequency and value in relation to the 1st and 2nd Tier delineations of the Burney-Hat Creek CFLR. Unlike the ACCG, there are no contractors within the 1st Tier that received contracts, but there are a number of contractors in Tier 2 that did. Some of these Tier 2 contracts, on a relative basis, were significant. Please see the note on page 20 and Appendix B regarding the contracting data portrayed.



iii. Dinkey Creek Collaborative

1st Tier: Communities including North Fork, North Fork Rancheria, Huntington Basin, Big Creek, Shaver Lake, Auberry, Big Sandy Rancheria, Prather, Tollhouse, Cold Springs Rancheria, and Terra Bella.



Communities in the 1st Tier extend from the crest of the Sierra eastward of the Dinkey CFLR, including the upper reaches of the San Joaquin River watershed, the boundary of the Big Creek Elementary School District in the north, and the Kings River Watershed and Sierra Unified School District boundaries to the south. Westward, the boundary lies in the upper foothills above the Fresno metro area and Clovis. The 1st Tier area findings are very similar to the local area delineated as a part of the Sierra Institute's 2013 Stakeholder Assessment (Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, 2013). The only difference is that the town of North Fork and the North Fork Rancheria have been added to this Tier, and that this local area is defined as an area rather than a list of communities. There was debate regarding the inclusion of what amounts to a small portion of the Chawanakee Unified School District, but ultimately Collaborative members agreed that the priority is inclusion of the town and Rancheria rather than the full school district. The 1st Tier of Dinkey Local Delineation is shown in Map 10.

Unique to the Dinkey CFLR is inclusion of the town of Terra Bella, a community located over two hours of driving-time and over 100 miles away from the project area. Terra Bella is home to one of the last remaining sawmills in the southern Sierra. Map 11 shows the town of Terra Bella (not seen on Map 10 because of the scale of the map). There is near unanimity among CFLR members that inclusion of Terra Bella is essential because it is home to a mill that ensures the competitive purchase of forest restoration products in the CFLR area. Without this mill, the USFS and Southern California Edison, the major private landowner within the Dinkey CFLR, would be challenged to complete forest restoration projects.

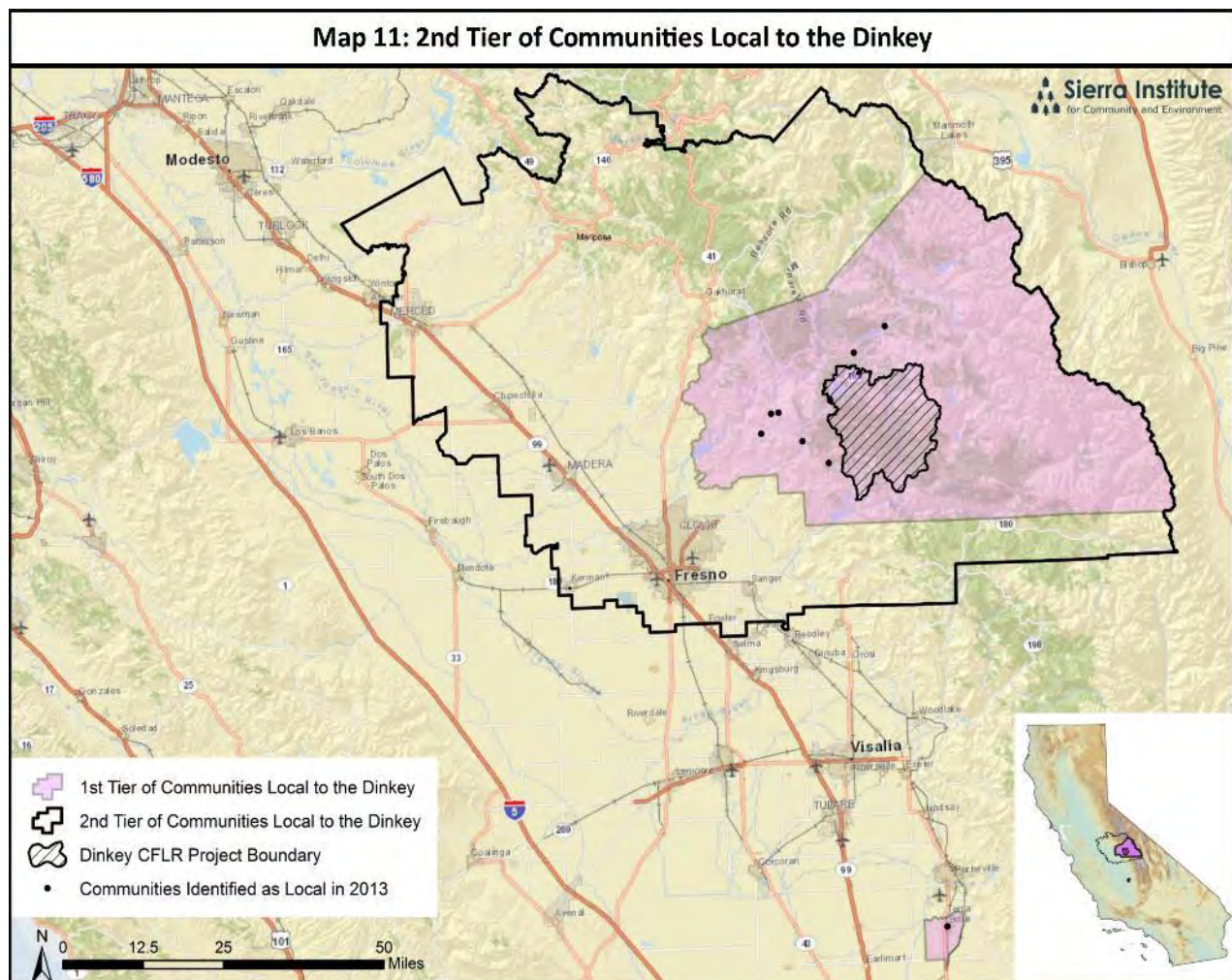
The 100-mile distance challenges conventional wisdom about the geographic location of communities affected by landscape management. The Terra Bella mill is reliant on the Dinkey CFLR for a significant portion of its timber. The town of Terra Bella is reliant on the Dinkey landscape because of the importance of mill employment. Terra Bella, population 3,000, lost almost 5% of its population between 2000 and 2010, in part due to layoff of a shift at the mill. With a population of roughly 3,000 and high local poverty and unemployment, Terra Bella can ill afford the loss of any more mill jobs.

Whether or not to include Fresno's metropolitan area in the 1st tier generated considerable conversation among Dinkey CFLR collaborative members, particularly regarding the degree of dependence of Fresno-based guides, sport shops, and related business on CFLR recreation activities. The decision to exclude the greater Fresno area from the 1st Tier was based on the fact that the contribution of the Dinkey CFLR to Fresno's recreation industry is far less than the economic and communal ties shared by 1st Tier communities. The opportunity to recognize the recreation-landscape relationship as a 2nd Tier linkage resonated best with informants. The 1st Tier patterns specifically refer to the cultural/community ties to the landscape; timber, agriculture, recreation and related commerce industries; and education.

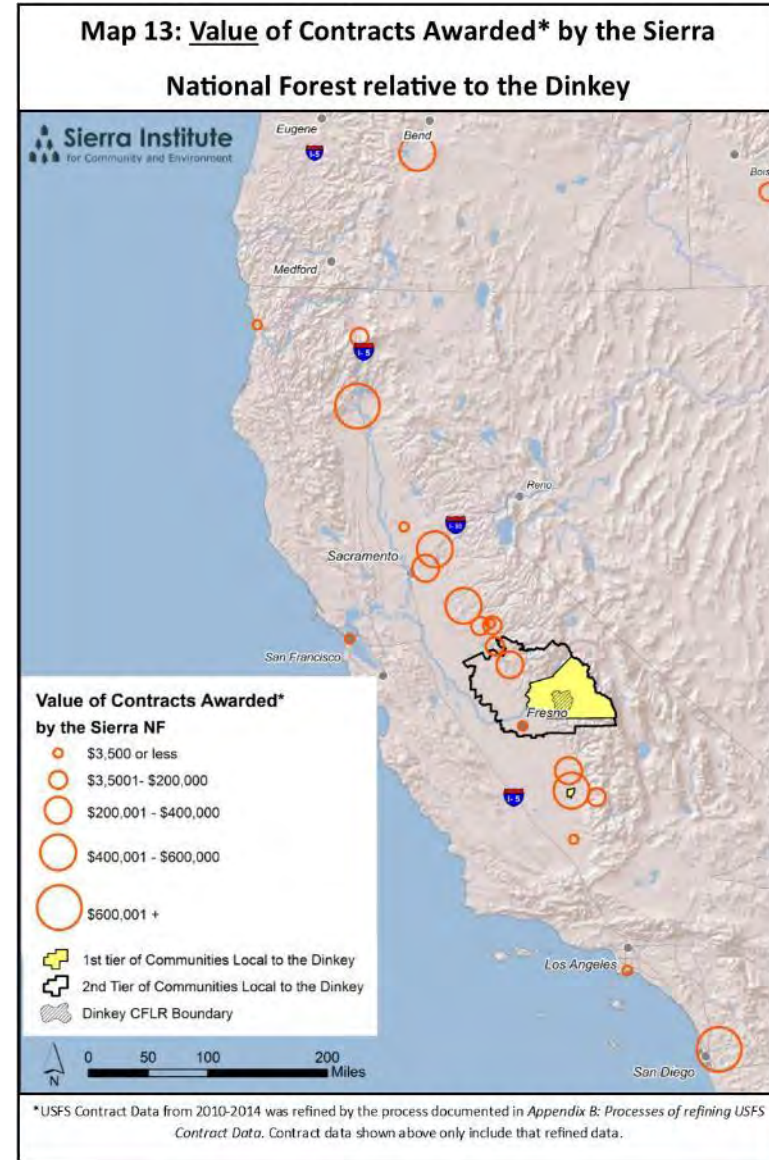
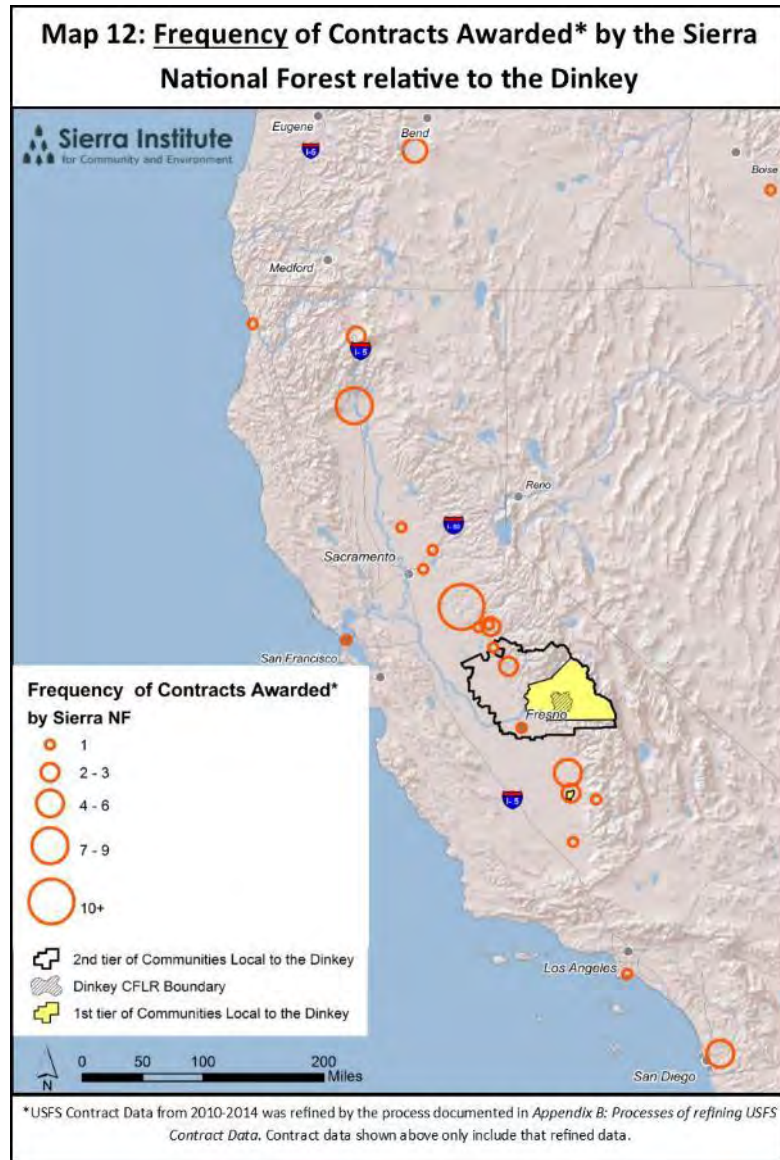
In this case study, some informants again suggested that Tiers be based on commuting distance. For similar reasons as cited in the BHC results section, this criterion was not relied upon. Using Terra Bella's 100-mile distance as a radius for all of Dinkey's 1st Tier would result in the inclusion of many communities with little to no connection with the landscape.

2nd Tier: Communities including Merced, Mariposa, Fresno, Clovis, and Sanger

Map 11 shows the 2nd Tier of the Dinkey local area. Communities that are a part of this Tier are included based on similar categories of social and economic patterns as described above, but are in the 2nd Tier due to the comparatively lesser degree or intensity of these patterns. There appears to be more interaction between these communities and the project area than other communities outside of both tiers. Most agreed upon inclusion of Fresno and Madera, but some debated the inclusion of Merced.

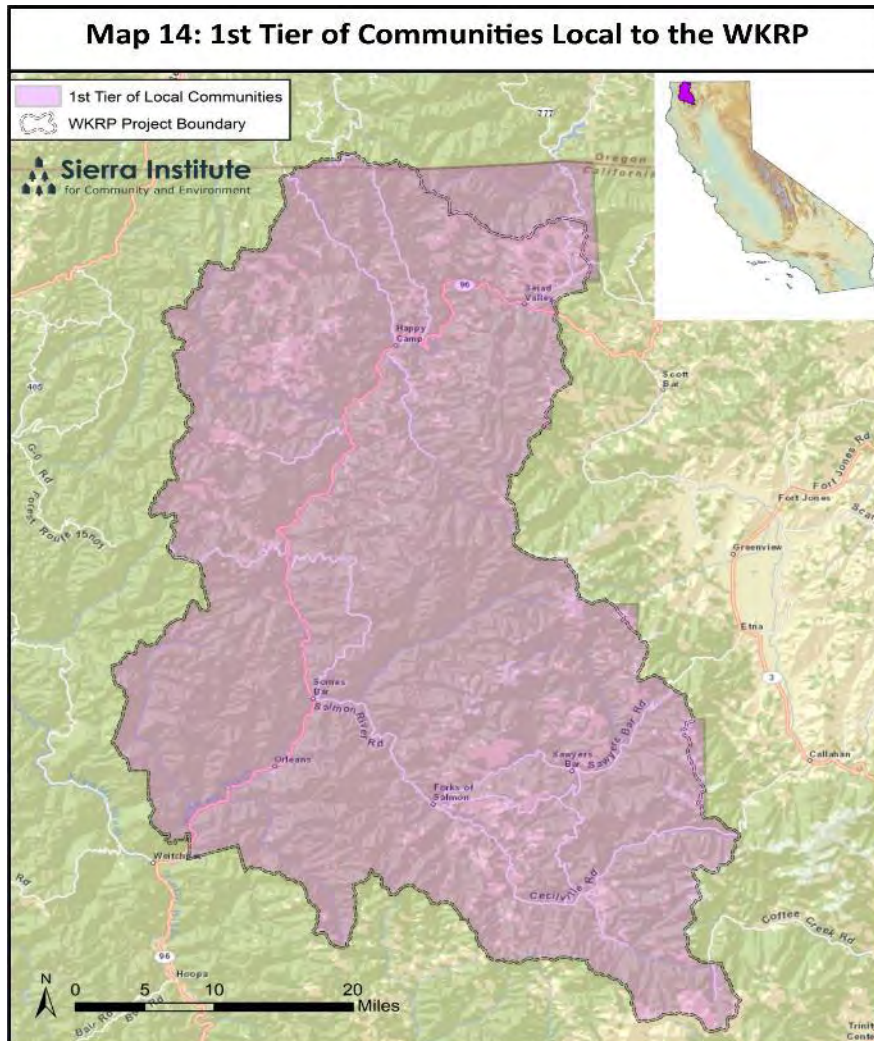


Maps 12 and 13 illustrate both the frequency and the values of recent Sierra National contract awards respectively. Again, please see Appendix B regarding the origins and limits of these data.



iv. Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WKRP)

1st Tier: Communities of and surrounding²³ Forks of Salmon, Happy Camp, Orleans, Seiad Valley, and Solmes Bar



Map 14 shows that WKRP's 1st Tier includes the communities within: Forks of the Salmon, Happy Camp, and Junction School Districts, as well as portions of the Klamath Trinity Joint Unified, Seiad Elementary, and Scott Valley Unified Del Norte County Unified School Districts. These communities have the strongest cultural ties to the landscape, along with the timber, agriculture, and commerce industries of the area. This sprawling area encompasses the rugged, deeply incised Klamath River landscape.

Note that the WKRP project area almost completely aligns with the ancestral territory of the Karuk Tribe, one of the Collaborative's foundational stakeholders. This overlap appeared informative in many of the informants' feedback on the delineation of Tier 1.

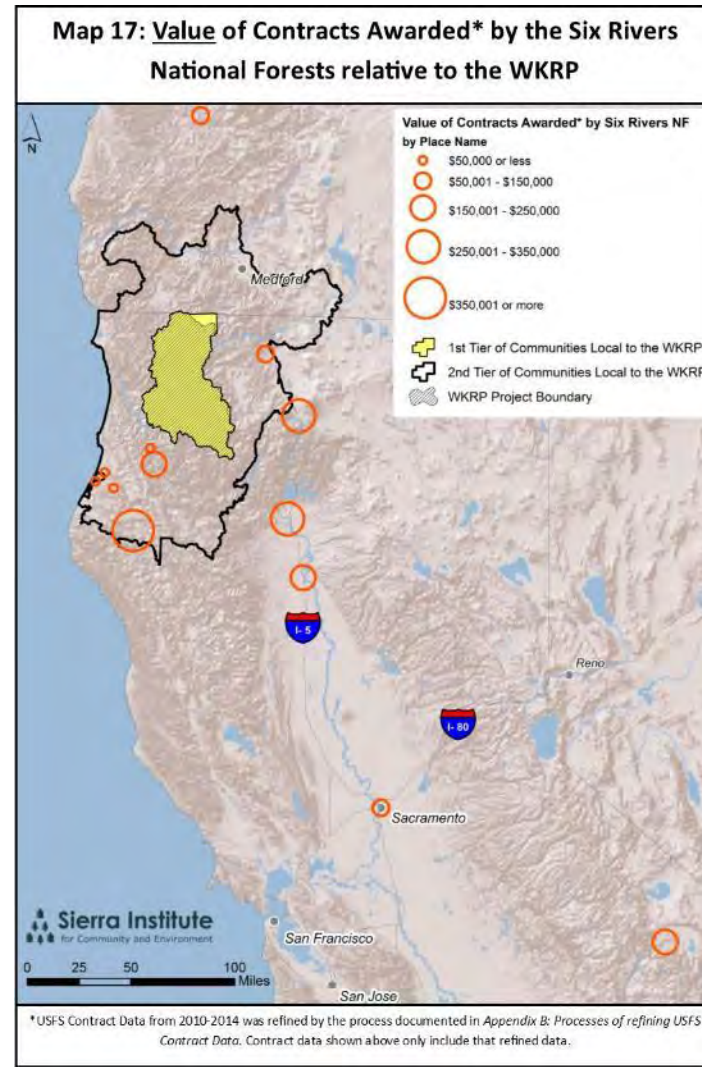
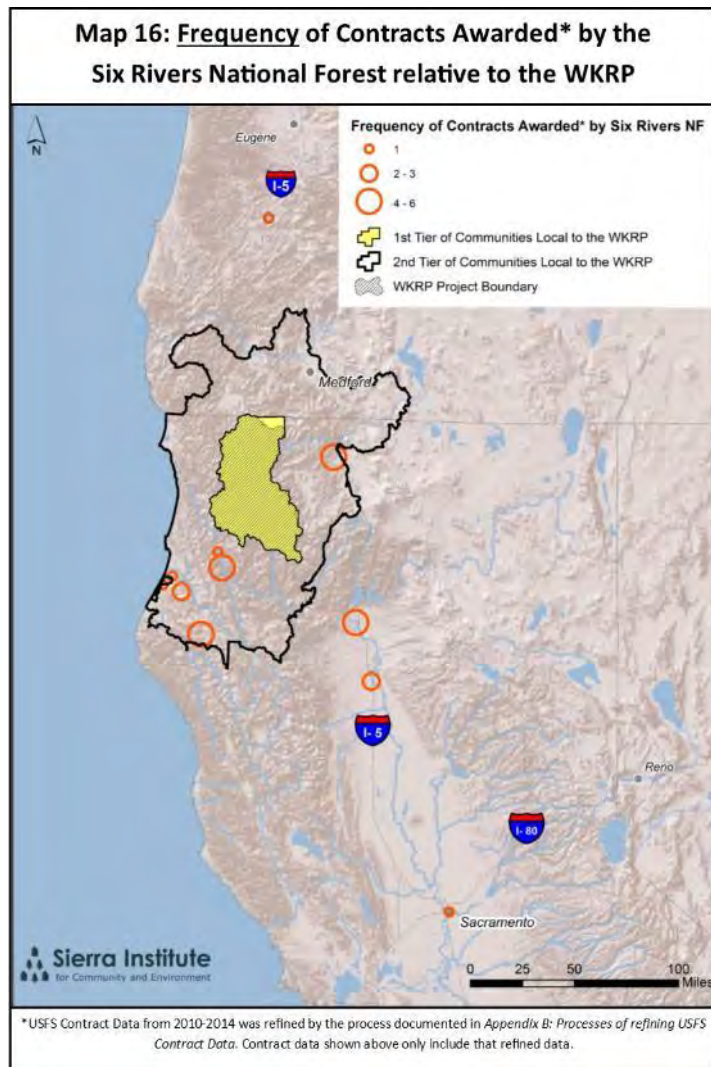
²³ "Surrounding" is defined by the boundaries of the WKRP project area shown on Map 2. The list of communities is not exhaustive.

2nd Tier: Communities including Crescent City, Cave Junction, Medford, Weaverville, and Yreka



These communities are included as a second tier based on similar categories of social and economic patterns as described above, but are 2nd Tier due to the lesser degree to which these patterns occur, as compared to Tier 1. Some of the 2nd Tier area includes communities in Oregon.

Maps 16 and 17 show the recent Six Rivers National Forest awards to contractors according to both frequency and value, respectively. Similar to two of the CFLRs, no contracts were awarded to contractors located within the 1st Tier, but unlike the CFLRs, the majority of the contracts were awarded to contractors in the 2nd Tier area. The majority of the value of the contracts, however, appears to lie outside of the 2nd Tier area. Again, see Appendix B regarding the origins and limitations of these data.



Inter-Case Study Patterns and Trends

Characteristics of Importance

Informants from the case studies identified several overlapping characteristics of importance including contractor capacity, commuting distance, cultural ties to the landscape (both present and historical), economic patterns (particularly those which relate to the timber industry, but also general commerce and service industries), location of schools and school districts, watershed boundaries, infrastructure, and landcover (e.g., “where the forest ends and begins”). Collectively, informants did not find one variable that trumped others yet when examined spatially, many of variables appear to coincide with one another at the local scale.

Local Contractor Capacity

No informant suggested that “local” contractors have the required capacity to do all of the contract work associated with these project areas. Indeed, the location of contractors carrying out the work in each of the cases suggest that there is a lack of capacity in the 1st Tiers to do all the needed work. As a result of this perceived limited capacity, the Sierra Institute recommends that local delineations not be treated as determinative but rather be used to inform contractor preference in terms of their benefit to “local.” We suggest that it is equally important to recognize that a contractor’s “benefit to local” should not simply rely on the Tier in which a contractor’s headquarters is located, but that preference is best determined by the Tiers from which employees are drawn and other socioeconomic impact is generated. See this report’s supplement, *USFS Acquisition Mechanisms and Potential for Increased Local Contracting*, for more information on implementation. Delineations of 1st and 2nd Tier “local” should be a point of reference for the USFS and other agencies when awarding preference. Preference does not equate to a guarantee or a requirement for award of a contract.

Secondly, because contractor capacity—particularly in the 1st Tier—is limited relative to the work needed, contracts should be scaled accordingly as to encourage local contractor participation and investment, in equipment for example. This effort to match scale with capacity will entail offering contracts that are within current capacity to successfully complete, and that are tailored to encourage progressive investment in equipment, employee training, and other aspects of local socioeconomic well-being. One collaborative member suggested that rather than asking “Are there any contractors within this boundary that can do the job?” a better approach would be to ask “How can we scale the contracts within these larger projects to maximize the amount of work done by our most local contractors?” (2015). Moreover, current contractor capacity should be viewed not as a permanent condition, but rather as one that requires nurturing and development. Contractor capacity, particularly in the southern Sierra, has diminished over the last 20 to 30 years; it will not be rebuilt in a year or two.

Recommendations for the USFS to assess capacity in a manner that informs future pilot contracts is also outlined in the *Federal Acquisitions with Local Preference* Report.

Finally, organizational and technical capacity to register with the federal cooperator system and the completion of potential additional documentation regarding local preference suggests that additional work is needed to train and increase the technical capacity of local contractors. More details from these findings and recommendations are discussed in the *Federal Acquisitions with Local Preference* Report.

Meaningful, Measurable Units

Collaboratives will benefit from local delineations that correspond with *meaningful* units for which data are collected at regular intervals. This is true particularly in the instance of CFLRs, where socioeconomic monitoring is required. Based on the literature reviewed and in the context of the interview data, school districts proved to be one of the most appropriate measures for delineating boundaries.

Appropriateness, in this context, involves units for which there are regularly collected, relevant, well-rounded (i.e., economic and social), accessible, and fine-grained data. Delineation of the 1st Tier for all but one of the case studies involves use of school district boundaries.

There are instances, however, for which school district boundaries do not correspond with local delineations. When such units are inconsistent with what is understood by respondents as local, such units should not be relied upon. In these cases, careful review of the interview and focus group data should be examined in relation to other administrative boundaries or geospatial features.

Concentric Tiers

Interviews and analyses across all case studies suggested that two Tiers of local delineation are an effective and accurate way to define local for the Collaboratives examined.

California as a Third Tier

Some informants raised the idea that contractors within California that are not within the 1st or 2nd Tier should be awarded tertiary local preference points for recognition due to increased standards placed on California contractors relative to other states in terms of worker compensation, vehicle registration requirements and fees, sales taxes, etc.

Worker's compensation rates vary widely from state to state. However, California by far has the highest worker's compensation rate among all 50 states at \$3.48 per \$100 of payroll (Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services, 2015). In comparison, neighboring states of Nevada, Oregon and Idaho have worker's compensation rates of \$1.26, \$1.37 and \$2.01, respectively (*ibid*). These differences are significant, particularly for projects with large payroll totals. However, worker compensation rates are not necessarily determined by the state in which the contractor is located or where the project is taking place, but instead is related to the employee's residence. For instance, if a California contract is awarded to a contractor from Oregon, the contractor is required to pay California rates of worker's compensation if (s)he hires California residents.

Additionally, California has strict air quality regulations, mandating smog tests for all vehicles 1975 or newer (California Department of Motor Vehicles, 2011). Consequently, many out of state contractors lease equipment instead of transporting their own vehicles from out of state (USFS Contracting Officer, 2015).

For these reasons, Sierra Institute recommends that all areas beyond Tier 2's, but within the state of California be considered a 3rd Tier for all California USFS Collaborative Forest Initiatives and awarded preference points accordingly.

Similarly, contractors that hire California residents should be awarded preference points.

All case study project areas encompass ancestral American Indian tribal territories. For WKRP, for example, the Collaborative project area encompasses all 1.2 million acres of the Karuk Tribe's ancestral territory. This area is characterized as 1st Tier, hence, any contractor within the project area is a 1st Tier contractor. Still, despite the massive size of this area, few contracts were awarded in this local area. In areas, identification of tribes within local Tiers is less clear. In one discussion with USFS CO's, much of the work with tribes is done through agreements, which are beyond the scope of this paper. Additional work is needed to determine how to effectively and equitably link tribes with Tiers, and/or whether or not this process is even appropriate in the context of tribes. Further discussion regarding this is outlined in the *Federal Acquisitions with a Local Preference* report.

V. Conclusions

Defining local is no simple task. As outlined in the Stewardship Contracting Handbook, in terms of USFS acquisitions, it is a decision made by the responsible line officer, and that "feedback from collaboration should also be considered in the determination of local community" (USFS, 2014, pg. 26). However, scientific delineation of local requires unbiased interpretation of cultural ties to the landscape (both present and historical), economic patterns (regarding both the forest-products industry and other markets), the location of schools, watershed boundaries, infrastructure, land cover, etc. Some of these data can be generated by an outside organization using publically available geospatial data, but other require community-specific awareness and evaluation. For example, site-specific stakeholder understanding is needed to accurately, delineate what is and what isn't local. Based on this work, Sierra Institute recommends that programs intending to provide local benefit apply the methodology and principles used in this study to generate case-specific delineations.

Sierra Institute recommends that Collaboratives work with third party social scientists to apply the following methodology when "defining local" for the purpose of USFS contracting purposes: (1) overlay the project footprint on the geospatial information listed above in a Geographic Information System software program; (2) conduct interviews with community (including tribal and nontribal), environmental, nonprofit, local agency, USFS, industry, and other stakeholders to determine which of those geospatial boundaries best apply to the project's local industry and infrastructure; (3) based on geospatial data, interview data, and community aggregation literature relevant to the landscape, generate draft delineations, using a multi-tier approach when appropriate; and (4) share the delineations with focus groups; and 5) refine, adjust, and finalize the delineations.

The geographic proximity of some USFS Collaboratives (for example, the South Fork of the American River, the Rim Fire Restoration Collaborative, and the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group), as well as the potential of additional Collaboratives, reveals another important consideration. In order for the concept of "defining local" to stimulate the preferencing of contractors that will most socially and economically benefit a given local area, it is imperative that all USFS Collaboratives go through the process of defining local, as to limit the overlapping of primary Tiers.

When responding to a USFS solicitation, potential contractors should be evaluated according to a number of standard factors (such as price, past performance) as well as their impact on the "local" area.

Tiers in and of themselves do not designate how much preference a contractor located within or outside of them receives. Instead, preference is assigned in relation to the Tiers based on the evaluation criteria: (1) location of headquarters; (2) residence of employees; and (3) other sources of socioeconomic benefit. It is also important to treat these delineations as a social science foundation upon which USFS Collaboratives may better navigate generating local socioeconomic benefit via local contracting; these recommendations are not meant to be prescriptive. These criteria and the scoring process is outlined further in this report's supplement, *USFS Acquisition Mechanisms and Potential for Increased Local Contracting*.

Finally, as others develop additional delineations in the context of other USFS Collaboratives, a re-examination of the Tiers presented in this study is recommended. This will allow for adaptive improvement of the delineations set forth in this report as well as the refinement of the principles used in the practice of Tier delineation. This step is an important component of the USFS' work to truly advance local, triple bottom line outcomes.

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VI. Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Interview Guide



Defining Local Interview Guide

ACCG CFLR

Interviews: 27-28 July 2015

- 1.) *Explanation of the project and its significance.*
- 2.) *Confirm informant anonymity, discuss questions or concerns that the informant may have.*
- 3.) Before we discuss specific places and boundaries... AKA the “where,” I want to hear your thoughts on “how” to define local. If you were to move to a new state next week and create a forest collaborative that intended to benefit “local,” how would you make that decision? What characteristics or variables would you take into account? What questions would you ask?
- 4.) Have you been involved in the process of the ACCG Defining Local?
John He. and John Ho. as well as Katherine were listed as being at least Op. Working Group meeting that discussed this.

If yes, Q1: Were the characteristics/variables that you would apply to your hypothetical collaborative considered in that process? Were some of them “weighted” heavier than others?

If yes, Q2: How did the group delineate what was local? What key factors or variables were considered? How did that decision making process take place (Consensus? Compromise?)?

If yes, Q3: Are you content/happy with the resulting definition? What, if anything would you change or continue to examine? Why?

<<use county maps to discuss if certain areas are “more local” and if so whether or not SD or CBG boundaries fit those tiers>>

If yes, Q4: When we talk about specific contracting vehicles and contracting patterns, do the boundaries still hold? What, if anything, should be different?

If yes, Q5: The operations working group notes indicate that contractors within those areas will be put into an IDIQ.

- Has any progress on that been made?
- Who is your FS CO contact for this effort?
 - Do you have a sense as to their perspective on how realistic and effective it will be?
- Do you have an idea as to how many contractors are available from within those delineations?
 - Are they all registered with SAM already?
 - Have they provided input as to whether or not they would be interested in joining the IDIQ?
- Have you all sorted out how to certify the place of residence of employees and expenses purchased locally?

If no: When considering the characteristics you would use with your hypothetical collaborative, what areas and communities do you think are local to the ACCG CFLR?

If no, Q2: Are there some areas/ communities that you think are more local than others? If so, where and why?

If no, Q3: When we talk about specific contracting vehicles and contracting patterns, do the boundaries still hold? What, if anything, should be different?

5.) If you were to give another forest collaborative advice on how to define local, what would you say?

6.) Is there anything else that you would like to say?

7.) Would it be OK if we followed up with you if we have any additional questions?

Appendix B:

Processes of refining USFS contract data

1. USFS Data Generation via Procurement Analyst

General Information regarding USFS spreadsheet data

Award information was obtained from the Federal Procurement Data System – Next Generation (FPDS-NG) for the period 01/01/2012 to 06/30/2015. This system collects data entered by contracting offices for contract actions using appropriated funds. This system does not contain data on non-contract actions such as partnership agreements with other entities.

Contract data was obtained from the Forests identified as being part of the various group activities listed below. This data contained all contract actions funded by these forests.

Group	Forest
Amador Calaveras Consensus Group	El Dorado
Amador Calaveras Consensus Group	Stanislaus
Burney Hat Creek Collaborative	Lassen
Dinkey Creek Collaborative LRP	Sierra
Western Klamath Restoration Partnership	Six Rivers
S. Fork American River Cohesive Strategy	El Dorado

The original data contained over 2000 lines of information. Based on conversations with Alison Reeves Jolley the data was screened to eliminate the following transactions:

- Procurement of only equipment or supplies (as reported in the product service codes)
- Information technology services/supplies
- Repairs/maintenance to Forest Service fleet vehicles
- Incident only emergency procurements for fires
- Modifications to contract actions awarded prior to 1/1/12
- Modifications/administrative actions where no additional funds were added (\$0 modifications)

The resulting spreadsheet now contains 468 transactions.

2. Sierra Institute process for data refinement

Given the large number of contracts in the USFS database, we chose to select only those contracts that accounted for work funded by CFLR dollars. This refinement process took place in the following way:

Contracts in the spreadsheet supplied by the USFS were identified by a number of variables including Product or Service Description and Description of Requirement. These outlined the type of work each completed under each contract. We chose to reclassify projects into more general categories which were:

- 1) Architecture;
- 2) Construction/Repair/Maintenance: Buildings;
- 3) Construction/Repair/Maintenance: Transportation;
- 4) Construction/Repair/Maintenance: non-building, non-transportation facilities;
- 5) Natural and Cultural Resources; and
- 6) Other (if contracts represented less than 1% of overall data).

USFS staff were consulted about which contract categories were funded by CFLR dollars. Categories identified were Natural and Cultural Resources and Construction/Repair/Maintenance: Transportation. The monetary value of contracts in these categories accounted for 46% and 23% of the total database respectively. Maps 4, 5, 8, 9, 13 and 16 reflect this subset of the data.

Contractor informants were also selected from this spreadsheet. The same general classification scheme was followed, and the total value and frequency of contracts in each category were calculated for each case study National Forest(s). This calculation was used to determine the breakdown of contractor informants contacted (i.e if 50% of the contracts were in the Natural and Cultural Resources category, 50% of informants should be contractors that perform work of this type). Subsequently, contractors were sorted by the distance from a central case study location (typically the meeting place of the collaborative group in question) as well as the number of contracts they received. Due to budget constraints, only contractors located within 75 miles of the central site were contacted. Contractors were contacted according to this method of prioritization and supplemented, when necessary, with input from the same individuals who identified other key informants.

**Local Benefit Recommendation
Amador Calaveras Consensus Group**

10/31/14

The Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) is a community-based organization that promotes fire safe communities, healthy forests and watersheds, and sustainable local economies. One of ACCG's key principles is to "Seek forest and watershed planning solutions that benefit all three components of our vision: the local environment, community and economy." The Operations Workgroup of the ACCG has been tasked with developing a definition of "local" for use in stewardship and service contract awards of Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration and other applicable funds.

The ACCG has approved the following definition of "local" for federal service type contracts. Additional work by the Operations Workgroup and subsequent approval by the ACCG will be needed for a "local" definition for Stewardship contracts.

The purpose of developing a definition of "Local Benefit" is to optimize the ACCG's goal of achieving an integrated triple-bottom-line benefit that is consistent with ACCG-adopted environmental, social and economic principles. The following definition of "local" was approved by the ACCG during its October 15, 2014 meeting.

1. Service Contracts – Work with USFS Regional Acquisitions staff to develop Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts using only local contractors. Critical need work will be identified that fall within USFS authority to identify local workforce within IDIQ contractor pool. Authorized work for IDIQs includes forest hazardous fuels reduction, watershed or water quality monitoring and restoration, wildlife or fish population monitoring, and habitat restoration and management.

Depending on contractor availability (identified through market research), our initial definition of "local contractor" is as follows:

- i. Projects in Calaveras Ranger District – local is considered Amador, Calaveras, Alpine and Tuolumne counties.
- ii. Projects in Amador Ranger District – local is considered Amador, Calaveras, Alpine and El Dorado counties.

All contractors defined here would be allowed into the IDIQ pool. IDIQ contract awards will include additional evaluation of and emphasis on defined social, economic, and environmental benefits to Amador and Calaveras counties.

Note: Based upon market research the definition of local may be expanded or contracted as needed to develop a reasonable contractor pool.