

Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group

Full-Group Meeting

Friday, April 23 9:00am-12:00pm

Zoom

[Meeting Synopsis](#)

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met virtually on Friday, April 23rd to provide updates on projects and partners, as well as to discuss strategic planning and the CFLR extension draft proposal.

[Attendees](#)

Jason Mateljak – Lassen Volcanic National Park
Michelle Coppoletta – Lassen National Forest
Todd Sloat – Fall River RCD
Tuli Potts – Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Jason Moghaddas – Spatial Informatics Group
Greg Mayer – Lassen National Forest
Debbie Mayer
Amye Osti- 34 North
Tom March- CalTrans

Jeffrey Oldson- Cascade Resource Consultants
Jim Richardson – Lassen Volcanic National Park
Alex Carter – The McConnell Foundation
Sharmie Stevenson – Fall River RCD
Trish Puterbaugh – Yahi Group Sierra Club
Steve Buckley – Lassen Volcanic National Park
Jonathan Kusel – Sierra Institute
Corrinne Scieszka – Sierra Institute

[Approvals, Modifications, and Meeting Objectives](#)

Jonathan led collaborative members through introductions and entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Tuli motioned to approve and Todd seconded. Todd then motioned to approve the meeting minutes from February, and Greg seconded. The agenda and meeting minutes were approved.

[Socioeconomic Monitoring Update \(Sierra Institute\)](#)

Jonathan provided an update on the final draft of the socioeconomic assessment. It has been substantially modified from the last version, with comments incorporated and new topics, particularly related to COVID, included. The draft will be sent out to group members early in the week following this meeting, with May 10th established as the deadline to provide comments. Michelle asked if these results could be condensed into a 2-page brief using a template provided for communicating socioeconomic monitoring results of CFLRs, to which Jonathan agreed.

Jonathan displayed maps showing scores for socioeconomic statuses and community capacity scores for communities in the Burney Hat Creek CFLR. The majority of communities scored roughly medium to medium low across both categories. These metrics assess rural forested communities more appropriately than more standard metrics like the CalEnviroScreen tool, under which there are no disadvantaged communities in rural forested areas.

Jason Moghaddas asked if there was a way to account for new changes in the region in these assessments, particularly new people moving up to the area, and shifting incomes that may result. Jonathan responded that there are many ways that this could be incorporated through different census data measurements, including median home values, job types, housing availability, and more. He is particularly concerned about recent EDD data detailing declining Forest Service, tourism, and manufacturing jobs in SNC counties. The monitoring report assessed data at the block group level because county-level data can make it difficult to differentiate and identify burdens of specific communities.

[CalTrans Update/Overview \(Tom March\)](#)

Tom March gave an update on work that CalTrans is doing, saying that they are currently trying to keep up with fuels reduction and maintenance projects. Lost Creek is one specific project in which they are

collaborating with Sierra Pacific along CA-299 and CA-89, working towards Big Valley Mountain grade and trying to hit guardrails. They are also conducting maintenance along the Shasta-Siskiyou county border. They are currently trying to accommodate more projects that are coming through, as there will be more funding. When timber fuels projects happen, it can be hard to pull crews for traffic controls. Greg noted that the 299 work is beautiful and that the residents of this area really appreciate it. He also asked if CalTrans is working on noxious weeds from fires. Hat Creek to Fall River is being inundated with star thistle and other noxious weeds creeping up the hill, and he would like to get these things before they migrate. Tom responded that they do manage contracts with Lassen, Shasta, Plumas, Siskiyou, and Modoc county ag to do chemical treatments for noxious weed. They are trying to pinpoint locations and do applications, and have herbicide crews. They want to start treating Four Corners, and are working with the county. Greg noted that they recently completed herbicide treatment NEPA documents for the Bald and Eiler fires, and included stuff to do management outside of fires, so he would be willing to partner with CalTrans to work together on this issue. Todd asked about barriers that have prevented them (CalTrans) from conducting maintenance. Tom responded that the biggest barrier has been public perception, and that they are trying to be good stewards in the community. Jonathan asked if they have had challenges in securing labor and getting crews together, and also provided a brief overview of the H RTP grant that the Sierra Institute recently received, in which they are trying to stand up crews to be engaged or contracted in this work. Tom responded that they are hiring and currently trying to fill more vegetation crews. They have also had inmates from CalFire on fire and national guard crews.

Strategic Planning

Todd opened up the discussion saying that he hopes to keep strategic planning on the agenda as a way of keeping the group on track to deliver on projects. Specifically, are there any changes in assets/barriers to getting work done that folks are aware of? This is the last year in the CalFire grant to deliver on these projects. Greg Mayer commented on the Backbone project, saying that they are conducting stand exams to better understand the condition of this land base, which will slow the project down a little bit. Todd asked if the Forest Service anticipates wildlife staffing needs. Lance responded that wildlife issues are front and center for these projects, that they will be advertising for a full-time position soon, and that they have wildlife technicians that will be surveying the area. They have two or three seasonal positions that will be coming on to work with the district archeologist.

Trish asked if the Backbone project is on the quarterly SOPA, and commented that with all of the work that is being done through the CFLR and FS, it is difficult for the public to have access to planning projects if they are not listed on the SOPA. Greg commented that this can be difficult because once things are put on the SOPA for formal public scoping, they have roughly one year to complete the project. So, there are some things that need to be done upfront before they start the scoping process. The group identified the 34 North website as an asset to this problem in keeping the public more informed, and proposed updating it with descriptions of Forest Service projects, which could then be linked on the Forest Service website.

Todd then asked about Lassen and what is being seen in terms of field crews this year. Steve responded that they will be doing bird work for the NW Gateway project, in addition to bat and spotted owl surveys, and that they will also be doing invasive plant species treatments. In regard to staff changes, he (Steve) will be leaving, and the fire division picked up a new fuels specialist. Jason Metljak noted that contracting on NW Gateway is stalling, and they are having discussions on which part of the project are most accessible. If they (the park) issue a contract, they need a contracting officer representative, and are currently trying to identify someone who can take over this duty. Lance offered to look into whether or not it would be possible for a FS employee to do it. Sharmie asked about the likelihood of work being performed on the NW Gateway project, given that the CCI grant ends on the 31st of March. Jason commented that he shared this concern about getting work done, and noted that NW Gateway is a high

priority for the park. He commented that a good discussion for the group might be, at what point do we put our energy toward another effort to get this project done?

Project Updates

Todd gave some updates on projects. The Thousand Springs project, which is a WUI project, has fuels marking completed. The Soldier Mt. project had a hiccup in the NEPA, and they expect to have a NEPA decision in the near future. Backbone was discussed already, but there needs to be investment in additional survey work. For the Bald and Eiler Reforestation efforts, they have 800 acres done so far this spring, and are closer to finishing up.

Greg noted that they need appraisals for the Crossroads, Manzanita, and Plum Biomass projects. The Cabin and Roadrunner projects are pretty much marked and they are waiting on cruise data. Reddington should be cruised, 49er TS is marked and will hopefully be sold first quarter of '22. For Badger, they have continued ID team meetings, and scoping went well. They are working through the same stuff as the Backbone project, with arc and wildlife surveys. Lance said that they have a draft appraisal for the Manzanita Chutes project and that the Hat Creek Fire Restoration project got through scoping with no objections.

Jonathan asked if the high volume of burned material and high prices of lumber are playing into bids and appraisals, and if so how? Todd responded that from a fuels buyer's perspective, the answer is yes, given that nobody is interested in buying logs. Jeff Oldson contributed that lumber prices have skyrocketed, but not so much for log prices. They are able to continue supporting folk's projects and don't anticipate dramatic action.

Partner Updates

SNC (Tuli):

They have open solicitation for forest resilience opportunities proposals, which are due on the 30th. These are for shovel ready projects to be complete by Jan. 2025. They foresee another 50 million in funding for the next fiscal year, for projects that involve both planning and implementation. It is hard to say the number of proposals that are forthcoming, but they are working with CalFire, who has a CCI opportunity right now, to coordinate and avoid overlapping on proposals.

Pit and Fall River RCDs (Todd):

Both RCDs received direct award funding for federal projects, one in Modoc and a couple on Lassen. CalFire wanted CEQA done, which excluded private projects. They reached out to CalFire and will be adding projects for direct consideration, which would get them up to a 5 million dollar ask and would encourage private lands projects. Both RCDs will be submitting grants for fire prevention strategy projects for CalFire grants. Joint Chief's will be resubmitted in a few days, and he doesn't know whether or not it will be competitive again this year.

Jason Moghaddas:

His company does a lot of work in the carbon world. They are working with the Vermont Land Trust to provide funding to private landowners who have been left out of the carbon market and finance fuels reduction projects through calculation of avoided carbon costs from wildfire.

Fall River RCD (Sharmie)

There is a company putting in the Fountain Wind Project, and will be going to the planning commission in May. They have offered up to \$300,000 to the RCD, which would be two phases, and they would have to leverage additional funding.

Lassen Volcanic National Park (Jason Mateljak)

They are looking at developing a long-term EA related to recreation, in the greater Manzanita Lake area, and looking at things from a socioeconomic standpoint.

Sierra Institute (Jonathan)

SI just received an H RTP grant for standing up fire crews, particularly with native groups, however this is not restricted to them. The grant hopes to introduce TEK to crews (along with a bunch of other skills), and use these crews to address labor shortages. One goal is to create a scaffolding of opportunities by bringing training to people and staying within communities, getting more people into the field and taking advantage of opportunities. The grant will start June 1.

34 North Data Workshops Update

Amye provided an update on 34 North work, and said that they have completed the first round of hazard risk assessment for the CFLR boundary, as well as a significant buffer of about 40 miles. They can make a quick version of the results to present to the group. They followed the GTR 315 wildfire risk assessment methodology and ranked HVRA results within the CFLR. The assessment identifies the relative likelihood of fire occurring on the landscape. This is a good resource for grants. They are waiting on COVID regulations for a face to face workshop, which will probably be in about another month or two before everyone is vaccinated, etc.

Michelle commented on the potential to merge this work with data that she has. Specifically, she highlighted a report titled “Landscape Assessment of Forest Health Treatment Priority Areas in the Burney Hat Creek CFLRP,” which was a high-level assessment good for summarizing broad needs across the landscape. It could help with recent grant asks, or even the CFLR extension. She also reported on a Terrestrial Conditional Assessment of the BHC CFLRP, in which different metrics were ranked to provide landscapes with an overall score from good to poor. Finally, there was a report on conifer regeneration potential in the 2014 Eiler fire, which could help to start to quantify reforestation needs.

CFLR Extension Draft Proposal

Debbie provided an update on the CFLR extension draft proposal, and highlighted a few areas where she needed some more information from the group. Specifically, she needs acres for the Hat Creek fire restoration EA, and help with filling out partners and partner projects. She will send out another email to help track and nudge folks to respond to requests for information. Another big section that she needs help with is the socioeconomic section, which would be for Jonathan and Todd to look at. This extension would be for five years, and would take us roughly through 2027.

Closing Comments and Future Agenda Items

Strategic planning- goods for services exchange between Forest and Partners relative to reducing fuels and improving forest health

Reforestation Issues/Potential Subgroup