

Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group

Full-Group Meeting

Wednesday, February 10 10:00am-1:10pm

Zoom

[Meeting Synopsis](#)

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met virtually on Wednesday, February 10th to provide updates on monitoring, projects, and partners, as well as to discuss strategic planning efforts including WUI and non-WUI work.

[Attendees](#)

Jason Mateljak – Lassen Volcanic National Park
Frank Heide – Lassen National Forest
Andrew Fullerton – Sierra Pacific Industries
Brendan Palmieri – 34 North
Michelle Coppoletta – Lassen National Forest
Todd Sloat – Fall River RCD
Tuli Potts – Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Tami Taylor – Lassen National Forest
Jason Moghaddas – Spatial Informatics Group
Greg Mayer – Lassen National Forest

Jim Richardson – Lassen Volcanic National Park
Alex Carter – The McConnell Foundation
Sharmie Stevenson – Fall River RCD
Jill Overbaugh – Symbiotic Restoration
Trish Puterbaugh – Yahi Group Sierra Club
Kyle Desautel – Pit River Tribe
Steve Buckley – Lassen Volcanic National Park
Gregory Wolfen – Pit River Tribe
Jonathan Kusel – Sierra Institute
Dov Weinman – Sierra Institute

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

Jonathan led collaborative members through introductions and entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from December. Jim motioned and Todd seconded. The group approved December's meeting minutes. Todd motioned to approve the agenda. Trish seconded.

[Monitoring Updates \(Michelle\)](#)

Michelle provided an update on ecological monitoring, stating that they are continuing to work with partners and staff to summarize the monitoring results. They are hiring field a crew from UC Davis to do some monitoring on Hat Creek, and with the Badger project, they're expanding monitoring efforts and doing detailed vegetation monitoring and work with the University of Wisconsin for acoustic monitoring.

The three documents provide a short synopsis of monitoring results from the North 49 project, situated in the southwestern corner of the CFLRP. The objective of these monitoring efforts was to evaluate the effects of thinning treatments on understory microclimate (i.e. wind speed, temperature, etc.), soil water uptake, and tree growth. They were fortunate to have excellent internal and external partners who led these monitoring efforts, and they hope that their findings result in useful and informative management recommendations.

[Monitoring briefs \(with online links to new Fall River RCD monitoring webpage\)](#)

- [Impacts of forest thinning on radial tree growth in large ponderosa pine](#)
- [Impacts of forest thinning on understory microclimate](#)
- [Seasonal changes in ponderosa pine water source depth and the impacts of forest thinning](#)

Additionally, more monitoring briefs can be found below: two are updates related to ongoing monitoring projects, while one summarizes hot-off-the-press results from a project that was initiated in 2020. A big

thank you to Kirsten Bovee, botanist on the Almanor Ranger District, for taking the lead on these projects and summarizing the results.

- [Monitoring the effects of the Eiler Fire on bunchgrass and bitterbrush in a mesic meadow system near Burney Mountain](#). Found that although the fire resulted in short-term impacts to bitterbrush, after five years, there was significant bitterbrush recovery. In 2019, the shrub community was on a trajectory to return to pre-fire shrub cover.
- [Monitoring wildfire effects, phenology, and longevity of the rare Baker's globe-mallow](#). Learned that Baker's globe-mallow density was highest under light burn severities, which may have been related to increased litter from pine needles that fell post-fire and helped retain moisture during a drought year.
- [Assessing black oak habitat characteristics for rare olive-thorn lichen](#). Monitoring revealed that most olive-thorn lichen patches were associated with 7"-9.5" diameter black oak trees, overtopped by conifers, and were found in stands with few oak seedlings or saplings. Future monitoring within the Crossroads Project will determine whether the retention of large trees retain the moist microclimate for this rare lichen, while also opening up canopy gaps to promote oak recruitment.

The Forest Service encourages interested collaborative members to contact them with questions, comments, or for further discussion.

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

Jonathan provided outcomes from workshops conducted as a part of this work, and the Sierra Institute is synthesizing scores and wrapping up the final parts of the socioeconomic monitoring. The Sierra Institute has done the socioeconomic monitoring for all three of the California CFLR projects, and is now working with Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) groups. The work from the BHC socioeconomic assessment will get rolled into these groups.

There has not been a direct comparison done of the socioeconomic conditions between the three CFLR groups, but these areas are relatively low income, with different things going on in ACCG and Dinkey, and SI is looking closely to see how these communities come out of Covid-19 and recessions. In terms of how the CFLR effort changes or influences socioeconomic conditions, paired cases studies have not been conducted. However, Jason noted that there has been a lot of hiring at the local mill, and that the value of trees is going up. There is, however, the question of whether these dollars hit the ground in communities, and how to properly ensure that rural communities capture the benefits from work done in forests. How do we let our conversations thrive, and not just survive?

[HVRA Process \(34 North\)](#)

Brendan discussed the BHCCFWG's Strategic Prioritization Process, and noted that he hopes that group members adopt the GTR 315 Workflow, which outlines a simple and adjustable workflow that collaborative groups can use to model wildfire risk across the landscape. The GTR 315 process is as follows:

- [GTR 315](#)
 - Review key data
 - Briefly review modeling approaches and fire simulation models
 - Distribute survey to stakeholders
 - Discuss outcomes and potential uses within the strategic planning process

The first objective is to agree on all the HVRA's, and then distribute a list associated with the map. They will then solicit feedback from folks to see if the list is complete, and then they'll distribute a survey to link those HVRA's. Depending on time constraints, they can do a generalized run with their best guess for

the rankings. Jonathan brought up the question of looking at these areas in light of different socioeconomic conditions, and linking biophysical issues to the community's ability to respond.

Strategic Planning Subcommittee (Todd)

Todd thanked the Subcommittee participants and brought up some questions to the group. For one, what is the process for picking the next area of work? The HVRA analysis will help to look at a map and see areas that need treatment, and could be a great playbook to use in order to examine how we want to work in this area, as well as use this to step toward funding sources. Secondly, what are some of the principles that inform the collaborative's direction? The group noted multiple priorities, including community protection, needs, and economics, leveraging natural fuel breaks or past work, considering projects that are actually possible, putting additional dollars towards the trickiest and most expensive treatments, prioritizing low intensity burns and providing a service for burning fuel loads, restoring areas after high severity wildfire, building capacity for burning the landscape, and paying special attention to rare and unique resources in the landscape, as well as important community structures, such as schools.

In terms of where work should occur moving forward, Steve noted that this should be wherever the fire weather allows us to work. Todd mentioned that we should focus on WUI areas that need our attention and Gregory Wolfin noted travel corridors that mitigate fire spread. Jason noted a need to focus on getting people out quickly and equipment in safely. Specifically, he noted the importance of campgrounds as economic generators.

Ultimately, we want to be able to answer, where are we going next and why are we going there?

Badger Project – Updates and Public Comment Period (Frank)

Frank provided an update on the Badger Mountain, Hat Creek and Old Station area and said they are looking to restore this area to a more natural open forest structure. They are looking to do some thinning in the plantations and fuel breaks. Tami contributed that the scoping letters are on the Forest Supervisor's desk, and she hopes for a public comment period to get out really soon.

Project Updates

Todd gave an update on some projects, including the Thousand Springs and Soldier Mt WUI, both funded by the McConnell Foundation, which will likely be signed by the end of the month pending some reviews. The Roadrunner, a 2400 acre WUI project, and Backbone are tracking well after some good meetings with the FS. Additionally, Bald and Eiler Reforestation efforts are moving forward. In the reforestation project area they doing traditional planting or variable planting, and Frank said these units were cited for conventional spacing.

Frank also provided updates on Hat Creek RD Projects. For Whittington, they have their cruise and will work on the appraisal shortly after. This is the same with 49er TS, and they will hopefully start cruising later this spring dependent on conditions. For Hat Creek Wells, they working to finish the infrastructure on those. The Hat Creek Wells project when a little over budget and the question was posed of what kind of additional money, or CFLR money from the region there is.

In regard to projects with developing bid packages, Manzanita Chutes and Crossroads are needing some appraisal information. Manzanita Chutes is out to bid right now. Todd is hearing some discrepancies in the market currently, but is hopeful that they will find something that works. NW Gateway is still alive and moving forward.

The Tami Hat Creek Fire Restoration Project should be going out for on the 17th. Received comments that were favorable and added a couple elements that were suggested. Backbone NEPA worked out a plan for

remaining surveys. The Hat Creek Recreation Enhancement Project pulled the recreation, but in order to get in on time, and not to miss out on the Great American Outdoor Act funding, they've separated some of the project out.

Partner & Other Project Updates

Sierra Nevada Conservancy:

Tuli provided information on SNC, the main update being that the Governor's budget that was proposed in January has a substantial amount of money for the SNC. They're expecting to receive \$20 million for shovel ready projects to be complete by January 2024, and they would have to have CEQA complete before September. They've prepared draft guidelines but won't be able to roll those out until March. Projects could be awarded as early as their June meeting, theoretically. They are poised to receive another \$50 million at the start of the next fiscal year.

Intermountain Recreation Collaborative:

Jill provided an update and said that they are looking into branding and promotional marketing materials. They are considering promoting with a video to show some of their recreational opportunities. They are moving along with their tourist and community surveys, and they're being refined. Tuli commented that she's working with Garrett, and the bulk of the deliverables are due at the end of the project in 2022.

FireSafe Council Updates:

Todd said that they are still struggling with whether they should create a Fall River FireSafe Council or expand the Burney Basin. Most folks have been in favor of expansion, but they're doing more outreach. Projects are still moving forward. They have either completed or have under contact 17 out of their 21 projects, a lot of which is funded through the CCI program. Jill is working on a calendar that focuses on different fire safe topics, as well as preparing for their annual meeting.

The Green Waste program from Tubit Enterprise was very successful.

Industry Updates:

Construction is on the Hat Creek Bioenergy facility is set to start in the fall, with \$2 million of equipment. It'll be a boiler with some gasification combined with some impressive emission control technology

Governor's Forest Management Task Force Budget Implications (Todd)

The government has proposed \$1 billion toward a variety of things, but it could have both positive and challenging impacts. There can sometimes be friction in our partnerships because we're pushing each other in different ways and at different speeds. Todd mentioned Sierra Institute's Partnership Evaluation.

Closing Comments and Future Agenda Items

Interagency mobility item
Strategic Planning work