



Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group Full-Group Meeting

Wednesday, June 23 10:00am-1:00pm
Zoom

Meeting Synopsis

The Burney Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met virtually on Wednesday, June 23rd to provide project and partner updates, discuss strategic planning, and discuss the potential utilization of a new data tool for scenario planning presented by Alan Ager.

Attendees:

Todd Sloat- Fall River RCD	Greg Mayer- Lassen National Forest
Peter Johnson- Retired Timber Land Manager	Jim Richardson- Lassen Volcanic National Park
Tom March- CalTrans	Jill Overbaugh- Symbiotic Restoration
Andrew Fullerton- Sierra Pacific Industries	Robin Wall- District Ranger, Hat Creek Ranger District
Sarah Oldson- Cascade Resource Consultants	Trish Puterbaugh- Yahi Group Sierra Club
Jason Mateljak- Lassen Volcanic National Park	Frank Heide- Lassen National Forest
Jonathan Kusel- Sierra Institute	Chantz Joyce- American Forest Foundation
Amye Osti- 34 North	Jeffrey Oldson- Cascade Resource Consultants
Tuli Potts- Sierra Nevada Conservancy	Alan Ager- FS, Rocky Mountain Resource Station
Bella Bledsoe- Sierra Institute	Corrinne Scieszka- Sierra Institute
Jason Moghaddas- Spatial Informatics Group	
Greg Wolfen- Pit River Tribe	

Approvals, Modifications, and Meeting Objectives:

Jonathan led collaborative members through introductions and entertained a motion to approve the last meeting's notes. Todd motioned, and Jason seconded. Tuli motioned to approve the agenda meeting and Todd seconded. Both the meeting minutes were approved.

Future Continued Facilitation Request for Sierra Institute (Greg, others)

Greg shared that they are working on continued facilitation efforts for the Sierra Institute. They hope to have the agreement wrapped up by the end of the month, which will be done as a cost share agreement with the Sierra Institute. This will need deputy forest approval.

Project Updates:

Greg Mayer provided updates from LNF. They have a FS crew working on the next timber sale up for the Plum project and are laying out units for this. They had a timber sale on the North 49 project. He had good news for the Hat Creek wells, as they were able to drill two wells last fall, one on the Hat Creek rim, and one on the North 49 project. For the Plum Biomass project, the Fall River RCD is currently putting together crews and will then move forward from there. Cabin 2 and 49ner mp sales will be out this

calendar year- they will likely go later into the year, but Greg anticipates that this is still happening. North 49 and Cabin will be next, and the RCD is working on Crossroads. The Gateway project is waiting for an agreement with Lassen Park and the RCD before they can move forward and out the project out to bid.

Frank Heide gave an update on reforestation efforts around the Eiler area. They luckily had some April rain showers, but extremely dry conditions will put stress on the efforts. Herbicide use has been delayed and there have been issues with getting a contractor. Once they get more information on the stocking surveys in the fall, he can give another update on the success of the reforestation efforts. They are laying out additional units for mastication prep, which will hopefully give a leg up on getting stands reforested.

Sarah Oldson- for the Backbone project, they are still figuring out details around the California Spotted Owl; they have some proposed packs, but this is why data is not yet available.

Tom March- CalTrans is trying to maintain right away through 99 and 84- they are looking to collaborate on preventing starts through fuel breaks.

Strategic Planning Discussion:

Todd led the discussion, noting that the forest has tackled larger landscape-scale projects, and partners have picked up smaller CE's. Is this still the strategy to take in the future? Greg noted that this has worked well in terms of building capacity and relationships with partners. Robin also said that it is working, and that they will continue on this path. They are learning the process and will not make any type of suggestion for changes in the future. Sarah asked if they are still able to find folks, and Robin responded that everyone has the same sentiment that there is a lack of foresters, and they are trying to grow the amount of younger forestry technicians and project managers and are trying to build capacity in this area.

In terms of where we go next, there has been great progress in data aggregation. Amye commented that baseline data aggregation has been useful for project area analysis and grant writing. It lays the groundwork for future prioritization efforts, including using ForSys based on Region 5 priorities. She is working with Todd, Michelle, and Jason on cross-walking management objectives with the data. The Fall River and Pit RCD Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment has been completed for WUI priorities. The project map has close to 150 projects that have been aggregated overtime. They have improved on metadata for projects where they have grant writing.

Funding is always one of the bottlenecks for scaling up. The future looks good for resolving the money side of things in terms of planning funds. However, the capacity side (how to scale up without overwhelming the forest) will be challenging. Tuli noted that she was blown away by the number of proposals for immediate action proposals and said that they are hoping to find space for them in the next round of funding. They expect general fund money to be available after July for projects and they will also get more clarity from CalFire on where SNC can supplement funding.

Greg spoke to bottlenecks of the FS. The biggest issue is on the governmental side of things and making the NEPA process easier. For the biggest projects that have NEPA completed, the question is how to go from having things ready to implementing road packages, appraisals, and grants and agreements systems. He noted that he was not sure how to solve this or how to get projects through the system in a reasonable time. Sarah commented that the Thousand Springs is a great project for partners to tackle the road package and appraisal. Cruising should happen within the next few weeks. Todd commented that there is an effort by the region to give direction to the forest on things like 3rd party NEPA. Regarding the bottleneck in review time, there have been discussions around a rotating third party NEPA team that works on multiple forests. For appraisal processes, there have been meetings in Washington on how to streamline this with low-value timber. For grants and agreements, he noted that he was not sure that anyone has had much success in resolving staff levels- there is a lot of project work, and it is hard for them to keep up.

Greg commented that in Region 6, 50% of projects are going out to partnerships and that Region 5 needs to learn from their neighbors in terms of how they are making it happen. He commented that ideas on resolving the bottleneck should be sent to him, as they are trying to put something together for the regional forester.

[Presentation from Alan Ager:](#)

Alan Ager works for the Rocky Mountain Resource Station and presented on a data tool called ForSys. He has been working with organizations and entities to help organizations do their own scenario planning and define their management goals. The purpose of the tool is to understand and prioritize treatment areas. The motivation for developing it arose from the fact that the agency uses ad hoc GIS tools for prioritizing land treatment investments, and there are no tools for predicting tradeoffs and outcomes at multiple scales for allocating investments. There has been strong interest in an investment tradeoff system. The challenge is combining multiple agency assessments- we're overwhelmed with data that makes decision-making difficult. Some of these assessments cost millions of dollars, and the question is how to put these together to predict priorities and outcomes.

Scenario Planning Model:

- Four key inputs: stand polygons attributed with conditions, priorities and weights, constraints or targets (area treated per project, wildfire risk reduction, etc.), and treatment thresholds
- Projects are built and prioritized to optimize weighted priorities
- Key Outputs: prioritization of management activities (priorities are mapped for landscape treatments to address management goals, i.e., how long will it take to address the backlog?), rate of attainment (efficiency of treating management targets with increasing investment, i.e., how many planning areas need to be treated to achieve specific targets), tradeoffs and production frontiers (production frontiers identify tradeoffs among different management goals and optimal attainment), relative efficiency of current action plans (allocations to forests can be evaluated against optimal scenarios to identify opportunities to change landscape conditions), and cross boundary opportunities (locate planning areas to address risk transmission, and maximize cross boundary economic opportunities)

Questions: Todd asked if they were seeing any general themes emerge from this tool. Alan responded that one theme is that everyone is overloaded with data and that people like understanding tradeoffs. More and more people are interested in the economics of restoration. In response to whether you can take rosters from current tools, Alan responded that they fully disclose how they do normalization and that they have to standardize and make sure that distributions are not skewed. Todd commented that it is hard to understand how much duplication there is with existing efforts and how similar it is to work that we are doing so far. Jonathan commented that there would be no cost to bring Alan in for this type of work. The group was generally supportive of the model, with Jason, Amye, Pete, and Trish all commenting favorably regarding investigating this tool more moving forward.

Strategic Planning Discussion: Fuel Reduction in Pine Oak Woodlands

The Crossroads project has a pine oak woodlands component and is one of the highest priority projects for the collaborative. They applied for CCI funds to help implement the project, it was marked and cruised last year, put out to bid this year, and they are waiting for appraisal. Greg M. commented that the biggest issue right now is that the project is stalled because of oaks marked in the project. Robin commented that this is due to responses from the Pit River tribe regarding the project and that there were discussions around the removal of these oaks. They are currently working with tribal liaisons and working on the FS response to the removal of these oaks, as oaks are a component of vegetation removal to enhance woodlands for fuels reduction. Soldier Mt. and other projects in the queue also have oak removal components, so the FS is working on its response to these concerns. Jeff commented that this landscape needs to get treated, and this delay seems to muddle capacity and industry efforts and it feels as though they are taking a step back. Robin responded that this is not an intentional delay and they are not trying to gum up the process, they are just trying to give a little more time to give response to tribal concern. Greg M. commented that the appraisal is not being worked on as a result of the delay, and once they get an answer on this it will probably be two months to push through JNA. Jeff said that this seems like it would be a more appropriate step for projects that haven't been signed. Todd said that the project has not been legally awarded but they do have a successful bid. From a process standpoint, they might need appraisal and it does have to get through grants and agreements before starting to implement. It is possible that they don't need it appraised if the region can determine that the bid was fair market value. The intent is to improve the survivorship of the oaks, and without removing them mechanically, we run the risk of larger ones burning up. Jeff commented that this is a WUI project, and that an emphasis should be placed on human life. Greg Wolfen commented that the tribe has wanted a seat at the table to prevent events like this from happening at the last minute and to flesh these things out beforehand. The tribe's interpretation of a monoculture after thousands of years of observation is that a diverse stand would better support ecosystem health and that they do not support a monoculture. Once they get the details fleshed out on Crossroads, the FS can request to get on the agenda.

Partner Updates:

SNC (Tuli)- will follow up with forthcoming funding opportunities, as well as existing project funding that is out there

Pit River Tribe (Greg Wolfen)- no update currently

Firesafe council- Burney Basins hasn't met recently- there have been 3 or 4 meetings on the Fall River side. There has been good planning with private landowners for treatment options in the WUI. On the bioenergy side, Hat Creek is still moving forward and the Tubit site in Burney is still moving forward as well- the use permit process is coming in the near future.

Lassen Volcanic National Park (Jim)- early in June, they hosted a scenario planning training in relation to climate change, which was the first in a series of several national parks throughout the west, which included local FS folks. They modeled species change in Lassen and likely fire increase. Lassen's primary tools for working on this issue is prescribed fire, as well as the work they are doing on the forest. Communities need to feel safe in order to support prescribed burns, and Jim noted that the park needs to focus time and effort on communities in the WUI.

Sierra Institute (Jonathan)- the final draft of the CLFR socioeconomic assessment is out, and comments are requested prior to July 4th weekend. It integrates and uses data that we have collected elsewhere, but it shows capacity and socioeconomic status of communities in the CFLRP.

Greg Mayer – regarding an extension of the CFLR, there is an opportunity to give a 3 minute talk to support the project- if anyone is interested in this, reach out to Greg and he will put in touch with the person setting this up. This committee is making recommendations to the chief of the Forest Service on projects which should be moving forward. There is also the option to send written comments if unable to contribute verbally

Face to face meeting:

The group brought up the possibility of meeting in person for the next meeting, either in the field or indoors, possibly at McConnell. Jim confirmed that NPS is ready to meet in person.