

Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group

Full-Group Meeting

Thursday, November 11 10:00am-12:15pm

Zoom

[Meeting Synopsis](#)

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met virtually on Thursday, November 11th to provide updates on projects and partners, finalize ForSys objectives and metrics, and discuss strategic planning around regional coordination.

[Attendees](#)

Todd Sloat – Fall River RCD

Doug Lindgren – Tubit Enterprises

Jason Moghaddas – Spatial Informatics Group

Amye Osti - 34 North

Jeffrey Oldson - Cascade Resource Consultants

Andrew Fullerton – Sierra Pacific Industries

Garrett Costello – Symbiotic Creek Restoration

Sharmie Stevenson – Fall River RCD

Trish Puterbaugh – Yahí Group Sierra Club

Sarah Oldson – Cascade Resource Consultants

Peter Johnson – Retired Timber Land Manager

Bella Bledsoe – Sierra Institute

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. Todd motioned to approve and Pete seconded. Andrew then motioned to approve the meeting minutes from September, and Todd seconded. The agenda and meeting minutes were approved.

[Crossroads Check-In Re: Memo](#)

Jonathan an update on the Crossroads memo, as he had spoken to Robin earlier in the week on the phone. A draft of the memo, which will outline FS expectations regarding language via oak removal in environmental assessment documents, is expected to go to the Forest Supervisor Deb Bumpus on Friday (the 12th of November). For context, the memo was developed in response to tribal concerns raised about the Crossroads project. The issue was raised at a consultation meeting with the tribal body.

The group discussed that this presents a process challenge, and that the FS needs to be clear about when issues can be raised about a project, and what the process looks like to respond to them. There is an urgency dimension to the Crossroads project currently, and group members are frustrated by the stalling of progress.

Todd noted that the RCD did bid Crossroads, and that they did the bid without an appraisal, which is not typically done, however they felt that it was important because they heard that they would get an appraisal. The desired bidder may not be interested in the project anymore. They will be going back to the LTP that won the bid to see if they are still interested, and will then make a decision from there.

The question was raised of whether or not federal representatives are required to take notes at tribal meetings, and if this could be made available to the collaborative. It is hopeful that the memo will go to the forest, but the group discussed next steps regarding if the outcome of the memo is not desirable. The chain of command and action items right now are that the district ranger will provide the memo to the district supervisor, and the group can go to the region to disagree with the process and argue that the memo is not required and that no additional action is required by the district ranger or supervisor, and have the region weigh in. If the memo is not received next week (November 15-19), the group can ask the region to weigh in on if a memo is needed. If the memo is received, the collaborative can still draft a letter expressing frustration with the process and a desire to see it fixed.

Sharmie added that the lack of transparency doesn't sit well with the RCD as the funding agency, and that this needs to be expressed to the region. Jonathan responded that there is increasing recognition that allowing partners to take on restoration work is needed, and that the region needs to understand that this is a major bump in the road in terms of progressing this relationship. Sarah added that there still needs to be an appraisal and road package, and that even with the memo, there are many pieces missing on this. They still need to put emphasis on actually getting an appraisal or streamlining things. A letter is needed regardless to get answers on next steps and getting other information. It was also added that while challenging this is important, it also needs to be recognized that it could potentially jeopardize the collaborative relationship with the agency in terms of responsiveness.

Next steps: Todd and Sarah will draft the letter and will distribute for a day or two to be reviewed by the group, as they want to make sure that they get the letter right. The letter will be sent to the regional forester, with a courtesy cc to the district ranger. If the group does not receive a response that they deem appropriate, then they can pass it on to the chief regional forester.

[Project Updates](#)

Badger: FS is working on adding salvage to this project, and the CA spotted owl forest plan amendments, as things will need to be redone here.

Plum: A large portion of this project burned, roughly 11,000 acres. The Hat Creek ranger district is missing a biologist currently. The plan is to get Plum out in the winter.

Hat Creek Recreation: out to scoping. Some tribal issues came up here, and the tribe gets two weeks before everyone else for scopes. This is a new process for the Hat Creek ranger district, and the tribe will be notified two weeks before the public for scoping.

CCI projects: Manzanita Chutes had funding awarded and scheduled implementation in 2021. Like **Whittington**, they need to get meetings with the FS to get bids out and for work.

Backbone is supposed to go out for scoping in September. The forest asked for an October delay, under the reasoning that the spotted owl plan wasn't fleshed out enough. It is possibly supposed to go out Friday (the 12th) to tribes, and then out to the public. This is part of phase 2 of the CCI grant, and they have a year to get NEPA completed. Loss of habitat for the CSO and fisher will impact the Backbone project in terms of what can be done.

Soldier Mt.: the draft decision memo is done, but will likely be modified by the forest due to the Crossroads issue. They are awaiting an appraisal and road package for this project, and also for **Thousand Springs**.

For Dixie fire salvage, the forest asked for help and is offering money, but it is not clear if grants and agreements can be processed in the timeline to meet what they would want help with on this.

[ForSys Objectives and Metrics – Overview and Discussion \(Bella\)](#)

Bella and Amye are working at both a conceptual and technical level on the ForSys modeling work. We are finalizing objectives for the model on a conceptual level, but Amye is working on data aggregation. There is so much data available to the group right now. We are using SERAL as a model to fit with the data that we have, meaning no LiDAR data. They are hoping to come back to the group with metrics assigned to each objective that was developed by a BHC subcommittee for the model. It was noted that we should recognize that this could be a lengthy process, and the group should continue to move forward

with identifying new project areas. The ForSys effort is essentially trying to establish an estimate of what it would cost to build a more resilient forest and to have an idea of the estimated costs of restoration, and how much needs to get done. We are helping to calibrate the model and make it more useful.

Strategic Planning: Developing a New Integrative Vision (Todd)

Todd opened the discussion by acknowledging frustration with intermingling partner commitments with the FS, and getting project work done. There are four collaboratives within Lassen National Forest. There is an opportunity to navigate a forest-wide strategic planning and implementation strategy. Partners are accounting for 60-90% of forest budgets in some areas of the state, and yet the state maintains primary decision making. We as partners can help with even more things that are inherently FS-driven, and we should start thinking about how existing collaboratives pose an opportunity to think about how we move forward.

Jason responded that consistent staff are not rangers or supervisors, and there needs to be an official process for how these positions engage groups and longstanding partners. We need to think about how to get these folks up to speed on things and how to engage.

In thinking about the Dixie fire and the challenges that it creates for those living in Greenville, as well as the ecological rebuilding of the forest, it is hard to think that the forest has anywhere near the capacity to address these things. It would still be a challenge for collaboratives. But teaming, learning, and leveraging these relationships with the forest provide the opportunity to make headway with things that are slowing the forest down. The State has approved more money, and more money will flow as long as project work gets done. It is difficult as partners to have the breaks put, not being able to meet requirements, and asking for extensions due to the FS. Who is leading the project needs further evaluation to get it across the finish line. There are processes that can make this work (3rd party NEPA), we just really need a commitment from the forest. The amount of funding flowing into these projects will continue to flow in the next few years. Todd mentioned that he heard that they have a position funded on the Lassen, a partnership coordinator, and thinks that this could be helpful.

Jason added that they are having trouble recruiting and staffing basic the basic org chart. All the money created through RCDs has created another economy, more people are going to special districts and more localized fire safe councils, which means that they have to compete for people. The FS has so many constraints, and we are seeing a culmination of those constraints. He doesn't see a magical expansion in their workforce in the next few years.

Doug added that they are finishing a contract MSA on the Lassen, and there was no possible way that these projects would have happened without the Master Stewardship Program. The FS needs to reach out to the private sector and RCDs to hire it out. After the Sheep and Dixie fire, there needs to be somewhere to take material and resources. They were already full first and second quarter. Regarding mill capacity, they are fouled up for a while, especially with the merchantable saw logs. He had to change his business model, and is sitting on \$3 million worth of equipment because of the changing marketplace.

The group discussed the need for accountability on getting projects through, as well as a potential mechanism or tool, where there is a time limit given for an agency response on a project. A federal lead would be identified, with x number of chances to make a deadline, but then identifying a partner representative who would then take the reins. This would allow leveraging in the agreement process and taking next steps without prolonged delays. Jonathan added that the FS will not be able to step out of their legal obligations, but moving into more of a role as facilitators of work might need to be the way to go with diminished capacity. Sarah suggested working on MOUs for specialists, like biologists and botanists,



which could help alleviate some responsibility on the FS side. Jason emphasized the need to engage leadership to finding openings for jobs, and drive recruitment to these openings.

Partner Updates

SNC: There are currently funding coordinator types and consultants working in fuel reduction work for SNC.

Sierra Institute: Sierra Institute held its most recent Sierra to California All Lands Enhancement (SCALE) meeting last week. Collaborative groups across California convened to provide recommendations to the State regarding regional framework developing and funding allocations. State representatives at the meeting were receptive, and having them ask for collaborative feedback in these areas feels like a good step in the right direction. SI will be circulating a document of recommendations, which will be sent to BHC members to review with any comments or feedback they may have. Additionally, SI received permission from SNC to repurpose grant funds to build a sawmill at our Crescent Mills site. The sawmill was purchased by J&C Enterprises and will be up and running soon.

Doug asked about whether or not there are any tribes that are developing a mill. Nobody knew of this happening, but it was noted that Greenville Rancheria lost their mill, and they are at least planning to rebuild the rancheria in terms of the services that they provide. The Maidu Summit Consortium is currently struggling to get burned wood off of their land.

Future Facilitation Funding

There is nothing currently under contract for facilitation. Todd suggested using overhead from SPAs, and that there might be other avenues for using overhead in other grants. SI will need to move on early next year given lack of funding, so the group may need to look into other facilitators. Jonathan noted that he wouldn't feel comfortable using overhead from grants, but suggested the possibility of getting facilitation funded through the CFLR. There might be more money for the CFLR coming through build back better, but the group did not receive renewed CFLR funding. The group also brought up the possibility of bringing it up to the region, regarding what is currently available to fund this.

Face to Face Data Workshop

McConnell has opened back up, and the group wants to meet to have a face-to-face data workshop, and also a general collaborative meeting, in Redding. Regarding the data workshop, everyone will have a different use for the platform- some may just want to know project status, but this still requires navigation. At a higher level, people can search parcels, or do spatial analysis. The workshop can be detailed depending on partner interest, and just navigating the site will be helpful for most folks. The group indicated (those present) that they are comfortable with an in-person gathering. The meeting will be in January of 2022, and will be a part of the full group meeting for that month.