



Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group

Full-Group Meeting

Thursday, January 27 10:00am-1:00 pm
Zoom

Meeting Synopsis

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met virtually on Thursday, January 27th to review project updates, specifically the status of Crossroads, partner updates, including American Rivers Finance Collaborative and SI's SCALE paper, and review the results of the ForSys model.

Attendees

Todd Sloat – Fall River RCD	Alan Ager- Rocky Mountain Research Station
Jason Moghaddas – Spatial Informatics Group	Tammy Taylor - Lassen National Forest
Michelle Coppoletta - Lassen National Forest	Tuli Potts - Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Robin Wall - Hat Creek Ranger District	Adam Sanchez - Lassen National Forest
Amye Osti - 34 North	Jeff Odey - American Rivers
Jeffrey Oldson - Cascade Resource Consultants	Garrett Costello - Symbiotic Creek Restoration
Andrew Fullerton – Sierra Pacific Industries	Sharmie Stevenson – Fall River RCD
Garrett Costello – Symbiotic Creek Restoration	Trish Puterbaugh – Yahi Group Sierra Club
Vance Russell - American Rivers	Sarah Oldson – Cascade Resource Consultants
Roderick Alfred - Lassen National Forest	Peter Johnson – Retired Timber Land Manager
Elizabeth Truman - CalTrans	Bella Bledsoe – Sierra Institute
Tom March - CalTrans	Jonathan Kusel – Sierra Institute
Dan Ostmann - Lassen Volcanic National Park	Corrinne Scieszka – Sierra Institute
Greg Wolfen - Pit River Tribe	

Approvals, Modifications, and Meeting Objectives

Jonathan led collaborative members through introductions and entertained a motion to approve the agenda. Todd motioned to approve and Sharmie seconded. Jonathan then motioned to approve the meeting minutes from November, and the group collectively approved. The agenda and meeting minutes were approved.

Crossroads Update

Todd opened the conversation and reported that a letter regarding the Crossroads delay was drafted and then sent to the region, and some productive meetings have been had between FS representatives and the RCD. The background on this issue is that Crossroads was one of the first projects identified by the group to be taken on by a CE, given the proximity to Burney and fire risk associated with this. Work on this project has been underway for quite some time, however it has been stalled due to concerns over oak removal. The FS provided a memo to the group regarding the issue in November and the regional office is currently preparing a response that is forthcoming. The issue centers around conflict between agency and grant timelines and meeting obligations that come with these grants in a timely manner. During discussion between FS representatives and the RCD, it was confirmed that there is a commitment from the FS to fund mastication if timelines are not met. However, there are still process concerns from the collaborative members. Specifically, it is concerning to the group that this discussion was opened a year after the decision memo, and that group members are only now going out into the field.

There also might need to be a review of the memo in terms of how significantly it is affecting proposed action on the project. The main concern of the memo was the removal of oaks. The original intent of the project was to cut oaks for fuels reduction, and the memo currently limits the ability to do so. However, collaborative members also addressed a second concern with the memo, as it reduces the conifer diameter

limit, reducing the requirement from a 30” to a 24” diameter. Group members commented that, under their understanding, this was not the original purpose of the memo, and there is clarification needed around where this reduction came from. This is specifically of concern because this requirement would be passed over to the Soldier Mountain project. Robin requested a follow up discussion regarding this issue. It was also noted that a field trip for Soldier Mountain should be planned to help clarify some of these problems.

Greg gave some comments on the process issue. Decisions have been made around the ancestral homelands of the tribe, some of which are federal properties, and this necessitates a consultation process. Historically, the tribe has been left out of planning on these sacred sites. Artifacts have been taken and sold, and this has driven concerns of the Pit River tribe, as well as tribes across the United States. At the recent site visit, it was expressed that there is a need for a clear line of communication between the Forest Service and the tribe. In the future, communication needs to be much more clear so that these types of things, such as coming back to a project a year down the line, do not happen. They do have quarterly meetings with the Forest Service, and are working on tracking down bands who made these comments on the project before the next meeting. Greg, as a representative of the tribe, can make recommendations and provide information, but decisions have to come from the tribe as a whole. He will be taking information and recommendations from the recent site visit back to the tribe and engagement with the FS will go from there.

Jonathan asked if agreement from the tribe could result in a modified memo. Robin responded that she cannot speak for the Forest Supervisor, and therefore cannot give a definitive answer. Trish asked if there was concern regarding receiving bids on the new project. Andrew responded that it is hard to tell, but whether or not somebody will bid on a project shouldn't stop the Forest Service from putting projects out there and doing what is best for WUI areas. There were 3 or 4 bidders last time, and it is hard to imagine that there wouldn't be this time, but there is no guarantee. Roderick added that he doesn't foresee it not selling.

Jonathan provided some summary comments. The group will look forward to hearing from the Pit River tribe and their deliberations on what is important on site. Secondly, the diameter reduction in the memo is problematic to the project's needs, and the group hopes that there will be consideration and reconsideration as this moves forward. They are appreciative of the agency's commitment to make sure this happens, but want to make sure that what does happen is efficient. Finally, they want to be careful about adopting limits that can constrain activities that are determined to be needed- i.e., reducing risk of catastrophic fire, WUI concerns, etc.

Other Project Updates

Tammy provided an update on some FS projects.

- **Badger:** There was a meeting regarding the Badger project, in which her team determined that they would be in favor of splitting the project and incorporating a green component in addition to salvage.
- **Plum:** went ahead and did marks for this project. Their hydrologist determined that the project is way above threshold in certain areas (137%). They are working on what they can do, including breaking it out in different pieces, setting a new threshold, and working out a map, and will have a meeting to discuss these things.
- **Hat Creek Recreation Enhancement:** went through scoping comments, all of which were in support of the project, with a few enhancements to be done. PCTA had the most comments, but a meeting is scheduled to sit down and work together on language.
- **Backbone:** issues were identified with wildlife. Habitat management areas will be made larger for martin and fisher populations. They are trying to discuss what they can do and what they need

to do, given that this area is known to be primed and ready for fire and adjacent to WUI areas. The Dixie fire, however, has created issues with habitat connectivity, and there are discussions that need to happen regarding how best to balance wildlife and fuels reduction concerns.

Todd gave an update on some CCI projects.

- **Manzanita Chutes:** Phase 1 is scheduled to be implemented this year. Phase 2 is in the planning stage, and this is the same for **Whittington**.
- **Bald and Eiler:** ongoing targeting for 2025.
- **Thousand Springs:** waiting on an appraisal/road package from the Forest.
- **Soldier Mountain:** botanist is reviewing some information. However, this project connects to the oak removal issue of Crossroads. They are looking at the prescription and are hoping for a field visit with Greg W. to look at proposed treatments. It will be ready for bid roughly in April. Partners would love to learn how to start helping with road packages.

American Rivers

Jeff Odey and Vance Russell presented on behalf of American Rivers and their work together on connecting collaborative projects to funding. Jeff is interested in headwaters treatments, including forest health. He focuses on urban water and funding and financing for projects and has partnered with Vance to learn more about forests. He and Vance are funded by a DWR TA assistance grant funded through the Yuba water agency. Their goal is to work through Sharmie and Todd to figure out a process and help the collaborative figure out sources of funding and support. They have roughly a six month process in mind to help them work through what is out there and what best meets the BHC group's needs. There are options to leverage federal funding and private investment.

They are inviting feedback on the best way to engage with the group and discuss these things. Todd commented that a subgroup might be a good path forward on this.

Partner Updates

SNC (Tuli): There will be funding opportunities available this summer including 25 million for wildfire and forest resilience planning and implementation work. They will hopefully be able to fund land conservation and recreation and tourism programs.

Pit River Tribe (Greg): They are looking to collaborate with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on porcupine studies for conservation projects coming down the pipes.

Lassen National Park (Dan): They have secured agency funding for the NW Gateway Forest Restoration Phase 2. There are approximately 850 acres of thinning at the north end of the park. They are looking to have a contract awarded in spring/summer with work starting as early as September.

SI: Sierra Institute is releasing a new paper consisting of recommendations to the State on building collaborative capacity and funding streams. The paper is being distributed throughout the SCALE network, and outreach efforts are underway with key state and legislative officials. SI also received approval to reallocate grant funding from SNC to build a sawmill at their Crescent Mills wood campus site. The sawmill will provide a needed outlet for salvage material coming off of the Dixie fire burn scar.

Spatial Informatics Group (Jason): They are working on a new project that involves mapping all projects in the pipeline for NEPA/CEQA across all ownerships, with the idea of making this dataset public to everyone.

Fall River RCD (Todd): The Tubit site in Burney is progressing well. They have directed meetings with financiers for bioenergy and are working on achieving long term feedstock contracts. A fire prevention grant is being resubmitted by the RCD and they are adding a few more fuel breaks. Collaborative members can reach out to him if they have any questions or would like to see more on this.

CalTrans (Tom): They had a cultural committee meeting on February 11, and are working with the Pit River Tribe on a cultural permit for native plant collection sites and managing roadsides.

ForSys Update

This project started in June with the intention of working through the ForSys model with the BHC group, defining collaborative objectives, and reporting to the American Forest Foundation on the process, as well as how this work relates to collaboratives and their current project work. Alan Ager presented initial outputs of the model to the group, with the caveat that ForSys is an ongoing process, and the group can run as many outputs as they like.

The motivation for ForSys was a lack of tools for predicting tradeoffs and predicting outcomes at multiple scales that the agency allocates investments. There is strong interest in a centralized investment tradeoff system. There are lots of frameworks/assessments, and the ForSys Scenario Planning System can help determine priorities. Key outputs of the model are prioritization of management activities, rate of attainment, tradeoffs and production frontiers, relative efficiency of current action plans, and cross boundary opportunities.

Two initial priorities were analyzed for BHC: wildfire transmission to buildings and restoration potential.

In a future meeting, the group should go through an identification process of priorities to help refine the model and thinking around it. This is meant to be an adaptive process, with learning through case studies. Amye mentioned sending a short memo/poll to the group.

Agenda Items for Next Time

Soldier Mountain field trip
Continued ForSys conservation