



Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group

Full-Group Meeting

Tuesday, March 15 10:00am-1:00 pm

Zoom

Meeting Synopsis

The Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group met virtually on Tuesday, March 15th to provide partner and project updates, discuss future work with LNF, review datasets and tools, and plan future collaborative in-person events.

Attendees

Todd Sloat – Fall River RCD

Jason Moghaddas – Spatial Informatics Group

Michelle Coppoletta - Lassen National Forest

Robin Wall - Hat Creek Ranger District

Amye Osti - 34 North

Jeffrey Oldson - Cascade Resource Consultants

Tom March - CalTrans

Dan Ostmann - Lassen Volcanic National Park

Tony Yiamkis - Pit River Tribe

Tami Taylor - Lassen National Forest

Tuli Potts - Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Robert Muma - Lassen National Forest

Sharmie Stevenson – Fall River RCD

Sarah Oldson – Cascade Resource Consultants

Shawn Wheelock- Lassen National Forest

Deb Bumpus- Lassen National Forest

Joe Flannery - Vibrant Planet

Scott Conway - Vibrant Planet

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 Tom seconded. Jonathan then entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January, and Jason seconded. The agenda and meeting minutes were approved.

Discussion Regarding Work Moving Forward with LNF and Crossroads

The discussion started with an update on the Crossroads project. Robin reported that they are hoping to complete the cruising package by the end of March. She also confirmed that they have regional office approval to fund mastication on the project if it goes beyond the CCI dollars. Sarah commented that all of their invoicing needs to be done by the end of March, so utilizing regional dollars will be a good path to get this done. The project was put out to bid last year and received a workable bid, and now with the adjustment in cruising they will have to circle back and figure out if they have a workable bid. The project was expected to be put out to bid by June 11th, and given that cruising will be complete by the end of March, they should be able to meet this deadline. Robin commented that she wanted to thank everyone for their patience in working this out, as well as the RCD for having discussions. Having an open conversation is the best way to move forward, and things are now moving forward on Crossroads.

The group shifted to a discussion of future partnership opportunities. Todd opened the discussion by asking how the group can make partnership an additive process for the Forest, rather than overloading them. Deb confirmed that they have been approved to hire a partnership coordinator for the Lassen. This process has taken 3-4 weeks, and they are in the middle of fire hire, which will take precedence. The district just put together their five-year program of work for implementation. They typically do this every 2-3 years, mainly due to the need to reevaluate (i.e, Dixie fire). The Washington office is taking a much bigger approach with a ten year plan. The Forest's, however, is timely, and they will be able to share it with the group and ask about coinciding priorities. A lot of time this year will be spent on the Dixie fire and they want NEPA done as soon as possible. A spreadsheet on this should be available within the

month. They want to shift some of the work back to WUIs and community protection and hope to work with partners to figure out how to fine tune this work. Todd commented that they have helped to identify simpler projects such as CEs in the past that they could tackle and that would fit well with their implementation plan. Partners have the ability to backfill when they have staff to do additional work, which allows them the opportunity to identify potential projects and fuels reduction and plantation treatment.

Jonathan proposed developing a program of work regarding how to more effectively align partner priorities, and Todd added that having input into the process of identifying projects would be very helpful. Deb responded that the district meets once a year with Steve Brinks (CFA representative) to discuss these things, and suggested that the collaborative could be a part of these discussions. This would be the most efficient way to share information, and safest for them in terms of potentially overstepping with the information that they are sharing. The group affirmed that there needs to be connection between entities on this topic, but there is likely a difference in the scale of focus here. The group also asked if a matrix or document outlining project prioritization could be shared with the group, and Deb affirmed that this is something that could be shared at the next meeting. When asked about identifying bottlenecks in the Crossroads project and identifying ways to improve moving forward, Deb also shared that the Lassen will be hiring 15 new people on the forest, and that a simple answer is that they did not have people. Specifically, they are hiring three other botanists, which has been a concern previously. Tami added that new templates put out by the government are working to help shrink the size of NEPA documents themselves. In other FS regions, namely in North Dakota grasslands, they have a prioritization schedule for projects that she is hoping to implement. All EAs there are written by third party contractors and they also do all of their analysis prior to scoping. This doesn't work as well in the Sierra, as timber projects are not as cut and dry as grazing, as there are more complications with litigation and public comment. Jonathan commented that outside contracting is part of the challenge, but given the long-term existence of local partners- are there opportunities to engage with these partners and reduce pressure on the agency when folks are rotating off? Deb replied that there is always room to build relationships, and the best way to do this is not over a screen, but sitting down together.

Other Project Updates

- **Badger**- the FS has decided to follow through with the green component of Badger, and let the region look through the burned portion in their overall Dixie assessment. They are looking at changed circumstances even in the green portion. The enterprise team work is due to them on April 8.
- **Plum**- They are going to have to defer some of the green treatments on this project to get salvage and reforestation work done. They will have their last veg meeting this week. The SIR should be completed in the next week, and signed off pretty quick.
- **Hat Creek Recreation**- they received good comments on this project, with one that required follow through (the Pacific Crest Association had language changes, but this has been figured out). Making these adjustments will only take a few days to get completely finished.
- **Backbone**- the RCD is having meetings every two weeks. Backbone is struggling to move forward with a lot of wildlife issues. They don't know if they will be able to achieve the fuels objectives. There is needed direction/guidance on the path forward for this project.
- **Bald/Eiler**- there will be planting for this project soon. There is also a plan for more mastication/herbicide treatments this year.
- **Soldier Mt.** - the decision memo was too long to fit into the new required template, and Tami is working on rewording to get it more concise - this will get done in the next few days.

- **Thousand Springs**- working on road package
- **Whittington**- CCI phase 2
- **Manzanita Chutes**- site visit this week, firming up treatment areas before taking next steps.

[Presentation on Post Dixie Fire Assessment Report \(Michelle Coppoletta\)](#)

Michelle gave a presentation on her Postfire Restoration Framework for National Forests in California. The Dixie and Sugar fires are both included in the assessment, as they ignited within a few weeks of each other, and overlapped into each other. The report is a science-based guide for management of burned landscapes and challenges us to think broadly- in both the short and long term, as well as beyond the most severely burned areas. It identifies a suite of restoration opportunities and considers future threats such as climate and reburns.

Step 1 in the assessment was to assemble a team and identify priority resources, desired conditions, and goals. The Dixie Sugar Fire Assessment Team included PSW research scientists, province ecologists, Plumas and Lassen managers, and wildlife biologists. Their goals were 1) Reduce the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire in priority resource areas, 2) Increase the resilience of surviving forest stands to future disturbance, 3) facilitate forest recovery through reforestation and natural regeneration.

The report uses the postfire flowchart to identify restoration opportunities. Some highlights include:

- Use of Postfire Spatial Conifer Restoration Planning Tool (POSCRPT) to identify and map regeneration probability 5 years post-fire
- 67% of the total area burned at high severity in large patches (>250 acres).
- Factors that may influence where, what, and how they design their treatments include: feasibility, future climate, soils and site productivity, topographic position, other sensitive resources, and reburn risk
- 394, 769 acres of conifer forest burned at low-moderate severity- in these areas, forest conditions may have been improved or maintained. In areas that were improved or maintained by the fire, there is a restoration opportunity to use prescribed fire and/or other fuel treatments to maintain the resilience of remnant strands to future disturbance
- 33,777 acres burned 2+ times within the last 20 years at low-moderate severity. Restoration opportunity: apply prescribed fire (at intervals similar to the reference fire return interval) to maintain resilience to future fire
- In areas where fire effects were within the NRV (Natural Range of Variation)- stands still do not meet desired conditions. Other factors may threaten ecological resilience and stability, and management action should be taken to restore desired conditions. Restoration opportunity: Thinning to reduce tree density and restore structural heterogeneity, and fuel reduction to reduce ladder and fire-generated surface fuels.
- Small isolated stands burned at low-moderate severity surrounded by large areas of high severity fire effects are at an increased risk of severe reburn. Restoration opportunity: edge hardening.
- Report includes a map displaying the development and integration of restoration opportunities in the Dixie and Sugar Fires- with areas mapped to maintain/promote desired conditions, take management actions to increase resilience to disturbance, and take management actions to reestablish the forest.

[Vibrant Planet Introduction to Collaborative](#)

Vibrant Planet representatives Joe Flannery and Scott Conway presented on Land Tender- a cloud-based planning and monitoring tool for collaboratives, agencies, and foundations. Their mission is to build the data and technological infrastructure to facilitate and unlock funding for the regenerative economy.

Highlights from presentation:

- Land Tender's workflows allow land managers to create a dynamic, land-based resilience plan in months rather than years
- Allows all users to prioritize treatment based upon a given budget, as well as quantify the co-benefits
- The system's transparency demonstrates how and where funds will be spent and the reason for priority treatments. It also democratizes data and scientific model access by allowing new faces to perform analysis to increase capacity.
- Incorporates new models, datasets, and local needs to make transparent decisions- it is a robust decision support tool.

ForSys Model and WUI Planning (Amye)

Amye presented the most recent ForSys results. It has been a lot of work getting datasets together. The second run of ForSys is focused on WUI planning and fire adapted communities. New results are set to come back in April, with a completed report in May.

ForSys Run 2 Objectives:

- Fire Adapted Communities, WUI Planning: Placing fuel treatments near residential structures within an urban interface versus treating nearby wildlands. Objectives include WUI protection, general flame length and rate of spread reduction. Reduce the risk of fire spreading to/from communities adjacent to USFS/Private Lands stands in the adjacent wildlands to meet forest healthy and ecological restoration goals.
- Species Protection Areas in WUI Defense Zone: CSO Protected Activity Centers inside of WUI defense zones and all HRCA designations and a target canopy cover of 50% for trees <20 inches/50 trees per acre. Exhibit multistory structure that provides habitat for late seral species.
- Restore Wildland to Desired/Reference Conditions: Improve forest health conditions by creating more open and spatially heterogeneous forested areas dominated by fire-resilient tree species with supportable tree densities that decrease the risk of mortality from insects, drought, and disease and reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire.

Data Products and Resources:

- Data Catalog: updates and derivative work ongoing
- WUI/Parcel Atlas: FRRCD and PRCD Boundaries
- Terrestrial Assessment (underway): FRRCD and PRCD Boundaries, SLWG Adjacent
- ForSys Input Data: a polygon shapefile with LMUs attributed with mandatory information to run a scenario. The shapefile also contains fields describing the characteristics of LMU with respect to the objective, treatment threshold, stand availability, investment or activity constraint, and pre-defined planning area and other subdivisions, such as ownership.
- ForSys Modeling
 - February results
 - Follow-up run ongoing through April 15
 - April results (review in person May meeting). Complete report May

Upcoming Group Review of Project Data (Jason and Amye)

Spatial Informatics Group started a project early Jan to map every planned project in the state of CA in order to help push the million acre strategy out. They have been tasked by the Climate and Wildfire Institute (CWI) to develop an inventory of completed and known planned fuel treatments across California and to develop a work plan for the creation of the Roadmap to a Million Acres (RMA). The goal of the RMA is to treat a minimum of one million acres annually. More information about the project can be found here: <https://sig-gis.com/roadmap-to-a-million-acres-rma-strategy/>.

They are reaching out to various entities in the hopes of getting information onto one map that is public and locally available- this will be an aggregation of data that is already out there. Specifically, they will be mapping burn piles and will be requesting burn pile locations from the group- this will require help from local districts as well as folks on the ground to fill in gaps.

Everything has been mapped and ready to go in the collaborative- Amye is asking if anyone will go through and sign off on metadata for local projects.

Partner Updates

SNC

- Will be rolling out funding programs next week, check here for updates: <https://sierranevada.ca.gov/funding/>
- There will be another round of funding this summer focused on forest health recovery

Lassen Volcanic National Park

- Got some funding for NW Gateway phase II. They are looking to get into service contract this fiscal year with implementation this year as well

Sierra Institute

- SI has put out a blueprint of recommendations for empowering local collaborative groups from their SCALE network, and hopes that the group will consider signing on
- Will have a fully operating mill at the Crescent Mills wood utilization campus up and running in the next few weeks. There will be a ribbon cutting in April

CalTrans

- Please contact thomas.march@dot.ca.gov to collaborate next to the State Right of Way

Shawn Wheelock (Lassen National Forest)

- Shawn provided an update on CFLR-related publications. They had one manuscript come out in December titled, ““Impacts of Climate Change on Groundwater Availability and Spring Flows: Observations from the Highly Productive Medicine Lake Highlands/Fall River Springs Aquifer System”. A second, titled ““Hydrologic Response to Forest Density Management in a Coniferous Mediterranean Forest during Extremes of Precipitation” is ready for submission.