**Landowner Engagement Subcommittee Meeting**

**Monday, December 12th, 2022**

**Attendees:**

Bella Bledsoe: Sierra Institute

Brin Greer: RCD of Tehama County

Debbie Margiotta: Lassen Meadows Ranch

Jim Richardson: LAVO

Jo Cunningham: Baccala Ranch

Kathryn Raeder: RCD of Tehama County

Mary Davidge: Friends of Warner Valley

Michael Lee: Friends of Warner Valley

Sophie Castleton: Sierra Institute

Stephanie Dickerson

Stewart McMorrow: Cal Fire

Wendy Heaton: Battle Creek Meadows Ranch

Wil Kingori: Circle S Ranch

Yana Valachovic: UC Cooperative Extension

**Meeting Objectives:**

* Hear from Stewart McMorrow from Cal Fire about the CFIP landowner assistance program.
* Listen to updates from the RCD of Tehama County on their two hazard tree removal projects located in Mineral and Mill Creek.
* Hear a presentation from Yana Valachovic from the UC Cooperative Extension.

### **Landowner Engagement Subcommittee Purpose:**

* Bringing together a collaborative group of landowners to strengthen the peer-to-peer landowner network.
* Planning and implementing fuel reduction projects and accessing existing landowner assistance programs.
* Facilitating cross-boundary work between private landowners and agencies.

**California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP):**

* CFIP is currently well-funded, with 8 forestry assistant specialists across the state; however, this can change with the state budget. The program is funded with special funds, which means the program relies on legislators each year to get funded
* CFIP purpose: to encourage public and private investments in forestlands and improve the quality of private landowner’s timber.
* CFIP can provide eligible landowners with technical and financial assistance for planning, reforestation, and resource management investments that improve the quality and value of forestland and woodlands.
* CFIP is a reimbursement program (i.e., cost share).
* CFIP typically provides reimbursement for up to 75% or 90% of the state cap cost of a project; reimbursement often dependent on acreage.
* Eligible practices for CFIP cost-sharing include:
  + Preparation of a Forest Management Plan by an Registered Professional Forester (RPF).
  + RPF supervision of:
    - Reforestation
      * Site prep
      * Tree planting
      * Tree shelters
    - Stand improvement
      * Pre-commercial thinning or release
      * Pruning
    - Follow up (includes mechanical, herbicide, not lop and scatter)
* To be eligible, landowners must own at least 20 acres of forestland but not more than 5,000 acres.
* Eligible landowners include private persons, gov agencies, LLCs, Trusts, Corps.
* No canopy cover restrictions, but must have 10% canopy cover to be counted as forestland.
* CFIP requires that a forest management plan be prepared and approved prior to a forest resource improvement project being started.
* If your property is burned and you are salvaging wood, there is no need for a forest management plan – this can help speed up reforestation practices.
* No commercial timber operations can occur on the portions of forestland where the CFIP program is taking place.
* CFIP Steps:

1. Look up CalFire CFIP
2. Find your county’s CFIP forest advisor and explore contracting an RPF
3. Do a field inspection to develop project ideas or discuss getting an RPF if you don’t have one already
4. Final application filed and ranked (discuss with CalFire rep how to make your project competitive)
5. Application approved or denied (applications not funded in the first round can be applied to the next round)
6. Reimbursement is approx. 1.5 months after invoice

**Q&A:**

* Phred: Is not having commercial harvest at the same time as CFIP limited by parcel size or timber harvest management plan?
* Stew: We just don’t want to overlap CFIP and commercial harvest at the same time. But you can have an active harvesting on a different piece of land. You can have an active harvest open somewhere on your property if CFIP isn’t happening on the same piece of land.
* Mary: If you had a group of landowners that are all small parcels, could they come work together to meet the minimum 20-acre parcel requirement?
* Stew: CalFire used to do that but cannot do it anymore because it isn’t compliant with the law. Instead, when CalFire has excess funding, they offer wildfire resilience block grants to orgs that can use that funding to make technical and financial assistance programs in their areas. These can be used for smaller parcels. It’s unknown if we’ll receive enough funding in the next fiscal year to offer that program. CalFire Forest Health Grants are exploring that option as well – a single entity like and RCD or non-profit would apply to the program and obtain funding to get work done on smaller parcels.

**Updates from the RCD of Tehama County on the Mineral Firewise Hazard Tree Removal Project and the new Mill Creek project.**

*Mineral Firewise Hazard Tree Removal*

* Funded by CalFIRE CCI.
* Working with Mineral Firewise Leaders to target dead, dying, diseased trees and address spacing.
* Focusing on the 3 subdivisions of Mineral.
* The Firewise committee is in charge of outreach, and the RCD is doing project planning.
* Phase I: 2022-2025
  + Remove 752 trees (25 – 35 dbh)
  + Remove 1800 trees (10-25 dbh)
  + 40 acres of mastication
  + Remove downed PG&E trees
* The RCD completed the inventory of trees in October 2022, and started roadside mastication in the Fall 2022.
* Contracting: MSA with the Yurok Tribe.
* Working on a community strategy to handle the amount of ground fuels that are present.
* In Stringtown 2,102 hazard trees were inventoried, with 15 acres of mastication.
  + There is 66% participation from landowners in Stringtown!
* In Cool-Air, there were 445 hazard trees inventoried.
* Conditions in Mineral include:
  + High stand density, crown continuity.
  + Ladder fuels, ground fuels.
  + Beetle kill, mistletoe, drought…
  + Trees within 5 feet of structures and powerlines.
* Challenges include:
  + Cost ($/tree)
  + Dissemination of information
  + Volume of trees/material
  + Staging areas
  + Finding outlets for material: biochar/biomass?
  + Ongoing coordination with PG&E
  + Environmental compliance work windows
* Phred – This is a good example of cross-boundary work. BCMR property abuts both Stringtown and Cool-Air. BCMR has adjusted their planning to complement the work being done by the Tehama County RCD. This is a good example of how components of cross-boundary projects can be prioritized.
* Bella – It’s really impressive how much work was accomplished in Mineral this year! This also highlights how timing of implementation varies between private and public lands processes.

*Mill Creek Project*

* CalFire CCI funding
* 250 acres of roadside fuel treatments along CA SR-172
* 2022 – 2026: Tree removal, limbing and pruning, and mastication.
* Interest in hazard tree removal on private property in a future phase.

*Presentation from Yana Valachovic from the UC Cooperative Extension*

* What it means to build thoughtfully, with wildfire in mind.
* Yana is an RPF and aspiring building designer, thinking about how we build resilient infrastructure.
* Understanding and predicting vulnerabilities in design.
* Yana advanced changes in CA’s defensible space code: 4291.
* The scale of fires in recent years feels overwhelming in many ways, this requires a radical rethinking of how we build, the materials we use, and the products we choose.
* Embers can cause a lot of damage despite their small size and heighten fire behavior.
* Wind-blown embers are responsible for most building ignitions: embers can penetrate vents, decks, and the base of the wall.
* Education messages have mostly focused on how to reduce direct flame contact through defensible space.
* Preparing for embers and radiant heat exposures takes a different approach – embers can bypass fuels modifications.
* Radiant heat: if a side storage shed ignites, heat can transfer through the air, break a window for example, and allow embers to enter a home.
* Three types of fire exposures:
  + Direct Flame Contact
  + Embers
  + Radiant Heat
* In Paradise, during the Camp Fire, 73% of homes were within 18 m of a destroyed structure.
* Marshall Fire started in Boulder Colorado on Dec 30, 2021 – fire was put out by a snowstorm.
  + Fire fighter response prevented additional spread.
  + Connected fences in housing communities spread the grassland fire.
  + Some materials withstand high radiant heat better than others, for example tempered glass didn’t fail when annealed glass did in the Colorado fire.
* What components make a building more likely to survive a fire?
  + Ember and flame-resistant vents.
  + Tall foundation.
  + Vertical and horizontal non-combustible zones.
  + Class A roof.
  + Plant placement is more important than plant type.
    - Fire safe landscaping requires maintenance (pruning, irrigation, clean-up)
    - Keep the plants away from the house, especially out of the first 5 feet
    - Have islands of vegetation, to reduce fire spreading continuously
* Home hardening to address vulnerable locations
  + Fence to house connection: think about how fire-resistant perpendicular attachment points are.
  + Rain gutters to roof edge: gutters can become clogged with needles and leaves and create gutter fires.
  + Retrofit vents to be able to resist embers.
* For more info:

Yana Valachovic

yvala@ucanr.edu and

https://ucanr.edu/sites/fire

**Adjourn**

Next meeting in March - hopefully in the field