



**Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group**  
**Wednesday, April 26th, 2023; 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**Attendees**

Alex Carter - McConnell Foundation  
Amye Osti - 34 North  
Andrew Fullerton - Sierra Pacific  
Industries  
Bella Bledsoe - Sierra Institute  
Dan Ostmann - Lassen Volcanic National  
Park  
Evan Watson - Fall River RCD  
Gregory Wolfin - Pit River Tribe  
Jason Moghaddas- Spatial Informatics  
Group  
Jeffrey Oldson - Cascade Resource  
Consultants  
Jim Richardson - Lassen Volcanic National  
Park  
Jonathan Kusel - Sierra Institute

Kyle Rodgers - Sierra Institute  
Pete Johnson - Retired Timber Land  
Manager  
Robin Wall - Lassen National Forest  
Sarah Oldson - Cascade Resource  
Consultants  
Shannon Prather - Lassen National Forest  
Sharmie Stevenson - Fall River RCD  
Shawn Wheelock - Lassen National Forest  
Stephaney Cox- Lassen National Forest  
Tami Taylor - Lassen National Forest  
Trace Laughlin - Pit River Tribe  
Trish Puterbaugh - Lassen Forest  
Preservation Gp  
Todd Sloat - Fall River RCD  
Tuli Potts- SNC

**Approvals, Modifications, and Meeting Objectives**

Jonathan led collaborative members through introductions and entertained a motion to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved by the group. Jonathan entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February, and the group approved the meeting minutes. Robin also shared that she is leaving during the first part of June; she accepted a new position in Region 8. Hat Creek is expecting a new acting District Ranger, but they are not sure who this will be yet.

**Project Updates**

**WUI, Linear Corridors, Plantations**

- No decisions have been made yet. Tami put the Castle North project and Brokeoff project in. We will have to split Castle North into two pieces. The lower side is the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan, and the other half is another Forest Plan. So they need to be separate.
- Todd asked if there are any specifics Tami can share about what the Forest is thinking about this project; do they have specific questions?
- Tami commented that there were a few things missing from the template, and she can elaborate more on that later offline.
- Todd commented that Deb supported this project last year, and the RCD has funding for the project. It is going to be difficult to use these funds the longer the decision takes to go forward.

**USFS Projects: Crossroads, Badger, North 49, Plum, Hat Creek Recreation**

- Crossroads is moving forward. They had to stop work for a bit due to saturated soils. They are hoping to finish the work by the end of June. 134 acres of mastication have not been awarded yet.
- Greg commented that they did an initial site visit probably two years ago. He is wondering if the Forest is working near the north shore. These are sensitive areas with a lot of cultural resources and artifacts.
- Tami said she does not know but will follow up with some folks on the ground. She will get more information and follow back up.
- Greg asked, is the archeologist Jennifer for this project? Tami answered yes. Greg will follow up with Jennifer.
- Badger: A good part of the project burned. The Forest needs to get out there as soon as it dries. We can't finish our surveys until the snow melts. The Forest is trying to extend the project timeline to September 2024. It was originally set for January 2024. The FS is hoping to have the NEPA signed by September 2024. This just includes the green side of the project. Dixie Fire burned areas are in their own project.
- North 49: There are 700 acres still not awarded. A group member asked, is that a biomass job? Sawlogs? Or both? Andrew responded: I would assume it is biomass. I have not heard much about sawlogs.
- Plum: There are 250 acres of hand piling. Tami does not know anything about the timber sale side of things for this project. She does not know the status of the two timber sales.
- Trish asked, is there any way we could find out? We would like to know that this project is going forward. We have been working on this for a long time.
- Hat Creek Recreation: the Forest is waiting on a wildlife analysis. They are still hoping for a May signature. We need to get the surveys done.

#### **CCI projects: Manzanita Chutes, Backbone, Whittington-Cypress, Bald and Eiler**

##### **Reforestation**

- Manzanita Chutes is being implemented. It should be done by June.
- Bald and Eiler: Bald is being planted with 16 by 16 spacing. They are finishing up some mastication. Eiler is looking to be planted in 2024.
- Whittington: This is a planning year for this; the Forest is working towards a 2024 sale.
- Backbone: The FS is working on wildlife. The RCD had implementation funds secured for this and is trying to move funds to use on other fuels reduction work, given the wildlife hold-up.
- Evan: We just completed arc surveys on one WUI project. About 500 acres are enrolled in the WUI project, mostly small parcels. We hope to start implementing in June. We are in the initial outreach phase for another WUI project. The CWPP for Big Bend is still in progress. This is being led by the Big Bend Community Land Trust. The Fall River CWPP is complete.

##### **Others: Soldier Mt., Thousand Springs**

- Soldier Mt.: There is no money for implementation. The work was not funded by Cal Fire. The RCD is still searching for funds to implement that. It is mostly a biomass project.

- Thousand Springs: The modification is anticipated to be sent to grants and agreements. They are running into some challenges.

### **Lassen Partnership Coordinator: Introduction, Role, Function**

- Introductions from Stephaney Cox: Stephaney has been here for about a month and a half. She was a wildlife biologist for a number of years and also has a social science background. She looked at the relationship between mountain lions and ranchers. She has interacted a lot with diverse stakeholders through her work. Her new role with the FS includes taking a big-picture view of partnerships and facilitating communication between partners and the FS. Stephaney will focus on establishing and maintaining relationships with organizations, assisting in identifying funding possibilities, and identifying roadblocks in project progress.
- Todd and Stephaney are also working on a Partnership Summit with the Eagle Lake District; it will be a two-day event. Stephaney is also working on a newsletter as another way to communicate. She hopes to do an annual partnership report.
- In terms of working on expanding partnerships, Stephaney has identified the Mule Deer Foundations, Trout Unlimited, and some others.
- Andrew: The Turkey Foundation would be a good partner to add to the mix.
- Trish: We have been looking forward to working with someone like you. Welcome!
- Stephaney commented that her involvement with projects on a day-to-day basis will probably be limited. She hopes to be doing some problem-solving at a bigger level.
- Todd mentioned that the partner group on the RCD side does a weekly meeting. Can Stephaney join that weekly meeting? We problem-solve at these weekly planning meetings and go through each project to address roadblocks. It would also be great if Stephaney could show the Program of Work. It would be helpful to review that with partners.
- Jonathan commented that collaborative processes have been challenged by turnover in the District Ranger seat. He thinks Stephaney's role can help ensure there is a response in the gap between Rangers. Repeated turnover is really hard on the group.
- Todd: How will you interact with the regional partnership coordinator?
- Stephaney: I will have some contact. All the partnership coordinators are fresh and excited. The disadvantage to this is that almost every coordinator is new to the FS. We are attempting to align all goals and targets.

### **Lassen National Forest: Shared Stewardship Strategic Planning Vision**

- Tami went over the current (FY23) Program of Work for the District. At the Forest level, the first priority is the Dixie Fire Community Protection Project. The second is the MVUM Update Project. At the District Level, the top four projects are Backbone (Forest Level #6), Hat Creek Rec (#8), Badger (#9), and the Crossing Project (#12).
- Tami added that she submitted the Castle North and Brokeoff project recently because they fit under the WUI, Plantations, and Linear Corridors project. She wanted to make sure one went through. If the full WUI, Plantations, and Linear Corridors project does not go through, she wanted to have some smaller projects in the lineup.
- Tami also discussed the general criteria for prioritization that the Forest uses.

- 1. Well-defined projects with a mapped area. There should be no TBDs. The Forest wants to know who is staffing the project and a concrete timeline. The core team has to be clear.
- 2. Funding- We don't want anyone to get funding until a project is on the program of work. But, a project is prioritized if it has funding. So this is still being resolved a bit.
- 3. Is the project a Regional or Washington target? Is the project time sensitive? Or does it have a legal obligation? These will rank higher.
- 4. Is it a partnership project?
- 5. Does it leverage existing treatments?
- 6. Is it economy-stimulating?
- 7. Is it a WUI project?
- 8. Is there low analysis complexity for every resource on the team?
- 9. Does the project address a specific safety issue for the public or employees?
- 10. Is the project post-fire? This would make it rank higher.
- The implementation side is done a bit differently. Likely, prioritization is tied to funding a bit more.
- Todd: The process has not been formally provided to partners yet, right?
- Tami: I do not think so.
- Shannon: It is an internal process so far. We could probably send the form out, sharing the process.
- Stephaney: I happen to be on the POW team. I got permission and can share the project review process document with folks in the chat.
- Tami commented that the FY 24 project proposals are submitted. After that, it will be for 2025 projects. The Forest should have their final list by November, and that will dictate how specialists do their work on NEPA from November to April. NEPA season is now October through April, and May through September is the field season. The FS is only working on NEPA within the NEPA season.

### **Hat Creek Bioenergy Groundbreaking Ceremony Update**

- It was a very nice event and an exciting day for the region and for all the partners involved. Parts are coming in for the facility now, and construction is underway.

### **Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Update**

- The only thing that has happened recently is more review of the market capacity assessment. Some minor changes were made. Hopefully, it will come out in June or July. Several entity options were provided and reviewed from other JPAs in the state. It appears that we won't be picking any of them. We are probably going to try blending a few of them. We are likely going to try and build a super RCD. This is partially because of a lack of county capacity.
- Some JPAs work cause of strong state or county partners. We are trying to avoid slowing work by adding too many bureaucratic processes. That's why we are trending towards RCDs. Work gets done more nimbly in this area by RCDs.

- Todd added that new utilization infrastructure is not going to happen without long-term supply agreements. Hat Creek Bioenergy is unique; a private individual invested in that effort. Without any long-term feedstock guarantee, that is not going to happen. Long-term feedstock is the main barrier we are facing right now to get these facilities going.
- Greg asked if there is any interest in juniper as a type of biomass. We have an abundance of juniper. Todd responded that he has not heard of anything yet.
- Sharmie: Golden State Resources will take juniper once their facility is operational. But it will be a while until they are up and running.

### **Golden State Natural Resources Reflection**

- Jonathan commented that some folks from GSNR felt we were casting shade on their project. That was not the goal, but rather, Jonathan wanted to understand how their operations will impact other existing operations. Are there concerns about operations of this size?
- Trish: Our supervisor Doug Peter is supportive of this project. He will not answer my emails though about the effort. Even in person, he does not seem to know much about what is going on. Environmental organizations are against biomass. I do not agree with that. But if we build on these facilities, they have to be fed. We have to thin more.
- Jeff: When anything is new, there are a lot of unknowns. First thing, I just want to hear actual numbers. We should not make judgments without the numbers
- Jonathan: For years, there have been no facilities to take biomass. But there is always an issue of scale.
- Andrew: How are we going to truck material to this facility? Who is going to staff it? Those infrastructure issues are huge. We do not have the chip trucks or capacity for that. That is a monster facility that is being proposed
- Todd: The market capacity assessment showed that we need more infrastructure. But, there is a fear of the size. Smaller-sized facilities kind of address that concern. If this large facility gets established, of course, it will affect other facilities.
- Andrew: I agree. There are a lot of small facilities popping up. We need to be strategic about how we are going to supply these new operations.
- Jonathan: Another 30,000 or 40,000 BDT facility is not an issue, but something of this size is different.
- Todd hopes they will continue to share with this group, especially as they iron out the details.
- Sharmie: GSNR is not intending to drive anyone out of business. Big Valley had three sawmills in operation at one point.
- Todd: I did not hear much about RCRC talking with the community about the scale the community thought was appropriate. When they finally did share about the project, it was way bigger than I expected. How do we embrace something that comes in with great intentions to help us but that we did not really consult on?
- Trish: It was not a transparent process. I cannot get the county supervisor to answer questions about it.

## **Partner Updates**

### **Sierra Nevada Conservancy**

- SNC is now accepting Concept Proposals for the [Wildfire Recovery & Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Solicitation](#). Concept Proposals are due June 16<sup>th</sup>
- The June 1<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting will be in Plumas County.

### **Fall River RCD**

- The RCD signed a contract with a voluntary carbon market organization. We are in the process of making sure our projects are up to date, the data is accurate, and hopefully, we can start receiving credits in a year or so. The goal is to develop a revenue stream coming from projects to help implement more work. This could generate \$1 - 2 million a year for implementation.

### **Sierra Institute**

- SI is the convener for the North State CERF work; we have a steering committee meeting next Monday. Though, we still do not have a contract. We can't wait anymore because the State wants to hold onto deliverable dates. We are starting five months behind with no contract.
- We also received funds from the Department of Conservation for planning a hydrogen production facility. We are also submitting some additional proposals to help move biomass to a future hydrogen operation.
- Todd: it might be interesting for the group to see the technology proposed behind that.

### **Lassen Volcanic National Park**

- Tubit finished up thinning in the Northwest Gateway units near Lost Creek group campgrounds. It looks great. When the snow melts, they will finish up their rehab work on skid trails.
- We also have 120 acres to burn in Northwest Gateway. There are also 350 acres of Northwest Gateway we are looking to thin. Ideally, this work would happen in the next year, but the worst case is in two years.
- At Lassen NP we are going through the EA and plan process near Manzanita Lake. This includes dam safety improvements, additional parking, EV charging stations, an extra lane at our entrance station, and multiple accessibility improvements. Public comment will likely be available in early Fall.

## **Adjourn**