



Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group
Thursday, December 14th, 2023; 9 am - 11:30 am

Attendees

Alex Carter - The McConnell Foundation
Amye Osti - 34 North
Andrew Fullerton- Sierra Pacific Industries
Bella Bledsoe-Sierra Institute
Dan Ostmann - Lassen Volcanic National Park
Doug Lindgren - Tubit Enterprises
Evan Watson - Fall River RCD
Jason Moghaddas- Spatial Informatics Group
Jeffrey Oldson- Burney Forest Products
Jess Rouse - Pit River Tribe
Jim Richardson- Lassen Volcanic National Park
Jonathan Kusel- Sierra Institute
Lejon Hamann - Lassen National Forest

Michele Turner - SIG
Oliver Baldwin Edwards - SIG
Patricia Puterbaugh - Lassen Forest Preservation
Grp
Pete Johnson - Retired Timber Land Manager
Rob Lawson - SIG
Sarah Oldson- Cascade Resource Consultants
Shane Romsos - SIG
Sharmie Stevenson - Fall River RCD
Stephaney Cox-Lassen National Forest
Tami Taylor - Lassen National Forest
Todd Sloat- Fall River RCD
Tuli Potts- SNC
Vincent Vitale - Sierra Institute

Approvals, Modifications, and Meeting Objectives

The group did a round of introductions at the start of the call. Jim commented that the value of these collaboratives is really important. Jim said a thank you to the Sierra Institute for hosting these meetings; and continuing to keep these collaborative groups going. Jonathan thanked Jim for his leadership at the Park; Jim will retire at the end of December. Lejon also introduced himself as the permanent full-time District Ranger for the Hat Creek Ranger District. The group approved the meeting notes. There is a misspelling that Todd is going to send to Bella. The group approved the agenda.

Relevant Project Updates & Discussions

- Soldier Mountain Implementation Funds: Soldier Mountain is a project to do fuel reduction in the WUI. The McConnell Foundation funded a lot of the planning work. The RCD received a pre-award from SNC for the implementation activities.
- SNC North Subregion Vegetation Assessment - Pre-Award: The RCD also received a pre-award from SNC to generate better data for analysis for NEPA processes. There is anticipated funding of about \$3.4 million to complete all the tasks. Amye contributed to this proposal significantly. Amye will send out a one-pager on the project to the group, and also give a larger presentation to the group at some point. Todd is grateful for all the partner support in these proposals and to SNC for the pre-award. Jonathan also cautioned that state funds are looking worse and worse; federal funds are still looking good.
- Close Out of BHC Forest Health Phase I: It is very exciting to have closed this project out, and only have left 212 dollars on the table out of a 7 million dollar grant. Great collaborative effort to get that funding spent and the projects completed. Cal Fire did

not approve our proposal last year. We want to revisit and repurpose it for this round because we have closed out this funding. We think we have a better chance now that we have spent Cal Fire money down.

- Other Projects: Lejon is really excited about the timber sales. Especially the N49 timber sale. It was the largest timber sale in a while. If you have any questions about projects, you can reach out at any time. One thing not captured in the table is the work we are doing for prescribed fire. In the last two months or so, 800-900 acres of burning have been done in the District. It got wetter a bit earlier than we wanted.
- Andrew- The 49er timber sale is listed as Franklin but was sold to Trinity River Lumber, right? It looks like an error on the sheet. When are they thinking about starting? Did you have a prescribed fire target?
- Lejon- I cannot speak to when they are starting. We did not necessarily have a prescribed fire target. But we have more units laid out than we got burned.
- Andrew - Sunshine is just getting started. Lejon- there was a road use permit requested to keep those roads open as snow starts to come. Those should be heading to you soon.
- Stephaney -If there is info that is not in the table that you all want to be, please let us know.
- Jeff- Is there any Dixie Fire material update? Any product moved?
- Lejon - The only NEPA we have in the Dixie Footprint is the R5 hazard tree removal project, which is the RO. It is going to cost millions to do that, just on the Hat Creek Ranger District. We are pursuing \$\$ to get that done. But as of now, implementation of that project has not been initiated on this District. In terms of the Dixie Fire Communities Project, my understanding is that it went out for scoping, and based on the comments, they are reevaluating that project. The Forest is looking to change the footprint.
- Tami- We had more than 100 comments on the Communities project. People wanted not just community protection efforts, but the entire project area to be covered by the NEPA.
- Jeff- has any reforestation occurred? Tami - No, not on the Dixie Fire.
- Jeff- What happened to Plum in the Dixie Fire footprint?
- Tami- There were too many cumulative watershed effects. We were only able to do the green areas of Plum. The burned areas will go with the larger Dixie project.
- Jeff - So, there are no sawlogs coming off the Dixie. Biomass facilities will be the home for this stuff. When can we expect the material?
- Lejon - We just do not know. It is unfortunate that it is taking longer. We are working with GBI on that project.
- Todd- where is the Dixie Fire project on the POW? Tami- It is number one.
- Andrew- what is the plan for reforesting in the Dixie footprint?
- Lejon- I am not on the NEPA team for that project. I would have to talk to GBI.
- Stephaney offered to get someone at the February BHC meeting to speak about this project.

- Jonathan - how do we connect partners like GBI to the collaborative? It feels like there is a disconnect.
- Lejon also updated the group that the FS reappraised a sale that the Fall River RDC was working on; the value is still above all the bids we received. We will not move forward with a bid that is under the appraised value. I will work with the RCD to redo the advertisement. Sharmie - I want to see us push this work quickly.
- Lejon- I understand there were three bids, but they were 50% of the appraised value. We cannot sell public resources so much below the actual value. It will not pay for treatments on the ground. We will not move forward with a sale that is not appropriate.
- Andrew- did you reach out to Industry about their thoughts on the sale? Or how to approach it with the three bids coming in low? Sharmie - We did not. We feel the markets dictate the value. We sent it out to the whole FS list of bidders, plus our list. Sarah - I just want to add that these were the three positive bids. Some people thought we should be paying them to do this work.
- Todd- We need to talk more about the appraisal process. This is a huge issue. It is the difference between acres treated and getting the fully appraised value.
- Todd- Thinking about getting to landscape scale, this topic of marking and appraising is drastically slowing down the ability to implement projects in a timely manner. The appraisal process is a bit antiquated and is not working in the current system.
- Lejon- We are not new to timber sales. The FS knows what we are doing.
- Andrew- My understanding is that there is some wiggle room with biomass. But in general, resources are appraised on pure value and do not take into account factors like if they are close to the WUI or the urgency dimension. Sarah - This is only a 240-acre project. The project ties into existing projects with adjacent landowners. They cannot burn until the FS cleans up their property. We were excited to see it move.
- The group transitioned to discussing the Hat Creek Ranger Districts' Ten-Year Plan.
- Lejon- I would like to pull in some of the products that are being developed, like Planscape, to overlay that on the project areas proposed. Once we have a better idea of what we are looking at, we want to talk to the collaborative and have a meeting to discuss the project and get opinions on what we are looking at. Despite the way this was rolled out, we will further develop this plan, and we want to collaborate on developing the projects.
- Lejon - I also think we should have a meeting to discuss collaboration. We should have some face-to-face conversations on that.
- Tami- This is a moving document. I just did what I needed to at the time, in the timeframe I needed to. I didn't mean to put the collaborative out. We want to revise the plan together. It is not locked in stone.
- Jonathan - Maybe there is a retreat needed to discuss the different needs of both the group and the FS.
- Lejon - Creating a plan that far out (10 years), there are always variables that change. The best thing to do is articulate the needs we need to deal with. We have to be flexible as time goes on and take the opportunities that arise.

- Todd- I like the idea of identifying needs at a higher level. I looked at the SCALE agenda, and I like the idea of large-landscape NEPA. I want to do a large landscape NEPA that fits those large-scale, higher-level needs. I would advocate that we have these types of conversations now before we get back into implementation season. We want to come up with something that the collaborative and the FS is supportive of.
- Jonathan- the group knows plans need to flex with funding, fires, and various factors.

Update on the Partnership in Practice Symposium (Stephaney)

- We had about 75 attendees at the symposium, and we had three main topics.
- The first was roles and responsibilities. Russell gave a talk about the WLHP, and went through some of the important milestones on that project, how partners engaged, and how the LNF participated.
- The goal was to discuss the tasks that only the FS can do, and what are the tasks that partners can take part in. Stephaney- we made a list to start with that went out with the post-meeting materials.
- The second topic was fiscal year timelines, and the third topic was the NEPA program of work process.
- We walked attendees through this whole process. Partners communicated the desire for more collaboration prior to the program of the work development process. We are realizing that the FS and partners are on different pages of what collaboration is. We need to make sure there is more consistency - what does collaboration mean?
- Other feedback we received was that the hybrid meeting did not work. We may hold a March meeting online and then the Fall meeting in person.
- In January, the leadership team is going to meet to discuss collaboration in general, as well as other topics. There will be more follow-up at the March symposium.
- Stephaney - Newsletters are quarterly. I will be reaching out to partners to help create content. That is our quarterly communication. And then the meetings will happen twice per year.
- Todd- We have different collaboratives who meet throughout the year. There is a lack of sharing between the collaborative meetings and the larger staff, particularly the leadership. There is a grant opportunity coming up. It is due in mid-January. It is going to require interaction with the FS to pull that off. More frequent interactions would help.
- Stephaney- Does that mean more BHC meetings? Todd- No, not necessarily.
- Stephaney - I hope communication is improving; there is more to do, but I hope the partnership coordinators have at least helped this process/communication a bit.

SIG Presentation

- Jason - Rob, Michele, and Shane work on the Planscape team. They all know the grind of the NEPA planning process. We will highlight the Planscape platform. This is an open-source, free, decision support tool for wildfire resilience. This started with the Natural Resource Agency in CA, and is focused on the million acres strategy. This is a cooperative endeavor between partners like the Taskforce, Google, the FS, SIG, CNRA, and the University of CA. This is everyone's product, and no one is profiting from it.

How do we plan across a landscape scale? How do we think about connecting a patchwork of treatments and land ownership? That is what the tool is designed to help us think about.

- Rob showed the various data layers, boundaries, and the capacity to dig into the 10 pillars of resilience using Planscape. The tool helps you visualize the different metrics spatially. The goal was to make all this great data accessible and public. This is all available through a browser. No software is needed. The point of “explore” is to look at those data layers. “Plan” allows you to draw an area or upload a shapefile. Then we can start running scenarios.
- Creating scenarios allows you to set up some goals and some constraints to help optimize areas and look at the outputs. The goal is to see the tradeoffs easily in this tool.
- Shane & Oliver Baldwin Edward also joined to show Match Drop. This is another open-source tool. It is for fire planning. The tool allows you to place an ignition on the landscape. The tool uses fuel data and other landscape data to see how the fire might spread. It also helps with forecasting a prescribed burn. You can pick any spot in the US, and a date and time, all the way back to 2011. You name your fire and run it. It takes about 3-6 minutes. The model runs 200 fires for each of the two models and then picks different percentiles for simulated fires burned. You are able to see how that fire will spread for about four days and can run up to 14 days. The goal is to see how a fire might burn in real time.
- You can also look at other metrics beyond where it will spread, including crown fire and other factors. We also have other layers in this map, like a structure map and transmission line layer. You can see how a fire might impact structures or transmission lines. Question from group: Have you compared the model to actual fires that did occur this Fall? Oliver - We are currently working on model validation with current fires.

Partner Updates

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

- In our last funding round, we had \$35m available. We received \$74 million in final proposals. We had to say no to a number of great projects, unfortunately. We anticipate recommending projects for funding at our next board meeting.
- SNC's next Board Meeting will be on March 7th in Sacramento, with our WIP summit on March 8th.

Fall River RCD

- OPR update - We are moving forward with a JPA with other RCDs. We would not own a facility, but it is possible that we could have a sort yard to get material out of the woods and hold it there until someone can take it. Looking to have board members from each RCD attend a meeting to tie this down more in the coming months.
- Hat Creek Bioenergy is under construction. The turbine is stuck in the Panama Canal because of drought.

Sierra Institute

- We have a staff member looking at marketing material from the Crescent Mills sawmill with the intention of trying to network sawmills. She is looking at what the market is, and especially the niche market, to bring in the highest value. We are trying to help these facilities become as efficient and profitable as possible.
- SI is also the convener of the North State CERF. It is now called CA Jobs First; the state rebranded this project. We have convened a whole bunch of folks. We are framing issues and outlining working plans and groups. March is a working session for the whole group. We will draft the final outcomes in April. Final working group deliverables are due in May. The challenge has been putting together these subgroups to put together some papers about what needs to happen in the North State region.
- Todd - Are there connections with the OPR project? Let's chat more about how we can fit in with the groups and subcommittees.

Lassen Volcanic National Park

- Fall broadcast burning started in September to get after some North aspect, heavily shaded acres. We burned about 200 acres this Fall. Not big acres, but important acres. This frees us up to do more acres next Fall. We got fire into most acres we thinned in 2014 through the Northwest Gateway project. We have piles all over the Park that we will be burning this winter.
- For mechanical treatment in Northwest Gateway, we have another 350 acres that we are looking to get into contract. We have funding to get those acres marked this field season. Post-Dixie Fire work continues through our interagency agreement with BIA. This summer, the focus was on the Juniper Lake area. We have about 57 decks out there. We are putting them out for auction.
- We are also revising our Park Fire Management Plan. We are looking now at what our plan is for the next 10 -20 years with prescribed fire and mechanical thinning. We are looking at if we want to expand to new areas. Generally, we are looking to expand the prescribed fire footprints.

Adjourn