

## **Landowner Engagement Subcommittee Meeting**

### **Monday, December 11th, 2023, 4 - 5 pm**

#### **Meeting Objectives:**

- Hear updates from the Lassen Volcanic National Park about their winter and spring burning plans in the Park and pile burning around Mineral.
- Discuss the potential use of an emergency authority to expedite implementation activities around Mineral on Forest Service lands.

#### **Introductions & Updates**

- Wendy Heaton (BCMR) Update: We finished thinning a couple hundred acres between the houses and Mineral; we are working with Collins. This is different than the mastication work being completed with the RCD of Tehama County.
- Mary Davidge (FoWV): We are working on recovering the community after the Dixie Fire. The Feather River RCD is finishing a lot of the clearing work on private land, and we are talking about planting for next year. We are also responding to the Lassen NF plans for the Dixie Fire Community Protection Project. We are hoping to turn our attention to what we want to see for the next decades and bring together private landowners and agencies to pursue deeper collaboration.
- Matt Barton (FoWV): Wants to turn from reactive work in the aftermath of the Dixie Fire, to longer term, sustainable pro-active work.
- Mike Lee (FoWV): Same as Mary and Matt.
- Leida Schoggen (FoWV): Same as Mary and Matt.
- Betsy Karle (Mill Creek Homeowners Association): Nice to meet the group.
- William Locker (Mill Creek Homeowners Association): Been working with Tehama County RCD, doing forest management on HOA common lands, and thinning on private property. Making communities fire safe is a long process.

#### **Lassen Volcanic National Park Update**

- Plans for winter: We have a large landing pile by the ball field; this is mostly hazard trees that will be burned in Jan.
- We also had an agreement with BIA and Mooretown last year to deal with hazard trees along the highway and burn those piles. Most are burned already, one pile by the visitor center will be burned soon.
- At the North end of the park (project name: NW Gateway phase 2), there are about 94 acres of machine piles that will be burned this winter.
- In Warner Valley, we have felled dead trees and decked larger material. Those decks were sold through GSA as excess property. They have until mid-summer to remove

those. 4-5 machine piles will be burned this winter. The log decks near Manzanita lake campground were also bought.

- The Log decks near Juniper lake area weren't released on the same GSA auction. There will be more log decks going out to bid soon. We have 4 full time LAVO staff in winter to burn piles, and we are planning to enlist FS help.
- **Q&A**
- Q (Mike)- Are you going to do more falling on park land that borders private land?
- A – Possibly. The first phase of treatment was to mitigate hazards near roads, trailheads, and facilities. We have secured funding to go wider in the WV wedge due to fuel loading. There are other places in the park that are authorized to use mechanical equipment to mitigate future fuel loading. We are in the process right now of updating the Park's fire management plan. NEPA was done in 2005 and was updated in 2010, to expand the area we could use heavy equipment. We are potentially looking to further expand that area. We are in the process of charting out the next 20 years of fire and fuels management in the park. Still determining the NEPA pathways. The park is interested in getting public feedback on this. Jim Richardson is retiring at the end of the month.
- Q (Matt) – What is the normal buffer for mitigating fuel loading and dealing with hazards? How much was it widened for the wedge?
- A – Initial work was to mitigate any tree that had hit the road. The original buffer was 50 feet from the road. Some trees were anticipated to fall within the buffer, so we extended the buffer to a max of 100 feet from the road. If you fell a tree taller than 100 ft, you can only remove the portion that is within the 100-foot buffer.
- Q – How do we manage flashy fuel after trees are removed?
- A – There are several tools within the fire management plan. We have limited use of mechanical equipment, hand thinning, and fire. Sierra Institute's crosscut crew worked along the boundary to Kings creek last year, cutting between 10–14-inch dbh trees. We also had the Flatiron prescribed burn project that was about 1300 acres. Research in the Park is confirming that portions of the park will have a burn severity memory. In 20-30 years, Flatiron ridge will likely burn at high severity again if action isn't taken. The idea is to broadcast burn it in 6-7 years from now. Get some low severity burn in there to break the high severity burn cycle.
- Q – What's the desired future state of the wedge?
- A – In terms of mitigating future fire behavior, Dan would like to see expanded mechanical treatment areas. Future Rx fire would need to be cross boundary: Park, Forest, Private land due to the nearby wilderness.
- Q – What's the timing for finalizing the Rx burn plan?
- A – If we use an EA pathway, it would be about a year. An amendment to an existing plan (Categorical Exclusion) could be done by summer.
- Dan also shared an update about the cross-boundary broadcast burn near Mineral Headquarters.

- A lot of burning has happened in the historic compound: 2008, 2016, this last spring.
- This spring (2024), we are looking to do portions of unit G, up to 17 acres, adjacent to BCMR and portions of unit F and H. We are also looking to do more broadcast in the fall (2024) in the Park, mostly around the Manzanita lake area.
- Recent studies also showed that reducing conifer encroachment in meadows resulted in lower severity burns in meadow areas in the Dixie Fire.
- Trails can be used as places maintained as defensive features for either future Rx fire or a wildfire. Trails can't be utilized if the fire behavior is too severe. But there are other seasons/years when conditions are such that fire could be contained in between trails. We are planning to pick trails that will be most strategic. Need to keep the cycle of low severity fires going. It's a priority of the Park to get the trails opened and bridges replaced that burned in the Dixie Fire.
- Matt happy to engage further on the topic of trails with the Park.

#### **West Lassen Headwaters Project - Emergency Authority**

- Mill Creek HOA have concerns about the dense areas of forest surrounding Mill Creek, including existing slash piles. They want to know what the plans are for areas adjacent to the Mill Creek. Would like more interface with the Forest on plans for this area.
- BCMR would love to see the Forest Service thin the areas around the ranch. Would like to have more communication with the FS about how the work could be expedited.
- Larry – the Mineral HOA is highly interested in seeing this work done quickly, especially north of Mineral.

#### **Adjourn**

Next meeting in March