



Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group
Tuesday, March 5th, 2024; 9 am - 11:15 am

Attendees

Amye Osti - 34 North	Katelyn Suderman - Lassen National Forest
Andrew Fullerton- Sierra Pacific Industries	Kathy Allen - Lassen National Forest
Bella Bledsoe–Sierra Institute	Lejon Hamann - Lassen National Forest
Dan Ostmann - Lassen Volcanic National Park	Michelle Coppoletta - US Forest Service
Doug Lindgren - Tubit Enterprises	Mike Battles
Evan Watson - Fall River RCD	Sarah Oldson– Cascade Resource Consultants
Gregory Wolfin - Pit River Tribe	Sharmie Stevenson - Fall River RCD
Jason Moghaddas– Spatial Informatics Group	Stephaney Cox-Lassen National Forest
Jeffrey Oldson- Burney Forest Products	Tami Taylor - Lassen National Forest
Jeremy Curtis - Lassen Volcanic National Park	Todd Sloat– Fall River RCD
Jessica McMullen - Lassen National Forest	Tom March - CalTrans
Jonathan Kusel– Sierra Institute	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; the group was introduced to Kathy Allen, the acting Forest Supervisor while Deb is away. The group approved the December meeting notes and the March agenda.

Relevant Project Updates & Discussions

- The Burney Hat Creek collaborative thanked the Forest Service for producing the project table and asked some follow-up questions.
- Katelyn prompted the group, is there anything on timber sales that should be mentioned or questions on timber sales? The FS added that the Tauntaun timber sale is not going out in 2024; the FS is reviewing it due to low board feet per acre and is considering combining it with another timber sale in 2025.
- Q: So there will be no timber sales in 2024?
- A: Correct.
- Q: What is behind the lack of timber sales? Is it a backlog in NEPA?
- A: There are sales coming out on the Lassen, just not on the Hat Creek Ranger District.
- Q: Is Sunshine still being operated on?
- A: Yes, the logs are going to Henderson.
- Q: A group member commented that they recall seeing a target for acres treated, does the Hat Creek Ranger District still have a target?
- A: Lejon commented that they do have targets for timber, fuels, and reforestation but that the targets are at a Regional level, not a District level. The Region receives its target from Washington, and then those are sent out to zones. Region 5 is broken into three zones; BHC is in the north zone. Lejon thinks that once zones accomplish what

they need to, the FS can approach the collaborative about what further action is needed and desired.

- Q: When do those targets come out?
- A: We usually have targets at the start of the fiscal year - October/November. However, targets are very delayed this year.
- Q: Is there any involvement with Mule Deer and other such groups to assist the pace and scale with NEPA?
- A: We are not working with Mule Deer right now aside from on Crossroads.
- Q: Given that there is a delay in Backbone's progress, will there be a delay in Badger too?
- A: Yes, all projects will likely be pushed back a month.
- The FS asked if there were any questions on the Stewardship Projects in the table.
- One correction to the table: Thousand Springs is currently being operated on - edit to the table.
- Q: Coming back to Backbone, are we dropping alternative three? The RCD and partners are still looking for clarification on why that alternative doesn't fit with the project anymore.
- A: The Forest Service does not have any official word yet from the Region, but they have said that alternative three does not meet the new CSO guidelines. We have not been given reasons why yet.
- The Forest Service provided an update on the Dixie Fire Community Protection Project.
- Jessica updated the group that the FS is redeveloping the proposed action and anticipating another scoping in early April.
- Q: What's the timeline after scoping?
- A: Timeline would put us into 2025 for anticipated decision; the project will be an EA.
- Q: What is being proposed?
- A: Primarily biomass removal and replanting.
- Q: How could we have done something different to get saw logs out?
- A: We were not successful in Hat Creek Ranger District getting sawlogs out, but the Almanor was able to get some out.
- Q: Can you summarize the comments from the scoping that drove the change?
- A: The most common theme of the comments was that we were thinking too small, just around communities; commenters wanted us to look at the whole Dixie Footprint.
- Jonathan added that maybe GBI can sit in on these calls to engage with the BHC collaborative.

WUI, Linear Corridors, Plantations

- Todd asked, what is the best way to proceed with the proposed project? The SNC money we have for this expires at the end of this year.
- Lejon responded that he is not entirely sure what grant we are talking about; he knows money exists, but what is this money connected to?
- Todd: This is early action money for capacity development from SNC.

- Lejon asked to punt this discussion to a more direct conversation with the Fall River RCD.
- Kathy Allen also provided an update on how she sees her role in the collaborative while she is the Acting Forest Supervisor. She is looking forward to continued engagement with the group and to the upcoming symposium regarding how partners can engage in the FS work.
- Questions for Kathy?
- Doug: How long are you in the details? Kathy: For the next four months (until the middle/end of June).

Collaboration Between BHC & Hat Creek Ranger District Going Forward

- Bella: NFWF put out a request for proposals, and SI began working towards a proposal for implementation on the West Lassen Headwaters Project. We then heard that NFWF wanted one proposal per Forest, so we started thinking through how to submit a proposal with all partners. As part of the pre-proposal, we put in a rough amount of money for Burney Hat Creek work.
- We have been invited back to submit a full proposal and are looking to define what work makes sense for the BHC collaborative. The proposal is due March 20th.
- What does the Forest and BHC want to do together, and what might this money go towards? Lejon -what does the group have in mind? Lejon also put in a NFWF grant with NCRC that was also selected for a full proposal. That work is going to be centralized on the Region 5 hazard tree project.
- Bella: This money goes to 2031, so I am sure there are activities the group could accomplish between now and then.
- Lejon would prefer to direct funds to NEPA for Mountain Valley and Onion; survey funds would be great.
- Todd added that he is hoping to also look towards larger landscape work and long term projects.
- Lejon: We are not moving forward with the WUI project at the moment. I have three main ideas. We could double down on the projects on the other districts and not go for any money on the HCRD. The funds could also go to follow-up fuel treatment on the back of cut, skid, and deck treatments. Or, funds could go to planning for Mountain Valley and Onion.
- Amye added that additional surveys on Mountain Valley and Onion are needed; SNC funds are not going to cover all survey needs.
- Todd asked if the goal is to continue down your path with NCRC, then hedge your bets and hope that two proposals get awarded? Lejon said there is plenty of work that needs to get done; archaeology surveys on Mountain Valley and Onion could cost millions of dollars.
- Jonathan asked the group to come together and decide what they want funds for and then to let SI know.
- Michelle Coppoletta also added a plug to include some monitoring funds. If a piece of the proposal features monitoring, she can help craft the language.

- Bella added that she will review the RFP to see if monitoring is an allowable expense.
- The group transitioned to discussing what the Lassen National Forest has been discussing regarding what they want collaboration to look like.
- Stephaney commented that her biggest takeaway from the Fall Symposium was that collaboration means different things to different people. Part of what she is working on is to create a shared definition of collaboration within the FS.
- Lejon commented that he would like to hear from others in the group on what their definition of collaboration looks like.
- Todd said he wants to see alignment so we can get more work done.
- Lejon commented that he would like to hear more from the group on what collaboration looks like. Where are we missing the mark? Where can we improve?
- Sharmie said she would like a more open planning process so the group is included before, not after planning decisions are made. She would like to work collaboratively in the pre-planning.
- Stephaney acknowledged that the FS heard that a lot in the partnership symposium.
- Todd: When decisions are made at the Forest leadership level, it causes a ripple effect on the partnerships. It is super hard to shift our staff and reallocate our resources as organizations and entities. It would help if we could be a bit more involved in the planning process so we can organize our staff and resources appropriately. Kathy added that she wants the FS to be transparent and inclusive throughout the whole process.
- Stephaney- We really missed this group at the Symposium. I recognize the symposium date went out late. We understand that any changes we make to project timelines impact partners a lot. We want to communicate early and often. We are working on being more realistic about our timelines so we do not put partners in a tough spot.
- Jonathan commented that this has been a short but potent discussion. We know the agency has restraints, but we do not think that transparency goes against the legal authority of the agency. We are a far cry from where we were years ago. It helps to bring partners in earlier and Tribes. Agencies shift and staff shift. We really need to create continuity for this work, which is often created by partners. I appreciate the candidness of this conversation. I appreciate the conversation between Fall River RCD and NCRC. We should bring partners together, not separate them.

Partner Updates

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

- **SNC Board Meeting on Thursday, 3/7 (Sacramento)**
 - Two projects in the BHC region are being recommended for funding
 - Soldier Mountain WUI Implementation Project
 - North Vegetation Assessment, Data Development & Project NEPA
 - Agenda & Meeting Packet, link to listen in, RSVP if you can attend: <https://sierranevada.ca.gov/board-meetings/>
- **SNC Watershed Improvement (WIP) Summit 3/8 (Sacramento)**
 - 20th year of SNC – Impact Report from the first 20 years will be presented

- The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's [Watershed Improvement Program \(WIP\)](#) Summit connects California policymakers to Sierra-Cascade issues that resonate across the state.
- The state budget is not looking amazing & we're uncertain if we'll be able to run a funding cycle this year. We will know more after the Legislature releases their 'May Revise' of the projected State Budget.
- September Board Meeting will be in the Northwest Subregion this year (Siskiyou County) – more to come on that.

Fall River RCD

- We are in phase two of our Office of Planning and Research grant. We are looking to create a JPA to liaison between the oftaker and the end user for forest products. We are working on insurance so that we can reduce the risk to both parties. Putting together the grant app for phase 3, which will take all the work we have done in the first few phases, and put us in a place to be up and running as a JPA with the other RCDS. Phase 4 is the actual starting. Todd- the voluntary carbon market projects are live and active; this is a funding source that is unlike the others.

Sierra Institute

- West Lassen Headwaters Project- We are preparing to scope this project soon.
- H RTP - We have a new upcoming grant and agreement to expand this work.
- SCALE - We had a meeting last week focused on workforce development.
- The North Fork Forest Recovery Project draft EA is coming soon.

Lassen Volcanic National Park

- Park has selected a new Superintendent who will be starting in May. Jeremy is here till April.
- We are working on finalizing the proposal for the new Fire Management Plan. Looking to use the same tools as always, managed fire and thinning. More to come on that soon. Looking to increase the scale of prescribed burning. 2,200 acres in the Manzanita Lake area this fall; this is largely a reentry burn, but some will be a first entry burn. The Sierra Institute wilderness fuels crew is going to help with prep for that. Looking forward to that this summer.
- Northwest gateway: we are completing the last chunk of mechanical thinning, and we are hoping to get that out soon. Hope to have more details about that at the next meeting.

Others?

- Tom March wants to partner with folks here as part of CalTrans to not leave the mustaches of fuels beside the road. We want to do cross-boundary work when possible. Please call us. We have had success in other locations. Let's communicate on how we can do better, create fuel breaks, and work together on this. We still need to do our CEQA, but it is often less extensive than your NEPA.

Adjourn