

Sierra to California All Lands Enhancement Spring 2019 Meeting

May 30-31/Jackson, CA

Meeting Summary

Sierra Institute's Spring Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement Meeting took place on May 30 and 31, 2019 in Jackson, CA, the home of the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group. Attendees gathered to hear the story and lessons learned of the ACCG, and to discuss issues related to landscape-level forest restoration. On Day 1, Trina Cunningham and Steve Wilensky spoke about the role of tribes in forest and watershed management. Participants discussed the successes and challenges of landscape scale work in small groups and heard an example of a landscape scale project from The Nature Conservancy's Angel Hertlet. Nick Wobbrock of Blue Forest Conservation spoke about Forest Resilience Bonds, and Phil Chang from the Oregon Department of Forestry shared the success that Oregon has had with Good Neighbor Authority. On Day 2, Jason Kuiken shared the efforts of the Stanislaus National Forest to bring together multiple collaborative groups to do forest-wide planning. Participants discussed building collaborative capacity in small groups, and Keali'i Bright from the California Department of Conservation gave an update on state investment in forest restoration. To close, participants had a discussion about how SCALE can best serve their needs in the future.

Attendees

Joshua Abel
Frank Aebly
Joe Aragon
Keali'i Bright
Elissa Brown
Ray Cablayan
Tania Carlone
Phil Chang
Seth Connolly
Trina Cunningham
Hinda Darner
Linda Diesem
Sheri Elliott
Katherine Evatt
John Exline
David Featherman
Chris Friedel
David Griffith
Cassandra Hagemann
Steve Haze
John Heissenbuttel

John Henshaw
Hannah Hepner
Angel Hertlet
Sue Holper
Thibault Hoppe-Glosser
Tracy Hruska
Shoana Humphries
Pete Johnson
Allison Jolley
Bobbette Jones
Holly Jorgensen
Alexandria Keeble-Toll
Jason Ko
Jason Kuiken
Jonathan Kusel
Hilda Kwan
Chuck Lewis
Paul Mason
Daniel McDonald
Stew McMorrow
Dale Meese

Regine Miller
Lindsey Nitta
Dave Osti
Brendan Palmieri
Sherry Reckler
Jerry Reiox
Justine Reynolds
Kyle Rodgers
Terrance Rodgers
Hilary Sanders
Jenn Shephard
Todd Sloat
Max Sterner
Camille Swezy
Donna Vial
Robin Wall
Martha Walters
Matthew West
Steve Wilensky
David Wilkinson
Nick Wobbrock

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Day 1

Story of the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group

Katherine Evatt (Foothill Conservancy) and Steve Wilensky (CHIPS)

The collapse of the logging industry led to high poverty in Amador and Calaveras Counties. In response, the Blue Mountain Community Council was formed. CHIPS was formed shortly afterward, and led to the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group in 2008. The group now has 41 signatories. SNC did a Mokelumne River Cost Analysis Study, available online, finding that not East Bay water users but state and federal government would be the primary beneficiaries of collaboration.

The group has received \$26 million in grants over time and CHIPS has been key for landing grant money. In the early years, work focused on USFS partnerships. The Cornerstone Project was funded in 2012 and has created 210 jobs. CFLR funding has been extended for two years, but the group is planning beyond that. An MSA with the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority allows local contracting, includes water in the scope of work, and allows outside money to come in that would not otherwise be possible.

Until recently, ACCG rotated facilitation responsibilities among members. This worked well when things went smoothly, but not when there was contention. Currently professional facilitation is funded by the Forest Service. That may not continue, so the group needs to figure out facilitation moving forward.

ACCG has been successful in bringing in money. However, as the group continues to develop, more time and expertise are needed to manage grants and be effective. As more opportunities are available and more voices are incorporated, there is a need to adjust how the group works. The need for effective partner relationships to fill in staffing and capacity gaps becomes more important and challenges like turnover in the Forest Service and the lack of young people interested in the work are more pressing.

There is a new sense of urgency with climate change and megafires. There is an abundance of fire research available but it can be difficult to apply, and not everyone is using it. In addition, studies are being repeated that have already been done, rather than using science already available. East Bay MUD has a study on costs associated with fires and management available upon request.

USFS and community members pulled together the CFLR application, hundreds of pages of documentation, in the week between Christmas and New Year. That process helped build trust between partners.

When ACCG started, USFS RFPs often received no bids, due largely to loss of infrastructure and capacity, and distrust of the agency. A recent RFP received interest from 27 companies and bids from 15, mostly local, indicating the revival of a local industry. The hope is to sustain a diversified forest management industry not through grants and subsidies, but through establishment of infrastructure.

Collaborative Updates

Dinkey Collaborative

Justine Reynolds (Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council)

The Dinkey Collaborative is a CFLR encompassing 154,000 acres on the Sierra NF in the Shaver Lake area. The group is currently working on road removal, wildlife mitigation, and meadow restoration. The area has been hit extremely hard by tree mortality, up to 100% in places. The forest is different than what the collaborative originally planned for, so there have been conversations about changing focus. There are also discussions surrounding changes in funding. Existing CFLR funding ends in September and there will be a 1 year gap before funding can be renewed. The Forest Supervisor wants to continue collaboration regardless of CFLR funding.

- Working groups are Recreation, Funding, and Smoke Management (works with San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District)
- CFLR goals are being achieved and 10 of 15 management units have been hit
- Outside funding from SNC and CCI grants, DOC Watershed Coordinator grant (Sierra RCD), joint 3-county CCI proposal (Sierra, Mariposa, and YS? RCD), 3-county LIDAR acquisition from Mariposa to Fresno for planning
- Forest-wide prescribed fire decision document in progress to increase pace and scale of implementation
 - Combined veg mgmt. and fire crew to keep on longer; Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds allow crews to stay full time; a lot of interest in new tribal work crews and fuels reduction and stewardship project on private lands and WUI

Feather River Stewardship Coalition

Hannah Hepner (Plumas Fire Safe Council)

The Feather River Stewardship Coalition is a collaborative between the Plumas County Fire Safe Council and the Plumas National Forest. It includes the entire Upper Feather River Watershed and some of Lassen National Forest, although all the group's projects are on the Mt. Hough Ranger District. Plumas Corp. is the fiscal agent. The group is funded by 5 grants with a total of \$8.5 million, and is currently under a Master Participating Agreement but is transitioning to a Master Stewardship Agreement.

- In beginning stages of a programmatic NEPA planning document
- Exploring cross-boundary underburn, although legislative changes have slowed momentum
- Fire Safe Council building up staff

Firescape Mendocino

Frank Aebly (Mendocino NF)

Since last attending a SCALE meeting 2 years ago, Firescape Mendocino has re-organized as a collaborative. They are bringing back workshops that they had cut down on. Sub-groups focused on individual projects rather than topics. The landscape includes pretty much the entire Mendocino NF. 280,000 acres of the Mendocino NF and about 70% of Lake County have burned in recent years.

- Community interest in post-fire restoration, increasing pace and scale; approaching work as a collaborative is new, hope to pursue CCI funding and more
- Cross-boundary burning morphed into working with Round Valley Indian Tribe elders to do traditional burning in Covelo

- Contract to Firestorm so they take on liability and burn boss responsibility to address liability issue, CAL FIRE may be trying to do that too

Burney Hat Creek

Todd Sloat (Pit and Fall River RCDs)

The Fall River RCD has an MSA with the Lassen NF, and the Pit RCD has one with the Modoc NF. Trust has been developed with federal partners for long term work in forest health as well as meadow restoration. The group has increased capacity in the form of local consultants and NGOs to assist federal partners with forest health projects, and by adding RFPs to the team. The group is working on how to balance revenue creation from timber sales or grants with high priority projects that cost a lot of money.

- Working with 34 North GIS data platform to create projects and info around certain subjects and communicate to stakeholders etc.; part of CCI grant
- Working with Spatial Informatics Group to plan projects at landscape scale
- 20 year PPA signed and working on financing for developing bioenergy facilities
- CCI proposal includes workforce capacity program with Shasta College to address challenge implementing forest health project without truck drivers

Future of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

John Exline (USFS Region 5)

There are 23 CFLRs in the US, mostly in the west. The first 10 were established in 2010 and the rest in 2012, and were authorized for 10 years. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized the CFLRP through 2023, including \$80 million in appropriations. The House of Representatives has already authorized \$35 million and it is expected the Senate will authorize more. Existing 2012 projects will be extended. FACA (Federal Advisory Committee Act) will review proposals and requests for extensions of 2010 projects. USFS will review FACA nominations in July/August, and the Secretary will issue appointments in September.

- Emphasis on wood utilization, forest health, not restricted to fire-prone areas, leveraging outside funds
- Cap of two new proposals per Region and 3 total projects per state, including existing CFLRs

Tribes, Forests, and Water Across California's Mountain Counties

Trina Cunningham (Tribal Consultant)

There is little recognition of the rich cultures and homelands that people live in. Every tribal community has a creation story that some say are the tribe's constitution, showing how they are supposed to exist in the world. That is threatened now. Trina grew up in Genesee with no electricity or phones. One of the first things that changed the world for her was realizing that her people had been through genocide. When she studied the Holocaust in school, she wondered about the survivors. It took a while for it to occur to her that she is one. She sees those who commit genocide as repeating patterns of trauma, something humans do. You always bring to the table who you are as a human being, so you have to take care of your thoughts and predispositions.

Capacity is a challenge when tribes are being asked to work with one another and with external agencies. Tribes have the same strengths and weaknesses as other communities and need the same investment to build capacity. There is a need to look at legislative barriers to tribal participation at an

equitable level. Tribes have knowledge of ecosystem resiliency, landscape scale, and prescribed fire, but integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) work into collaboratives has to be tribally driven. One creation story says the Maidu will know every rock and spring and maintain a relationship so they will always know who they are and never be lost. We have lost that intimacy with the environment that drives work and with it the relationship to mental health and other issues.

Like generations before, Trina has devoted her life to building stronger communities, and in particular has headed three projects to address these issues.

- In Genesee Valley, the Feather River Land Trust purchased property and brought together stakeholders on site for a symposium on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Native youth made videos of the elders, the first time many of the elder has allowed themselves to be filmed. They talked about what the most important things are, with water being fundamental.
- The second project was an event on the FRLT property organized to bridge the gap between rural and urban, and build urban understanding of investment in headwater communities. It was supported by Mooretown Rancheria, Plumas National Forest, OPR, and volunteers. A huge mix of urban and rural agencies came together to discuss how federal and state governments and other stakeholders can work together. The Klamath later used this idea.
- The third project is Sierra Valley Big Time, traditionally a time where young people come together to meet, get married, and trade. Mountain Maidu, Washoe, and Paiute tribes came together last year, on the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic designation of the middle fork of the Feather River in Sierra Valley, it's headwaters, to remember water and fire, discuss ranching, and discuss how to address stigma. Trina is planning it again this year, incorporating what tribal people want to know and teach. This could be a pilot for other tribes as well.

Steve Wilensky (CHIPS)

CHIPS began 14.5 years ago just after Steve was elected county supervisor. A meeting with the Rocky Mountain Institute brought together unemployed loggers and mill workers, environmental groups, and Miwok representatives. No one's goals were being met and groups pointed fingers at each other. Litigation that environmental groups viewed as successful caused hardship for the Forest Service. Alcoholism was high in a generation of unemployed loggers who blamed spotted owls. Diabetes and suicide were prevalent in the Miwok community, with unemployment and youth encounters with the criminal justice system both around 50%. No one talks about native history in Amador and Calaveras Counties or questions the genocide that made the area what it is. In that meeting people were 90% in agreement on what needed to happen to get back to some form of stewardship and Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) was born.

Now 72% of CHIPS' 47 employees and five of the seven forepersons, including a Paiute woman leading a crew in Yosemite, are Native American (Washoe, Paiute, and Maidu). It is not easy to recover from genocide and poverty and we will never get it right unless we include those who have lived here.

Stories:

- Indian Manpower funded one man to work for CHIPS for eight weeks with the expectation that CHIPS would hire him if he worked well. He has moved up the ranks over 11 years with CHIPS.
- Another man didn't have the certifications to work for the Forest Service but did great at CHIPS, supervising and developing a program and winning a national award. He readdicted to

methamphetamines 3 months later. CHIPS arranged for him to go to a sweat lodge for recovery, but he instead took a job elsewhere and did not recover.

- A CHIPS crew of Paiute works in Yosemite Valley restoring ecological and cultural sites. It took 2 years to get a contract for a 5-6 person crew. A woman on the crew camped in the park while working and another group doing similar restoration work called the police. She was arrested and spent the night in jail, yet still showed up to work the next morning. The charges were dropped but she did not get an apology from the police or the other crew and she now has a record. You can care about restoration, but if you don't understand the people who were there before you, we have a long way to go.

CHIPS operates like a co-op with any excess over 2 weeks savings going back to employees in the form of salary, bonuses, and incentives. Insurance is an issue. There have been incidences of people smoking cannabis on break, and someone readdicted to meth and fell a tree on someone. A few people were stung by bees and didn't know they were allergic. Insurance went from \$600 - \$17,000 per month. In the last three years there have been no injuries so workers comp has gone down so CHIPS was able to give raises. Transportation is a barrier to employment for some, so CHIPS bought vehicles to get people to work. They also offered a \$50 incentive for every two weeks of perfect attendance and attendance went from 70% to 94%. There was \$19,000 to give back due to savings and another \$34,000 in excess. CHIPS is pushing healthcare and retirement, but gets voted down because people want the money up front. Many are on Obamacare, and many don't have bank accounts and can't do direct deposit. CHIPS also sponsors financial counseling.

Employees get certifications like Sawyer, Red Card, and Basic 32 and other training to do cultural burning. We trained a lot of people to haul biomass, we still don't have a place to take it. We have to calibrate our training and certification with actual opportunities. There could be training to build capacity for tribes to be involved in the NEPA process and form NEPA teams, possibly through CCI funds. Trina is building a statewide tribal advisory committee around water and fire issues and developing tribal crews that have the skillset and knowledge to do work in their homelands.

It is a triumph to have 35 Native people working to restore their land. There has been no recidivism, whether because having a job is personally restorative or because people are too tired to recommit after working 8-10 hour days. Work ethic is hard to figure out if it isn't a habit. In addition to forest restoration, CHIPS is trying to restore communities and people, and provide soft skills and support. The probation departments of Amador, Calaveras, and Alpine Counties work with CHIPS to have people do community service as CHIPS employees. CHIPS is about giving people a second chance at life.

Beyond Incremental Improvement: Reaching Landscape Scale

Todd Sloat (Fall River RCD, Pit RCD); Small Groups

In the face of limited money and people, there is a need to strategically maximize the resources available and set up a sustainable system of getting work done. In the Burney-Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group, partners are taking on Categorical Exclusion projects of 3,000 acres or less while the Forest Service tackled large scale, 30-50,000 acres planning units. The intent is that partners can learn to write NEPA and eventually take on projects with revenue associated to fund future NEPA. Challenges include adding to the Forest Service workload, getting new biomass facilities up and running to accept the oversupply of feedstock available, and aligning work with grant timelines.

Successes:

- Collaborative process
 - Helps get community buy-in, find areas of consensus, and diffuse opposition
 - Brings in money and complete NEPA
 - Allows for sharing information and establishing long term processes and relationships between stakeholders, particularly public-private partnerships
- Utilization of authorities like Master Stewardship Agreements and Good Neighbor Agreements
- Geospatial data tools for visioning/strategic planning/prioritization, looking at how projects fit together across the landscape
- Obtaining grants and non-federal dollars for non-federal and cross-boundary work
- Partners bringing resources and capacity to do work; strategies to utilize existing capacity
- Resource advisory funds
- State water bills that encourage or mandate watershed management

Barriers:

- Building trust among stakeholders is a slow process
 - Managing disagreements over policy and methods; consensus may not be possible
 - Competing land uses, don't share same vision
 - Narrow vision; need to maintain restoration effort over time
 - Build business model for the collaborative model
- Aligning grant timelines with other agencies and requirements (eg. burning windows), coordinating multiple funding sources to achieve complex projects over long time periods, bridging reimbursement gaps; understanding time and capacity needed to implement
- Easily accessible, complete, up to date data to better understand landscape; incorporating hydrologic framework
- Access to areas (eg. bad roads, wilderness)
- FS staffing capacity; FS knowledge of area and partners
- Workforce and grant-writing capacity
- NEPA and CEQA requirement; process for exemption not clear
- Urban understanding of rural challenges; community outreach and coordinated messaging to increase local engagement and public perception of prescribed burning, local capacity to support community in both wildfire and prescribed fire
- Hesitation to take on risk of implementation, especially prescribed burning
- Small-diameter wood and transportation infrastructure; CCI and other existing sources do not cover larger-scale processing/co-gen facilities so need subsidies or additional funding sources

Scaling Up: Planning for Large Landscapes

Angel Hertslet (The Nature Conservancy)

The Nature Conservancy lead the French Meadows project near the Middle Fork of the American River with the purpose to learn about barriers to landscape scale planning. The purpose of the project is fire resiliency, motivated by the large amount of sediment that flowed into the American River in the aftermath of the King Fire.

- 28,000 acres, including 6,000 acres owned by the Yuba River Land Trust and 22,000 acres on Tahoe National Forest
- Thinning and prescribed burning for meadow restoration

- Met \$1.8 million budget through widespread fundraising

TNC took the lead on prescribed burning through a long-standing agreement with the USFS, and worked with USFS on NEPA and planning and with the Placer County Water Agency on CEQA and implementation. Sierra Nevada Research Institute (UC Merced) provided data and research support. Sierra Nevada Conservancy was instrumental in funding and management. Two primary consultants providing the majority of the technical expertise. Surveying was done by local USFS staff, an Enterprise team, and outside consultants.

- LiDAR showed where to look for certain issues; survey work integrated to share information, limited to implementation areas to avoid unnecessary work and issues; would have been helpful to spend a more time up front to clarify what survey processes needed where and when
- MOU established goals and prevented later disagreement, established roles and responsibilities, lent clout when dealing with outsiders
- Steering committee set up decisions and moved quickly
- Registered Professional Forester (RPF) throughout to provide expertise
- Paid consultants sped up process
- Fire behavior model highlighted risks, provided motivation, assisted with fundraising and NEPA
- Regular and consistent meeting attendance and staffing important
- Key leaders within the USFS provided leadership and educator roles
- Good baseline watershed research facilitated process

The Nature Conservancy recently published a lessons learned paper from the French Meadows Project ([available online](#)).

Investing in Forest Restoration

Nick Wobbrock (Blue Forest Conservation)

Blue Forest Conservation finds new funding sources to complement existing sources to bring more money into forest restoration without needing to raising taxes. Finance makes sense when the spending on a project creates more value than it costs, not just by improving revenue, but also avoiding cost.

The reimbursable model of state funding is a challenge for implementers because there is a 3-6 month delay before they are paid and can pay contractors. In the Yuba Project, finance played a role in smoothing out cash flow between various partners.

- Yuba Project is 7,000 acres of treatment to protect 15,000 acres, mostly fuels reduction with some meadow restoration, creating potential for increased water quantity
 - Included Forest Service, Yuba Water Agency, National Forest Foundation, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, the EPA, research and law partners, other foundations
- Forest Resilience Bonds create an LLC for the project to take in money in the form of low interest loans (not actually bonds), and pay implementation partners so they and their contractors are not constrained by payment delays. Work happens after beneficiaries like utilities sign a contract to pay back low interest loan. For the Yuba project, investors put in \$4 million in upfront money, the Yuba Water Agency pledged \$1.5 million to repay the bond, and the project will also tap CalFire grant funds from the Cap and Trade program. In the future, other options could include carbon value on cross-boundary work, or tele-com groups with infrastructure at risk.

- Different groups could fund differently; e.g. Forest Service could use cost-share while utilities could fund based on outcomes such as fire or water quality
- Term of repayment is 5 years, which provides some flexibility from the CCI 3 year window
- Projects should be NEPA ready, have identified and able implementation partners, and have gone through a collaborative modeling process

State Investment in Forest Restoration: Lessons from Oregon

Phil Chang (Oregon Department of Forestry)

Oregon invests much less money into forest restoration than California does, but the manner of investment, and specifically the use of Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), is very different. One theory is that California has so much state money there is no need for GNA.

The Federal Forest Restoration program in Oregon was created 2013. The Governor at the time persuaded the legislature of its importance and commissioned an economic analysis that quantified the benefits of forest restoration work and found a 40-1 investment benefit for every dollar spent on restoration on federal forests in Oregon. The state established a team of four regional coordinators, two GNA foresters involved in implementation and one program lead. There are 23 collaboratives in the state, and 20% of the total annual budget goes to collaboratives.

One of the main focuses in investing in and supporting collaborative forest restoration work is building zones of agreement. Another is supporting collaborative infrastructure like charters, non-profit 501c3 status, strategic plans, and other tools that help collaboratives work better and be more effective, and providing technical assistance awards. Investing in applied research like fire history analyses guides restoration by helping to better understand the structure, composition, and function of forests. In addition, the state supports peer to peer learning, story-telling by collaboratives, values mapping, human ecology mapping, and supports contractors in project design. The state also directly supports federal partners, including producing pieces of NEPA through contractors, to address federal bottlenecks. Data collection and NEPA analysis is 20% of the ODF budget, and treatment unit layout and project prep are 25%. They are also conducting multi-year effectiveness and outcome monitoring to help with collaborative learning.

Under GNA the state acts as an agent of the secretary. Congress made tribes and counties eligible for GNA. Types of projects can include anything restoration, including road restoration, and anything from project prep to implementation. GNAs are similar to MSAs, but different from stewardship contracting in the use of retained receipts for monitoring is modest. Under SPAs, there is no match requirement with SPAs and ODF uses their own contracting if contracting is needed. ODF holds revenue generated in state account to do additional restoration work. FS still maintains ultimate NEPA decision authority and is ultimately responsible for prescriptions, can delegate to ODF.

GNA program revenue: From stumpage value and price ODF sells timber to purchaser, the state immediately turns around and pays some deposits and a minimum appraised value ("base rate") to the FS. After ODF admin costs are covered, the rest of the value is to do additional restoration work on the forest, or for planning, unlike with stewardship contracting. This allows a self-perpetuating cycle of work that the state is responsible for and creates a parallel work force of ODF permanent staff to get work done, which could include 8-10 GNA foresters.

There is some pushback from counties because they are not getting income from timber receipts if they are not involved, but many county supervisors prefer work to be done to reduce fire risk.

Closing

Stew McMorrow (CALFIRE)

The Governor's Forest Management Task Force began last summer to replace the Tree Mortality Task Force. Four Regional Prioritization Groups meant to be made up of practitioners in those regions inform the seven Working Groups. The Task Force was initiated in September but is starting over following a change in leadership in April, so they are taking the opportunity to reevaluate goals. Stew, co-leader of the Forest Management and Restoration Work Group, would like to change the work group's goals to focus on collaboration. He extended the invitation to participate to SCALE attendees. The SCALE meeting will help Stew make recommendations in line with what groups are experiencing.

Day 2

Introduction

Jason Kuiken (Stanislaus NF)

Jason was born in Wisconsin and grew up on the Wisconsin river. On Memorial Day weekend he would go with his best friends to the wilderness area where he did his Eagle Scout project, the only certificate he has framed. When he went to visit his uncle in Denver, he fell in love with the mountains, the winter skiing, summer hiking, fly fishing, and memories of green forests, what he thought was a healthy and active ecosystem.

When he went back to work in Denver later in life, the environment was not what he remembered as a kid. The hills were red and dying, with 4 million acres of lodgepole pine dead. While he was there he helped identify funding sources and prioritize landscapes to treat. The experience impacted how he looks at forest management. He does not blame those managing the forests before but believes people were making the best decisions they could with the information they had at the time.

The 56,000 acre Carlton Complex fire had incredible impacts. Historically there would have been 10,000 acre fires with variable severity with some torching creating openings every 3-15 years on landscapes below 6,000 feet. However, we have been very successful at fire suppression, which changes fuel loading and how the environment works. We now have good science from Paul Hessberg, Hugh Safford, Malcolm North, and others about fire behavior, forest structure, history of fire and how we should be managing. The question is implementation. Forest health also includes insects, disease, and drought, and managing for fire also manages for these, and better meets habitat needs. We need to look at landscape scale because what happens in one area affects another.

There were no highways 200 years ago but now Hwys 4, 108, and 120, as well as towns, infrastructure like powerlines and water flumes, and National Forest boundaries define the area and change how fire interacts with the ecosystem. About 90 HUC 6s (Hydrologic Unit Code 6, or watershed areas of about 5,000-29,000 acres) touch or are fully within the Stanislaus NF. How do we decide which ones are most important to treat? We tend to work where there is opportunity but don't necessarily think about how we want the landscape to look and act in 20 years.

If we continue on this trajectory we will continue to have fires outside range of natural variability so we need to approach the problem differently. There is too much fuel loading to burn our way out so we need to reduce fuel loading before using prescribed fire. Making biomass economical is essential. There is generally a common vision of how we want the forest to look and act. Over the next 18 months the two collaboratives on the Stanislaus National Forest, the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group and Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions, will engage in dialogue about what treatments and tools to use to increased pace and scale.

In answer to a question from Steve Wilensky, the plan is to propose monthly joint meetings between the two collaboratives, and with the Dinkey Creek Collaborative via teleconference. LIDAR data is available for the Stanislaus NF and much of the Sierra NF and as well as Tuolumne County under 1500 feet in elevation, which can help begin planning. Steve also asked how Jason saw the Forest Service's role in getting 3 MW facilities under SB1122 going. Jason replied that he would have to check with the Regional Office, but grant opportunities to invest in wood innovations is needed to have a sustainable model.

The term Potential Wildfire Opportunity Delineation (POD) has been used to talk about this project in the past, but do not align with HUC6 watersheds.

Collaborative Updates

Butte County CWPP Workgroup

Holly Jorgensen (Sacramento River Watershed Program)

The Butte County CWPP functions as a collaborative. They signed an MOU at the end of 2017 but lacked the funding and implementation strategy to do much work. They received a CCI planning grant in 2018 and the Butte County Fire Safe Council also received funds for planning, implementation, and outreach. They had signed agreements in the Fall, went to the October SCALE conference, and were working with 34 North developing a prioritization tool at a steady, moderate pace, but things have changed drastically since the November 8th Camp Fire. Now instead of planning for management and restoration we are also planning for recovery.

- Some CCI project areas burned
- Bittersweet because we have received lots of attention and interest
- Outreach and tours to highlight possible solutions; cleanup; additional funding
 - PGE committed \$100k to support communities
 - Looking to hire someone to deal with biomass, may apply to CAL OES for a grant to deal with the 350k trees that need to come down (Wheelabrator mentioned as an option)
- Huge impact on community, especially capacity
 - Trying to hire, get people involved to adequately deal with new issues
 - Trying to support Butte County FSC with increased strains
 - Catastrophic fire not just physical, a social and economic issue

South Lassen Watersheds Group *Jonathan Kusel (Sierra Institute)*

Sierra Institute began with working with Almanor Basin Watershed Advisory Committee in 2002, which eventually formed the South Lassen Watershed Group.

- 650,000 acres, including upper North Fork of the Feather River and Upper Mill and Deer Creeks
 - Recently added all of Almanor Ranger District and additional areas of Lassen Volcanic National Park
- Focus on strategic planning
- DOC watershed coordinator grant, SNC funds to prepare for thinning prior to burning, CCI support for work on West Shore

Diamond Mountain Initiative *Bobette Jones and Chuck Lewis (Lassen National Forest)*

The Diamond Mountain Initiative spun out of the Lassen County Fire Safe Council. The area is north-facing, moves from no forest to high density forest to oak woodlands, and forms the backdrop to Susanville. The Forest Service identified the area as a WUI of interest, so there was a lot of synergy, common interest, and use of best science.

- Due to high priority objectives in area, researches pulled to other areas; partner filled in
- Two biomass facilities, infrastructure in place but other pieces missing
- January 2018 RAC grant helped pay for CEQA, CCI grant, SNC grant for Rx fire and fencing
 - After successes, grant and fire timelines challenging, plan was for FS to layout and prep and partners implement, but lost four foresters; didn't keep trust going, didn't do a good job balancing needs of implementation; bit off more than can chew
 - Partnership struggling to work through without placing blame
- Need crews that don't get pulled off for fire

Yuba Watershed Forest Collaborative *Sherri Elliot (Camptonville Community Partnership)*

The Camptonville Community Partnership has been working on building a biomass facility, the Camptonville Forest Biomass Business Center, for ten years. The 3MW Power plant has lots of energy behind it, and has done feasibility studies and raised \$6 million. However they realized they needed a collaborative so at the end of last year they worked with the South Yuba River Citizens League and other partners to develop a collaborative.

- Focus is entire Yuba Watershed
- SYRCL, Yuba Water Agency, and Tahoe National Forest partnered on Watershed Coordinator Grant, which Yuba Water Agency matched
- North Yuba, two additional projects part of collaborative coordination; hiring two coordinators
- Working with Yuba Watershed Protection and Fire Safe Council, updating CWPP and strategic planning

Collaborative Capacity Investments

Small groups

Group 1:

Existing Capacity

- CFLRA funding
- Technical assistance, CALFIRE data, and use of good science,
- Mature and large collaborative
- Retired RPFs and other volunteers add capacity

Needs

- More realistic and rigorous timelines
- Rebuilding infrastructure
- Different stakeholder engagement in bottom up vs top down collaborative development
- Map of projects that NEPA ready, shovel ready, and completed

Group 2:

- Commitment, leadership, and volunteers both existing and a need for different groups

Needs:

- Diverse involvement and consistent attendance
- Consistent facilitation
- Knowledge of FS processes by partners
- FS flexibility with grant timelines
- Team building and trust building
- Communicating to local residents
- FS including partners in decision making process and delegating work to partners

Group 3:

- Education and outreach exists, challenge is translating attention into action
- Bridging data aggregation, planning, and design to work on the ground, roles that can connect
 - Translating work being done back into planning and learning about landscape
- Consistency with staffing, crews, training

State of CA Commitments and Policy

Keali'i Bright (CA Department of Conservation)

From the beginning of Governor Brown's administration a general consensus has been built around an approach to tree mortality and wildfire and there has been a surge in political will. The budget and CCI Forest Health Program expanded. It was clunky to begin with but we now have more money than we ever thought we would. However, we are treating it competitively rather than like regular infrastructure.

The Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program and the Watershed Coordinator Program covers the whole California Natural Resources Agency. They want to provide money that would allow some flexibility because not everyone is happy that forestry is getting a lot of CCI money, and the state is starting to get gummed up with so much money going out. The RFFCP got approval for \$20 million in advances to regional block grantees across the state. The approach was to find RCDs, conservancies, state agencies, and others to serve as stewards of these funds in an infrastructure approach to set up contracts and administrative processes to support project work. This will help build a cohesive regional strategy with plans in place and a sustainable local workforce to implement them, which will give the state more comfort in putting out more money.

The Watershed Coordinator grant program is a much smaller but impactful grant program. People in Sacramento don't really understand the impact smaller grants can have, so DOC is trying to highlight that. The program had great success under CalFed in the 2000's, but fell apart when the bubble burst, so we want to make sure we are prepared for that to happen again.

Steve Wilensky suggested putting fire suppression/resilience money into supporting SB1122 projects. Keali'i responded that it is difficult to take money from fire protection. There has been some burnout since the passage of SB1122 and people have been reluctant to work on biomass energy due to political contention. CNRA is stepping back to look at biomass utilization rather than limiting to biomass energy, although is not moving very fast on that either.

One participant pointed out that the match requirement could prevent some counties from engaging. Keali'i acknowledged the challenge and answered that a well-funded agency in the area could be a partner. A wood institute in partnership with Cal Poly and UC Berkeley is being established and is beginning to engage Silicon Valley.

Reflections

Meeting Benefits

- Opportunity for networking
- Sharing resources and lessons learned, seeing examples of success, and being exposed to new ideas, both in terms of project approaches and in terms of collaborative structure and function
- Feeling of solidarity in working through challenges
- Forum to interact with diverse stakeholders, including federal and state agencies

Desired Future Outcomes

Facilitating Communication

- Host a forum to maintain communication and share resources between meetings
- Share and maintain a directory of collaboratives
 - Capture and share on-going efforts
- Host a cohesive database or centralized data library and develop common methodology for prioritization
- Organize peer mentors/formal one-on-one partnerships, create team of facilitators, disseminate best practices
 - Support cross-boundary work through mentoring
- Support working groups to continue dialogue on issues
 - Facilitate groups sharing lessons learned about various authorities
 - Bring groups together to work through tough issues like biomass
- Provide regular updates and next steps
- Advertise more widely

Partnering with the state

- Provide list of low-hanging fruit to the state to get at capacity and a template for legislation
- Advocate for forest health and work of collaboratives
- Follow through with policy
- Develop a written annual report
- Share information and stories of successes and challenges with decision makers, practitioners, and public

Providing Resources

- Develop mechanism to audit collaboratives and identify needs
- Compare collaborative models
- Continue working to develop infrastructure
 - Engage with research and efforts to develop infrastructure
- Bring practitioners in to meetings to work through issues
- Share examples of large scale cross-boundary work
- Facilitate dialogue with Sierra Club
- Conduct an asset-mapping exercise