

FEATHER RIVER STEWARDSHIP COALITION

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Steering Committee Meeting Notes

November 6, 2019

Quincy Provisions

91 Bradley Street, Quincy

Attendance: Lindsay Wood, Plumas Audubon Society; Ryan Tompkins, UC Cooperative Extension; Lynn Campbell, Sierra Nevada Conservancy; Matt West, Plumas County Fire Safe Council; Brad Graevs, Feather River Resource Conservation District; Chuck Bowman, Graeagle Firewise; Will Brendecke, Plumas National Forest; Hannah Hepner, Plumas County Fire Safe Council

Partner Landscape Strategy

Hannah Hepner summarized the large planning efforts taking place:

Mt. Hough Ranger District Claremont Project

Beckwourth Ranger District Mapes Project

Plumas Audubon Society South Park Project

Feather River Resource Conservation District Indian Valley West Project

Feather River RCD/UC Cooperative Extension/Plumas National Forest CalTrans Highway Project

Brad Graevs said that the RCD needs to prioritize project based planning or programmatic planning. There is not the capacity to do both.

Lynn Campbell said that Butte County Fire Safe Council withdrew an application to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for county-wide CEQA because the funding wouldn't be sufficient to cover the cost. She said there is a large collaborative in the North Yuba that has agreed to do CEQA/NEPA planning for a 250,000 acre area.

Ryan Tompkins pointed out that the Forest Service is doing a large portion of the NEPA planning in that effort, similar to what the Plumas National Forest is doing with the Claremont and Mapes projects. He suggested getting private lands around those projects involved and CEQA underway. He said that Mapes is hard because it's the "back 40." There are several private inholdings, but it is not a highly populated area.

Will Brendecke shared that the Walker Fire salvage and restoration has impacted the progress of the green program. There is an opportunity for the Feather River Stewardship Coalition or partner groups to undertake survey work to keep things on track.

The Feather River District is working on the Strawberry and French Creek 1 & 2 projects.

SNC Capacity Building Funds

Hannah explained that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has capacity building funds from the Department of Conservation that they are looking to invest locally. They have requested a regional entity to conduct a needs assessment and administer the funds. Hannah questioned if the FRSC is a suitable organization for the administration.

Lindsay Wood shared that Plumas Audubon Society would be interested, but would require an advance on the funds to play that role. Additionally, she would want clarity about what the funds are being used for before committing.

Will asked if the funds could be used to do additional analysis on the Claremont project. Brad said, yes, and getting partners involved on the ground on the good way to get the project primed for state investment.

Ryan said that he would be interested in seeing an inter-organizational Interdisciplinary (ID) Team formed. Brad pointed out that it doesn't have to be a fully integrated ID team, a federal liaison could be sufficient. He suggested that the capacity building funds could be used to investigate development of those kinds of relationships.

Will said that a Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) could be used for that purpose and asked which entities are able to enter into a GNA agreement. Hannah pointed out that a Master Stewardship or Master Participating agreement could be used. Brad said that the benefit of a GNA is that it doesn't require match.

A collaborative Indian Valley project has also been proposed using the SNC funds as seed money.

Ryan expressed that the FRSC exists to focus on work on the ground, not to take on administrative roles. Additionally, he said that the number of layers of administration for these funds is burdensome. He asked the group if they are comfortable with him approaching Elissa Brown with the suggestion that SNC administer all of the funds. The group was in support.

Project Prioritization

Hannah said that the Fire Safe Council recently updated the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and that a list of annual projects was added as an appendix. She said that she will be updating the list annually. The FRSC has a project prioritization process in the Charter, however, recent projects have been the result of opportunity not a formalized process. Hannah asked what metrics are important to include in the project list and which entities should be included in the outreach.

It was agreed that projects with landowner/community engagement should be prioritized and that other project features such as planning status, potential funding sources, proximity to WUI, etc could be considered secondarily.

Stakeholder Exchange

The UC Cooperative Extension is planning a stakeholder exchange with financial support from the SNC capacity building funds. Ryan explained that Plumas National Forest has a five-year program of work in which the first few years are well understood, but farther out is more like "throwing darts at a dartboard." He pointed out that the same is true for all organizations. He suggested that hosting a stakeholder exchange would be an opportunity to coordinate the five-year programs, which will increase the opportunity for collaboration and increase readiness for funding opportunities.

Ryan would like to have a planning meeting in January.

Next meeting: Thursday December 5th, 3:00pm