

FEATHER RIVER STEWARDSHIP COALITION

www.featherriversc.org



Meeting Notes

December 1st, 2016

Plumas National Forest Supervisors Office

159 Lawrence Street, Quincy

Update

Hannah Hepner introduced herself as the Plumas County Fire Safe Council (PC FSC) Coordinator and updated the group on changes to FRSC's organization as adopted by the Fire Safe Council. The proposal to merge the responsibilities of the FRSC and PC FSC coordinator, which was approved by Plumas Corporation and PC FSC, was distributed. Hannah then posed the question of who would take on the role of group facilitator and figurehead in Mike De Lasaux's absence.

Open Discussion followed centered around five primary topics:

1. Leadership

Nancy Francine - collaboration should not be directed by a single organization and that the Forest Service should avoid conflict of interest by maintaining a participatory role only.

Ryan Tompkins - the coalition needs to maintain some independence from the agency and perhaps no figurehead is required.

Dan Martynn - if nothing else, the coordinator position is needed to take care of the "nuts and bolts" for existing projects that have been awarded grant funds.

Rose Comstock sought further clarification for the role of the coordinator.

The role was defined by the group as including outreach and continuity, as well as a conduit for the cost sharing with PNF for materials provided.

2. Focus

D.M. asked for clarification of the mission – suggesting a distinct mission is needed for justification of the group's existence.

Supervisor Lori Simpson read the mission from the website: “The Feather River Stewardship Coalition (FRSC) is a diverse community of willing stakeholders working to improve the ecosystem health of private and public lands within the Feather River Watershed, the headwaters of the state water project. We work to identify solutions that facilitate productive balance among community, economy and environment.”

R.T. - the original mission proposed for the RAC grant was to source input on forest service lands. The group has a charter, mission statement and logo - which received a lot of the group’s focus in the early stages.

N.F. - the vision was to develop a CFLR. However, lessons learned from Forests that have them suggest that focusing on a single district can have a negative effect elsewhere. Instead the focus has been on the many PNF projects that are “all dressed up and ready to go” with no funding or commercial component. SNC has many opportunities and Lynn Campbell is willing to work with the Coalition to secure grant funds for these projects. The other benefit of the collaborative is developing new projects. PNF values on-the-ground insight.

R.C. asked if there was a PNF list of EAs and EISs that are in place and if the Forest Service had planning dollars.

N.F. - service work has NEPA in place. Finding money to contract work is difficult. Funds that exist are not specifically for planning or otherwise - the Forest Service finds the balance.

Dave Kinatader - Mt. Hough projects are almost “caught up.” The coalition will be useful for moving forward with new projects. He suggested that perhaps an outside group could even take on NEPA for the Forest Service.

N.F. - the Coalition will additionally be beneficial as the Forest develops a forest plan revision in the coming year.

R.C. - the initial meetings of the QLG took place because an alternate plan had been written to the PNF Forest Management Plan. They came together to look at that plan and create a solution that would work for everybody. She believes PNF will face controversy in the land management revision process and that this group is poised to solve some of those issues before they become controversy. The next step would be to secure money to develop NEPA documents and proposals. Additionally, she questioned that there had not been any focus placed on stewardship contracts. N.F. confirmed that there are currently no timber removal projects.

R.T. - the Forest would like to use the Farm Bill Insect and Disease authority to do projects like Lakes Basin, but a collaborative is required.

D.M. - pre-commercial activities will be the NRCS's focus in the collaborative. There are opportunities to do upland treatments for meadows that have already been restored. Conifer removal in wetlands is a possibility. All of which would be complimentary work for areas that have already had funds directed towards them.

Mike Callaghan mentioned the list of projects online that was discussed at the April Coalition meeting and suggested it as a jumping off point for the next meeting. He additionally offered that the intent of the group needs to be clear to the general public – in terms that don't include acronyms – and that the outputs of the group need to be communicated to the public.

L.S. - the new administration will probably create more opportunities to get things done and now is a good time to get together and get organized.

D.K. asked what capacity the County has as it appears that many State monies have been directed to counties.

L.S. said it is something she will investigate. She would like the County to have a natural resources person, but the funding is gone.

3. Engagement

L.S. voiced Mike De Lasaux's expectation that the group would replace the efforts of QLGA.

It was recurrently noted that the FRSC struggled to develop the desired diversity among the small group of consistent and committed people engaged in the process.

R.T. shared his observations that everyone's volunteer capacity is tapped out. However, despite lack of sustained participation in meetings, he didn't want to see the organization "die." There are a number of organizations established addressing natural resources with paid staffers whose participation would be an asset. Therefore our group should aim to maximize output with minimum investment by all parties.

R.C. – parties who are willing to participate, such as herself, need clear directive for where their expertise is needed.

D.M. - private lands participants are probably not going to engage because they are saturated.

N.F. - the interface between public and private is a great opportunity to increase pace and scale. We can't fully address the watershed if we don't have an "all lands" approach.

R.T. - while the Forest Service has been the PI (principle investigator) for the state grants awarded, there's nothing to say that it couldn't happen with other lands – NRCS, private, etc.

Andy Juska - Collins Pine Co. is at the table because they learn from the collaborative effort, but often move quicker. While Collins regularly undertakes non-merchantable thinning, they cannot protect their resources in isolation.

3. Goals/Products

R.C. offered her impression that the group formed to gather stakeholders together to identify projects and articulate what needs to be done to assist agency action. She further suggested that a map to inform decisions was vital and that the Coalition can build from the QLG framework.

R.T. - the online map captures past QLG and private projects, as well as PNF proposals for the next 5 years. He questioned if the amount of investment in the map resulted in the outcomes the group was looking for. Ryan pointed out the strength of the group so far has been securing over \$800,000 in state funds for an all lands approach.

Sue McCourt would like to see the maps on the FSC website and FRSC website consolidated into one.

The primary value of the Coalition was summarized into the following “products:”

Project mapping

Identifying grant opportunities

NEPA/planning input (Insect & Disease CE authority, Letters of support)

Public Outreach (LRMP Revision)

All Lands approach to landscape projects

Identifying partnerships to create traction for project initiation

4. Future Meetings

Participation in the coalition was identified as having three commitment groups: ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial.

Meetings will continue on a quarterly basis for intermittent participants – otherwise identified as a “steering group.”

Regular tours will be prioritized during the summer months to engage ephemeral participants.

An annual forum – organized by perennial participants – will be organized to capture as much input as possible.

Organizations identified for outreach:

PC FSC – Plumas County Fire Safe Council

USFS – United States Forest Service

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Timber Industry

FRLT – Feather River Land Trust

FRC – Feather River College

Plumas Audubon

Tribes

County

RCDs – Resource Conservation Districts

Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship

Firewise Communities

Cal Fire

SNC – Sierra Nevada Conservancy

CSDs – Community Services District

Upcoming Events

Nancy announced the Butte County Fire Safe Council Wildfire Summit on Wednesday Dec 7th from 9:30-1:00 Dec 7th in Paradise. Topics include: Collaboration Between Agencies and Large Landscape Approach Planning. Ideally a Coalition member will be able to attend.

Next meeting: Early March – date and time TBD