

FEATHER RIVER STEWARDSHIP COALITION

www.featherriversc.org



Meeting Notes

February 5, 2019

Plumas National Forest Supervisors Office Conference Room
159 Lawrence St, Quincy

Attendance: Nils Lunder, Feather River Land Trust; Ryan Tompkins, Plumas National Forest; Don Gasser, Plumas County Fire Safe Council; Brad Graevs, Feather River RCD; Barbara Drake, Plumas National Forest; Dave Kinatader, Mt. Hough Ranger District; Kristin Winford, Beckwourth Ranger District; Ryan Bauer, Plumas National Forest; Lynn Campbell, Sierra Nevada Conservancy; Dan Martynn, Natural Resources Conservation Service; Sue McCourt, Plumas County Office of Emergency Services; Nancy Francine, Plumas National Forest; Ashley Bomar, Sierra Institute; Chuck Bowman, Graeagle Firewise; Lindsay Wood, Plumas Audubon Society; Lucas MacMath, Fire Lookout; Hannah Hepner, Coordinator Plumas County Fire Safe Council

Cal VTP Programmatic EIR Update

Matt Dias, Executive Officer for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection told the group via phone that the goal of the Environmental Impact Report is to evaluate ecological restoration and fuel break projects in the Wildland Urban Interface of the State Responsibility Area at a programmatic level. He said that it builds off of the Vegetation Management Program but that it is being rebranded as the Vegetation Treatment Program. It has been a 10 year effort to develop the EIR which covers 23 million acres. The CEQA process has been a hindrance to implementation. There is still a risk with projects getting litigated, so the EIR does not cover removal of commercial forest products.

The timeline for the process is aggressive: there will be a draft EIR issued in June followed by a 45-day comment period. The goal is to have the document certified by the end of 2019. Once it's certified it will be available for use. At that point it is incumbent on the entity using it to check that the project is under the scope of the EIR. Activities include prescribed fire, mastication, herbivory, herbicide use, etc.

He said that SB 901 allows an equality standard between NEPA and CEQA. NEPA must be done for federal lands. The bill went into effect January 1st and will sunset in five years. Various grant programs through CAL FIRE are looking at utilizing SB 901 for more rapid implementation.

Discussion followed about the capacity of Resource Conservation Districts to undertake NEPA planning. Brad Graevs commented that it will be critical for partners to undertake planning on behalf of the Forest. Barbara

Drake followed that SB 901 is not a panacea because it only covers a limited amount of what the Forest does. She said that in the future it will be important to produce CEQA/NEPA equivalent documents.

Ryan Tompkins pointed out that the partnerships create a jigsaw approach, each taking on a small project. Sierra Nevada Planning grants provide opportunities for partners to do planning, but the \$100,000 limit does not support a landscape scale approach. Lynn Campbell said that the FRSC should provide SNC with a white paper proposal.

Beckwourth Ranger District Projects

Kristin Winford, Timber Management Officer, said that the Beckwourth District is working on the Mapes (90,000 acres) and Boot Sole (3,000 acres) projects. They will be looking for service work opportunities. However, these projects don't have a strong WUI component. Ryan Bauer said that the Mapes and Boot Sole projects could be WUI projects if private partners were brought on board. Most of the WUI ground is in private ownership.

Mohawk Valley has been a focus for collaborative work. There are currently three projects around Mohawk Valley with completed NEPA: Lakes Basin, Plumas Eureka, and Haskell. There is service work required in Lakes Basin which could be a candidate for the next round of SNC funding.

Partner Updates

Plumas County Fire Safe Council: Hannah Hepner said there are currently five FRSC implementation grants. The Plumas County Fire Safe Council is hiring a public lands project manager to help coordinate the projects.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy: Lynn Campbell announced that the quarterly Board meeting is March 7th. There will be a watershed improvement summit the day before that will include a panel on each of SNC's new strategic goals.

NRCS: Dan Martynn said he is working with landowners in Butterfly Valley to do prescribed burning. The NRCS hasn't contracted burning in the Sierra yet. A burn boss is required for NRCS projects.

Mt. Hough: Dave Kinateder said all collection agreements are in place for SNC and CCI grants. He is waiting on cost codes before proceeding. He has a meeting scheduled with Mooretown and the BIA to finalize an agreement for the Butterfly work.

Feather River RCD: Brad Graevs should have the Genesee portion of the CCI project ready to go soon. The RCS has been working on building capacity as a CEQA lead agency. They have put two documents through to comments. Currently the RCD is working on getting the Moonlight project ready through agreements with SNC and PNF. Nils Lunder added that the RCD has recruited additional board members.

Plumas County OES: Sue McCourt is working with Firewise communities. Chester, Galeppi Ranch, Portola, Smith Creek Ranch and Lake Almanor Pines are new this year. Since the Camp Fire there has been a lot of interest. She is assisting Old Highway, Butterfly Valley, Taylorsville, Paxton, and Seneca with certification. She

has also been working with CAL FIRE on producing an evacuation map that will be sent out to all residents of Meadow Valley. She has a CodeRed banner that is available for events.

Plumas National Forest: Ryan Bauer said that the last piles in the American Valley project were burned. He is working on getting the CCC involved in burning.

Ryan Tompkins said that the Medora and Plumas Eureka timber sales should be awarded soon. 44 million board feet is the goal this year. The Camp Fire burned about 31,000 acres on the Forest. Some areas had good post fire effects. Ryan is working with the Mule Deer Foundation on an SPA to help do work in Moonlight.

Nancy Francine announced that Jerry Bird will be the acting Forest Supervisor starting later this month. He has experience working with partnerships around capacity issues. Nancy added that the furlough shouldn't have too much of an impact on annual goals since it wasn't the field season.

Sierra Institute: Ashley Bomar said that the PCREW is nearly all set for summer projects. There are about 3 weeks left to fill. She has put in a RAC proposal to do work with Jim Belsher-Howe on the Mt. Hough District. Crews will be available mid-June through the end of August.

Graeagle Firewise: Chuck Bowman said there has been a lot of private landowner interest in the Mohawk Valley project. He is working with Dan West to include Graeagle Land & Water in the project.

Feather River Land Trust: Nils Lunder manages the 900 acre Heart K Ranch for the Land Trust. He has a cross-boundary underburn planned with \$10,000 in Stevens funds. The CCI grant will treat neighbors to the east, which will allow burning from those boundaries, and will treat in the Ward Fire footprint.

Plumas Audubon: Lindsay Wood said that they have several proposals submitted for funding, including Boyle Ravine. She will be taking a hiatus from Audubon to focus on the Cal Naturalist program. She is looking for participants in a forestry panel.

Camp Fire Field Trip: March 15th 9am-5pm

Next meeting: TBD

Upcoming Events:

CCI Plumas Collaborative Forest Health project partner meeting, February 26th

Good Neighbor Authority/Master Stewardship Agreement workshop, Sacramento Feb 27th - March 1st

SNC Quarterly Board Meeting, Placerville March 7th

Plumas Underburn Cooperative Dutch Oven Cook-off fundraiser, Meadow Valley March 24th