

Feather River Stewardship Coalition Meeting Minutes Quincy Library, March 9th, 2016

In Attendance: Mike De Lasaux, Rachael Norton, Bill Chapman, Dan Martynn, Nancy Francine, Dave Kinateder, Ryan Bauer, John Sheehan, Jim Bamford, Taylor Bamford, and Kyle Felker.

Project Status Update – Wolf/Grizzly Creek application to SNC is in the comment phase of CEQA, likely to hear in June if we are awarded. Nancy mentioned that this process likely took a while since there were 3 NEPA documents to assess for CEQA. Bucks Lake Project was submitted for the March 1st deadline. Community support for this project was wide ranging from the Board of Supervisors, PG&E, the Feather River Integrated Regional Water Management Group, and others even after the application was submitted (Bucks lake HOA, Bucks Lake Snowmobile Club).

Dave – posted NEPA and complimentary documents to the Plumas National Forest Website specific to the Bucks Lake Project, making sharing NEPA documents with SNC much easier for the application

Project Prioritization Strategy – We have been invited to support several projects, we need to develop a strategy for prioritizing them. Projects include:

Lakes Basin – we created a letter of support for the project and haven't made any other advancements.

Mohawk Vista Project – 1,100 acres planned around the community of Mohawk Vista, which would complement the SRA proposal for private properties in that neighborhood. A fieldtrip will be scheduled for late May.

Poplar Valley – Poplar Creek and Mill Creek Restoration

Grass Flats, Sugar Loaf, On Top – Each over 1,000 acres of service work and some prescribed burning to complete larger projects. Each of these is on the Feather River Ranger District. April meeting on the 27th will include Randy Gould, District Ranger on the Feather River Ranger District who will have more details on these projects. Mike Jackson has contacted the Yuba County Water District, hopefully the April meeting will include some follow up with this organization.

Mike – Hesitate to sign up for more grant funding when we haven't received any yet and the process is new.

Ryan - Sugar Loaf drains into the Yuba, Grass Flats drains into the North Fork (this one needed more players).

Nancy – May want to consider combining the two in pursuing funding.

Rachael – Want to make sure these projects on the FRRD are what we want to do? Our mission speaks to watershed health

Nancy Integrated Resource Service Contract – not enough timber value to cover treatments, FS has to provide money to offset some of the costs. Running into that a lot lately, Hayden timber sale didn't have the merchantable timber that was originally planned.

Rachael – could be avoided sometimes by ground verifying in the planning process.

Bill – Is this coalition restricted to the Feather River Watershed? That would exclude the Sugar Loaf project.

Rachael – Only need 2 members to change our charter.

John – Want to have Yuba stakeholders take the lead on this project, no issues other than needing funding to finish this project.

Bill – So On Top drains into two watersheds?

Ryan – Yuba and Feather River, On Top is only minimally in the WUI.

John – Let's hash this out with the Ranger.

Ryan – Every major fire in the last few years has been on the west slopes of the Sierras, and these areas of our forest has largely been ignored.

Nancy – The Coalition seems interested in pursuing grants as well as developing projects, it may be time to develop some task groups to pursue the different projects.

Dan – Criteria could include connecting to other projects, already treated areas. Also private lands or other partners who could participate would be good criteria.

Mike – So we should do some outreach to Greenville to connect community treatments with what we applied for in the Wolf/Grizzly Creek project, which is also a priority watershed. Joint outreach of NRCS and Fire Safe Council.

Dan – For NRCS, landowners have to pitch in, which can be problematic in this community.

Ryan – Our priority strategy is to initially do work adjacent to communities that are doing work.

Rachael – Strategy for now is to see what FRRD has to say about the projects, and involvement of Yuba County, see which projects fit best.

Nancy – Possible that we could overwhelm Plumas Corp with these grants if we get everything we apply for?

Bill – Lets develop a list of potential projects, not sure this represents everything we should be looking at. Will get together with Rachael to develop an inventory.

John – Agree that that's an important endeavor, though Almanor won't be involved since they are so busy with their collaborative, OHV planning.

Bill – April FSC meeting land managers will present treated and planned projects.

Kyle – Layout on American Valley probably dropped around 100 acres due to lack of funding, acres that are crucial for the project and had willing landowner participation.

Non Profit Discussion –

Rachael – do we want to become a nonprofit? Benefits – more credible group, projects don't have to align with FSC or require a FSC resolution?

Mike – We are already credible by being part of the PC FSC and Plumas Corporation. We may be better off not being an official CFLR group, finding challenges in the large organized collaboratives.

Nancy - National Forest doesn't require association with a CFLR or other recognized collaborative, just need collaboration. Can't make any agreements as a non-official collaborative but we can still meet and plan projects. Most NP's have a small staff, structure, director, by laws & articles of incorporation, tax accountability.

Rachael – Could it be limiting to lean on the Fire Safe Council to submit and administer grants?

John – Could be limiting under local politics, but not law.

Updates –

Steve Munson, Far West Biopower: Interested in purchasing Loyalton Biomass Facility for about a year. Still pursuing the plant. It's been getting complicated because the University of California is interested in purchasing it. Hopeful that one or the other will get it and get a power purchase agreement. Steve is also working with the State Tree Mortality Task Force.

5 billion BF of dead trees in the Southern Sierras, aerial tree survey. Concerns are that the mortality is heading north.

Jim – Been working in Mariposa, able to export the material to China. Seeing mortality trends heading north.

Mike – A huge issue is that there is nowhere to take the material, trees from Public Lands can't be exported.

Cal Fire MOU: Actual MOU titled "For the purpose of using fire to meet ecological and other management objectives." Cal Fire has no legal authority to manage fire for resource objectives. Offshoot of communication and management of fires, as well as settlement from the 2004 Plan Amendment agreement for cooperation to expand the use of fire. Cal Fire put out the first press release. In the past, private timber land owners were the largest proponents of prescribed fire (light burning) pre fire suppression. A second round of signatories has started, then some kind of action committee will be formed. Basically Cal Fire supports prescribed fire and incorporating natural ignitions in resource management.

John – Looks exclusive to not have private landowners on the MOU.

Ryan – We can become a signatory if we agree to the four bullet points. We need to all read it.

California Biomass Energy Alliance – Bill Powers sent a letter of support to the California Public Utilities Commission who is heading an effort to shift alternative energy subsidies to biomass energy production. February 25th was supposed to be a resolution to start shifting these subsidies.

Next Meeting April 27th 3:30 to 5:30 at the Quincy Library.

May meeting is on the 25th in the Portola/Graeagle area, time and location to be announced.
Beckwourth Ranger District field trip to the Mohawk Vista project area will be scheduled for the end of May.

