

# FEATHER RIVER STEWARDSHIP COALITION

August 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes  
Quincy, Plumas County Library

## In Attendance:

Mike De Lasaux (UC Cooperative Extension), Rachael Norton (Plumas County Fire Safe Council), Terri Rust (National Resource Conservation Service), Lori Simpson (Board of Supervisors), David Arsenault (Plumas Audubon Society), Bill Wickman (Sustainable Forest Action Committee), Nancy Francine (Plumas National Forest), Ryan Tompkins (Plumas National Forest), Gabe Miller (Feather River Land Trust) Ryan Bauer (Plumas National Forest), Leah Wills (Interregional Water Management Group), John Sheehan (concerned citizen), Steve Munson (independent investor), Carlos Lovizzaro (independent investor).

Mike –

## Intro's and agenda overview, background of the group

Rachael –

## Vision and Mission Overview

Lori – put FRSC (Feather River Stewardship Coalition) mission on the agenda rather than the FSC (*Plumas County Fire Safe Council*) mission

Rachael – On that note, suggested a logo contest through FRC (*Feather River College*) to create our own logo to replace FSC logo.

Mike – We started out spatially defined to the PC WUI (*Plumas County Wildland Urban Interface*), but we could expand with interest.

Bill – The Feather River watershed is so far out of this region – emphasize that this effects the urban water user, recreation, other user groups, and further focus on our effect downstream, in mission.

Mike – balance among, community etc., in the Feather River Region and California.

John – Similar to IRWM (*Interregional Water Management Group*), clearly audience extends beyond Plumas County, hopefully we can do things right for the future and outside our region.

Bill – Important to point out a broader collaborative impact.

Mike – Further stated by the taxpayer base as water users.

## Charter Update and Development

Rachael – Original Charter from Burney Hat Creek, simple format, basic information. Goals and targets drawn from Pinchot Report, Plumas County CWPP, and IRWM objectives. Need to define targets and connect process and outcomes. Leadership, trust, accountability. Can take advantage of multiple efforts. Volunteer base is saturated, how do we get everyone in the same room, working together?

John – So are these are questions for us?

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Rachael – these are questions and comments from the last charter discussion, room for notes. Extrapolated purpose and goal, targets from guiding docs. Bulleted objectives to further define mission, created and needs revision.

Leah – been hearing rumors about Forest Plan revision, could this effort tie in?

Nancy – Could start next year, no absolute definition of exactly what and when, but a major piece is public engagement. The FS could wear everyone out with public meetings but the Coalition format could help clarify public input.

John – To clarify, we could have a clearly defined condensation of the thinking of a number of entities.

Nancy – Yes and could address socioeconomics, and multiple user group opinions.

Bill – Within Coalition statements we need to educate Ag and recreational users, urban users of our goals and objectives and find outside funding sources.

John – IRWM wants to move in that direction, have a good plan and find multiple sources of funding

Nancy – Fourth Goal could express this or create an additional item

Rachael – So send doc to everyone and add in comments, since this can be a painful group process.

Leah – So should we add Forest Plan Revision in the Charter?

Mike – That's more of a project than a goal.

John – Federal Mandates and Regional Mandates may come about that require a collaborative group for assisting in planning. So addressing co-planning in collaborative charter.

Nancy – new Forest Plan emphasizes more collaborative input, local description and vision. CFLRA further emphasizes the need for this group.

Mike – Charter can be downloaded for adding comments.

Rachael – Will send charter

Mike – SNC grant, another grant opportunity through Dept. of Fish and Game for Prop 1 funds.

### Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Application Update

Rachael – Displayed map of project areas, Round Valley Project area and Lake Davis for about 500 acres, hand thin, grapple piling, mechanical thinning. These projects didn't have the merchantable timber to pay for themselves. High priority watersheds, municipal water sources, NEPA complete projects. Asking for \$500,000, FS match of \$125,000.

Ryan T – At the last meeting, we talked about how the PNF and FRSC could work together, CE, all these initiatives out there but the agency doesn't qualify to apply, so interested in seeing what the public is interested in. This grant had a water focus, didn't have funding for this service work. Try to fund some service work yearly but there is never enough to get it all accomplished. Decided to fund projects on two districts to share and distribute the work. Been trying to fund

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these projects for a while, mixture of work. FS contribution is to prepare and administer the contract, and burn the piles.

Rachael – Great SNC representative, Lynn Campbell, through the WIP program, funds distributed through the next four years. Encouraging to see someone want us to move forward.

Ryan – the timing was unsure, but we decided to go for it instead of waiting for the Coalition to become official.

Mike – Because of this, really Plumas Corp is the grantee, as the fiscal sponsor for the PC FSC. Also an opportunity for the FSC and Plumas Corp to establish these contracts with the FS. Both projects are former HFQLG (*Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group*).

John – Personal distaste for projects that have no opportunity for revenue. When we can have projects with revenue, we should take them. Round Valley area is clearly a circumstance where no money can be made. In the QLG, the FS tried to contain revenue in their projects to offset costs, but many times, projects had no revenue to use for the offset, such as pile burning.

Ryan – Jenkins Stewardship that is in the SNC grant was a timber sale that never sold, hoping to create a stewardship contract and hope to have some sawlog product to reduce the service fees, though the fees will be outweighed. The hand thinning in Greenville was also part of a past stewardship contract.

David- Is there a lifespan on the NEPA (*National Environmental Policy Act*) for these projects?

Ryan – That is a line officer discussion to determine if the NEPA is still current to continue with a project. Can be internally scoped.

Nancy – Supplemental Information Report, for example, listing of the Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog. In most cases, for fuels reduction the work is steady and not a big issue. Some of these projects are pretty old.

David – do you worry about the project being challenged? Can you change the goals and objectives?

Nancy – If we start changing prescriptions and goals, we go outside the analysis. If we make major changes like updating to GTR 220 (*General Technical Report*), we would need supplemental analysis.

Rachael – SNC projects have to be CEQA (*California Environmental Quality Act*) compliant and up to date with current CEQA standards. SNC will be the lead on CEQA.

Gary – CCC (*California Conservation Corps*) requirement? Not really designed for that scale.

Mike – Had an aversion through FSC since we want to employ local work force.

Nancy – We have local tribal agreements for work as well.

Gary – Using CCC on a test thinning project for the Heart K Ranch. Trying to reach out because of the Feather River Land Trust growth.

John – Used to have a CCC camp here and we didn't have enough work to keep them here.

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Gary – SRA (*State Responsibility Area*) funding will reopen the Grizzly Ranch Camp for the CCC.

Nancy – A partnership may be possible for hand thin and pile work.

John – they do well but we also have the Greenville Rancheria and we have to decide how to serve the greater good.

Rachael – Share application with the group

John – How was this different from the IRWM application?

Ryan- Decided to apply to multiple places, could accomplish more work through SNC rather than IRWM. If we do get this funding, we could leverage other funding to get more work done.

David – CCC came with a quadruple funding match from drought funds for the last project.

Gary – CCC has money and mandatory match and looking for partners.

Nancy – the great thing about fuels reduction is that it is highly scalable, we can do more or less. Continuing NEPA planning because of potential funds.

David – The great thing is that other groups can apply for funding on behalf of the FS.

Mike –

### Adoption of projects

Lakes Basin and Butterfly Valley – engage in the process.

Rachael – attended the Lakes Basin Planning meeting, 20 people with recreation concerns but no forestry concerns or questions, important for us to investigate and comment.

Nancy – the group can follow the NEPA process and comment on the proposed action.

*Decided on a presentation from the Beckwourth Ranger District at the next meeting focusing on the Lakes Basin Project.*

Bill- Other projects bordering the Lassen NF if interested in large scale planning projects.

Ryan – Volunteer base is saturated especially in small communities. More effective way to spread knowledge is to bring in folks to represent other entities, and represents a strong paradigm. When the FS sends scoping notices, the FRSC could help distribute to other user groups. This is a way to cross pollinate groups, this meeting in particular has more organization representatives than other meetings and that is significant.

Gary – FRLT is nearing 1,000 members and this is significant and have a lot of opportunity to engage that group, just haven't figured out the role in forest management.

John – QLG era was missing in engagement from certain groups, particularly tribal organizations. Time has proven the success of collaboration. The larger we get the more successful we will be if we don't get hung up on dotting I's.

Mike- Appreciate the different groups at this location, demonstrates the potential capacity.

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Bill –

## Discussion on Socio Economics – Sustainable Forest Action Committee:

Litigation through environmental issues has led the FS to stray from its responsibilities to the economic considerations in a given project. When NEPA was first developed, it was required to assess a human element along with the environmental impacts. Plumas was a more successful area because of the healthy input. On Top Sale had sufficient analysis of social and economic considerations. QLG documents North West Forest Plan all have a social and economic section, and is mandated. Project specific docs rarely analyze these elements, if any, they address the value of the timber. SFAC (*Sustainable Forest Action Coalition*) started 4 years ago working with the Regional office for Regions 5 & 6. Now have 1 social scientist and 1 economist for the entire Region 5. Social and Economic workshops in Chico last spring, MOU signed between Chico State and the Region, a directional region letter will go out in the future so NEPA planners can address socio-economic impacts of projects.

The region uses the headwaters economic dimension toolkit, though it is extremely broad. (Broad categories). The Chico State MOU will go more specifically into individual counties and zip codes to list economic topics and avenues. FS couldn't fund survey and data collection, SFAC funded Chico State to do this data collection among businesses, and train NEPA planners. Developing templates for the training. This effort was driven from the fact of socio-economic requirements within NEPA.

SFAC was in 2009 in two groups, as a response to economic crash. SFAC and Plumas County Economic Recovery Committee, with similar goals. Joined together in 2010, with supervisors from each county. Feb of 2010 drew up mission, goals, charter. Now have support from 7 counties in Southern Oregon, meet twice a year. Now Region 5 & 6 are starting to talk since they have similar impacts from the economic crash. Political Exposure has led to involvement with 23 counties in California. Now involving our Senate to keep work going, and change regulations and increase management.

One of the biggest issues is to create awareness of biomass infrastructure. Added fuel issue, decreases project value. Trying to increase awareness, though it has the lowest support of all renewable energy sources.

Steve Munson – introduction to his efforts in biomass infrastructure. More biomass facilities are closing in the state, working with investors to reopen facilities. Personal investments in the Loyaltan Biomass Facility. 50% RPS law passed the senate, specifying power contract priority to base line renewables (biomass and geothermal). Wind and Solar are 30% capacity, need 70% gas supplementing. 7,000 megawatts are part of the future requirements, for biomass and geothermal sources. Bill 590 passed senate, putting money into biomass business annually. Federally, we have the disaster relief fund to restoration projects on National Forests, hasn't passed yet. Biomass support letter from environmental activists upset over biomass being processed into pellets and clearing Southern Hardwood Stands. Requested the EPA to state that biomass was nonrenewable. 46 senators wrote in response to the EPA demanding that biomass be considered carbon neutral. So biomass may be in a good position from the Clean Energy Plan. Renewable energy will replace 7-10% of the coal energy supply.

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Mike – Biomass is so critical to our efforts, the Loyalton Biomass plant has been down for 7 years, as well as one in Greenville, a decrease of 70 MW of power, as well as the effects of limiting restoration efforts. For the NEPA process, an ID team is required comprised of specialists, but there isn't a socio-economic expert. Everyone else is there in response to a law in addition to NEPA.

Bill – NEPA is a law, and CEQ (*Council of Environmental Quality*) mandated, and has been ignored for decades.

Nancy – Good to know about the Chico State Memo, the partnership with them will be essential during Forest Plan Revision.

John – PGE (*Pacific Gas & Electric*) study on the loss of inflow on Lake Almanor, illegal pumps in the forest have never been addressed in any document. In the future if Socio-economic means something, NEPA planners will have to look at these issues. Make the case up front in the purpose and need.

Bill – Goes back to the Forest Plan, can include that in the analysis. SFAC has provided that input but it hasn't been utilized. No relation between fire and socio-economics in Forest Plans. We have to bring people to that awareness. Meeting in Chico on the 27<sup>th</sup> to get a timeline on this work.

Mike – Observation on recreation sector not connected to our efforts, do we go to other meetings (FRLT and others), how do we cross-pollinate?

Steve – We would like to be kept up to date on other pertinent meetings.

Mike – We are developed enough to go to other groups and educate them on our efforts.

Nancy – We need to find a way to involve the Feather River Ranger District. Butte County Fire Safe Council needs to be contacted about what we are doing. FRRD is more fragmented with public and private lands.

Meeting ended at 8:00.

***The next meeting is on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 6-8 PM at the Portola City Hall.***