

MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

April 17, 2014

Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

Meeting Synopsis

At its April 17 meeting, the Dinkey Collaborative received a Landscape Planning Work Group update on the development of the Exchequer Project Boundary. The group also discussed the role and identification of an Interdisciplinary (ID) Team Liaison to represent the Collaborative interests in any necessary ID Team meetings. The Deputy District Ranger reviewed the CFLRP expenditures and accomplishments from 2010 to the present, and discussed with members areas that could be further developed or better communicated. Marking a milestone, the Communication Work Group has received at least 16 confirmed RSVPs from elected officials and their staff to visit the Terra Bella Mill on May 14th. In addition, the Collaborative discussed the panelists that will present at the May 15th Water Panel. The panel will be a landmark opportunity to speak with subject-matter experts on issues such as upstream-downstream connection between the forest, municipal and agricultural water users, climate change preparedness and the Sierra snowpack, post-fire impacts to water quality ,and more. The full group also recommended a final Adaptive Management Framework pending minor revisions. Finally, members reviewed a presentation of the 2011 Ladder Fuel Marking Guidelines and discussed its application in the Exchequer project. The full Collaborative will meet again on May 15, 2014, from 10 am to approximately 4 pm at the Sierra National Forest Supervisor’s Office, 1600 Tollhouse Road, Clovis, California.

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This meeting summary paraphrases individual comments and suggestions from Dinkey Collaborative members. Statements do not indicate consensus of the group unless they are preceded by the words, "AGREEMENT:".

All materials are available to members on DataBasin.org, and general information is available on the Dinkey Collaborative website, www.fs.usda.gov/goto/sierra/dinkeycollaborative For questions please contact the facilitator, Mr. Dorian Fougères, at dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu or (916) 531-3835.

Action Items

1. **The facilitator** to follow up with Ms. Oberti regarding the Dinkey Charter and membership process.
2. **CCP** to distribute the final ID Team Liaison Charge.
3. **Mr. Gus Smith** to get SCE accomplishments and investments from Mr. Bagley for DLRP.
4. **CCP** to update the collaboration statistics.
5. **Ms. Flick** to send copy of volunteer hours form to Gus for revision and tabulation of Collaborative member contributions.
6. **Mr. Gus Smith** to gather and distribute the volunteer hour forms for members to fill out.
7. **Mr. Gus Smith** to revise budget materials.
8. **CCP** revise Finance Work Group Charge.
9. **Ms. Flick** to ask Dirk Charley to provide photography on May 14 Terra Bella field visit.
10. **Ms. Flick** to provide the final invitation letter to members doing follow-up invitation calls to elected officials.
11. **Ms. Reynolds and CCP** to send a list of planned briefings and final fuels and wildfire letters, members to let them know if desire to opt-out from being listed as a signatory.
12. **Mr. Gus Smith** to send volunteer agreement forms to Ms. Reynolds for Communication Work Group members.

13. **CCP** to send water panel topics to presenters and notify them that Mark Grossi may attend.
14. **Mr. Haze** to contact Mr. Charley about inviting Mark Grossi to water panel.
15. **Ms. Flick** to share Northern California Prescribed Fire video.
16. **CCP** to distribute revised managed wildfire letter and allow any members to opt-out of being listed by name.
17. **Mr. Gus Smith** to invite Mr. Porter to be part of May timeline review.
18. **Members** to contact Mr. Van Velsor if there are any issues they would like brought up at the SCALE Steering Committee meeting May 9th.
19. **Mr. Gus Smith** to confirm whether there is a new CFLR in California.
20. **Ms. Flick** to resend the invitation letter to the Terra Bella Mill visit to Mr. Gould.
21. **CCP** to distribute final Collaborative Adaptive Management Framework.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Gus Smith, Deputy District Ranger, represented the Forest Service and welcomed members to the full Collaborative meeting. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) Facilitator, reviewed the agenda items, meeting ground rules, and conducted member introductions.

2. Interested Party Comment Period

Ms. Chris Oberti, Chair, Huntington Lake Association, noted that the work being done in the Collaborative is relevant to what is happening in Huntington Lake, because of concerns about fire safety and historical and recreational values. As a result, she expressed her interest in being an interested party within the Dinkey Collaborative.

- **ACTION ITEM:** The facilitator to follow up with Ms. Oberti regarding the Dinkey Charter and membership process.

3. Landscape Planning Update on Exchequer Boundary

A. March 31 LPWG Webinar Update

At the March 21 meeting, the Landscape Planning Work Group had focused its primary attention looking at the habitat quality in PACs and defined circles, and how to utilize the demographic information to help inform decisions on the Exchequer boundary. Using the Seamans and Gutierrez study as a reference, the LPWG highlighted the association that was made in the Eldorado National Forest between the availability of dense, closed canopy forest habitat within these circles, and owl reproduction or abandonment. Given differences between habitat in the two national forests, it was decided that the owl reproductive index and reproduction overall would allow for better planning for owl habitat treatments.

B. April 18 Joint Work Group Meeting Update

A brief overview of the agenda items that would be discussed at the joint Landscape Planning and Prescribed Fire Work Group meeting was given to the members. The meeting would consist of presentations on the current fire modeling tools and fuels strategies, and discussion of the Exchequer objectives, boundary proposal, and proposed action components. Members discussed and clarified that dividing the Exchequer Project into zones would allow provide an intermediate level of planning detail. This would be helpful in moving from the landscape scale to a fine-grained, stand-by-stand scale, which will be needed in some areas where there are conflicting objectives. There was suggestion to plan a field visit in May or June to help with the decision making process, and Mr. Smith agreed that getting into the field together was the priority for the upcoming June trip.

C. Interdisciplinary Team (ID) Liaison Applications

The facilitator reviewed the revisions made based on member feedback and discussed any questions members had. Members expressed concerns with the required level of commitment in the position and the difficulty of identifying a representative. Others noted that this position needed to be identified early on so that they could aid in the NEPA planning process as well as possible. Members recommended Ms. Sue Britting to represent the Collaborative as the first ID Team Liaison, and agreed to try and identify an alternate in the coming months. Members also recommended adding language to the charge to include involvement at the start of the process, and provision for an alternative.

- **AGREEMENT:** Members recommended the ID Team Liaison Charge, with the addition of language about early initiation and an alternate.
- **ACTION ITEM:** CCP to distribute the final ID Team Liaison Charge.

4. Dinkey CFLRP Expenditures and Accomplishments

A. Budget Materials

Mr. Gus Smith, explained that the presentation was in draft format and that the data would change given the addition of any 2014 information. He explained that the primary goal was to clarify the matching funds, and reviewed the details of the budget from 2010 to 2014.

Discussion followed:

- It was noted that the 20,000 acres that Southern California Edison owns is a part of the Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, and is included in the All Lands Report.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Gus Smith to get SCE accomplishments and investments from Mr. Bagley for DLRP.
- Members also noted that at one time the volunteer efforts were included in the volunteer statistics and should be included from now on.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** CCP to update the collaboration statistics.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Flick to send copy of volunteer hours form to Gus for revision and tabulation of Collaborative member contributions.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Gus Smith to gather and distribute the volunteer hour forms for members to fill out.
- Members recommended organizing the budget to include more detail about the various departments and provide a breakdown of the missing accomplishments, youth involvement, monitoring costs by resource category, etc.
- It was also suggested that the definitions be updated and clarified.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Gus Smith to revise budget materials.

B. Final Outreach Letter re: Fuels Accounting

The facilitator explained that revisions had been made to the Fuels Accounting outreach letter, and asked for any final comments.

- Members recommended revising the passage to include the word “and” so that the passage reads, “health and resilience.”
- It was also recommended to formalize the names on the list of signatories.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** CCP to distribute revised fuels accounting letter and allow any members to opt-out of being listed by name.

C. Finance Work Group

The facilitator provided context to the document and explained that the Forest cannot advocate internally for the Collaborative as it is considered lobbying. However, the members can at their own discretion. Ms. Smith reminded the group that during a discussion of the budget estimates with Mr. Bernie Gyant, Deputy Regional Forester for Resources, it was decided that the business plan and associated budget estimates needed to be revised. The original Finance Work Group members included Mr. Kent Duysen and Mr. Craig Thomas.

- It was recommended that Mr. Stan Van Velsor, The Hon. Ron Goode, Mr. Stan Harger, and Ms. Justine Reynolds be added to the Work Group.
- Members also suggested adding language around the scope of the work, partnership development and accomplishment reporting.
- Since the Collaborative is not a non-profit organization it cannot receive grants as a single body. Instead, individual members and their organizations have to coordinate their own grant applications and seek to be the grantee. The Collaborative as a whole can endorse these organizations’ applications by writing a letter of support signed by all members. It was suggested that the language around this be clarified.
- It was also recommended that the term, “business plan” be added to the language.
- **ACTION ITEM:** CCP revise Finance Work Group Charge.

5. Communication Activities

A. Terra Bella Mill Visit

Ms. Pamela Flick provided a brief update on the progress of the Elected Official visit to Terra Bella Mill, highlighting that the CWG had received a total of 16 RSVPs from all levels of

government. She requested that members conduct personal follow-up calls to the invitees to encourage further participation.

- **ACTION ITEM: Ms. Flick** to ask Dirk Charley to provide photography on May 14 Terra Bella field visit.
- **ACTION ITEM: Ms. Flick** to provide the final invitation letter to members doing follow-up invitation calls to elected officials.

As a result of member interest, Sierra Forest Products has offered an opportunity for Collaborative members to visit the mill in June. The date is likely to be Friday, June 20, and will be confirmed. The visit will not be a formal event, and is primarily offered by the Duysens for the benefit of those members who were not on the Collaborative's visit to the mill in December 2011.

B. Priority Briefings

At the March full Collaborative meeting, members were asked to rank various organizations according to their priority. Per member feedback, the first eight organizations were identified and will be sent briefing letters.

- **ACTION ITEM: Ms. Reynolds and CCP** to send a list of planned briefings and final fuels and wildfire letters, members to let them know if desire to opt-out from being listed as a signatory.

Mr. Smith added that the Forest had approved the small budget recommended by the Collaborative to cover gas and mileage for members who conduct communication briefings. He reminded the group that work group would have to communicate ahead of time if they are planning a trip.

- **ACTION ITEM: Mr. Gus Smith** to send volunteer agreement forms to Ms. Reynolds for Communication Work Group members.

C. Webpage/Logo

The facilitator explained that he had been in contact with Ms. Iveth Hernandez who has comprehensively revised the Dinkey webpage by shortening the URL, adding all previous year's summaries, and linking the page to the Forest Service webpage as a "spotlight." He added that not much progress has been made on the logo, and took responsibility for the delay.

D. May 15 Water Panel

The facilitator provided a list of the panelists and their affiliations which included:

1. The Honorable Ron Goode, Chairman, North Fork Mono Tribe
2. Mr. Gary Serrato, General Manager, Fresno Irrigation District
3. Ms. Cristel Tufenkjian, Manager of Community & Public Relations, Kings River Conservation District
4. Mr. Alan Gallegos, SNF Soil Program Manager, USFS
5. Mr. Steve Koretoff, Valley Farmer and Organic Advocate
6. Ms. Carolyn Hunsaker, Research Ecologist, Pacific Southwest Research Station, USFS
7. Matt Meadows, UC Merced Southern Sierra Critical Zone Observatory
8. Kathy Wood, Southern Sierra Integrated Regional Water Management

9. Michelle Selmon, Regional Climate Change Specialist, DWR

The facilitator reviewed the schedule of presenters and explained that the panel was designed to be a source for information sharing, scientific and otherwise. He added that panelists were to present their knowledge from their experiences and backgrounds.

- It was recommended that Mr. Mark Grossi from the Fresno Bee be invited to attend as a member of the press. Members discussed having media in the room may cause hesitation among panelists and result in mischaracterization of the information being presented, but agreed that Mr. Grossi was a careful reporter and well-regarded, and could add value to the Collaborative's effort to tell its story.
- **ACTION ITEM:** CCP to send water panel topics to presenters and notify them that Mark Grossi may attend.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Haze to contact Mr. Charley about inviting Mark Grossi to water panel.

E. Educational Briefing Videos

Members asked about the progress of the videos to be used as educational pieces for the communication briefings. The group discussed that utilizing pre-existing videos would be a more efficient starting point, some very good pieces exist. At the same time, the Collaborative would like to eventually create a hybrid of videos and slides pertaining to Dinkey and the health of the forest.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Flick to share Northern California Prescribed Fire video.

6. General Updates

A. Socioeconomic Assessment Status

Mr. Stan Van Velsor and Mr. Jonathon Kusel will likely attend a future Collaborative meeting to present the Draft Socioeconomic Assessment to the members, likely June.

B. Sierra Cascades All Lands Enhancement (SCALE)

Mr. Van Velsor informed the group of the upcoming SCALE Steering Committee meeting on May 9, and volunteered to speak on behalf of the Collaborative if necessary. He explained that the purpose of the meeting is to identify the key issues that the SCALE group will be focusing its resources on. Members suggested bringing up the example materials and mentoring contributions from Dinkey to the other groups, and suggested clarifying how the Dinkey Collaborative would benefit. Mr. Gus Smith added that there may be a new CFLR in the Stanislaus National Forest, but he wasn't positive of the details.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Members to contact Mr. Van Velsor if there are any issues they would like brought up at the SCALE Steering Committee meeting May 9th.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Gus Smith to confirm whether there is a new CFLR in California.

C. Report to Congress

Mr. Van Velsor noted that the Report to Congress is due at the end of the 2014 fiscal year (September) and will include the data with indicators and outcomes. There will be a Sierra National Forest Resource Staff meeting on May 6-7 to finalize the indicators, desired conditions, methods, etc, so that they can be included in the field work. He will update the group when more information is available and the template is released.

D. Final Outreach Letter re: Managed Wildfire

The facilitator noted the changes to formalize member names and asked for any other feedback on the letter. With no further comments, the facilitator noted that he would distribute the final copy, and requested that members identify if they have any concerns with being included in any of the letters.

- **ACTION ITEM:** CCP to distribute revised managed wildfire letter and allow any members to opt-out of being listed by name.

E. General Project Updates

Mr. Keith Ballard represented the Forest and reviewed the project updates from the handout. Members asked for clarity on the Aspen Fire Recovery and Reforestation, and the effects on the workers involved in the Soaproot projects. Mr. Ballard clarified that the workers on the Soaproot logging projects are a different set of workers than the ones tied to the fire recovery.

F. Deputy District Ranger

Members asked about the duration of Mr. Gus Smith's appointment as Deputy District Ranger. He explained that remainder of his 120 day appointment ends in June. Mr. Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor, added that the forest is doing everything it can to limit the gap between Mr. Smith and the permanent hire, whoever that may be. The Forest is working to start the competitive hiring process as soon as possible to avoid a loss of continuity that happened in Bald Mountain project planning when the former Deputy District Ranger was gone for a 120 day detail. There was concern that with the possibility of Mr. Smith leaving, the timeline may be off track by June, a check-in was suggested for May.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Gus Smith to invite Mr. Ray Porter to be part of May timeline review.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Ms. Flick to resend the invitation letter to the Terra Bella Mill visit to Mr. Gould.

G. Use of Google Sites

The facilitator asked if the members were frequently utilizing the Google Sites page as a source of reference. Many of the members were unaware of the site but requested the link be redistributed.

7. Fire Treatments: Accessibility and Severity

A member of the Collaborative gave a presentation offering a different perspective on the fire data that was presented at the March Collaborative meeting. He emphasized the use of

different starting datasets, which could result in different conclusions on the proportion of high severity fire, patch size, heterogeneity, and biodiversity. He summarized by noting that while there is broad scientific support for prescribed fire on the land, regardless of the data sets used, the different conclusions are important to keep in mind when planning.

- Members asked the presenter's ideal percentage for high severity burns. He replied between 15-25 percent of burned acres annually. Some members raised questions about whether this was possible because, depending on the assumptions one makes, this could result in a pace and scale of high severity fire disturbance that is faster than the trees can reoccupy a given area. All members agreed that the presentation served as a good reminder of the various datasets being used and the differences in outcomes that can result.

8. Collaborative Adaptive Management Framework

The draft Collaborative Adaptive Management Framework was brought before the Collaborative in January and revised to meet member recommendations. The revised version was introduced and reviewed to the members again for their approval.

AGREEMENT: Members agreed to adopt the final Collaborative Adaptive Management Framework pending revisions.

ACTION ITEM: CCP to distribute final Collaborative Adaptive Management Framework.

9. Ladder Fuel marking Guidelines

Ms. Carolyn Ballard presented photos of a test fire in the Barnes Mountain region and its severity back in February. She also displayed data from the historical weather conditions over a 20 year period. She found that the 20 year average in temperature under 50th and 90th percentile weather conditions had increased somewhat, while humidity had not significantly changed, but noted that the outcomes may be very different after the input of the 2014 data. Based on those weather patterns she also discussed the corresponding fire behavior.

Ms. Ballard discussed the ladder fuel marking guidelines document and its origin in planning for fisher den buffer areas in Soaproot. The presentation provided examples of different types of ladder fuels and how the document could be applied in the field.

Discussion Followed:

- Members commented on the inclusivity of the document and appreciated how it encouraged partnership in the field.
- It was also noted that it was a practical use of the data and helps to balance habitat now and habitat for the future.
- The facilitator asked if the members would like more time to comment on the document before recommending it to the forest. Many of them noted that because the document no longer just applies to Soaproot, but could be applied to the Exchequer project, they would like more time for review. It was noted that members would submit comment by

June 1. The document would also be mentioned in the Joint LPWG/PFWG meeting April 18, 2014.

10. Attendees

1. Emily Adams, CCP
2. Chip Ashley
3. Rich Bagley
4. Carolyn Ballard, USFS
5. Keith Ballard, USFS
6. Sue Britting
7. John Cielnicky, USFS
8. Kent Duysen
9. Larry Duysen
10. Dorian Fougères, CCP
11. Hon. Ron Goode
12. Dean Gould, USFS
13. Stan Harger
14. Steve Haze
15. Andy Hosford, USFS
16. Joe Kaminski
17. Ray Laclergue
18. Chris Oberti
19. Justine Reynolds
20. Ramiro Rojas, USFS
21. Gus Smith, USFS
22. Mark Smith
23. Kim Sorini-Wilson, USFS
24. Erin Stacy
25. Craig Thomas
26. Stan Van Velsor