

MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

June 16, 2011

Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

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Action Items

1. Mr. Jones-Yellin to provide a written copy of the current activities information he presented verbally, along with the summary slide.
2. Staff to provide the Collaborative with access to the hazard tree sales decision and review documents.
3. Staff to send out a list of the road maintenance sites, including the maintenance level of the roads.
4. Staff to provide the Collaborative with access to the decisions and updates authorizing the road maintenance work.
5. Mr. Jones-Yellin to investigate whether and how Dinkey funds could be used to match OHV funds.
6. Staff to provide a list of allotments, including Dinkey, Patterson, Blue Canyon, and Haslett.
7. Staff to provide a list of current and future cabin development plans.
8. Mr. Jones-Yellin to reach out to DFG and FWS regarding involvement in the Collaborative.
9. Mr. Jones-Yellin to work with Mr. Goode to develop a suitable questionnaire about native uses of fish and game and plant resources in the near-term project areas.
10. Staff to provide a description of the vegetation types and locations.
11. Staff to provide responses to the remaining questions regarding the three near-term projects, including how each project involves prescribed fire, road decommissioning, and snag creation.
12. Mr. Jones-Yellin to prepare a one-page proposal for the specific ways in which the Collaborative could be involved in the left-hand side of the NEPA planning triangle, for subsequent discussion by the Collaborative.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mosé Jones-Yellin, Dinkey Collaborative project manager for the Sierra National Forest (SNF), welcomed the participants to the full Collaborative meeting and reviewed the agenda, noting the intent of different items. Facilitator Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS, reviewed the meeting ground rules and handouts, noting that all full and work group meeting summaries were available except for the June 2 review of the Soaproot proposed action, which would be available shortly. He noted that the two objectives for the day were to map the realm of issues associated with the term “restoration,” and to decide whether to proceed with each of the three proposed 2013-14 near-term projects.

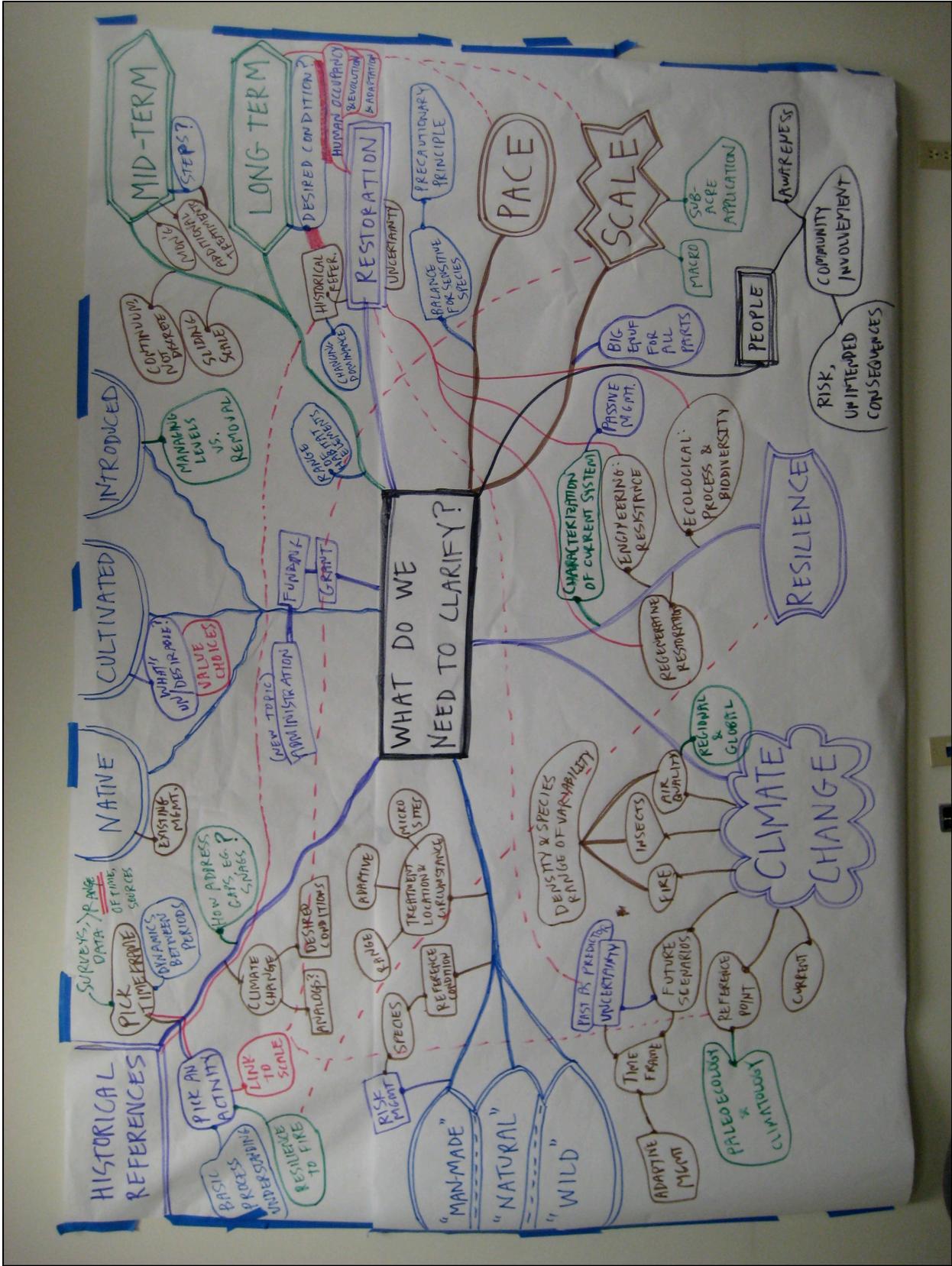
2. Begin Developing a Shared Understanding of “Restoration”

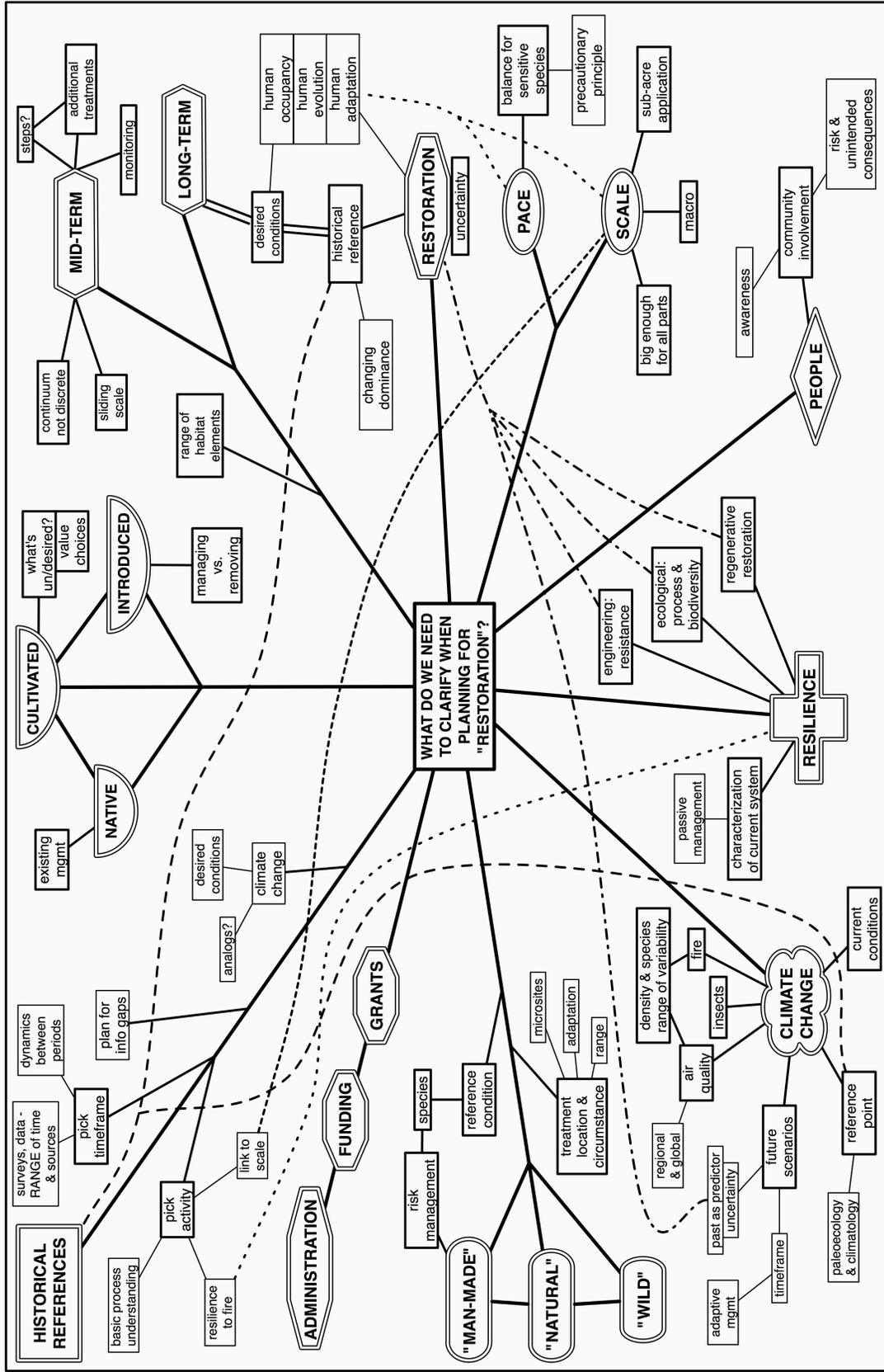
Mr. Jones-Yellin explained that this agenda item was developed in response to requests from Collaborative members to clarify what people intended when they used the term “restoration.” He noted that the exercise would create a “mind map” that would help identify the various topics and issues that people felt were important to understanding “restoration” as a concept, and that some of these may need to be further clarified as the group advances in its work. The facilitator then reviewed the exercise handout, which contained a reference definition from the Society for Ecological Restoration, a series of questions for small and large group discussion, and an explanation of how to create a mind map. After 20 minutes of small group discussion, the group generated the mind-map found on the following two pages. The following points were highlighted by the tables during their report-outs and subsequent discussion:

Historical References

- There were at least two approaches to utilizing references: one could choose a timeframe and compare things to this, or could choose an activity or process (for example, fire) and use one’s understanding of this as the basis for comparison with current conditions and desired outcomes. The latter encourages one to think about scale and how a process applies across the entire landscape.
 - In practice these two approaches might fit well together, for example, if one looked at fire-related ecological processes during a given time period.
 - While snapshots were helpful, dynamics and change over time are equally important, so a range of timeframes may have to be used.

Surveys and data were important, and since no single reference is perfect, a range of material must be examined and their biases and gaps analyzed. For example, features that are recognized as important today, like snags, may not have been recorded in the past.





- The need for active management and the assumption that the current forest is not resilient should be questioned. In some cases the best thing to do may be to leave the forest to its own devices. This points to an important distinction between engineering resilience and ecological resilience.¹

Native, Cultivated, Introduced

- In some cases introduced species may have to be managed since removal is impractical or unfeasible.
- Deciding what are desirable plants to cultivate and what plants are undesirable involves an explicit choice based on values.
- Assessments should include what species are already being managed and the corresponding activities.

Mid-Term and Long-Term

- The term “restoration” itself needs clarified, and should be its own category on the mind map. There’s engineering and ecological resilience as well as regeneration. The historical reference point is particularly important here.
 - Disturbances and climate change over the past thousand years have let to different species being dominant, so the timeframes used for reference need to account for these shifts.
- Mid-term and long-term need to be defined if you use them for planning. And there is a sliding scale between these, with what you do in the mid-term affecting what you can do in the long-term. So the terms are a continuum, not discrete categories.
 - The long-term can be understood as where we want to go, and the mid-term as the steps we take to get there.
- Effective planning and management around the mid-term require effective monitoring, and additional treatments in areas where this is needed.
 - Such monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of treatments needs to include the full range of forest attributes, not just live trees but biodiversity, snags and downed logs, etc.

¹ Footnote from the facilitator: see for example, Holling, C.S. 1996. *Engineering resilience vs ecological resilience* in Engineering within Ecological Constraints. Schulze, P.C., ed. National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 31-43. In Holling’s paper, “engineering resilience” focuses on “stability near an equilibrium steady state, where resistance to disturbance and speed of return to the equilibrium are used to measure the property”, while “ecological resilience” focuses on “conditions far from any equilibrium steady state, where instabilities can flip a system into another regime of behavior... In this case the measurement of resilience is the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before the system changes its structure by changing the variables and processes that control behavior.”

Pace and Scale, and People

- Restoration must be planned in a way that treatments designed to achieve future objectives do not compromise sensitive resources in the short-term.
- Scale must be planned in a way that the landscape treated is large enough to include the full suite of parts that constitute the ecosystem.
 - A balance needs to be struck between a macroscopic level and some sub-unit at which restoration treatments can be applied.
- Human uses and cultural uses and the people occupying the land can have huge impacts on the land – “people” need to be their own category on the mind map.
 - Human occupation is linked to long-term objectives as well as scale.
 - Humans also evolve, and should focus on what is left on the landscape rather than what is taken. Humans will need to adapt to live with the land rather than just meet their own needs.
- People and their relationships are important to consider, as well as unintended consequences of their activities.
 - Community awareness is also critical – how do people understand restoration activities.

Climate Change and Resilience

- Climate change depends on identifying a reference condition; different scenarios can then be used to explore change by comparing the past and current climate, and factoring in disturbances like fire, insects, and air quality to assess likely futures.
 - Reference conditions themselves have a range of variability, as noted in the discussion of historical references above.
 - The challenge is, with climate change the past becomes a less reliable indicator of the future. This means that analyses will also need to include other indicators like fire in adjacent regions that have analogous but different conditions. Historical references for climate should be linked to healthy forests that are functioning currently and to desired conditions.
 - As a result of such uncertainty, the desired outcomes and timeframe for restoration are partly a moving target. Adaptive management approaches and methods will be needed.
- With regard to air quality, there are regional and global air flows and basins, so the regional issues cannot be managed in isolation. There are also important historical records for the climate and ecology that should be incorporated. Contemporary air quality information, drawn from a variety of monitoring stations, is also available.

“Man-Made,” “Natural,” and “Wild”

- The reference condition needs to be identified as it relates to comprehensive species composition including invasives. A full range of species would be needed for adaptation.
- Identifying important micro-sites within the landscape will be important for maintaining desired species.
- Managing for certain species will involve different levels of risk.

New Topics: Administrative Constraints, Grant, and Funding

- There are administrative constraints, as well as requirements in the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act, that affect what restoration activities should and can take place, and what funding is available.

3. Landscape Evaluation Part 1: Inventory of Current Activities

Mr. Jones-Yellin briefly responded to a series of questions asked by Collaborative members during earlier landscape evaluation and near-term project evaluation sessions.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Jones-Yellin agreed to provide a written copy of the current activities information he presented verbally, along with the summary slide.

Topics included the following:

Hazard Tree Sales

Such sales are conducted by the Forest Service when dead and dying trees are located near roads and structures that could be concerns for public safety. This includes the Dinkey-McKinley, Forks, Nelson, A-Heart, Highway 168, Kings River Experimental Watershed (KREW), Keola, and Dinkey North and South hazard sales.

- Mr. Chad Hanson asked when the decisions for these sales were signed. Mr. Ray Porter, District Ranger, Sierra National Forest, explained these were signed approximately 6-7 years ago, and reviewed about 4 years ago. Mr. Hanson expressed concern about the age and consistency of these documents, and asked for access to these documents, including the title, size, location, and date signed of the hazard projects. Mr. Porter agreed that the environmental assessment documents could be provided.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to provide the Collaborative with access to the hazard tree sales decision and review documents.
- Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that the KREW project is being appealed and this will determine what work is done in the area. Mr. Steve Haze asked for more information. Ms. Sue

Britting explained that the KREW project was not part of the Dinkey Collaborative's work, and that Mr. Haze could contact Sierra Forest Legacy for further information.

Fuels and Prescribed Fire

These include the Rush, Barnes, Florence Mountain, Bear Creek, and Turtle Underburns, as well as the following Wildlife Habitat Improvement Projects (WHIPs): Hazlet 1 and 2, and Lower Rancheria Underburns.

- In response to a question from Mr. Stan Van Velsor, Mr. Jones-Yellin clarified that underburns involve applying fire to the understory within a timber canopy, while prescribed burns more generally involves primarily brushy areas and can apply to both natural and mechanically treated stands.
- In response to a question from Ms. Britting, Ms. Carolyn Ballard, Fire Management Officer, SNF, explained that Jose 1 and Jose Central are outside the Dinkey landscape. Jose 1 is a 2001 decision focused on treating young timber stands, brush removal, and understory removal, and uses Recovery Act dollars. Jose Central is in the same drainage basin in the northern part of the High Sierra Ranger District, outside the Dinkey landscape.

Road Maintenance

These activities include blading (scraping a large blade over road beds), brushing (clearing brush), pothole patching, installing drainage features, and removing noxious weeds.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to send out a list of the road maintenance sites, including the maintenance level of the roads.
- Mr. Van Velsor asked whether any activities are occurring in Soaproot, and if so why they are being treated now, and how they are being coordinated with the broader Soaproot planning.
 - Mr. Jones-Yellin explained that two sites, 10S43 and 10S04, are within Soaproot. Mr. Andy Hosford, SNF, explained that current blading work is being funded by the state Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) grant for green sticker vehicles. Ms. Ballard also explained that certain roads needed for fire access are being cleared and maintained as part of overall management efforts.
 - Mr. Van Velsor commented that it was questionable whether money should be spent on maintaining roads that might be identified as superfluous, and whether current work would foreclose future options.
 - Mr. Porter explained that road maintenance is ongoing and excluded from NEPA, and the objective is to ensure that existing roads do not create negative impacts.

So the planning could recommend getting rid of a road, yet in the near-term maintenance is still required to avoid damage.

- Mr. Haze asked how this work was coordinated with the Forest’s travel management planning and associated public participation. Mr. Jones-Yellin explained that all these road activities were part of the public process for which stakeholder input was received. Mr. Porter explained that Sub-Part B had been completed first, which addresses unauthorized routes and which ones should be brought into the system; Sub-Part A will analyze the existing system and look at opportunities for obliteration.
 - Ms. Britting stressed the importance of matching funding from outside sources to advance the Dinkey work. She noted that the green sticker money should be available again in the future. Mr. Porter agreed that matching was an important strategy, including on repair associated with OHV damage, and that the OHV funding could be an important source of funding.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Jones-Yellin to investigate whether and how Dinkey funds could be used to match OHV funds.
- In response to a question from Mr. Hanson, Mr. Porter explained that there are two different environmental impact analyses used to guide this work; that both have been updated based on the framework, standards and guides; and that both were being well applied on the ground.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to provide the Collaborative with access to the decisions and updates authorizing the road maintenance work.

Marijuana Eradication

Mr. Jones-Yellin explained that no work was currently scheduled.

- In response to a question from Mr. Van Velsor, Mr. Craig Thompson, USFS, noted that the High Sierra Trail Association has led a lot of old site cleanup efforts. Mr. Porter added that about 275 of 300 sites have been cleaned up, including likely all of the sites on the Dinkey landscape. Mr. Thompson noted that some funding had been made available for using rodenticides on these sites.
 - Mr. Van Velsor suggested that this might be another opportunity for matching funds. He noted that during a national CFLR conference on monitoring people had emphasized the need to clarify what matching funds mean and what leveraging funds means.

Grazing

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted the large number of allotments and referred members back to the map handed out by Amy Gustafson, SNF, during her March 17, 2011, presentation on range management on the Dinkey landscape. [This map is available on Databasin.org, as part of a

powerpoint posted under the March 17 Supporting Documents, titled “Landscape Evaluation Information.”]

- **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to provide a list of allotments, including Dinkey, Patterson, Blue Canyon, and Haslett.
- Mr. Porter noted that almost all of the Dinkey landscape is within an allotment, and no plans existed to retire the allotments.
- Ms. Britting suggested that impacts on restoration efforts and water quality should be included in the monitoring plan.
 - Mr. Porter noted that some areas, like Bull Creek, are already being monitored for the purpose of protecting the Yosemite toad, and this information could be incorporated.
 - The facilitator noted that the monitoring work group had begun identifying ongoing Forest Service monitoring activities, and would include these in its planning.

Recreation

- Ms. Britting asked for information regarding recreational site management and recreational development, including campsites. Mr. Thomas asked whether there were plans for cabins that would require major land planning and change.
- Mr. Porter noted that no plans exist for expanding the Blue Canyon and McKinley Grove campgrounds. He noted that a sawmill is scheduled for decommissioning but it is outside the boundary of the Dinkey landscape. He also noted that the Dinkey North project included cabins.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to provide a list of current and future cabin development plans.
- Mr. Van Velsor asked for information regarding OHV events, their potential impacts, and whether additional events were being considered. Mr. Porter noted that there are typically two or three events each season.

4. Landscape Evaluation Part 2: Review of the Three Project Options, including Follow-Up to Information Requests about the Landscape and Project Options

Mr. Jones-Yellin briefly reviewed the three near-term project options that had been presented in previous meetings, including Cow Creek, Bald Mountain, and Aperson Ridge [see the April 21 and May 19 meeting materials on Databasin.org].

With regard to Cow Creek, he noted that this project was developed from a suggestion from the District's aquatic biologist, Stephanie Barnes, to improve conditions for this Lahontan cutthroat trout. In this case questions focused around the red fir regime, how to view restoration of an introduced species (given its federal status), and road decommissioning following restoration. Mr. Jones-Yellin emphasized that the Forest would seek the Collaborative's input in designing management treatments for the red fir area, given the difficulty of characterizing this area.

With regard to Balk Mountain, Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that this ran along the eastern edge of Shaver Lake, and included red fir as well as Sierra mixed conifer stands, and partly overlapped with 0.4 CBI fisher habitat.

With regard to Aperson Ridge, Mr. Jones-Yellow noted that the Bear Dance is a traditional tribal ceremony that takes place in the area, and the basic intent of the project was to protect cultural resources through the reduction of fire hazards. This case also presented opportunities for meadow restoration, and application of GTR 220 principles to mixed conifer stands. There are no major roads in the area.

Process and General Questions

- In response to questions from Mr. Van Velsor and Mr. Hanson about the current agenda item, the facilitator explained that the Collaborative was being asked whether they were okay with the general project outlines being proposed. If the Collaborative supported the projects as described, this would be the basis for the Collaborative to work with the Forest to further develop the projects; endorsement today would not constitute a blank check for the Forest to propose and conduct anything it liked in these areas.
- In response to a question from Bob Rice, SNF staff noted that Cow Creek ranges from approximately 6,500 to 8,500 in elevation, Bald Mountain from 5,800 to 7,100, and Aperson Ridge from 1,800 to 3,000. Mr. Rice emphasized that physiographic information was critical because it limited potential future changes. He suggested that the group also look at what monitoring efforts existed and what beneficial information could be gained by monitoring treatments in these areas. He also suggested looking at analogous sites to understand treatment options, as well as eventually inform options in those sites.
- The Honorable Ron Goode stressed that throughout this process he sees a greater need to coordinate and talk more with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and native people about the species that are important, the species that predominate, and what types of game are found on the land. These are important to consider when developing restoration actions. He felt this point had been made before but no answers had been provided. He suggested the agencies be invited to present to the Collaborative, and that a questionnaire be

developed to identify what types of resources are gathered by native people, without divulging exact locations. He felt that without this information the group was developing projects without a clear idea of what is needed.

- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Jones-Yellin to reach out to DFG and FWS regarding involvement in the Collaborative.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Jones-Yellin to work with Mr. Goode to develop a suitable questionnaire about native uses of fish and game and plant resources in the near-term project areas.
- Mr. Patrick Emmert requested the fire history for the Rush Creek fire as well as smaller fires in these project areas, including those linked to the recreational history. Seasonal streamflow information would also be helpful.

Cow Creek

- Regarding Cow Creek, Mr. Craig Thomas asked whether a recovery plan existed for the Lahontan cutthroat trout, and how this fit with restoration efforts, particularly given the large amount of red fir in the area.
 - Mr. Rojas reiterated that this proposal was initially developed by the aquatic biologist, and it is driven by how to protect the trout. In this case a stand replacement event would create a large volume of sediment, so a potential tension exists with a high intensity burn.
 - Ms. Britting suggested that this tension could be explored and potentially resolved by better spatial information regarding the location of the red fir, the reach of the creek in question, and the length of the creek relative to the treatment area. For example, perhaps the plan would involve treating a small portion of the area, say 150 acres, specially for the fish, in a different way than the restoration for the larger treatment area of 3,000 acres.
- Mr. Van Velsor asked whether the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) were involved and reviewed the proposal.
 - Mr. Porter explained that FWS would be consulted if the project went forward, but since it is still preliminary they have not yet been involved. He agreed with the need for coordination.

Bald Mountain

- Mr. Hanson suggested that Bald Mountain and Eastfork (already under development with the Collaborative) both presented good opportunities for high intensity fires and the creation of blackbacked woodpecker habitat.

Aperson Ridge

- Ms. Britting asked for greater description of the habitat and vegetation on Aperson Ridge.
 - Ms. Ballard replied that there is a lot of brush cover, as well as problems with poison oak.
 - Mr. Tom Munton, USFS, noted that owl Protected Activity Centers (PACs) are not very active in the area, although they exist. He noted that they had not had pairs in that area for several years; it is more occasional habitat than high quality habitat.
 - Mr. Rojas added that the area also has canyon live oak (as well as some blue oak historically), conifers in the drainage, and ponderosa pine scattered throughout the area.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** Staff to provide a description of the vegetation types and locations.
 - Mr. Thompson noted that there is incidental male fisher use of the canyon.

5. Landscape Evaluation Part 3: Paired and Collective Assessment of the Three Project Options

Mr. Jones-Yellin reiterated that the Collaborative was being asked whether they wanted to further develop the three proposed project for implementation in 2013-14. This would help define the Collaborative's work over the next two years. These projects were the best near-term opportunities identified by SNF staff; nonetheless, if the Collaborative was not satisfied with the qualities of these projects, they could ask the Forest Service to come back with different options.

The facilitator then asked people to work in pairs to fill out a worksheet designed to aid evaluation of the three projects. He noted that the worksheet was meant to provide heuristic guidance, not a rigorous quantitative analysis of the projects, and was developed in response to previous requests by Collaborative members to have some approach for comparing projects.

Given the incomplete information for the proposed three projects, members completed the exercise yet noted that the resulting numbers likely did not provide an accurate picture of a project's merits. One approach to improving the numbers would be to total the value and divide by the number of completed categories, so that empty categories would not devalue a project; the group acknowledged this but did not want to spend the time crunching more numbers for the current exercise. They suggested several improvements for future such exercises including:

1. a way to identify more specific elements of a criterion or project (the current worksheet requires assumptions and generalities)
2. differentiating between what is potential and what is feasible
3. taking the evaluation sheet into the field for grounded discussions

Several members felt uncomfortable with providing values for the projects given the incomplete information. Mr. Goode nonetheless noted that the averaged totals were 56 for Cow Creek, 51 for Bald Mountain, and 41 for Aperson Ridge.

Recognizing the caveats about the evaluation results mentioned above, during discussion the group highlighted the following qualitative points as a way of better explaining values provided:

Items for which proposed projects received a score of “10”:

- Cow Creek: opportunities for mixed intensity fire, snag creation, informing future management, road decommissioning, watershed improvement, use of fire, and achieving desired vegetation characteristics.
- Aperson Ridge: opportunities for informing future management, use of fire, achieving desired habitat and desired vegetation characteristics.
- Bald Mountain: opportunities for creating heterogeneous habitat (through high intensity prescribed burn), use of fire, road decommissioning, informing future management, and achieving desired vegetation characteristics.

Items for which proposed projects received a score of “0”:

- Opportunities for road decommissioning and watershed improvement on Aperson Ridge.
- Opportunities for fuels treatment and public safety on Cow Creek.

Discussion of the Forest Service Commitment to the Collaborative Planning Process

Mr. Van Velsor expressed reservation about selecting these projects, and Mr. Hanson echoed the concern that the lack of information made it hard to view a project one way or the other.

- Mr. Porter acknowledged this concern, as well as the strong desire expressed earlier by the Collaborative to identify projects well in advance to be able to move through the left side of the NEPA triangle with the Forest Service. He suggested that if the Collaborative adopted a project now, it would not mean they are locked into this or specific actions if

through additional work serious concerns arose and could not be addressed. He also noted that the Forest Service had a lot of people and tools available for this work, and would have to figure out how to work with the Collaborative in the given timeframe.

- Mr. Goode asked whether participation in the Collaborative was worth it, as he felt the Forest already had their desired end product in hand, given their staff and tools.
- Mr. Thomas expressed that he did not believe the Forest had a completed product, and that in his recent experience things were open to change and the inclusion of new ideas. His organization has been involved in 12 similar efforts in the last two years, and while they have not been ebullient about each of the projects, the progress was notable and the Forest Service had been open to their input. This was the reason his organization was spending the money and time to attend the Collaborative's meetings. He noted that historical frustration was shared by the Native American and other communities, and that part of this process meant really working to address Native American concerns.
- Mr. Van Velsor stated that he heard Mr. Porter acknowledge that greater clarity is needed on how the Collaborative will engage in the left-hand side of the NEPA planning triangle.
- Mr. Rojas expressed that for many Forest Service staff collaboration is a new way of doing business, and that nobody in the room really knows what that looks like. So there is anxiety on all sides. It is difficult for people to change, but the reality is that this is a new thing and the Collaborative and Forest Service need to figure it out together.
- Ms. Britting commented that the alternative to figuring this out was the old approach of weighing in at the end of planning where one can only say "yes" or "no," so this approach was new to Collaborative members as well.
- Mr. Hanson echoed that this was an exciting opportunity because it was a different approach to working on projects. He requested that staff provide greater information on how the three projects would include prescribed fire, road decommissioning, and snag creation.
 - The facilitator noted that this was also an approach people could take – they could provide direction on the things they would like more information.
- Mr. Bagley noted that he participated in the Dinkey North and South planning, and in that process the Forest was responsive to stakeholder concerns. This effort was larger and more intense, but he believed the Forest would again be responsive.
- The facilitator suggested that important issues included transparent decision-making, a genuine effort to include and address the different interests, and, ultimately, personal decisions as to whether people wanted to continue to participate. Part of this could only be resolved over time on the basis of the actions of the Forest.

AGREEMENT: After discussion the group agreed that projects chosen today would be developed under the following conditions:

1. Responses to existing questions would be provided.
2. New questions would be addressed by through the planning process. This spirit of joint inquiry was flagged as a healthy illustration of the iterative, collaborative process.
3. Field visits would be used to explore and advance the projects.
4. The group would not be locked-in to a project. If the group developed serious reservations about a project during the course of planning and could not develop a way to address these, it could step away from the project.

ACTION ITEM: Staff to provide responses to the remaining questions regarding the three near-term projects, including how each project involves prescribed fire, road decommissioning, and snag creation.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Jones-Yellin to prepare a one-page proposal for the specific ways in which the Collaborative could be involved in the left-hand side of the NEPA planning triangle, for subsequent discussion by the Collaborative.

AGREEMENT: The Collaborative agreed to adopt all three proposed projects – Cow Creek, Bald Mountain, and Aperson Ridge – as their near-term planning projects for implementation in 2013-14.

6. Informational Updates

F16 Fisher Research Project

Mr. Thompson, USFS, affirmed that the weather had prevented conducting the proposed research this spring. There were no plans to further activity at this point. The Collaborative agreed that this item could be dropped from the monthly updates until new activity is considered.

Joint Fact-Finding on Ladder Fuels

Mr. Hanson explained that the work group had discussed running different scenarios through the Forest Vegetation Simulator model to see the outputs and, based on that information, discuss what appropriate desired conditions might be for the Soaproot project. Mr. Rojas added that he had blocked time to complete the modeling the following week, and that the results would be available July 1. The facilitator noted that the work group would meet before the Collaborative's next meeting, and bring the results of their discussion back to the full group

for presentation and consideration. Mr. Thomas stressed the importance of the full group tracking this process and issues.

Soaproot and Eastfork Proposed Actions

Ms. Elaine Alaniz, SNF, explained that the notice of scoping had been published in the newspaper and sent to the full Collaborative. The deadline for comments is July 11. She explained that based on the June 2 work group meeting, changes had been made to the climate change, road decommissioning, and ladder fuel sections. Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that the Eastfork proposed action would be circulated in the coming weeks for Collaborative review, and that both of these projects would follow the near-term planning process identified in the Collaborative's Charter – meaning that the Collaborative would help to refine and develop alternatives before plans were finalized, even though a public notice will have been issued.

Monitoring Work Group

Mr. Van Velsor noted that he and Marc Meyer, USFS, had attended a national conference involving representatives from the different CFRLPs. The aim was to develop a set of shared outcomes and indicators that could be used to provide Congressional groups and other interested parties with relevant information. A final draft is pending, and he will share this information with the monitoring work group and any other people interested. The work group also will continue developing its draft near-term monitoring plan, and hopes to have questions for the full group's review by the next full meeting. He noted that the plan focuses on treatments and questions related to Soaproot, but that the plan would eventually extend to the landscape as a whole, per direction from the Collaborative earlier this spring. He also emphasized the importance of getting a good understanding of all the current Forest Service monitoring activities, so it was clear what was already being done and what needed to be added.

DataBasin File Structure

The facilitator noted that the Collaborative's site on DataBasin.org was up and running, and provided a handout explaining where all the Collaborative's materials could be found. He clarified that if people wanted some materials posted they should send them to Mr. Jones-Yellin and to him, so that staff could track what materials were posted and available.

Collaborative Charter

The facilitator noted that Sierra National Forest Supervisor Scott Armentrout had signed the Charter. He noted that people's signatures had been electronically copied to a final version; if anyone was uncomfortable with this he would remove their signature. The final charter would be made available shortly and posted to DataBasin.org.

Letter of Support

The facilitator noted that the draft Letter of Support for projects had been revised per the Collaborative's comments on May 19, and was now available on DataBasin.org. The document was not yet used for any projects.

Promotion of Mr. Jones-Yellin

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that he had accepted the position of Deputy District Ranger for the High Sierra Ranger District. He would remain the project lead for the Dinkey Collaborative, and would also have to take on additional responsibilities and attend additional meetings.

Schedule Revisions and Field Visits

Mr. Jones-Yellin's promotion also meant that the group would have to change a few dates in its schedule. The facilitator noted that the total number of meetings for the year would remain the same, at 10 in total. It was agreed that, given schedule conflicts, the full Collaborative meeting in July would be postponed until August 4 (with a field visit on August 5); August originally had no full Collaborative meeting scheduled. The meeting would include spending two days out in the field in Sierra National Forest (both August 4 and 5), even though some time on August 4 would have to be spent on normal meeting materials. This would include spending a night out in the field, given the driving distance from Clovis (likely two hours). The Forest Service would work to provide appropriate accommodations. The group also agreed that they should try and conduct field visits in September and October, and November if possible.

Personal Field Visits

People interested in getting into the field on their own were invited to coordinate their visits through Mr. Jones-Yellin and Mr. Thompson, who could help answer questions and let them know what was happening on the ground.

Upcoming Discussion of the Dinkey CFLRP Budget and Other Items

The facilitator noted the email message forwarded to the group that explained that the Dinkey Project had received less than half of the requested funding for fiscal year 2011-12 (and about half of the funding received for fiscal year 2010-11), or approximately \$400,000.

- Mr. Thomas emphasized that it was essential to get representatives from the Region 5 Forest Service office to attend an upcoming full Collaborative meeting to explain what had occurred in the budgeting process in Washington, D.C., and how the gap would be bridged. Mr. Thomas stressed that numerous people in the room had committed to participate in the Collaborative based on the understanding that the Region and Forest was committed to supporting the work of the group.

- Ms. Britting added that a clear understanding of why funding had been cut would allow the group to improve specific aspects of its work in the coming year.
- Mr. Haze requested detailed budget information for the upcoming meeting, including the planned and actual expenditures for 2010-11, and the planned expenditures for 2011-12. Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that information about fiscal year 2010-11 had been provided in early 2011 and was available on DataBasin.org, and would be brought back into the discussion for easy reference.
- Mr. Hanson noted that this process differed from usual planning because of the flexibility to pursue a range of ecological improvements, rather than simple tree removal. Mr. Hanson expressed strong concern about the budget reduction because for him it left the Forest Service with three options: (1) placing greater emphasis on more cost-effective treatments, like mechanical treatments, (2) conducting fewer projects, or (3) offsetting lost funds with greater emphasis on tree removal. Mr. Hanson stressed that these options, particularly the third, would undermine the purpose of his participation in this process.
- The facilitator noted that the upcoming meeting would include a focused session on the Dinkey budget, and likely some combination of the following: report-back and discussion of the results from the joint fact-finding work on ladder fuels; report-back and discussion of draft monitoring plan questions and associated materials; and discussion of a proposal for Collaborative involvement in the left-hand side of the NEPA planning triangle, for application to the 2013-14 near-term projects.

7. Attendees

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Elaine Alaniz | 14. Andy Hosford |
| 2. Rich Bagley | 15. Mosé Jones-Yellin |
| 3. Carolyn Ballard | 16. John Mount |
| 4. Sue Britting | 17. Tom Munton |
| 5. Charlotte Chorneau | 18. Ray Porter |
| 6. Larry Duysen | 19. Bob Rice |
| 7. Patrick Emmert | 20. Ramiro Rojas |
| 8. Pamela Flick | 21. Mark Smith |
| 9. Dorian Fougères | 22. Craig Thomas |
| 10. Chathurka Goonawandeva | 23. Craig Thompson |
| 11. Ron Goode | 24. Denise Tomie |
| 12. Chad Hanson | 25. Mandy Vance |
| 13. Steve Haze | 26. Stan Van Velsor |