MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

February 19, 2013

Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

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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 Fougeres, at* dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu *or (916) 531-3835.*

Action Items

1. **Mr. Stan Van Velsor** to circulate an email asking members if they are interested in the socioeconomic sub-group.
2. **Mr. Stan Van Velsor** to circulate Mr. Jonathon Kusel's contract to the group.
3. **Mr. Dirk Charley** to connect with Mr. Ron Goode for potential transportation aid for Hands on the Land.
4. **Ms. Vance** to look into groups that can connect with Hands on the Land for further advancement.
5. **Mr. Haze** to get more information for funding opportunities for Hands on the Lands.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin, Deputy District Ranger, High Sierra Ranger District (HSRD), Sierra National Forest (SNF), welcomed all participants to the full Collaborative meeting and reviewed the agenda items. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) Facilitator, reviewed the meeting ground rules and had members introduce themselves.

2. Preliminary Findings on Fisher Detections on Heterogeneous Forest Environments

Mr. Chad Hanson presented a slide show to the group about mixed-intensity fire and the Pacific Fisher. He wanted to review the previous misconceptions of "catastrophic" fire, and compare it to his findings on the Kern Plateau, specifically noting the McNally fire. Mr. Hanson reviewed images of high-intensity burns with the Black Backed Woodpecker using the area for habitat. It was stated that the woodpecker has a strong relationship with fires on the forest, which was shown through graphic mapping of fires and occurring woodpeckers. Mr. Hanson noted that the woodpecker's habitat is diminishing due to the lack of high-intensity fires in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. He added that he had seen the Spotted Owls use the mixed-severity patches for foraging. It was stated that researchers are reviewing how they evaluate the use of high/moderate-intensity patches.

Mr. Hanson discussed his findings regarding the Pacific Fisher. He noted that the fisher used the low-severity sites for nesting and roosting, and the high-severity sites were used for foraging. He used a kitchen/bedroom analogy for the fishers, where the low intensity areas are their bedroom, and the high intensity areas are their kitchen. The study focused on the fisher's diet in the early successional forest. A team of dogs was hired to detect fisher scat in the Kern Plateau, which had several fires with mixed-intensity. The findings showed that the fishers used the burned mature forest areas. It was noted that the forest structures fishers used in the burned areas were the same as the structures found in the areas fisher were in the pre-fire areas. The fishers were found more in forest structure areas of high-intensity fire, and the fisher used the areas within fire patches rather than outside the fire zones for foraging. Mr. Hanson stated that the edge of fire patches were used by many species.

Mr. Hanson stated that the results would be different if the site had mechanical thinning. He added that if the only information used on the sites were canopy and basal area, then there would be missing information. He noted emerging research stating species have adapted with high-intensity fire areas, and the areas with mixed-severity fire benefits old growth forest species, especially foraging species. Mr. Hanson stated that he wants to bridge the gap in forest management, and see historic scales of fire intensity reintroduced.

Members followed with comments and questions about Mr. Hanson's presentation:

- A member asked about the proportion of high-severity fire on the Kern Plateau. Mr. Hanson stated that the proportion was 14-20% high-severity with approximately 70-76% moderate-severity. He stated that he found the fishers almost exclusively within high-severity areas.
- Ms. Sue Britting stated that identifying a preference about the fisher's habitat relationship and characteristics of the type of fire intensity would be beneficial. Mr. Hanson stated that he needed to gather more information to report those results, though he stated high/moderate-intensity were the majority of the findings.

- It was noted that the 2002 McNally fire had conifer (currently 8-9 feet tall) and chaparral regeneration. Mr. Hanson noted that as the landscape regenerates, he would like to study how the fishers respond to the changes.
- It was noted that the high-severity burns were more advantageous to the pines.
- Mr. Craig Thompson informed the group that the studies from Zelinsky excluded some information from fire sites, which is important for Mr. Hanson to note. He added that the study did not mention of species selection or preference limited to old growth.
- Mr. Hanson stated that there were fishers found in 10-year post fire areas.
- A member stated that the authors might have tried to reconcile historic information from the early 1900's, when fire intensity was low. Mr. Hanson stated that it is interesting to analyze all historic data of mixed-intensity fire. He added that there were accounts of mixed-intensity fire from before 1900s.

3. Individual Recommendations on Bald Mountain Project

Mr. Fougères reviewed the handouts for the individual recommendations. The matrix and the supplemental handouts were laid out section by section with information reflected from the work group technical meetings. The supplemental handout corresponded with sections seven, eight, and eleven. The original text was listed next to the recommended text, and members could indicate whether they did or did not support any given provision, or were uncertain. It was noted that if members did not feel there is enough detail then they should vote uncertain if they are not comfortable, so not to make any assumptions.

Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin stated that the Forest Service would tally the votes from the matrix, and the interdisciplinary team would incorporate the recommendations into the preferred alternative. The team would work carefully to incorporate the alternatives and provide explanations on why each alternative was chosen. The group would then vote on the preferred alternatives by email with a support letter.

4. General Updates

Mr. Jones-Yellin stated that there were no new project updates since the previous meeting, but stated that in Soaproot the fisher markings done in the summer are not far off from the data collected by the PSW and Mr. Craig Thompson on fishers. It was stated the crews are doing a decent job identifying rest sites.

In regards to the desired conditions and trigger points, Mr. Stan Van Velsor stated that there are two scheduled workshops, one on April 10, 2013, for wildlife issues. He stated that the February 11, 2013, meeting had presenters from the PSW Research Station, Mr. Malcolm North and Mr. Brandon Collins. The discussion had been on complex issues, but the group worked on a few solutions. In regards to the Socioeconomic Sub-Group, Mr. Van Velsor stated that there was no progress, but he would be speaking with Mr. Jonathan Kusel. Mr. Van Velsor stated that Mr. Kusel's contract was finalized, and would like to set up an advisory group. Mr. Haze stated

he would be interested in participating in the advisory group, and added that his organization could explore supplemental funding for this work.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Stan Van Velsor to circulate an email asking members if they are interested in the socioeconomic sub-group.

ACTION ITEM: Mr. Stan Van Velsor to circulate Mr. Jonathon Kusel's contract to the group.

In regards to the Forest Plan Revision, Mr. Jones-Yellin stated that there would collaborative meetings and webinars offered from February 2-20th. To access the webinars, a link is located on the bottom of the Forest's main website. It was noted that there would be 15 draft topical papers, upon which the public can make recommendations.

Ms Pamela Flick presented the group with the Collaborative's Annual Report. The Dinkey Collaborative and member Mr. Rich Bagley were highlighted in the text. She had hard copies for the group to review. She added that the press release would be pursued when implementation began on projects because the Fresno Bee was looking for current news.

Regarding outstanding action items, it was noted that there were only two. The group is trying to get more support for the intensive modeling regarding fire. Ms. Pam Flick will also check the communication materials for consistency with the revised Charter, once adopted.

5. Hands on the Land Student Environmental Program

Mr. Ramiro Rojas presented on the Forest Service's partnership with education and the youth employment program, previously called Hands on the Land. He stated that it is an agreement between Sierra Unified School District to hire kids to work with the Forest Service on various projects throughout the forest. Last year, 36 high school students participated in the program. The program consists of one Forest Service employee and six crew leaders, which are teachers, with six kids in each crew. The program trained young individuals before they would go out into the field, for example, hydrologists would work with the crews educating the kids before implementation. He listed some of the projects of 2012, which were the removal of hazardous waste, planting trees on 10 acres, and rebuilding sediment fences. The program allows the Forest Service to identify young talents for potential future employment.

The program had been focused to grade school and high school students, but with budget restrictions and lack of transportation, the program is now focused on the high school students. Mr. Rojas reviewed the 2012 budget breakdown for Hands on the Land funding. The total was approximately $104,000 contributed by a few organizations. He noted that the coordination of time and work could be difficult because they do not have the full summer with the students. In addition, the need for transportation is great. If they could gain access to more vehicles, then they would have the capacity to accept 60 students within program because there is funding but no access. The group had comments about Hands on the Land:

- A member stated that it is a minimal investment with a large return, and noted that they are happy with the group being involved with the program.
- Mr. Rojas stated that when Ms. Tracy Rowland stated the program six years ago, it was much smaller. When the Forest Service became involved, participation grew to 50 kids, but funding became an issue, so other sources of funding were located.
- Mr. Dirk Charley stated that Mr. Zachery Tane is a contact, and Ms. Gwen Gaines for Sierra Unified.
- A member asked if there was outreach to the local tribes from Hands on the Land. Mr. Rojas stated that there have been several kids, which are part of the local tribes. It was noted that Sierra Unified does the recruitment.
- Mr. Charley stated that the tribes could aid in the transportation of the kids.
  ACTION ITEM: Mr. Dirk Charley to connect with Mr. Ron Goode for potential transportation aid for Hands on the Land.
- It was noted that there has been no financial value assigned to the work done by Hands on the Land, though it would be a possibility. The only documentation done is the number of kids involved, the work done, and the money spent.
- A member stated that they would like to flag the program for Mr. Kusel to include it with the socioeconomic monitoring. The charter stated that the program focuses on both short and long-term benefits.
- **ACTION ITEM: Mr. Van Velsor** to note the Hands on the Land program to Mr. Kusel.
- Mr. Rojas stated that the program gives the students the opportunity to advance with the work and training, so they could gain experience and skills for future employment.
- Ms. Sue Britting would like to facilitate aid with the program growth. Ms. Mandy Vance stated that there are a lot of areas that could be linked by offering partnerships with other groups with different skill levels.
  ACTION ITEM: Ms. Vance to look into groups that can connect with Hands on the Land for further advancement.
- Mr. Rojas stated that there was funding available from Youth Conservation Core (YCC), and if there were a person to better document the program, there would be more possibilities for funding.
- Mr. Haze stated that his organization had funding for trail construction, specifically for outreach to local opportunities and career development.
  ACTION ITEM: Mr. Haze to get more information for funding opportunities for Hands on the Lands, including youth involvement in trail construction.

6. Proposed 2013Dinkey Collaborative Goals

Mr. Fougères reviewed the proposed goals worksheet with the group. He asked members to focus on the discussion questions on the back of the worksheet. The members had comments for each of the questions:

1. Are there any goals that are missing or any that could be deferred?
   - Consider the need for more clarity and more specificity for the adaptive management process.

- Note the science symposium is the same as the monitoring symposium planned for 2015 in the charter.
- A member stated the need for socioeconomic desired conditions. Mr. Haze stated that the socioeconomic monitoring needed to address the underlying theme of environmental and economic justice. Mr. Van Velsor stated that the themes were addressed in the proposal, and that developing desired conditions could address the themes.
- In regards to public outreach, it was stated that the group should plan a public field trip, and consider a public event scheduled on a weekend.

2. What recommendations do you have for how any of the goals might be better approached and accomplished, given the group's limited energy and resources?

- Need for funding assurances regarding future fisher research and monitoring.
- Consider creating a landscape planning work group.
- A member suggested reviewing work done by the group through field visits in the summer to aid in the planning process.
    - A member stated that implementation monitoring would be the link in obtaining valuable information for the planning process.

3. What are the goals in which you are willing to actively participate and play a leadership role?

- It was noted that Mr. Ray Laclergue and Mr. Steve Haze were interested in participating in the socioeconomic work group.
- Mr. Haze stated that he would like to be part of public outreach to Sierra Foothill Conservancy , Forest Oak and woodlands, range lands (Working Landscapes) and restoration work plan, and items 10/16/17 on the goals handout. (This information was submitted in writing immediately after the meeting.)

Mr. Fougères suggested that the group consider grouping the goals or leaving them as individual tasks. Mr. Rojas stated that since the goals are complex, the group should have a small work group discuss the issues and report to the group building trust through the process. Members stated that much of the work has begun, such as fisher marking guidelines, and some felt there was enough trust. Mr. Fougères stated that the goals are ongoing, but noted that he would like the group to adopt the current draft with all comments incorporated.

AGREEMENT: The group adopted the proposed 2013 collaborative goals, including the refinements noted on February 19, 2013.
(Members present: Mr. Justin Augustine, Mr. Mark Smith, Mr. Rich Bagley, Mr. Craig Thomas, Mr. Stan Harger, Mr. Kent Duysen, Mr. Chip Ashley, Ms. Pamela Flick, Mr. Steve Haze, Mr. Larry Duysen, Ms Mandy Vance, Mr. Stan Van Velsor, Ms Sue Britting, and Mr. Ray Laclergue.)

7. Biennial Review of Charter: Continued from December and January

Mr. Fougères reviewed the newest track changes to the Collaborative group's charter. The members had no comments or questions about the changes.

AGREEMENT: The group adopted the revised charter presented on February 19, 2013. Members present: Mr. Justin Augustine, Mr. Mark Smith, Mr. Rich Bagley, Mr. Craig Thomas, Mr. Stan Harger, Mr. Kent Duysen, Mr. Chip Ashley, Ms. Pamela Flick, Mr. Steve Haze, Mr. Larry Duysen, Ms Mandy Vance, Mr. Stan Van Velsor, Ms Sue Britting, and Mr. Ray Laclergue.

Mr. Fougeres noted he would circulate a clean copy of the adopted charter and invite any members who were not present to sign the charter or verbally adopt the charter. From this point forward the Dinkey Collaborative would use the new charter as its governance document.

8. Proposed 2013 Landscape and Project Planning Activities

Mr. Jones-Yellin introduced the 2013 planning activities handout to the members. He stated that the group should outline a general project location during the April meetings. He noted that the Forest Service staff should not dictate the boundaries to the group, and that this should instead be developed collaboratively. Mr. Jones-Yellin suggested identifying disturbance zones, such as aspect, slope, ridgelines, and fire, to aid in establishing a landscape level analysis for the general project area. It was noted that the April 17 and 18 meetings would be focused on disturbances, ongoing processes, and key topics, for example, fisher. He added that the group should consider potential project opportunities, for example, geographic areas of overlap or meadows. He asked the members to think about ecological themes and priorities on the landscape. Another key issue to address was clarifying the adaptive management process from previous projects. It was noted that a small work group could potentially work out a process for the 2016 project. He stated that the goal for the meetings in April are to narrow down the basic location of the 2016 project. The handout had questions listed on the backside, and members were asked to comment:

1. How and when should the development of landscape level desired conditions be integrated?
    - A member suggested that they assess and compare current conditions with the desired conditions to narrow down a project area.
        - It was stated that the desired conditions would be used to identify areas in need of restoration. In other words, an area could be identified and prioritzied based on how far the existing conditions were from desired conditions. Mr. Jones-Yellin stated that it could be a part of the assessment piece looking at the landscape level desired conditions.
        - Consider prioritizing the desired conditions for the proposed general area. Some conditions might be more important than others.

- It was noted that some of the desired conditions the monitoring work group is establishing focuses on landscape level conditions, as well as project specific.
- Ms. Britting stated that there should be landscape level process developed for snags, so the group could make the connection to the project level scale.

2. How and when should the development of species-specific restoration plans be integrated?
    - It was noted that because of the large scale, differentiating and capturing information about certain species, habitat attributes, and specific locations of their range would be helpful in moving forward. Some plans would need to be developed and integrated at the landscape level, while others could be assessed at a smaller scale.
3. What landscape level analysis and modeling will be critical for decision-making and why?
    - Consider the importance of critical wildlife corridors in the landscape.
    - Identify riparian areas, and observe how resilient these areas are to climate change because over time it becomes more critical.
    - It was noted that the group should not focus only on historical conditions, and should also anticipate future conditions given current land use, demographic, climate change, and other trends.
    - A member noted that the GTR 220 could focus information about burn probability to four zones, North West slopes, South East slopes, ridgelines, and canyons.
    - Develop clarity for the assumptions and burn probability.
    - It was stated that precipitation research could be brought to the group for consideration the landscape planning, but would not be a key issue for the group.
4. What additional suggestions do you have for improving the 2013 proposed planning approach?
    - Members stated that there is need for a definition of adaptive management, and then to consider how the process of adaptive management fits into the Collaborative's next project, while being scale specific.
    - It was stated that small and large scale treatments should be handled separately. A landscape framework should provide the context for future small-scale projects.
5. Do we define /think about "General Area" for 2013?
    - Consider identifying the WUI threat zones, opportunities for restoration needs, and the fisher occurrence probabilities.
    - It was noted that the criteria and prioritization for defining the "General Area" would be worked on at the April meetings.

Mr. Fougeres asked if any members were interested in participating in a Landscape Planning Work Group, which would meet in person on March 21. Ms. Sue Britting and Mr. Craig Thomas noted that one of them would attend. Mr. Rich Bagley, Mr. Justin Augustine, and Mr. Mark Smith also volunteered.

Mr. Jones-Yellin briefly updated the members on the preliminary counts from the votes on the matrix. He stated that there were areas of consensus, though there were a lot of undecided. He noted that there was strong support for the snag proposal. The next steps would be to characterize the minority and majority votes for each section. Mr. Jones-Yellin congratulated the group on the large number of significant work products and efforts completed today, and closed the meeting.

9. Attendees

1. Elaine Alaniz, FS
2. Chip Ashley
3. Justin Augustine
4. Rich Bagley
5. Sue Britting
6. Dirk Charley, FS
7. Kent Duysen
8. Larry Duysen
9. Pamela Flick
10. Dorian Fougères, CCP
11. Gabriella Golik, CCP
12. Chad Hanson
13. Stan Harger
14. Steve Haze
15. Andy Hosford, FS
16. Mose Jones-Yellin , FS
17. Ray Laclergue
18. Ramiro Rojas, FS
19. Greg Schroer, FS
20. Mark Smith
21. Kim Sorini-Wilson, FS
22. Craig Thomas
23. Craig Thompson, FS
24. Mandy Vance
25. Stan Van Velsor