

MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

August 15, 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 Fougères, at dfougeres@ccp.csus.edu or (916) 531-3835.

Action Items and Agreements

1. **Dorian** to follow up with Landscape Planning Work Group to edit the indicator table.
2. **Justine** to schedule a Communication Work Group meeting.
3. **Mr. Thomas, Ms. Roberts, Mr. John Mount, and Mr. Jamie Tuitele-Lewis** to discuss how to formalize the Collaborative's adaptive management process.

AGREEMENT: The group agreed that Exchequer will be the next General Project Area for project planning on the Dinkey Landscape.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Ray Porter, District Ranger, represented the Forest Service and welcomed members to the full Collaborative meeting. Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin was promoted to District Ranger for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Oregon; he included his final goodbye movie for the group, and encouraged all members to stay in contact. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) Facilitator, reviewed the agenda items, meeting ground rules, and led member introductions. In addition, Mr. Fougères asked members to fill out the trust meter handout and turn it in by the end of the day.

2. Landscape Planning Group - Management Unit Group Selection

Mr. Justin Augustine reviewed the group's charge and stated that the group had narrowed the potential project sites to three Management Unit Groups (MUGs). Working from a powerpoint presentation, Ms. Sue Britting discussed the criteria used for picking the three MUGs (15 reference indicators, six opportunities, and feasibility). Mr. Ramiro Rojas, District Silviculturalist, reviewed the results of the indicator and opportunity analysis, process (focused on the degree of departure from the indicator), and MUG scoring. The Landscape Planning Work Group recommended to the Collaborative that Exchequer be the MUG for 2013-14 planning; for second priority, Upper Big Creek and House were considered equal. Mr. Mark Smith noted that Upper Big Creek and House could again be considered at a future date, even if they were not chosen today.

Discussion regarding potential project sites followed:

- Regarding fuel loading, it was noted that the fire return interval exceeds the indicator throughout the entire Dinkey landscape.
- Regarding formatting of the indicator table, it was recommended to organize the indicator table into "like" categories for an easy to follow format, and add footnote explaining the use of percentage of departure.
 - Consider having a simplified table for community outreach purposes.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Dorian** to follow up with Landscape Planning Work Group to edit the indicator table.
- Note that the watershed indicator states that beyond a certain threshold of existing disturbance, any activity would further disturb the area, so MUGs beyond the threshold would be avoided.
- Regarding House, the Wishon area has a powerline that goes through the area. Consider lightening ignitions and the impact of power supplies to the west coast if any unforeseen events were to occur.
 - Power lines are not an ignition source, but lines do have to be shut down when fire is present.
- Note that Exchequer and Upper Big Creek are of importance due to human use (WUI).
- The timeline for Exchequer would be 18 months for project initiation. NEPA would begin after next field season (2014).
- There are opportunities communicate with local communities (through the Mountain Press, brochures, and designated points of contact), and continue further public outreach.
 - Yosemite-Sequoia RC&DC also has the "Chip Two" (spell?) Program that provides funding for outreach. Recommend contacting the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council to aid in providing outreach and additional funding to private landowners in the area to mitigate fire threats on their property. Highway 168 Fire Safe Council provides up to 50% fund matching for private landowners to do work on their lands.

- It is important to have defensible space both to protect houses from fires coming from outside, as well as to help stop the spread of any ignitions that occur at a house.
- Consider a different approach to the WUI, and mitigate threats to the species of interest, while meeting the needs of the WUI. Identify areas which are easily accessible to provide prescription treatments. There are more restrictions where species of concern are found.
- Past projects focused on mitigating the risk to houses within Upper Big Creek; part of the site has had recent treatments.
- Mr. Porter stated that he was comfortable with Exchequer being the MUG chosen by the group. He added that the group needed to focus on many factors and not only the WUI; the overall picture includes ecosystem restoration. The Upper Big Creek area's main component would be the WUI, it is more of an isolated pocket. Pacing of the schedule for the next project is important for completing planning on time; the pace might seem slow, but the Forest is working in Dinkey North & South, Eastfork, Soaproot, and Bald Mountain NEPA is nearing completion; the group is getting quite a bit accomplished. The group also has the ability to devote funds to specific tasks that are not within a new project, and perhaps they would want to do this to address fire risk in a place like Upper Big Creek; some existing projects, for example, haven't been completely funded.
- Mr. Rojas and Mr. Bagley noted the possibility of public-private treatment partnerships involving private land that is less steep.
- Ms. Ballard noted that all the easy fire prevention work was complete in Upper Big Creek. The area is a very risky area to work given unpredictable winds. The defensible fuel profile zone around homes helps mitigate this.

AGREEMENT: The group agreed that Exchequer will be the next General Project Area for project planning on the Dinkey Landscape.

Yes: Mr. Justin Augustine, Mr. Rich Bagley, Ms. Sue Britting, Mr. Narvell Conner, Mr. Kent Duysen, Mr. Larry Duysen, Mr. Ron Goode, Mr. Stan Harger, Mr. Steve Haze, Mr. Joe Kaminski, Mr. Ray Laclergue, Mr. John Mount, Ms. Justine Reynolds, Mr. Mark Smith, Mr. John Stewart, Mr. Craig Thomas, and Mr. Stan Van Velsor.

No: none.

3. General Updates

- **July Public Field Trip:**
 - Ms. Justine Reynolds gave a brief overview of the sites visited for the field trip (post-treatment landing, camp grounds, riparian area, water bars, and fisher rest site). Surveys were given to the public, and the findings showed individuals increased their knowledge from the field visit. Comments were as follows:

- Note that the public needs to be educated on the entire process of treatments, and include information about the specific equipment needed for implementation.
 - Consider a tour for public officials.
 - Use creative means to educate the public, and try to partner with other organizations and activities when hosting events.
 - Suggest creating a general PowerPoint presentation for members to present to any organization.
 - Consider social networking sites and other forms of technology to market public events.
 - **ACTION ITEM:** **Justine** to schedule a Communication Work Group meeting.
- **Project Updates:**
 - Ms. Ballard touched on each project's progress, and asked members if there were questions:
 - It was asked that members receive updates on any projects that do not get implemented, so the group can chart what was funded, and if it was implemented.
 - Mr. Porter explained that all Dinkey North and South treatments were done with the exception of fire treatments.
 - Have a conversation in the future about fire treatments feasibility (and all constraints) because most members have interest in prescribing burns, yet the targets established in the Dinkey Strategy are far from being met. The group needs to ascertain whether the estimates in the Strategy are realistic. The discussion should include the amount scheduled, funded, and completed. This information is also useful for the public.
 - Note that it would be beneficial to track the WUI contributions for the projects.
- **Aspen Fire**
 - Ms. Ballard gave an update to members about the Aspen fire, which was 90% contained. She noted important aspects about the fire:
 - Hotshot crews dealt with rugged terrain while creating dozer lines.
 - Winds created difficult environment for fire fighters to get in front of the fire.
 - The last fire recorded in the area was a 1939 source point fire that had a similar footprint.
 - Based on the soil burn severity map, approximately 1900 acres were of high severity, 33% moderate, 38% low, and 4300 acres of extremely low severity was indicated.
 - Rehabilitation work will follow to minimize erosion and hazardous trees.
 - Members had questions regarding the Aspen Fire:
 - There is interest in seeing how treatments affected fire behavior.

- Ms. Ballard noted that areas where mitigation took place mimicked a controlled under burn.
- There is interest in reviewing the research video cameras during the fire.
- **July 23 SCALE Meeting Update**
 - SCALE (Sierra Cascades All Lands Enhancement) meeting summary was reviewed by Mr. Van Velsor.
 - The group agreed to continue attending the SCALE meetings for the purpose of sharing information, fostering collaboration, and leveraging funding.
 - The three Collaborative Groups involved would apply for a \$40,000 grant from the National Forest Foundation for coordination. Any proposals would come to the full group before being endorsed.
 - The Forest Service Regional Office expressed support for the group. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy also would like to support SCALE.

4. Presentation of Full Draft Multiparty Monitoring Plan

Monitoring Plan and Monitoring Matrix

Mr. Van Velsor presented the following updates for the Monitoring Plan. Mr. Van Velsor then presented members with the progress on the Monitoring Matrix and reviewed the matrix table with Ms. Roberts. The following was discussed:

- To date the plan is 90% complete.
- Members were requested to review the final plan that was sent out to the group and prepare to discuss the plan at the next full meeting (September 19).
- The first phase of the socioeconomic contract with Sierra Institute should be complete by the end of the year or early 2014.
- Focus on adaptive management to find answers to the monitoring questions.
 - The indicators are measured over time, and feed into desired conditions and trigger points.
 - The monitoring plan should always adapt to new research.
 - It was suggested to clarify that observational approaches to monitoring also had protocols, not only experimental approaches.
- Regarding the Sierra Institute's contract, the members were interested in having a detailed discussion about what the interviews entailed. A discussion planned for the full Collaborative meeting on September 19th.
- A member asked if air quality could be monitored. For example, track the flow of smoke from fires in the mountains.
 - Ms. Ballard stated that she is working with air quality monitoring during prescribed burning.
 - Note that the community is concerned with the burns (particularly smoke). It was suggested that the Sierra Institute's research could include examination of

- the social concerns around smoke, including visual impact and qualitative measures, if it was not too late in the process.
 - It was suggested that in communication materials the group should demonstrate that the purpose of the fire is different than typical reasons, and contributes to larger goals.
- It was stated that there is an importance in reviewing the social responses to treatments. Current document only addresses the ecological issues, and the Sierra Institute is supplementing with the socioeconomic piece.
- A member stated interest in the overall ecology, and not focusing on the details but the health of the forest. The matrix has a range of questions that address different scales.
 - Regarding the matrix, interest was expressed in exploring the both quantitative and qualitative measures, and focus on how the smaller scale effects the larger forest scale.
 - The matrix has a range of questions that address different scales.
 - It would be important to continue discussing how the matrix informs landscape planning, and how to integrate and synthesize it for adaptive management.
 - **ACTION ITEM: Mr. Thomas, Ms. Roberts, Mr. John Mount, and Mr. Jamie Tuitele-Lewis** to discuss how to formalize the Collaborative's adaptive management process.
- It was suggested to the title of the Monitoring Matrix table to state that it focuses on ecological issues.
- A member wanted the group to utilize local resources, and collaborate with local organizations and the Sierra Institute for the socioeconomic monitoring.
 - The group expressed appreciation for the offer and supported the need to integrate local capacity.
 - It was noted that a lot of local resources are best suited to project implementation. At the same time, it was important to think during planning about opportunities for surrounding forest communities to be involved in implementation.

5. Forest Food Web Presentation

Mr. Ron Goode presented on the California Black Oak Restoration Work Shop. The workshop brought together regional tribes. Presentations were given by researchers, and are available to any interested members. The following topics were discussed in his presentation:

- Oak restoration has multiple benefits (Ex: fisher and acorn harvesting). Fire is necessary for the continued health of the oaks. Well- managed oaks produced acorns annually.
- Regarding Cultural burn strategy, four piles under trees were burned to produce the necessary smoke. More studies are to follow on the preferred amount of smoke and length of the burn.
- Four restoration sites were reviewed noting the various species affected by the burns (ex: the oak's food web).

- Mr. Goode stated that he was planning on publishing a book about the forest food web (includes cultural uses and species), which centers around the oak. He had visual aids for reference.
- Burns resulting in mass productions of acorns.
- There is a need to inform the public about the benefits of the oak cultural burns.
- The watershed benefits from the burning because healthy oaks retain water in their root system.
- Smoke kills the invasive mistletoe.
- Soaproot had a healthy oak grove where there was young growth and acorns present. The growth drew animals to the area, and created a healthy forest environment.
 - Potential to gather LiDAR information for Soaproot.
- The group should plan for oak restoration in Exchequer.
- Healthy oaks have could facilitate intertribal commerce through the selling of acorns throughout California.

6. Attendees

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| 1. Justin Augustine | 11. Dorian Fougères,
CCP | 20. John Mount |
| 2. Rich Bagley | | 21. Ray Porter, USFS |
| 3. Carolyn Ballard,
USFS | 12. Gabriella Golik,
CCP | 22. Justine Reynolds |
| 4. Sue Britting | 13. Ron Goode | 23. Susan Roberts |
| 5. Dirk Charley, USFS | 14. Dean Gould, USFS | 24. Ramiro Rojas, USFS |
| 6. Linda Clague | 15. Stan Harger | 25. Mark Smith |
| 7. Kim Coleman | 16. Steve Haze | 26. John Stewart |
| 8. Narvell Conner | 17. Andy Hosford,
USFS | 27. Craig Thomas |
| 9. Kent Duysen | | 28. Trudy Tucker |
| 10. Larry Duysen | 18. Joe Kaminski | 29. Stan Van Velsor |
| | 19. Ray Laclergue | 30. Cindy Whelan,
USFS |