

Madera County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) Meeting Notes  
November 17, 2010

**Location:** Bass Lake Ranger District (BLRD) Office, North Fork, CA

**Attendance (as listed on sign-in sheet):** Group A; Roger Mitchell, Don Warnock, Dan Carter, Mike Wubbels, Ron Davies. Group B; Steve Haze, Keith Sauer, John Youngquist, Joseph Frank, Joanne Freemire,, Warren Branche, Group C; Gary Gilbert-Chair, Tom Wheeler, Lynn Cogdill, Brett Matzke. Dave Martin-DFO, Julie Roberts-Coordinator, Pam Bierce-Forest Coordinator.

**Absences:** Frank Bigelow, Dave Hallam.

**Public Attendees:**

Jeanne Frank, Rick Lawin, Timberview Area Firewise Improvement Council.

**6:30 pm; Speaker phone for call-ins turned on, Gary Gilbert called the meeting to order.** Introductions by RAC members and public attendees were made.

**Additions to agenda, motion and vote if needed.**

Gary asked for any additions to the agenda. There were none. Motion was given to accept the agenda. The motion was 2<sup>nd</sup> and accepted.

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Review and approve minutes from 10/20/2010 meeting.** Gary Gilbert asked if there were any comments or changes to add to the 10/20/10 meeting notes;

Tom Wheeler asked about noticing to the public. He made the comment that there may be more projects that are not on the list that the committee wants to fund. He does not want to shut anyone out. Gary answered that all projects will be accepted and if they meet the guidelines they can be considered. Dave Martin will pre-approve for legality.

**Update on RAC members:**

Update on members. No word from David Hallam  
06:50 conference call turned off.

**Revisit the Meeting Night of the Week:**

Gary asked Roger if he had any concerns. Roger said that he is ok with the 3rd wed of the night. Removed from the agenda.

**Mission Guidelines (Attachment 1):**

Brett Matzke suggested that the word "preservation" be added to the last sentence of mission statement. John Youngquist stated that he does not feel that preservation fits in the mission because of the fire danger. Gary Gilbert asked how many want to see preservation in the statement. Joanne Freemire and Brett voted yes, rest no. Steve stated that preservation fits for water quality but not for forest health. It was decided to leave mission statement as is with the grammar edits.

**Mission Guidelines (con't):**

Mike Wubbels would like to see a change in second and third paragraphs regarding road maintenance, feels that road maintenance is a priority. 50% of Title II funds are for road maintenance. Gary Gilbert will make the addition to the guidelines and will quote the law. Julie Roberts will make changes on copy.

**Project Priority Consensus:**

Dave Martin took the list of possible projects from the October meeting and put these projects in groups of like type providing general categories of types of projects the group may consider. Projects with a \* are additional projects since the last meeting. These projects have been posted on the board for the group to consider and come to a consensus regarding project prioritization. The list was consolidated into the following priority categories; control of invasive species, natural resource education, pre-suppression FireWise information and education, recreation, wildland fuel reduction and strategic Fuel Breaks, and wildlife habitat and native species protection.

Dave Martin suggested that the group will come to an agreement more so than a consensus regarding prioritizing the project list.

**Discussion from Group Leaders, Group A, B, C on Project Priorities:**

- Joanne Freemire recommended combining wildlife and habitat and preservation projects.
- Gary Gilbert suggested that control of invasive needs to stand alone.
- Discussion continued regarding grouping of projects after vote. Main grouping came from previous meetings where group discussed their priorities.
- Vote will be used to narrow and show groups focus on the project types that have been submitted.
- John Younquist asked what project will fit the criteria.
- Tom Wheeler states that he would put specific project down.
- Gary Gilbert stated that group should discuss and put together like projects. Cooperative fuel breaks and continuation of fuel breaks.
- Dave Martin explained the difference between fuel reduction vs. fuel breaks.
- Don Warnock suggested that Nelder Grove be put under recreation.
- Dave Martin stated that the project grouping will allow other possible projects will be able to see if they want to continue with submission...match a type of project. Help this group to reach a consensus when new projects come in.
- Gary Gilbert continued the discussion regarding placement of projects and project groupings. Tactical vs. strategic groupings. Firewise and education are examples of tactical level. Strategic would be considered fuel breaks, fuel reduction.
- Recreation and Education suggested as another grouping. Gary Gilbert placed projects into six groups.
- Dan Carter stated that Nelder Grove fuel load reduction listed under "Other" should be under fuel reduction.

19:30-19:45 break

### **Voting Project Priorities:**

Dave Martin, Julie and Gary Gilbert reorganized project list posted for voting.

- 1-Fuel Reduction and Strategic Fuel Breaks 2-Presuppression FireWise Information and Education 3-Wildlife and Habitat Protection and Native Species 4-Control Of Invasive Species 5-Education 6-Recreation
- Dave Martin explained the voting procedure. Each group member will vote by placing the numbers 1, 2, 3 on project categories. Each person has three stickers: #3 is to be placed on your highest priority project, #1 is lowest priority and #2 middle priority.
- Joan Freemire asked if National Scenic Byway would be placed under recreation.
- Gary Gilbert will be voting for Frank Bigelow, as per e-mail received from Frank.
- Lynn Cogill wants everyone to remember that “education and youth” is the Forest Service of tomorrow.
- Group members placed votes.
- 19:45-19:55 Dave Martin and Julie Roberts tallied numbers. Use for the group and the public to determine what projects are most important to this group. Voting results: Fuel Reduction and Strategic Fuel Breaks chosen as first priority projects, second priority projects are Recreation, followed by Presuppression Firewise information and education, Wildlife and habitat protection, Control of invasive species, and Education.
- Joan Freemire questioned where would biomass fit in? Recreation.
- Project priorities will be summarized and sent out with notes.
- Reason for going thru this step is that there is only \$222,000 and this will help determine how to get the most return for your money. Julie Roberts stated that this will become public through these notes. It will be stated as the group’s highest priority projects.

### **Discussion regarding projects:**

- Gary Gilbert would like to revisit guidelines. Everyone in this group has very diverse interests, stressed the fact that no one will get everything that they want and that it’s imperative that the group works together. Three no votes from any group will stop a project. There needs to be cooperation and collaboration within the group as to why project is important etc. That is why this is set up this way. Consensus of the group says ...if you can explain why you hate a project.
- Mike W. road maint is important and is far behind. If roads are grown over what use is it, can’t use. Mike has a group that is cleaning culverts, etc. trying to catch up. Dave some things cost more than others. MVUM comes out you should know where you are and suppose to go/be. Linchpin, have to be marked. Continue to ride and recreate on those roads like they have in past. Working diligently on signs.
- Tom W. Dave has done brushing project, good job. ARRA money. Maps and signage up so that the public. Road maintenance, watershed, projects must fit under/meet the test of 50% requirement. Forest officer must make the determination if projects meet these criteria. Fixing pothole would not fit under the 50% intent for watershed improvement. Think of anything you would do to prevent dirty water coming off a road....fits criteria.

### **News Release:**

Discussion regarding the news release included:

- The news release given to the group is an example to look over and make changes, additions before sending it to the newspapers.
- Joan Freemire said that statement regarding RAC funding for one year is a little vague. Drop sentence completely.

- Gary Gilbert commented on proposals accepted paragraph. Corrections made. Take proposal paragraph out.
- Tom Wheeler suggested January 12, 2011 as cutoff. Gary Gilbert states that they need to be prepared for the meeting on January 19, 2011 and that the deadline date should be January 7, 2011.
- Julie stated that projects will be posted on the website. Dave Martin said that the only ones that will remain on the website will be the ones that he has accepted which meet the criteria. He also said there could be a lot of RAC proposals.
- Julie will forward accepted proposals out to the group.
- Keith Sauer asked if there is the option of having presentations on the projects that are accepted.
- Brett Matzke asked if there is a cap on the amount of money requested. Gary states that there has never been a minimum or maximum.
- Lynn Cogill asked regarding snow chains needed for area in January. Dave states that they usually cancel meeting if snowing, etc.
- Gary Gilbert asked what newspapers release would be sent to: Fresno Bee, Sierra Star, Madera Community, Sierra Sun, Yelp. Also, send out to members so that they can pass information on and also send any other email addresses to Pam to be added to the list.
- Julie read meeting notes regarding future meetings in January if needed. Possible meeting dates: 19, 26 and February 2, 2011.
- Joan Freemire asked if something should be added to the press release regarding fire safety and education. Replace the wording on the press release to reflect the priority project.
- Press Release will be sent out by next week with follow up in mid December.
- Dave Martin asked about changing wording on website: edit mission guidelines.....last paragraph to website to clarify for the public. List project categories alphabetically. That way it doesn't look like one category is being favored over another.

1930-1945 Break. Conference call turned off.

Gary Gilbert asked if there were any member or public comments.

Comments from group: Joan Freemire would like to make a comment regarding the Cascadel Woods project she mentioned last meeting. Cascadel Woods environmental check list, gave to Dave to look over. Negative declaration for the state. Gary looked at it as well. Fuel treatment project done by FSC nonprofit ...hired an outside consultant to do environmental studies. She has the right to ask how they did the public notice Joan stated that they did an arch study but not one on native plants. Are they required? Tom Wheeler said that they have to go look at and document it. Only if someone objects to their comment that there isn't effects.

The next meeting will be on January 19<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM, at the Bass Lake Ranger District Office in North Fork. Agenda items will include: First look at submitted proposals and possible proposal voting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.