MEETING SUMMARY | Dinkey Collaborative Full Group

September 15, 2011

Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, Sierra National Forest

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Action Items

1. Mr. Jones-Yellin to circulate the fuels management budgets (including recent years and 2012, and the projects included therein) and solicit questions in preparation for October 28.
2. Mr. Jones-Yellin to email Larry, Gareth, and Andre an invitation to the December 1 meeting and the Collaborative roster.
3. Mr. Jones-Yellin to distribute a revised form for members to indicate their contributed time, indicating whichever number is higher – the full cost of time contributed, or per hourly rate. Members are asked to return the form by October 7.
4. Mr. Jones-Yellin to distribute a draft annual report to the Collaborative on October 14, with comments due October 25, and a recap of comments and revisions provided on October 28, and the final report going to the Regional Office on October 31.
5. Mr. Jones-Yellin and Mr. Rojas to ask in his network for any recommended candidates for the monitoring coordinator position.

6. Mr. Thomas to recontact The Nature Conservancy about their interest, as well as the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.
7. Mr. Meyer to create a revised monitoring coordinator position description that focuses on short-term tasks.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Mosé Jones-Yellin, Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project (DLRP) manager for the Sierra National Forest (SNF), welcomed the participants to the full Collaborative meeting and reviewed the agenda. Facilitator Mr. Dorian Fougères, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS, reviewed the meeting ground rules and handouts.

2. Questions Posed to the Regional Office

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that Deputy Regional Forester Dan Jiron regretfully could not make the meeting as hoped. He then shared information he gathered on each topic.

A. A Regional Conservation Strategy for Pacific Fisher

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that a response was pending on this topic, and would be provided at the October 28 meeting.

- Mr. Craig Thomas noted that Forest Service researchers needed to work with academic and other researchers to gather new and synthesize existing scientific information. The fisher is likely to be listed as an endangered species in 2014, so starting to plan now would be greatly beneficial. He has been working with Steve Brink, an industry representative, and feels it is critical to involve the Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station and conduct a bioregional assessment. The process requires experimentation and testing to move forward, not a disregard for standards and guidelines. The first step would be to create a scope and work plan, including synthesis of existing information.
- Mr. Mark Smith suggested that part of the challenge was the organizational structure, and that the Regional Office had to be lobbied to give this task to its southern Sierra zone (Sierra, Sequoia, and Stanislaus National Forests). The supervisors of these three forests used to meet, Sierra and Sequoia have district biologists that could be project leads, rather than the Regional Office itself.

B. A Regional Strategy for the Use of Prescribed Fire

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that a response was also pending on this topic, and would be provided at the October 28 meeting.

- Mr. Thomas emphasized that he could not call the project "restoration" if it did not involve fire, and single-entry treatments were typically inadequate. If the Forest Service cannot seriously support this, it should tell members immediately. Mr. Thomas wanted

SNF Supervisor Armentrout and a Regional Office representative to attend a full Collaborative meeting to discuss this openly.

- Mr. Kent Duysen commented that the Forest's fuels and fire budgets for 2011 and 2012 were needed to help determine whether implementation needed to look beyond the local to the region as a whole. The group agreed to look at this information before deciding who else to bring into the conversation.
- Mr. Rojas suggested a more accurate indicator was the acres treated with a certain amount of funding.
- **ACTION ITEM**: Mr. Jones-Yellin to circulate the fuels management budgets (including recent years and 2012, and the projects included therein) and solicit questions in preparation for October 28.

C. A Regional Strategy for the Biomass Utilization

Mr. Larry Swan, Gareth Mayhead, and Andre Reichoft joined the group by telephone for this portion of the meeting. Discussion highlights included:

- This topic is integrated with the others, including prescribed fire.
- Moving biomass to the market where it can garner the highest value, or creating such markets if they do not exist, depends on careful analysis of the best use of each piece of biomass.
    - One or more of the experts will attend the December 1 Collaborative meeting to present on and discuss this topic in detail, and the potential for more detailed analysis of options/feasibility study based on explicit criteria for success.
    - Factors include the requisite equipment and roads; long-term consistency in the flow of such products from the land; and subsidization of energy prices, including cogeneration of power and heat, appraisal points, assigning value, increasing acreage and establishing large-scale contracts, integrating resource and timber contracts, and stewardship groups/partners that can help with the costs.
- Concern was expressed about the current climate for small businesses and the challenge of funding further studies when action is needed now.
- The biomass working group could help frame the options and analysis, given their expertise with policy, regional dynamics, valuation of the ecosystem benefits to society, and a regional pilot project; existing studies are helpful and need updating.
- Elissa Brown is a point of contact for the North Fork work on this topic, and will report to the SFCC.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Jones-Yellin to email Larry, Gareth, and Andre an invitation to the December 1 meeting and the Collaborative roster.

D. Funding for Dinkey and the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

Mr. Larry Swan, Gareth Mayhead, and Andre Reichoft joined the group by telephone for this portion of the meeting.

- Mr. Jones-Yellin explained that 30% of the CFLR budget is taken by Forest Service headquarters in Washington, D.C., and the remainder divided among the projects based

primarily on their records of success (their decision criteria are not available). On paper the DLRP looks good.

- Mr. Thomas suggested forming a small work group to lobby for the DLRP, with information and materials provided in part by the Forest Service. This could emphasize the air quality, endangered species, and public utility concerns of the Forest. Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that lobbying was not restricted by the CFLR, although neither was it encouraged.
    - Mr. Kent Duysen suggested that different Collaborative members could play different roles in a finance work group, and share a common schedule and approach.
    - **AGREEMENT**: The Collaborative agreed to form a Finance Work Group. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Duysen volunteered to serve on this group and have a follow-up call, reporting back to the group on their ideas and plans.
- Ms. Pam Flick noted that such efforts should be careful to not undermine other lobbying efforts being conducted by stakeholders.

3. Joint Fact-Finding on Ladder Fuels

Mr. Fougères reviewed the document that summarized the results of the joint fact-finding work on ladder fuels in fisher den buffers for the Soaproot project.

- Ms. Kim Sorini-Wilson clarified that this applies to all past and current den sites.
- The group asked about the sequencing of the recommendations regarding first threat and defense zones, and then threat zones specifically. It was clarified that the intent was to follow the structure laid out in the standards and guidelines.
- The group agreed that the scope should be increased to include spotted owl protected activity centers, with this reflected in the document title.
- The group noted the need to reference the record of decision.
- **AGREEMENT:** The Collaborative agreed to adopt the principles and recommendation from the joint fact-finding work group on ladder fuels in fisher den buffers in Soaproot, with the final document requiring revisions noted above.

4. Desired Involvement of Cold Springs Rancheria

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted he had worked with Mr. Steve Marsh, District Archaeologist, to assist Cold Springs Rancheria in compiling a summary of the important topics identified in consultation by the Sierra National Forest, utility companies (P.G.&E.), and other federal agencies (F.E.R.C., Army Corps of Engineers) with Cold Springs Rancheria and interested Mono people regarding National Forest land uses in the Dinkey Collaborative Landscape area. The corresponding handout was meant to provide guidance to the Collaborative on the issues about which the Tribe cared most. The Honorable Robert Marquez, Chairman of Cold Springs Rancheria, was not able to attend, so discussion of this document was postponed.

5. Soaproot NEPA Alternatives

Mr. Jones-Yellin reminded members that the Forest put out a scoping notice, received comments, created an initial list of corresponding alternatives, and worked with the Collaborative's Technical Work Group to refine these and develop a proposed action that best addressed people's concerns.

- In response to a question, Ms. Sorini-Wilson confirmed there are no goshawk protected activity centers.
- In response to a request from Mr. Craig Thomas to be more explicit in the alternatives, Mr. Jones-Yellin confirmed that the first alternative includes prescribed burning and herbicide treatment.
- Mr. Sean Ferreria recommended that more attention be paid to timing and segmenting prescribed burns, whether in NEPA or in the burn plan, to ensure that air quality standards are met.
- Mr. Thomas remarked that the GTR 220 does not have specific guidelines. He noted he thought that an assessment of the results of the Dinkey North and South work would inform this work, and that the GTR 220 would be considered in this context.
- **AGREEMENT:** The Collaborative agreed to conduct an optional field visit on Friday, October 14, to visit and assess the results of the Dinkey North and South work.
- Mr. Thomas noted that he could therefore support the proposed alternatives, but with reservations that would need to be addressed through the field visit and revisions to the text per the group's conversation.
- The group debated how to include language about snag creation, with their intent being that this constitute one of the possible tools that could be used, and any use of such a tool be based on scientific analysis. It was also noted that the monitoring matrix should include monitoring of whether wildlife use the large snags created through such treatments.
- **AGREEMENT:** The Collaborative agreed to the proposed alternatives provided they included the following revisions:
    - Soaproot Alternative 1:
        - "…and pockets of high density, and using large snag creation of white fir and incense cedar, where appropriate, as one of the tools to advance ecological restoration objectives and improve wildlife habitat creation."
        - Replace reference to GTR 220 guidelines with reference to concepts from GTR 220
        - Clarify the ladder fuels sentence so that dependent clauses are clearly consistent with the approved recommendation.
        - Specify the use of prescribe fire and herbicides.
    - Soaproot Alternative 2:
        - "…girdled to create snags, or allowed to remain as live trees."
- Members then signed letters of support for the project, indicating reservations if they had reservations. These follow below:
    - Pam Flick: "My reservations are based on the uncertainty of what 'GTR 220 thin' achieves given the lack of monitoring done thus far on Dinkey North & Soputh,

as discussed by the group. I hope to rearrange my schedule in order to participate in the October 14th site visit to help inform the group on this issue.
    - Sue Britting & Craig Thomas: "Sierra Forest Legacy's support is with reservations because we want to have a clearer understanding about the outcome of the prescriptions in Dinkey north/south project. It is not clear if the marking guidelines in Dinkey north/south accomplished the desired outcome. Monitoring results from the Dinkey north/south project need to be evaluated and considered in developing the prescriptions and marking guidelines for the Soaproot project.
    - Richard Bagley – full
    - Richard Kangas – neutral: I will not comment on this project. But I still prefer larger trees to be left living with burning a preferred treatment. In this respect larger trees would be all trees greater than 20" dbh and sufficient replacements above 12" to allow larger sizes to proliferate. Then forest and ecological restoration will be promoted.
    - Kent Duysen – with reservations (no explanatory statement)
    - Mark Smith – neutral
    - Larry Duysen – full
    - Matt Meadow – full, and explanation: So long as monitoring of alternative actions takes place and effectiveness of activities is determined. Specifically, are "created large snags" actually used by wildlife?
    - John Mount – neutral
    - Raymond Laclergue – neutral
- Mr. Chad Hanson, participating by telephone, was unable to sign a letter. The facilitator noted he would follow-up with Mr. Hanson and provide him with a similar opportunity.

6. Eastfork NEPA Alternatives

Mr. Jones-Yellin reminded members that – like with Soaproot – the Forest put out a scoping notice, received comments, created an initial list of corresponding alternatives, and worked with the Collaborative's Technical Work Group to refine these and develop a proposed action that best addressed people's concerns.

- Mr. Hanson requested inserting the same language about snags from the Soaproot project, amending the language about the GTR 220 per the Soaproot project, and adding language about spot fires. He noted he had sent in proposed wording to Mr. Jones-Yellin.
    - The group discussed possible language for how to best capture Mr. Hanson's suggestion for including high intensity fire.
    - Mr. Rojas noted that Ms. Carolyn Ballard, not present, had expressed previous concern about high intensity fire in mixed conifer areas. He noted that this approach would likely achieve a mix of fire severities, and he was okay with that.
        - Ms. Britting noted that this clarification was important, and implied that one would look for specific conditions conducive to mixed severities.

    - Mr. Thomas suggested that further conversation with Ms. Ballard and a review of the literature could help clarify where and how much of this was appropriate.
    - Mr. Hanson clarified he was proposing this specifically for Bear Ridge, which did not have mixed conifers.
    - Mr. Alan Gallegos and Ms. Julie Gott, SNF, noted that the use of high intensity fire could jeopardize stream and sediment objectives by increasing erosion.
    - Mr. Ferreria noted that letting spot fires roam might be problematic if they burn for a long period, as burn permits were typically for short periods. Segmenting would thus be important again, as in Soaproot. And in some cases the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District might require that a fire be completed faster.
- Mr. Thomas noted his same reservation about the GTR 220 as expressed for Soaproot.
- Mr. Thomas also asked for clarification about the removal of lodgepole pine in the meadow area, asking whether this could be used for snag creation.
- Mr. Rich Bagley asked for clarification on "incremental restorative activities," noting it could be interpreted as pre-decisional. Mr. Jones-Yellin noted the intent was to include a range of restoration tools, and this could be clarified.
- **AGREEMENT:** The Collaborative agreed to the proposed alternatives provided they included the following revisions:
    - Eastfork Alternative 1:
        - Similar to the revision to Soaproot, replace "mixed conifer stands would be thinned according to the GTR 220 guidelines, fir stands would be thinned to approximate conditions without fire suppression" with "vegetation treatment in mixed conifer and fir would use concepts from GTR 220"
        - Subsequently add, "and using large snag creation of white fir…" and the same language from Soaproot, adjusted for the appropriate verb tenses. Also include lodgepole pine with white fir and incense cedar.
        - After "…spot fires would be ignited and monitored" add "with the goal of creating high, moderate, and low intensity patches, in order to improve habitat for black-backed woodpecker and associated wildlife species." (This should be double-checked with the final language produced on-screen by Mr. Jones-Yellin.)
        - Clarify what will be done in meadows, including tree removal, lodgepole pine treatment, and aspen treatment.
    - Eastfork Alternative 2:
        - After "stand thinning" add "snag creation"
        - Note same reservation about GTR 220 and need to utilize results from Dinkey North and South
        - Note the concern about the duration of fire (and possible direction to increase intensity to shorten duration, if needed for air quality standards), and the potential to offset this concern by segmenting the burn.

- Members then signed letters of support for the project, indicating reservations if they had reservations. These follow below:
    - Sue Britting and Craig Thomas – Sierra Forest Legacy's support is with reservations because we want to have a clearer understanding about the outcome of the prescriptions in Dinkey north/south project. It is not clear if the marking guidelines in Dinkey north/south project accomplished the desired outcomes. Monitoring results from Dinkey north and south need to be evaluated and considered in developing the prescriptions and marking guidelines for the Soaproot project.
    - Shawn Ferreria – Segment restoration projects will facilitate/mitigate air quality concerns. "Spot fires would be ignited and monitored." Duration; need to account for air quality impacts over long duration of time. Also segmentation.
    - Pam Flick – My reservations for the Eastfork proposal are based on the uncertainty of "GTR 220 thinning guidelines" (as discussed, which are not actually treatment guidelines) and outcome of such treatments as implemented on Dinkey North & South.
    - Larry Duysen – If a low water crossing will address the riparian and aquatic issues, why will the road need decommissioning? The road is necessary to provide future access for management activities for decades, including fire suppression.
    - Matt Meadows – full - same comment as Soaproot.
    - Mark Smith – neutral
    - John Mount – neutral - I see no reason to decommission any road.
    - Richard Bagley – full
    - Kent Duysen – with reservations, no explanatory statement attached
    - Richard Kangas – I will comment on this project in order to affect meadow restoration activities that might seem deleterious.
- Mr. Gallegos reiterated, "Planning high intensity fire is counter to soil and watershed management objectives and is against LMP standards and guidelines."

7. Proposed Approach to 2012 Dinkey Collaborative Activities

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that the Collaborative had begun discussing this topic at its August meeting, and he would like to shift from a project-by-project approach to a landscape-level approach. The handout explained his approach, which would have one level of interaction at the landscape, and the other focusing on specific tools. He explained that Mr. Gallegos' presentation provided an example of how landscape-level questions could be analyzed.

Mr. Gallegos then presented Sierra National Forest work on the assessment of meadows, noting the underlying data was available for those interested. His presentation slides are

available to Collaborative members, along with all other meeting materials, on DataBasin.org. Questions followed.

- The first data set came from 1944, which Mr. Gallegos believed was a good baseline given the limited activity in meadows on the south side of the San Joaquin River at that time.
- The discrepancy between lower encroachment estimated by aerial photography and higher encroachment confirmed by field visits was due to historically black and white contrast compared with color photographs, inability of aerial photographs to pick up small seedlings.
- Encroachment figures also relied on soil sampling in the area surrounding meadows.
- The numbers for the Dinkey Landscape could be broken out of the larger dataset.

8. Preview: Annual Report Requirements

Mr. Jones-Yellin noted that handouts included the annual report template and instructions shared with the group one year ago. He also would like members to indicate the time they have spent on Collaborative work by filling out the volunteer service record, including not just implementation and monitoring, but also work for planning, material preparation, negotiation, and meetings. Mr. Fougères noted he would share a "collaboration statistics" document to help members track the variety of meetings and their duration over the past year.

- Ms. Britting noted that several members are paid by their organizations to be involved, so they are not volunteering but rather providing matching funds, and a form should be developed to reflect this.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Jones-Yellin to distribute a revised form for members to indicate their contributed time, indicating whichever number is higher – the full cost of time contributed, or per hourly rate. Members are asked to return the form by October 7.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Jones-Yellin to distribute a draft annual report to the Collaborative on October 14, with comments due October 25, and a recap of comments and revisions provided on October 28, and the final report going to the Regional Office on October 31.

9. Informational Items

A. University of Arizona Doctoral Student Survey Request

Mike Wood is conducting a survey of CLFR members and a link to his short survey will be provided via email. Members are asked to respond.

B. Collaborative Member Biography Document

A first draft is available, members who have not sent in a biographical statement and photo are asked to do so.

C. Draft Fact Sheet and Promotional Materials

A draft fact sheet modeled on an example from The Nature Conservancy was shared with the group. Members were asked to send in suggestions on additional topics, messages, and audiences to the facilitator for inclusion in future promotional materials.

D. Snowy Patterson Project Update and Timeline

An internal draft of the environmental assessment is due the week of September 19, and will be available of public review in following weeks.

E. Finance Work Group

Craig Thomas and Kent Duysen will talk further and update the group on their proposal at the next full Collaborative meeting. This would include letters to the press and Congress members, planned visits, a list of topics covered, audiences, overall intentions, talking points, and other information.

F. Monitoring Matrix Presentation and Coordinator Proposal

The October 28 meeting will include a presentation on a full draft monitoring matrix. Mr. Meyer presented a proposal for a part-time monitoring coordinator position, noting that all other CFLRs have such a position. There are many different approaches and funding could be kept to a minimum to avoid cutting into the budget for actual monitoring work.

- Mr. Jones-Yellin expressed concern about hiring someone from outside the Collaborative, given the time it would take to get them up to speed. He suggested looking within participating organizations first. He also expressed concern that budget cuts might undermine such a position.
- Ms. Britting replied that she was unsure whether participating organizations had the capacity or appropriate staff. She also suggested that monitoring was a priority in the CFLR Act, and if budgets were reduced then consideration should be given to what else can be reduced in order to safeguard monitoring.
- Mr. Rojas suggested that a contract could be set up for this work at the end of the fiscal year, and end of year money could be put into an agreement that protects the funding for several years. He also noted that a Forest Service retired annuitant could be hired,
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Jones-Yellin and Mr. Rojas to ask in his network for any recommended candidates for the monitoring coordinator position.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Thomas to recontact The Nature Conservancy about their interest, as well as the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.
- Mr. Meyer suggested that short-term needs be differentiated from long-term needs, and agreed to revise the proposal to call out short-term needs to cover critical tasks for the next field season, even if this is only a 25%-time position.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** Mr. Meyer to create a revised monitoring coordinator position description that focuses on short-term tasks.

10. Closing Remarks

Mr. Jones-Yellin thanked members for their participation, including their attention to the Soaproot and Eastfork project alternatives.

11. Participants

1. Elaine Alaniz, USFS
2. Rich Bagley
3. Sue Britting
4. Darcy Brown, USFS
5. Kent Duysen
6. Larry Duysen
7. Sean Ferreria
8. Pamela Flick
9. Dorian Fougères, facilitator
10. Alan Gallegos, USFS
11. Julie Gott, USFS
12. Chad Hanson (by telephone)
13. Mosé Jones-Yellin, USFS
14. Rich Kangas
15. Ray Laclergue
16. Gareth Mayhead (by telephone)
17. Sam Magill, facilitation support
18. Matt Meadows
19. Marc Meyer, USFS
20. John Mount
21. Andre Reichoft (by telephone)
22. Ramiro Rojas, USFS
23. Mark Smith
24. Kim Sorini-Wilson, USFS
25. Larry Swan, USFS (by telephone)
26. Craig Thomas
27. Stan Van Velsor
28. Cindy Whelan, USFS