

Plumas County Coordinating Council

**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF
AUGUST 5, 2011**

1. **Call to Order / Roll Call** - 1:01 p.m.
Present: Brian Morris (Chair), Robert Perreault (Vice Chair), Supervisor Sherrie Thrall, Supervisor Terry Swofford, Frank Stewart
Absent: Randy Wilson

2. **Public Comment Opportunity**
Terri Simon-Jackson, Planning Staff Officer - Plumas National Forest, provides handouts pertaining to the following field trips:
 1. Beckwourth Ranger District Field Trip: Cow Creek Stream Restoration, Freeman Fuel Reduction Project, August 11, 2011, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 2. Eagle Lake Ranger District Field Tour: Lyons Fuel Reduction Project, August 17, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Ms. Simon-Jackson invites anyone who is interested to attend these field trips.

Ms. Simon-Jackson introduces the new Plumas National Forest Deputy Forest Supervisor, Lawrence Crabtree.

Mr. Crabtree states that the Motorized Vehicle Use Maps will be available next week (hardcopy and Internet).

Mr. Crabtree relays the announcement of the new Plumas National Forest Supervisor, Mr. Earl Ford.

3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes**
Frank Stewart compliments Brian Morris on his comment on Page 2, Item 5, Paragraph 3, Line 10, *...consideration of overgrown forest conditions and excessive fuel loading, which are the primary issues for local forests, have been minimized by the nationwide formula outlined by the Forest Service.*

Terri Simon-Jackson asks that Page 2, Item 5, Paragraph 3, Line 3, beginning Ms Simon-Jackson..., is changed to read as follows:

Ms Simon-Jackson states there will be a collaborative meeting, including counties, at the end of July or beginning of August, and that a plan will need to be written before the end of September.

A motion is made by Supervisor Thrall and seconded by Supervisor Swofford to adopt the meeting minutes of July 8, 2011, as corrected. Motion is passed.

4. Recovery Efforts for Salmon and Steelhead

Brian Morris introduces Alice Berg from the NOAA Fisheries Service. Ms. Berg begins her presentation, accompanied by PowerPoint slides, explaining how she is currently involved in salmon recovery efforts. Ms. Berg lists various threats identified in the Salmon/Steelhead recovery plans and states that the proposed recovery strategy focuses on securing existing Salmon and Steelhead populations and reintroducing them to their historic habitats. Ms. Berg provides background information about dam construction from the turn of the century to the 1970s and the resulting 80% decline in fish populations. Ms. Berg also mentions the impact that climate change will have on fisheries in the future. Frank Stewart asks, "Why introduce fish if they cannot get over the dams." Ms. Berg explains that there are collaborative efforts in place to fix the problem by way of fish ladders and/or trapping and hauling. Ms. Berg stresses how important partnerships (with stakeholders, landowners, and Forest Service) will be in order to have successful outcomes. Mr. Morris asks how proposals to reintroduce salmon in the Upper Feather River Region under the Central Valley Recovery Plan relate to the Habitat Expansion Agreement between PG&E and the Department of Water Resources. Ms. Berg answers that review and discussion continues so the outcome is an unknown at this point. Ms. Berg adds that the North Fork and Middle Fork of the Feather River are part of those considerations. Conversation continues with a focus on the effects of logging and fires bordering fish habitat areas and the economic impact that reduced fish populations have had on the sport fishing industry. Ms. Berg concludes that NOAA hopes to be involved in future planning processes as early as possible.

5. Forest Service Conditional Waiver

Brian Morris identifies the Conditional Waiver of the Clean Water Act and the State Water Quality Act for the Forest Service, and states that he has a copy of the document if anyone would like to read it. Mr. Morris gives additional background information and focuses on the portion dealing with catastrophic wildfire and the impact it has on water quality. Mr. Morris adds that this item will be on a Board of Supervisor's agenda in the near future.

6. Title III Project Proposal Overview

Brian Morris states that County Staff (Morris, Planning Department, OES) have put together a proposal for the Board of Supervisors to review at their September 20, 2011, meeting in reference to Title III funding. The proposal provides requests \$400,000 to support a County Fire Warden, OES, the County Forester, the Coordinating Council, and the elements of the Planning Department's General Plan update related to wildfire protection. There are also two other proposals to support the Plumas County Fire Safe Council and to reimburse the Plumas County Sheriff's Department for emergency services on National Forest lands.

7. Update on Standing Issues

a. Forest Service Travel Management

Bob Perreault states that there are still efforts being made to schedule a meeting with other counties in October. Brian Morris contributes that the Sierra Access Coalition sent out an announcement that they are preparing to file a lawsuit pertaining to the Plumas National Forest Travel Management Plan, and that Plumas County was considering joining them as a party in that lawsuit.

b. Forest Service/RCRC/CSAC Memorandum of Agreement

Brian Morris states that he is waiting to hear back from them.

c. Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Pilot Project

Frank Stewart reports that discussions are taking place regarding continuation of the pilot project.

8. Legislation Update

a. H.R. 1581 (McCarthy) – *Return inventoried roadless areas to multiple use if not recommended for wilderness designation*

Brian Morris states that the House Natural Resources Committee had a hearing recently and they are moving forward with the legislation.

b. H.R. 242 (Herger) – *Suspend implementation of Travel Management Rule*

Brian Morris reports that this legislation is not moving forward on its own, but the House Appropriations Committee has included a provision in the Fiscal Year 2012 Forest Service appropriations bill to prohibit spending any money on implementation of the Travel Management Rule. Mr. Morris hands out a committee report (titled: *H.R. 2584 Dept. of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012*) directing the Forest Service to suspend implementation of the rule and to work on designating additional routes. This is similar to the appropriations bill passed by the House for the current fiscal year, which did not become law.

c. Stewardship Contracting

Frank Stewart reports that a bill is being drafted and should be introduced in the near future.

d. Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization

Frank Stewart shares his concern that there is no authorized funding for Secure Rural Schools after 2011 and that budgeting could become an interesting dilemma. Mr. Stewart adds that there is interest in rolling Title III funds into Title II. Mr. Stewart comments that it is Fire Safe Council's job, at the county level, to send letters to legislative representatives to make sure that Title III is under the control of the Board of Supervisors. Under current law, the Board has the option to dedicate some funding to Title III or to use it all for Title II.

e. Other bills

Frank Stewart, Brian Morris, and Lee Anne Schramel-Taylor (Forest Service Representative) provide information regarding AB1x 29, a trailer bill to the state budget which will impose a fire prevention fee on all habitable structures in State Responsibility Areas. For Plumas County, the bill affects all private property except Chester, Quincy, Portola, and part of Sierra Valley. The Governor is pursuing new legislation to change the purposes for which the money can be used from fire prevention to fire suppression. Legal challenges are expected because the so-called fee meets the legal definition of a tax, but it was not approved by a two-thirds vote in the Legislature.

9. Litigation Update

a. Travel Management

i. **Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation v. U.S.F.S. (Eldorado National Forest)**

Brian Morris states that there has been a decision from the Eastern District Court and that generally upheld the Forest Service decision on the Eldorado National Forest against a challenge by an environmental group. Mr. Morris continues that the court did find that the Forest Service violated the National Forest Management Act and Endangered Species Act in a few areas, so they sent the parties back to negotiate an appropriate remedy.

ii. **Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center v. U.S.F.S. (Stanislaus National Forest)**

Brian Morris reports that this matter is still before the judge, who has requested briefing on application of the Eldorado decision.

b. **Center for Biological Diversity, et al. v. California Department of Parks and Recreation, et al. (challenging EIR and funding for over-snow vehicle program)**

Bob Perreault states there is nothing new to report. Mr. Perreault elaborates that this issue is a threat to snowmobile activity within the Plumas National Forest, and it also gets into revenue contracts with the state for snowplowing the trailheads used for snowmobiling.

c. **Sierra Nevada Framework and Basin Project**

Frank Stewart states that he is waiting for the announcement of the next hearing date. Mr. Stewart adds that he plans to attend that hearing. Mr. Stewart provides related information concerning the Angora Fire, and projects in the Eagle Lake and Almanor Districts.

Brian Morris reports that the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal ruled against Butte County in its efforts to get the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to order the Department of Water Resources to provide reimbursement for public services provided at Lake Oroville. Butte County was seeking interim reimbursement from the time the FERC license expired in 2007 until a new license is eventually issued. This lawsuit was separate from the CEQA lawsuit that Butte and Plumas Counties are pursuing in state court.

10. **Meetings and Other Activities**

a. **Regional Council of Rural Counties meeting with U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Regional Forester – June 22**

Bob Perreault distributes copies of the final letter from the Board of Supervisors to RCRC regarding the pending memorandum of agreement between the Forest Service and California counties. Mr. Perreault also shares copies of an email and notes that were published by RCRC from the last roundtable meeting. Mr. Perreault shares his thoughts that the 11-page set of notes warranted scrutiny, that several areas of the document struck him as being glossed over or requiring some additional input, and that the word *coordination* is noticeably lacking. Mr. Perreault suggests to the Coordinating Council that they assign staff (i.e., Randy Wilson, Brian Morris, Bob Perreault) to critique the notes and come back with a draft of responses suitable to forward to the Board. Mr. Perreault mentions that there will be another roundtable meeting scheduled in the future and it would be good for the Forest Service and RCRC to focus more on specific county responses instead of the *broad brush* programs reflected in the notes.

Frank Stewart asks Mr. Perreault if there has been a reply from the letter the Board of Supervisors sent, and Mr. Perreault responds, "Not yet."

b. Plumas National Forest Watershed Condition Inventory – August 8

Brian Morris states that he and Frank Stewart will attend a meeting Monday and he will subsequently provide a report.

c. Plumas County Fire Safe Council – August 11

Brian Morris reminds the Council that the Fire Safe Council will meet August 11, 2011.

d. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Tour – August 30 & 31

Brian Morris mentions the dates of the scheduled tour.

e. Other Meetings

Frank Stewart lists the following meetings that will be coming up:

- o August 16, 2011 - Tahoe Summit, with Senator Feinstein;
- o August 19, 2011 - Plumas County RAC at the Fairgrounds;
- o August 25, 2011 - QLG
- o August 24, 2011 - Forest Action Committee with Congressman Herger, Congressman McClintock, and the Regional Forester
- o August 4, 11, 18, 25 – Pertinent UC Extension programs

11. Date and Agenda Items for Next Meeting

a. Set next meeting – The next meeting is set for September 2, 2011.

b. Future agenda items:

- o Bob Perreault – Public Works has six bridges to be replaced (three are of interest to Forest Service) and would like to have PCCC invite District Rangers to discuss;
- o Leah Wills – Report on the efforts to deal with mercury in the watersheds;
- o John Sheehan – Report from Forest Service regarding Plumas Eureka State Park;
- o Terri Simon-Jackson – Report on the Draft FY 2012 Forest Service Budget at October meeting, with clarity on the QLG funding.

12. Adjournment

A motion is made by Supervisor Swofford and seconded by Supervisor Thrall to adjourn the meeting. Motion is passed. The meeting adjourns at 2:26 p.m.