

Plumas County Coordinating Council
(PCCC)

**MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF
July 6, 2012**

1. Call to Order / Roll Call - 1:04 p.m.

Present: Robert Perreault, *Chair* – Plumas County Public Works Director
Randy Wilson, *Vice Chair* – Plumas County Planning Director
Sherrie Thrall – Plumas County Supervisor;
Terry Swofford – Plumas County Supervisor;
Frank Stewart – Counties QLG Forester.

Absent: John Sheehan – Quincy Library Group member

2. Public Comment Opportunity

Public Attendees (*per sign-in sheet and/or by verbal introduction*):

Earl Ford, Forest Supervisor – Plumas National Forest;
Al Vazquez, District Ranger - Almanor Ranger District / Lassen National Forest;
Lee Anne Schramel-Taylor, Public Affairs Officer – Plumas National Forest;
Lisa Sedlacek, Assistant Resource Officer – Plumas National Forest;
Tracy Ball - Plumas County Resident;
Diane Uchytel, High Mountain Riders member;
Corky Lazzarino - Sierra Access Coalition member;
Jay Read, Sierra Access Coalition member;
Bob Vancourt - Ironman Dual Sport Rides.

Ms. Schramel-Taylor reports that fire restrictions have been put in place by both CalFire (private land) and the Forest Service (public land). Ms. Schramel-Taylor adds that in the instance of public land, wood fires must be in designated sites; or instead of wood, campers can have propane fueled campfires.

3. Review and Acceptance of Agenda by the PCCC

Mr. Perreault states he would like to add an item to the agenda – a discussion with Forest Service personnel on the topic of comparison of policies within the different National Forests. Mr. Perreault adds that this topic would be part of Item 14 on the agenda and that he will provide a handout later in the meeting.

A motion is made by Supervisor Thrall and seconded by Supervisor Swofford to adopt the meeting agenda of July 6, 2012, as modified. Motion is passed.

4. Approval of PCCC Meeting Minutes

A. Meeting of April 6, 2012

Mr. Ball informs the Council that on Page 5, Item 11, last paragraph of the April 6, 2012, minutes, he was speaking not only on his own behalf, and that of his wife, but also on behalf of other residents whose property borders Forest Service motorized trails. Mr. Ball also

responds that a *maximum* of 7% of the funds can be designated for Title Three, and that *more than* 8% of the funds can be designated for Title Two.

Mr. Ford comments that it was announced in the newspaper that a settlement has been reached on the Moonlight litigation, and next Thursday in Sacramento there will be a press conference on the details next Thursday in Sacramento.

Mr. Stewart reports that the long-standing lawsuit challenging the 204 Framework will be heard August 9th. Mr. Stewart adds that this is still a critically important lawsuit because it potentially effects standards and guidelines that the Forest has to operate under. Mr. Stewart encourages the County to stay involved and informed on this issue.

7. Report by County Director of Public Works on Roads Meeting Between Lassen National Forest staff and DPWs from 5 Counties

Mr. Perreault reports that the second meeting involving Lassen National Forest (LNF) staff and Public Works representatives (from Butte, Plumas, Lassen, Tehama, and Shasta Counties) was conducted on June 29, 2012. Mr. Perreault stated that the discussion focused on the request made by the counties to LNF to consider reclassifying certain roadways for OHV use. Mr. Perreault says that the discussion went well, and that future meetings in the field have been scheduled. Mr. Wilson asks if there is an anticipated date of completion. Mr. Perreault states that from the Counties point of view, this is a high priority matter and the Counties are hopeful to complete the project during calendar year 2012. Mr. Perreault adds that if it goes into 2013, it will most likely relate to the environmental study requirements.

8. Report by Director of Public Works on the Beckwourth-Genesee Highway (FH 177) Improvements Project

Mr. Perreault stated that meetings were conducted on May 30, 2012 and on June 8, 2012, pertaining to the Beckwourth-Genesee Highway Improvements Project (Hwy 177). Mr. Perreault explains that the focus of the meetings was to find resolution concerning mitigation to an existing OHV corridor, as proposed by the FHWA. As a result of the June 8th meeting, a follow up meeting will be arranged involving the Forest, the County, and the Sierra Access Coalition who initially identified the OHV concern. Mr. Perreault adds that it is important to resolve this matter soon to avoid a threatened loss of funding from Washington, D.C. Mr. Wilson asks for clarification about the alternate OHV route. Mr. Perreault responds that the PNF staff is presently opposed to the replacement parallel roadside OHV trail and that PNF is exploring options that would be located away from the highway, takes advantage of some existing Forest roadways, and ties into some campground activity. Mr. Ball asks if the proximity to residential areas is considered when these things come up for discussion. Mr. Perreault replies that he believes the FHWA has contacted all affected private property owners. Mr. Perreault stated that he will provide updated information on this matter at the next PCCC meeting.

9. Forest Service Project Updates -- Reports by Various Staff

A. Lake Davis Summer / Winter Recreation Management Plan

Comments by Public Works

Mr. Perreault reports that meetings have taken place regarding this project on May 16th, June 8th and June 19th. Mr. Perreault says that the focus of the Public Works Department has been attempts at completing the snowmobile route around the entire lake. The County roadway that crosses the Lake Davis dam and links with Grizzly Road appears to be too

long to safely accommodate snowmobiles on the County roadway segments (that are plowed in the wintertime). Accordingly, Public Works has identified 2 alternates, as follows:

- Construct a roadside pathway parallel to the roadway and over part of the existing dam, and
- Construct a bridge north of the roadway over Lake Davis from one land point to another to enable closure of the proposed OHV loop.

Mr. Perreault concludes his comments by saying he wanted the Council to be aware of these two options, which should be considered during the project review phase.

Comments by Plumas National Forest staff

Mr. Ford introduces Lisa Sedlacek and says she is here to talk about the map on the board that addresses the Lake Davis Summer/Winter Recreation Management Plan. Ms. Sedlacek states that the map was created to show the following:

- The mixture of public comments received at the March 7, 2012, public meeting,
- The vision of both motorized and non-motorized users of the region.

Ms. Sedlacek says that she has a list showing the comments that have been received so far and states that all comments, including the points Mr. Perreault made at this meeting, will be considered when the PNF performs their review. Ms. Sedlacek points out the proposed locations of trails for motorized and non-motorized use. Ms. Sedlacek also points out areas where there are concerns for the wildlife and explains that motorized use would be restricted in those areas but non-motorized use would be allowed to some extent. Mr. Stewart asks how they intend to notify the public about restricted areas. Ms. Sedlacek responds that law enforcement personnel, education, and signage would be the various means they would use as well as the users themselves would spread the word. Mr. Perreault asks when the next meeting is scheduled to take place to further discuss the matters. Ms. Sedlacek answers that they are planning a public meeting on July 31st to receive comments one more time and then they will develop another map and a report for the specialists to evaluate.

B. Motorcycle Recreation Events – Special Use Permit

Ms. Sedlacek provides a handout titled; *Ironman Dual Sport Rides and Events*, and explains that the Iron Man Dual Sport proposal is for two dual sport motorcycle tours for August 25 thru August 26, 2012, and October 6 thru October 8, 2012. Ms. Sedlacek introduces Bob Vancourt and says that he has been leading tours on the Plumas National Forest since 2009. He has also lead tours on the Shasta, Trinity, and Six Rivers National Forests, plus he will begin leading tours in Lassen National Forest this year. Ms. Sedlacek and Mr. Vancourt explain that a dual sport motorcycle is a motorcycle that can go on paved roads and dirt roads; and it is anticipated that dual sport motorcycle tours (involving approximately 30 riders each tour) will bring business to vendors (food, lodging, gas, etc.) throughout Plumas County. Mr. Vancourt shares a map showing the proposed routes, and states that they look for routes with scenic value and low traffic volume, and routes that are away from residential areas. Ms. Sedlacek states that they have published the 30 day comment period for this proposal in the local newspaper and they welcome comments from the public. A brief discussion ensues regarding the need to acquire use permits from the Forest Service for activity on their land. Ms. Sedlacek says that a portion of the permit funds received will go back to improve the facilities being used by the public. Mr. Wilson asks if NEPA is required for this proposal. Ms. Sedlacek replies that the environmental specialists have reviewed the routes and their findings plus the public comments will be reviewed and a decision will be made.

C. Priority Watersheds

Ms. Schramel-Taylor begins by mentioning that two members of the PCCC (Frank Stewart & John Sheehan) are what she considers *specialists* in this matter. Ms. Schramel-Taylor continues that the Forest Service decided that there was a need for a consistent national program or system for prioritizing watersheds, which means categorizing them, analyzing their health and condition, and then prioritizing them. Ms. Schramel-Taylor explains that information on the internet is available regarding the health of a particular watershed by going to the national Forest Service website and selecting *Conditions Framework*. Ms. Schramel-Taylor states that the first watersheds selected for review in our region were Grizzly Creek and Wolf Creek; and the action studies for those projects include fuel reduction and road maintenance, as well as in-stream work. Ms. Schramel-Taylor adds that the next round of selecting priority watersheds will occur in August. Mr. Ford states that they are looking at the health of the watersheds, but also want to tie into recreation in the region. Mr. Stewart asks how this process will be affected by the new Land Management Plan (LMP). Mr. Ford explains that everything the Forest Service does will be under the umbrella of the new LMP, so these projects will be incorporated as well. Ms. Schramel-Taylor mentions the need to be competitive for additional funding. Mr. Wilson asks about the funding for the two projects currently in place. Ms. Schramel-Taylor says she doesn't have that information today, but she will provide a report at a subsequent PCCC meeting. Mr. Stewart asks if anyone has information concerning the Collaborative Landscape Forestry Restoration Programs. Mr. Vazquez responds that he is not sure about the status of those programs. Mr. Wilson asks Ms. Schramel-Taylor how the watershed priority programs will work with the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP). Ms. Schramel-Taylor responds that they should dovetail with one another. Ms. Schramel-Taylor explains that the concept of *unique local characteristics* does not come with a definition, but that it is up to whoever is looking at the various watersheds.

10. Forest Service Proposed Rule to add 3 additional categorical exemptions to NEPA regulations

Earl Ford, *Forest Supervisor – Plumas National Forest*, indicates that Lee Ann Schramel-Taylor, *Public Affairs Officer – Plumas National Forest*, is handing out a summary (dated June 12, 2012) pertaining to a Forest Service proposed rule to shorten documentation of environmental review for certain restoration projects on National Forests and Grasslands. The handout is titled: *"Final approved by NRE, USDA Forest Service seeks comments on supplemental environmental regulations."*

Mr. Ford points to the bulleted items on the handout that represent categorical exclusions (CEs) that will be used, instead of an Environmental Assessment (EA), to facilitate the Forest Service to:

- Restore the flow of waters into natural channels and floodplains by removing, replacing or modifying water control structures. (Mr. Ford cites two examples – water bars, dams);
- Restore lands and habitat to pre-disturbance conditions by removing debris and sediment conditions following natural or human-caused events, and
- Restore, rehabilitate or stabilize lands occupies by non-National Forest System roads and trails to a more natural condition.

Mr. Ford continues that these CEs are now subject to public comment during a 60 day comment period that started on June 12, 2012, and will end on August 13, 2012.

Corky Lazzarino, of *Sierra Access Coalition*, seeks clarification from Mr. Ford about the procedures by which the public can make statements. Mr. Ford states that all CEs are subject to the comment period. Ms. Schramel-Taylor adds that on March 19, 2012, the US District Court mandated compliance with a court order for notice, comment and appeal on CEs (*Sequoia Forest Keeper v. Tidwell*). Ms. Lazzarino asks if this means there are changes to how scoping is done, and adds that in the past the scoping has been very vague. Mr. Ford answers that this ruling does not specify how they will do scoping; but it does mandate that they do it, as well as have an appeals hearing which was not the case in the past. Ms. Lazzarino asks for an explanation of the wording *pre-disturbance conditions*. Mr. Ford and Al Vazquez, *District Ranger–Almanor Ranger District–Lassen National Forest*, explain that they look at the pre-existing conditions prior to when an event (disturbance) occurs. Mr. Vasquez stated that under a CE, there would be scoping, alternatives, analysis, a BA/BE, etc, and there would be opportunity for public appeal.

Ms. Schramel-Taylor points out to Ms. Lazzarino that she can add as part of the substance of her comments that she doesn't think the matter is defined clearly enough and she can request that they resolve that problem. Mr. Wilson provides a brief explanation concerning the differences between NEPA and CEQA as far as scoping and noticing are concerned.

Mr. Perreault asks if there are any other comments. Hearing none, Mr. Perreault states that he will list this item on the next Coordinating Council meeting agenda for August 3rd. Mr. Perreault adds that the Board of Supervisors meeting following the next PCCC meeting would be on August 7th. Comments are due to the Forest Service no later than August 13th.

11. Firewise Communities / Community Wildfire Protection Plan / Quincy Library Group Pilot Project

Mr. Perreault states that this item is a standing item on the PCCC agenda. Mr. Stewart comments that Mike DeLasaux and Jerry Hurley were expected to cover the Fire Wise Communities and the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, but they are not in attendance. Mr. Stewart shares his awareness that the Wildfire Protection Plan (with associated map) has been updated.

Mr. Stewart provides a handout titled; *H-FQLG Pilot Project: Annual Accomplishment Measures, Acres, Saw Log Volume, Biomass Volume*, and provides a review of the statistics shown in the handout. Mr. Stewart informs the Council that re-authorization of the pilot project has passed in the House of Representatives and is now in the Senate. Mr. Stewart continues that there is a concerted effort to get the pilot extended, and he believes this is primarily due to the catastrophic fire problem. Mr. Stewart praises the summary report regarding fuel treatment effects on the HFQLG pilot project, and states that it shows a cohesive strategy. Mr. Stewart adds that with an extension of the act, he would like to work with the Forest Service to get more done in the area of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Mr. Ford informs the Council that Mr. Stewart has an excellent slide show that they might want to see at a future PCCC meeting. A brief discussion ensues regarding the recent bug kill problem in trees in Wyoming and Colorado and what impact it may or may not have on the catastrophic wild fire problem.

12. USFS Pacific Southwest Region – Sierra Other Meetings and Activities

Mr. Perreault states that *Dialog Session No. 6: Adaptive Management for Forest Planning* was conducted on May 10, 2012. Mr. Stewart reports that he attended the meeting, which was well attended. Mr. Stewart explains that they talked about the subject of adaptive management, bringing more science into the process, applying treatments on the landscape, monitoring, and finally adjusting accordingly. Mr. Stewart states that adaptive management and more science

are part of the new LMP process; however, his concern is that there could be potential delays that could adversely effect getting ahead of the catastrophic fire problem. Mr. Ford says that such concerns are why collaboration is so important for moving forward and getting the land treated. Mr. Stewart states that there are two more dialog sessions, and that the next one (October or November) will focus on biomass. Mr. Stewart adds that he hopes the process supports and enhances the current opportunities for biomass, specifically power plants. Mr. Ford adds that there will be frank conversation about the power aspect, plus other ways to diversify.

13. Strategic Planning Meeting: REVITALIZING THE NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEMS

Mr. Perreault comments that the Strategic Planning Meeting is coming up on July 17th and 18th and asks the Council if anyone is attending this meeting. Mr. Stewart responds affirmatively, and states that the intent of this meeting is to discuss revitalizing the National Forest system through development of a new kind of strategy. Mr. Stewart elaborates on the efforts put forth by various individuals in Siskiyou County, particularly the *National Institute for Eliminating Catastrophic Fires*, who will provide a presentation at the meeting.

14. Other Meetings and Activities

Mr. Perreault provides a handout titled; *Comparison of Policies in the National Forests within Plumas County*, and states that it deals with how the different National Forests in our region have different rules, particularly where travel management is concerned. Mr. Perreault reviews the information on the handout; and states that he prepared the first draft as a tool to gain a better understanding of where there are differences, and to discern whether there is a possibility of making the rules more consistent between the Forest Service entities. Mr. Perreault asks National Forest staff to review the information and provide comments/corrections/additions.

Mr. Wilson briefly mentions grant funding that pertains to a hazard mitigation plan (i.e., fire, flood, etc). Mr. Wilson adds that the County has been involved with this topic and that Forest Service staff may want to follow it as well.

Supervisor Thrall states that the Sheriff's Department has brought to her attention that they are concerned about a possible land exchange that would involve Dyer Mountain where their communication towers are located. Supervisor Thrall adds that there will be a meeting on July 19th to discuss this matter further.

Mr. Stewart reports that the Quincy Library Group (QLG) will hold their July 26th meeting at the Feather River Ranger district to talk about various projects (i.e., Slap Jack, On Top, and Sugar Loaf) which are all QLG projects in Plumas County. Mr. Stewart adds that emails will be sent out containing all the pertinent information regarding the meeting. Mr. Ford suggests carpooling, and also possibly taking a look at the Saw Fly problem area on the way back from the meeting.

15. Vice Chairmanship of the PCCC

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Perreault nominates Mr. Wilson for the position of Vice-Chair. Supervisor Swofford seconds the motion. Motion is passed.

16. Date and Agenda Items for Next Meeting

A. Confirm next meeting.

Confirmation is made by the Council to hold their next meeting on August 3, 2012.

B. Future Possible Agenda Items

The *Strategic Planning Meeting to take place in Sacramento on July 17 & 18, 2012*, is added to the following list of future possible agenda items:

- o More detail on the Lake Davis project
- o Presentation on Biomass Potential by Bill Wickman
- o Final Forest Service Land Management Rule
- o Eastern Plumas Recreation – suggested by John Sheehan
- o More discussion about collaborative/coordinated processes (i.e., water, fire, Forest Service)
- o Mercury studies and TMDLs
- o Randy Wilson - discuss how the different sections of the General Plan might reinforce the PCCC position on coordination.

17. Adjournment

Mr. Perreault adjourns the meeting at 3:17 p.m.


Robert Perreault, PCCC Chair