

# RFFCP East Subregion Stakeholder Meeting #3

## Meeting Summary

Friday, December 18, 2020



### 1. Welcome and Introductions

The third Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) East subregion stakeholder meeting comprised local, regional, and federal stakeholders. The goal of the meeting was to discuss and approve a project concept for Great Basin Institute's services. The meeting started with a brief introduction of the host group the Eastern California Water Association (ECWA), the RFFCP East team, and the aim of the meeting. Participants that attended can be found in the list below.

#### Participants

- Holly Alpert, Contractor – Eastern California Water Association
- Marlon Charneau, Sierra Corps/Eastern California Water Association/American Forests
- Rick Kattelmann, Eastern California Water Association
- Brittany Dyer, American Forests
- Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council
- Kelley Williams, Inyo County Office of Emergency Services
- David Griffith, Alpine Biomass Collaborative
- Ky Osguthorpe, Alpine Watershed Group
- Natalie Morrow, Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District
- Justin Nalder, Mono County
- Rhiana Jones, Washoe Tribe
- Janet Hatfield, Plumas Corporation
- Bob Gardner, Mono County
- Erin Noesser, Inyo National Forest
- Jerry Keir, Great Basin Institute
- Robbie Di Paolo, Mono Basin Fire Safe Council
- David Haas, CAL FIRE
- Carol Snow, CAL FIRE
- Matthew Diener, Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council
- Edward Hermann, Lone Pine Paiute Shoshone Reservation
- Lia Webb, High Energy Sierra Foundation
- John Umek, Desert Research Institute
- Andy Rost, Great Basin Institute

## **2. Process**

Utilizing the Great Basin Institute is a way to kick off the RFFCP project development and planning process. The meeting was convened to discuss the details of and approve the project concept that was identified by the project prioritization subcommittee. A proposal for general environmental review of riparian fuels treatments by the Great Basin Institute was the project concept that was identified. The subcommittee discussed various projects and agreed that this project idea should be further developed. We drafted a concept paper, talked it over with GBI, then convened the full stakeholder group to receive input. The idea is to put together a concept that will benefit more than just one project.

## **3. Project Concept Presentation**

GBI will assist with project planning in the East RFFCP subregion by developing a model/ example/ template of part of the environmental studies needed under CEQA for fuels management projects in east-side riparian zones. These riparian areas are dangerous because they can carry fires to communities when their fuels are dry. They also can burn in more benign conditions.

The idea is to develop a generic environmental analysis document for riparian zones below the forest that stakeholders can draw from. CAL FIRE and the Inyo National Forest saw this project as being beneficial to the region as long as it is a reference document and a good synthesis of the science of the environments that are being considered for treatment. We fully anticipate that this is supportive of the finer scale site analysis.

The project is about capacity building that will have multiple benefits down the road. This analysis will not apply to a specific project but rather is broad enough to be applicable for individual projects down the line as people conceive of them. This can be thought of as a programmatic EIR like the federal agencies implement or the “Master Environment Assessment” of Mono County. Our review of the MEA of Mono County’s work makes it clear that a broad environmental analysis would be useful for the entire region and would limit the burden of review.

## **4. Important questions that were answered:**

What are the risks of going with this approach?

One risk of going with this project is that it may not be applicable and not cover all of our region. The flip side is our original vision was to have GBI only help with one or two projects. Other challenges that might arise are that we need to make sure that this is not a wasteful document that will be stymied by regulatory agencies. GBI confirmed that talking with state entities will be a feature of the first phase of the work.

Would the work include site visits or stakeholder engagement?

Yes, interaction with the stakeholder group would be helpful to identify the needs and desires. Ground truthing would occur, but given the budget, GBI does not anticipate extensive survey work. This document will largely provide environmental characteristics. Things such as boundaries will need to be further investigated and reevaluated through the input of stakeholders.

## **5. Conclusion**

The group did not have any significant objections except for slight concerns addressed in the previous section. Thus, the group gave GBI the okay to move forward with this project. We will be in touch with the group when the next steps are identified.

If there are any questions, comments, or concerns about the meeting, please contact any of the RFFCP team members, and they will gladly assist with more information.