

RFFCP East Stakeholder Meeting #1 Summary

Monday, July 20, 2020



1. Welcome and Introductions

The first Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) East subregion stakeholder meeting comprised local, regional, and federal stakeholders. The meeting started with an introduction of the host group the Eastern California Water Association (ECWA), the facilitator American Forests, the RFFCP East team, and the participants, who are listed below.

Participants

- Brittany Dyer, American Forests
- Marlon Charneau, Sierra Corps/Eastern California Water Association
- Rick Kattelman, Eastern California Water Association
- Holly Alpert, Contractor – Eastern California Water Association
- Pam Padgett, Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council
- Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council
- Kelley Williams, Inyo County Office of Emergency Services
- Donald Day, Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council
- David Griffith, Alpine Biomass Collaborative
- Robbie Di Paolo, Mono Basin Fire Safe Council
- Duncan King, Mono Basin Fire Safe Council
- Mo Loden, Alpine Watershed Group
- Heather Stone, Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office
- Drew Mallinak, Sierra Institute
- Justin Nalder, Mono County
- Stacy Corless, Mono County
- Chance Traub, Inyo National Forest
- Edith Martinez, Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Janet Hatfield, Plumas Corporation
- Bob Gardner, Mono County
- Nathan Sill, Inyo National Forest
- Zoe Watson, Sierra Institute
- David Carle, Mono Basin Historical Society

2. Overview: RFFCP and ECWA/AF Partnership

Holly provided an overview of the RFFCP, the ECWA/American Forests partnership, and how stakeholders fit into the picture. (See Figure 1). She explained the flow of grant funding and the role of the Sierra Corps Fellow, Marlon Charneau. The final deliverable of the grant is a regional planning

document that includes a list of prioritized projects that can then be moved forward for funding and implementation.

Figure 1.



3. Phase I Review: Capacity Assessment

Holly and Rick then presented information about the first phase of the RFFCP grant work, which was an assessment of stakeholder capacity in the region. A report on this work was produced and submitted to SNC on April 30, 2020. Stakeholders wishing to learn more about this work should contact the RFFCP East team. Also, during this agenda item time, Janet Hatfield of Plumas Corporation presented briefly about the SNC-funded resilient communities project for the Mammoth Basin she is just getting off the ground. This will be a long-term effort with major emphasis on public education/outreach and biomass processing.

4. Identifying, Planning, and Prioritization Dialogue

The dialogue began with the question of “how do you view this stakeholder group coalescing into a group?” This question initiated the conversation that would occupy the remainder of the dialogue time. Various stakeholders gave their input into how such a large group could work together, the necessity of having federal land managers such as the INF and BLM involved, and the difficulty of implementing forest health projects in Alpine County where the biggest land manager, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest (HTNF), has little involvement.

The idea of having a centralized position(s) dedicated to forest health and community resiliency efforts housed in the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG) was discussed in detail. ESCOG could serve as the coordinating entity for identifying needs, prospective projects, potential funding sources, and means of implementation for wildfire-risk-reduction within Inyo, Mono, and possibly Alpine counties. A dedicated staff position could provide an efficient point of communication and information

regarding wildfire safety activities as well as help find, apply for, and administer external funding. ESCOG could also coordinate efforts and communication among local FSCs and agencies and the state and federal agencies. We learned that the Mountain Area Safety Task Force in San Bernardino county might be a good resource for planning a regional approach. Our group agreed that a region working together is more enticing for funding opportunities, and it could decrease competition among groups within the region.

Although the conversation was productive and encouraging, at the end of the dialogue section, some uncertainty remained about the process of creating a new collaborative.

The final agenda item was to discuss the next steps. In this section, conversation revolved around how to move the group forward in an efficient and effective manner. One question that arose during this time was what groups/communities were not present in the meeting that should be contacted? Tribes and Fire Departments were the two that came up. Another question was how to include different groups (such as Tribes, Fire Departments, and Fire Safe Councils) that are stretched? It was determined it would be important to know when it is best to bring them in based on the topic of conversation in any given meeting. Another point was to actively engage the Carson Ranger District of the HTNF as it is essential to improved forest health in Alpine County. The meeting concluded with the understanding that to create a collaborative group, a flexible and accommodating system needs to be created so that all interested stakeholders of the region can participate and benefit.