

Forest Carbon Action Team (FCAT)
December 15, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Meeting attendees:

Whitney Albright – Department of Fish and Wildlife; Janet Barentson – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE); Jerry Bird – US Forest Service (USFS); John Blue – California Environmental Protection Agency (CAL EPA); Jim Branham – Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC); Jim Browner – Bureau of Land Management (BLM); Jay Chamberlin – Department of Parks and Recreation; Edie Chang – Air Resources Board (ARB); Colin Connor – State Lands Commission; JR Delarosa – Natural Resources Agency (NRA); George Gentry – State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection; Stacey Heaton – Regional Council of Rural Counties; Russ Henly – NRA; Kevin Hunting – Department of Fish and Wildlife; Josh Johnson – CAL FIRE; Chris Keithley – CAL FIRE; John Lowrie – Department of Conservation; Carla Martinson – California Association of Counties; Mark Nechodom – Department of Conservation; Ken Pimlott – CAL FIRE; Mark Rosenberg – CAL FIRE; Ashley Conrad-Saydah – CAL EPA; Klaus Scott – ARB; Duane Shintaku – CAL FIRE; Chris Zimny – CAL FIRE.

The meeting started at 15:03.

Agenda Items 1-3 Opening remarks, Review agenda, and Review/Approval of October 20, 2014, minutes

Chief Pimlott greeted the team by noting good progress with FCAT assignments particularly with Russ Henly's Carbon Action Plan outline. Chief Pimlott reviewed the agenda for the meeting and the past minutes from the October 20, 2014, meeting. He noted major agenda items for the December meeting include a summary report from Department of Fish and Wildlife on their actions related to Forest Carbon Plan, subcommittee reports (especially the Policy Committee), web site update, and scheduling for the next FCAT meeting.

Chief Pimlott proceeded with approval of the minutes and summarized action items from the October 2014 meeting including consent on use of Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) inventory information and ownership categories, use of the co-benefits ranking table, and development of the Science Advisory Panel.

Action/Consent Items

- Approval received for final October 20, 2014 minutes.

Agenda Items 4 – Department of Fish and Wildlife report on agency actions related to Forest Carbon Plan

The first agenda item was a report by Whitney Albright of the Department of Fish and Wildlife on their department's actions related to the Forest Carbon Plan.

Ms. Albright began the presentation by discussing the organizational groups of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) that address climate issues. Overall throughout DFW there are seven Regions and several Branches, with the Climate Science Branch in Sacramento. She noted that there are two staff persons assigned to coordinate climate information for other staff in DFW

and to coordinate with other agencies on climate impacts to natural resources. The Climate Branch provides climate information to programs, policy, staff, and other agencies.

Current major projects regarding climate at DFW include two educational efforts related to climate adaptation. The DFW "Climate College" was initiated the 2012. The Climate College provides climate-related information for other DFW staff for use in their programs on a day to day basis. Related to this is "Climate 101" where marine climate issues were developed. Other climate information for other resources is planned for in 2015.

DFW staff also serve on a standing committee for the National Climate Academy that has similar goals and objectives for information on climate impacts to those of DFW's but on a national scale. The National Climate Academy is led by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

The most recent activities related to climate and carbon is funding for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). DFW has received \$25 million for wetland restoration and mountain meadow restoration. Primary grant activities will focus on Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta restoration projects, statewide coastal wetlands projects, and mountain meadow forest restoration projects. Ms. Albright noted there are important cobenefits with these projects particularly related to fish habitat improvements and to water quality and quantity.

Solicitation for GGRF grant proposals began in November, 2014. Deadlines for proposals are December 19, 2014. Review of proposals is expected to occur over the next two months and include external, administrative and technical review of the grant proposals. DFW will use a selection panel with final approval being done by the director of DFW.

Another major activity within DFW is the development and revisions to the State Wildlife Action Plan (Action Plan). The Action Plan is a conservation blueprint for the State. An update is required every 10 years and the next update is due and 2015. Included in this revision will be "open standards" for conservation practices based on projected threats and impacts on wildlife from stressors due to climate change.

To help support the Action Plan, a goal is to create statewide assessments of vegetation vulnerability to climate change for each habitat. This will be done in cooperation with University of California, Davis. The assessment will include climate protection strategies for various habitats with focus on climate impacts to fish and wildlife. Efforts will include Action Plan companion plans to link to various other agency plans. One target is for links to forest and rangelands plans.

Other DFW efforts include working with the Natural Resources Agency Natural Working Landscape Group on climate change research plans; involvement with the state's Climate Action /Safeguarding California Plan updates; and national/regional landscape "cooperatives" with the US Fish and Wildlife Service related to the National Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Questions and comments from FCAT members to the Ms. Albright followed: Chief Pimlott inquired about what metrics of GHG emission reduction are being used by DFW for GGRF projects. Ms. Albright noted that they will rely on applicants developing methods, talking with

other knowledgeable persons regarding the sufficiency of methods, and will rely on additional existing scientific literature information. Lack of information on mountain meadow restoration relative to GHG emission reduction is a particular problem. She noted that DFW would coordinate across agencies for developing GHG methods and will be working the Air Resources Board.

Ashley Conrad-Saydah noted that jointly developing carbon accounting efforts among agencies/departments will help support more GGRF funding in the future.

Agenda Items 5 – Subcommittee reports

Inventory Subcommittee report

Mark Rosenberg reported he met with Jeremy Freid of the Pacific Northwest Experiment Station and reviewed regional groupings of Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) information. Part of the effort was to develop guidance on FIA subcategory information that will avoid private land confidentiality conflicts.

Klaus Scott noted he met with Region 5 US Forest Service on fire smoke management issues and climate information gaps. Jerry Bird noted it is important for the US Forest Service to stay on message regarding the wildfire/greenhouse gas emissions issue and try to obtain real-time emission estimates. Emission estimates were done for the Rim Fire and there were several issues with the numbers generated for that estimate. These emission estimates will also be useful for National Environmental Protection Act GHG emission analysis for projects.

State/Federal Lands Subcommittee report

Mr. Bird discussed alignment of the US Forest Service Land Management Plans (LMPs) with climate goals and adaptation strategies. Task 1 of his subcommittee's goals is to assess alignment of the LMPs with AB 32. Initial results of this assessment indicate that more recent LMPs are more in line with AB 32 goals than older LMPs. These LMPs contain contemporary forest carbon information such as use of solid wood and biomass use. Three new LMPs will be completed in the next two years and will contain climate goals and adaptation strategies. Another 10 plans will be completed over the next five to seven years and will also contain this information. The USFS is considering combining the future LMPs so development of them would be more efficient. Mr. Bird noted that the draft results of Task 1 would be available by the end of January, 2015.

Mr. Bird noted that the Task 2, large scale initiatives collaboration, is ongoing and the subcommittee is gathering info that will be ready for the February, 2015 FCAT meeting.

Action/Consent Items

- Report subcommittee Task 1 results by the end of January, 2015.
- Task 2, large scale initiatives collaboration, will be presented at the February FCAT meeting.

Co-benefits Subcommittee report

Duane Shintaku reported that the subcommittee was reviewing literature on pertinent information and the subcommittee did not meet during the period.

Edie Chang noted that comments came back from the Science Advisory Panel on the scope of the Resource Economic Study. Comments include that the study has a very wide scope. Ms. Chang noted the need to look for opportunities to narrow the scope.

Policy Subcommittee report

Russ Henly provided a report for the Policy subcommittee. Mr. Henly is putting timelines for all subcommittee efforts and will send these to the committee for review. The timelines are intended to show how all subcommittee efforts fit together.

Mr. Henly noted that the Forest Carbon Plan outline was out and the next task is to schedule public meetings. The subcommittee met and discussed the outline with the Executive FCAT members. He noted there is a need for the outline to be available to the public prior to the public meetings.

Mr. Henly provided a review of the Forest Carbon Plan outline that was distributed for the FCAT meeting. He noted this is a starting point and initial comments from subcommittee members were contained on the outline distributed. He noted that the outline is for early panning and may change. The comments will be dropped off when the outline is distributed to the public.

Comments from committee members focused on the need for the plan to be challenging, to think broadly with new processes, discovery, and visionary statements. Lots of uncertainty still ahead on such things as cobenefits.

Chris Keithley noted that there is a need for a vision statement for the FCAT Forest Carbon Plan accomplishments. Time horizons of 2020, 2030, and 2050 and after should be established.

Mr. Keithely further noted the need for a wide range of forest management actions and investments. Consideration should be given to whether the actions and investments are broadly located or applied to the most needed areas. Consideration should also be given to including holistic watershed-wide projects. There is a need to establish both goals and targets using ecologically based regions containing differing project portfolios with suites of actions varying by ownerships. The approach could be similar to the assessments being done in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

Chief Pimlott noted that it is key for the group to comment on the outline and the goal is to get comments over the next two weeks.

Mr. Henly noted that he is interested in getting identification of the bigger problems with the outline He also wants the vision statement reviewed with consideration given to inclusion of benefits and goals for continuing forest as carbon sinks.

Edie Chang, a member of the subcommittee, noted that there is an issue with the inclusion of solid wood products as part of the long term sequestration of carbon and wanted refinement of this.

Jim Braham noted that he did not see in the outline a very important issue related to the impacts of large catastrophic fire on carbon, although it was noted in item III. B. 2. of the outline, under Disturbance regimes. Many issues currently related to existing forest condition/drought are related to wildfire. Also there are concerns that climate change is resulting in big losses of forest carbon as forestlands are changed shrublands in lower elevation areas. Lack of information on baseline knowledge of forest carbon stability vs carbon releases results in not being sure of what we're losing due to these changes in conditions.

Mr. Bird noted that some forests are net emitters and not just sequestering carbon from forest growth and acting as sinks. Also, forest floor soil carbon is being lost and this results in very dire conditions. Mr. Bird also recommended management actions that increase the pace scale for forest carbon protection with emphasis especially for treatments on US Forest Service lands. Some of these lands may be already trending towards net emitters as a whole. Jeremy Freid is coming out with FIA information on this topic.

Ashley Conrad-Saydah noted that given these conditions, the Forest Carbon Plan should acknowledge that forests need attention while still retaining/providing cobenefits. Such an acknowledgment should be in an introductory statement.

Mr. Henly began discussing the public outreach meetings. The meetings should include “who we are” and “what we are doing”. Potential target dates are January 22 through February 16, 2015. Discussion included consideration for whether meetings will be all bunched together or staggered out depending on peoples’ desire to attend. One meeting should be in a central location, such as Sacramento, where there is good telecommunication opportunities for satellite meeting locations. Information on the meetings should be released for the public at least two weeks in advance of the meetings.

An example of the meeting format might be one similar to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy satellite meeting approach where satellite meetings were held concurrent to the main meeting and the process was facilitated by UC Extension. The meetings should be designed for opportunities for substantial feedback from the public. The meetings should have access to staff and may include an exercise to rank benefits. Ideas for meeting format included setting up a storyboard to display what is being discussed. There is a need to capture comments and hand out general responses to questions, not individual question responses.

Mr. Henly would appreciate feedback from committee members on the structure, location and types of connectivity to stakeholders. He is looking for ideas on communication technology and connectivity methods.

There could likely be three meetings with regional differences. For example, one in Redding, one in Southern California and one in the bay area or coastal areas. George Gentry noted the need to meet on forest management topics in northern California with a meeting in Southern California more related to broader vegetation management. Also, an idea was to have one

meeting that contained broad, overall content, and other local meetings that contained information of particular interest to the local attendees.

Mr. Henly further asked how the committee should establish meeting dates. George Gentry volunteered to assist in logistics for meeting arrangements prior to the next FCAT meeting. Stacy Heaton suggested to not have the meetings on Tuesdays because of local board council meeting conflicts. Edie Chang noted that consideration needs to be given to whether they are daytime or nighttime meetings depending on the target audience. Professionals typically are available during daytime and stakeholders are more available during night time. Mr. Henly noted that professionals are likely the target audience in the Bay area meetings.

Discussion also included which agency members should attend the meetings. Consensus was that all FCAT agency members need to attend each of the meetings, but regional agency staff can attend in place of the FCAT member when meetings are distant.

Mr. Henly noted an action item for committee members is to communicate dates that would best meet the FCAT members' needs. Edie Chang noted a Governor statement on the 2030 climate targets was nearing release. She suggested that FCAT information should be coordination with Governor's pending statements and messages.

Action/Consent Items

- Russ Henly to provide timelines for the subcommittee's efforts and will send these to the FCAT members for review.
- FCAT members to review and provide comments on the Forest Carbon Plan outline to Russ Henly by January 1, 2015.
- Russ Henly to schedule public meetings and develop formats for the meetings based on FCAT member input. Input from members should focus on locations, dates and formats of presentation.
- Russ Henley will communicate to FCAT members selected dates, locations and formats.
- All FCAT agency members, or their regional representatives, should attend the FCAT public meetings.
- Provide Russ Henly names of specific agency members who intend to attend the meetings.

Agenda Items 6 – Report on Science Advisory Panel

Dr. Chris Keithley provided a report on the Science Advisory Panel (SAP). Scientists met in November to review the Forest Resource Economic Study scope of work. Participants were asked about their thoughts on climate and forests. Comments included:

- 1) The departure from the range of variability.
- 2) Shifting of species.
- 3) Presences of exotic species.
- 4) Effectiveness of treatments and future desired conditions.
- 5) General forest impacts of climate change and fire.
- 6) Conflicting management goals between carbon protection and use of forest resources.
- 7) Transfer information to decision makers.

Agenda Items 7 – Progress Report on Forest Resource Economic Study

Mr. Keithley provided a report on the Forest Resource Economic Study and the Request for Proposal. It included views on the scope of work for contractors. Comments included:

- 1) The scope of work was too broad.
- 2) Knowledge gaps and not enough knowledge on certain topics may be difficult to overcome in the Forest Carbon Plan.
- 3) Levels of uncertainty for making quantitative estimates.
- 4) Difficulties for estimating co-benefit non-market goods values. Issue is estimating monetary values vs relative measures.
- 5) How to represent baseline conditions.

Mr. Keithley is developing a timeline of getting Forest Resource Economic Plan done. Project will take 18 months to be developed, but this is too long to integrate into the Forest Carbon Plan. Mr. Keithley noted that the subcommittee will have a proposal at next meeting for addressing this time issue.

Russ Henly noted there are two potential alternatives 1) complete the Forest Carbon Scoping Plan later, or 2) revise the Forest Resource Economic Study Request for Proposal to be completed sooner than 18 months.

Edie Chang noted that consideration should be given to taking more time on the Forest Carbon Scoping Plan due to the Governor's 2030 target announcement coming out.

Mr. Keithley noted the science team meets on a quarterly basis with focus on inventory at the subcommittee's next meeting.

Action/Consent Items

- The subcommittee will have a proposal at the next FCAT meeting for addressing the time issue (conflict with Forest Carbon Plan timeline) for completing the Forest Resource Economic Plan.

Agenda Items 8 – FCAT web page

Janet Barentson discussed the webpage noting it was up and to click the link to see the sample. Outreach will be found there and public meeting info will also be located there.

The next meeting is scheduled in the Governor's office on February 23, 2014

Meeting was adjourned at 16:15 hours.

End