

Wood for Salmon Workgroup Subcommittee Meeting

December 9, 2011

NRCS Office

Ukiah, CA

Attendees:

Bill Snyder, Carol Mandel, Rick Macedo, Steve Smith, Greg Giusti, Chris Zimny, Patty Madigan, and Pete Cafferata

Brief Notes:

We discussed developing a series of workshops explaining to RPFs and agency staff that there is funding available through CAL FIRE and other agencies for producing the new California Cooperative Management Plan for small nonindustrial landowners (must be "forest land" with at least 10% cover). CAL FIRE has federal and state bond funds for grants to assist landowners with producing cooperative management plans. CAL FIRE, through its CFIP and PROP 40 grant programs, will grant up to 90% of the cost of the cooperative management plan, to a maximum of about \$5,600. Topics to cover in these technical workshops include explanation of the management plan, contents of the management plan, and programs and funding opportunities available to help deliver management plans. A tentative agenda and schedule for these workshops had previously been distributed by Steve Smith.

We also discussed developing a second set of workshops for landowners explaining management plan options and existing funding opportunities for forest improvement work/small restoration projects, including large wood enhancement projects. Rick Macedo suggested bringing technical experts to the landowner workshops. Topics to cover should include: financial help, technical help for various topics (watershed, oak woodland issues, fuel reduction, etc.), and permitting assistance.

There was considerable discussion of the cooperative management plan template that was developed by four entities over 1.5 years, titled the "California Cooperative Forest Management Plan" (the form is posted at: http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/CAForestManagementPlan.pdf). RPFs are to fill out this form for landowners. If NRCS is paying for the development of a consolidated conservation plan (up to 75% of cost), CAL FIRE's Jill Butler must approve the plan. After the plan is approved, a small landowner can apply for additional funds for actual on-the-ground field work (e.g., road improvement work) with federal programs such as EQIP. Lists of landowners with past THPs, NTMPs, etc. have been developed with GIS data and Assessor's records to determine landowners most likely to be interested in producing a California Cooperative Forest Management Plan (gathering "low-hanging fruit"). A key advantage of using this voluntary template is that it allows

landowners to be in a better position to receive federal funding for projects. The conservation plan can “piggy-back” on an existing CEQA document, such as an NTMP.

Ideas for the workshops discussed included:

- Develop a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for landowners.
- Provide guidance to landowners on types of projects that will require additional expertise (e.g., large wood enhancement projects).
- Work through the Farm Bureau to improve workshop attendance with landowners.
- Possibly include field tours with indoor sessions.
- Use Ukiah as a pilot location for the landowner workshops.
- CAL FIRE staff is to work with NRCS staff and UCCE staff to deliver a coordinated message to landowners regarding the workshops and how to develop outreach strategies.
- Test the WFSW consolidated permit form with focused outreach to landowners and resource professionals with past experience with these types of projects (e.g., Chris Blencowe, Lisa Bolton, etc.).
- Bring in past larger landowners in Mendocino County (5-7 landowners) with key watersheds for coho recovery that already have utilized NRCS EQIP funds for large wood enhancement projects.
- Explore approaches to deal with DFG’s requirement (CESA section 2080) for funding assurances to obtain a Consistency Determination with a federal Biological Opinion (BO) (i.e., no authorization of the federal BO without funding assurances, such as bonding, letter of credit, etc.). **Bill Snyder suggested that we may want to address this issue legislatively (discuss with CAL FIRE Legislation staff).**
- Develop a useful guidance document/brochure for landowners explaining all the available funding programs, the California Cooperative Forest Management Plan, including a flowchart/diagram describing what is required to get a project implemented on the ground, including some type of conservation plan, the time required, funding opportunities, permit requirements, etc.
- Provide clear guidance on the types of projects that will be funded (e.g., road improvement, wood enhancement, fuels reduction, etc.).
- Provide a clear explanation in a white paper that: (1) NRCS requires a “conservation plan” for project funding, but it does not have to be a California Cooperative Forest Management Plan, and (2) CAL FIRE does require a California Cooperative Forest Management Plan prior for CFIP project funding (note the difference between State and federal requirements).
- Explain that there is a better chance of obtaining federal funding if a landowner has a California Cooperative Forest Management Plan, and that all agencies recommend using this route (secondary routes (“mini-plans”) are available for federal funding, however).

- Consider the use of webinars in addition to workshops.

Landowner Workshop Tentative Agenda:

- Explanation of the California Cooperative Forest Management Plan (desired pathway).
- Discussion of funding sources available for the various types of plans.
- Discuss State and federal cost share programs for project implantation.
- Discuss how landowners secure funding.
- Discuss possible project types available for funding (including large wood enhancement projects).
- Discuss where to go for additional help.

Technical RPF Workshops:

- See Steve Smith's email agenda outline for technical training for RPFs.
- Explain the range of management plan options available, but stress the desirability of using the California Cooperative Forest Management Plan option.
- Note that UCCE is committed to supporting these workshops.
- Request volunteers for large wood enhancement projects (pilot projects).
- Attendance: RPFs, District Conservationists, agency representatives, FACs.
- **Have teaching cadre meeting prior to first workshop in Ukiah on March 15th. Cadre scoping meeting is to be either February 8th or 10th.**
- **Have CAL FIRE's Herb Bunt, Jeff Calvert, and Jill Butler fill out a sample California Cooperative Forest Management Plan prior to the cadre meeting, as well as develop a simple Q and A document. Distribute these documents by email prior to the cadre meeting, and bring copies of these documents to the cadre meeting.**