

Pine Creek CRMP Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2017 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

**Eagle Lake Ranger District (ELRD) - Lassen National Forest (LNF)
477-050 Eagle Lake Rd, Susanville, CA 96130**

I. Introductions

See Attachment A – Sign-In Sheet

II. Discuss Pine Creek CRMP Goals and Objectives and development of Project Tracking spreadsheet.

Rene Henery, CA Science Director for Trout Unlimited (TU) provided an overview of the Pine Creek CRMP Project Tracking spreadsheet. The spreadsheet assembles the goals and objectives identified in various documents and plans relevant to the Pine Creek CRMP, including Forest Service goals and objectives and Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout Conservation Plan goals and objectives. The spreadsheet is also meant to place all of the Pine Creek CRMP's projects in one place where the CRMP can track their status, link projects to funding opportunities, and share the CRMP's vision with the Forest Service and the public.

The spreadsheet is broken up into three categories: 1) Non-NEPA projects; 2) NEPA projects in the planning phase; and 3) NEPA projects in the implementation phase.

Members of the CRMP who would like to add a project to the spreadsheet should coordinate with a member of the CRMP Technical Review Team (TRT).

There was discussion regarding the status of the Pine Creek CRMP monitoring project that was submitted to the RAC by TU. The project was selected as an alternate project to receive funding if one of the selected projects is unable to use the funding. IT was also discussed that TU has additional band width for grant writing if another agency or organization needs help with a proposal.

ACTION:

1. *CRMP TRT members should contact Keesey to make sure their projects are on the spreadsheet and up to date.*

III. Discuss Pine Creek CRMP implementation projects including proposed actions, benefits, and timeline for implementation and completion:

a. Splitter Restoration/Repair (Hunt/Sloat)

Todd Sloat with Todd Sloat Biological Consulting (TSBC) provided an update on the splitter restoration/repair project, which was implemented this summer with funding from NFWF (*See Attachment B*). The splitter was raised .3-.4' and sealed. The splitter was set to flood stage to avoid flanking and keep more water in the main channel of Pine Creek

and out of the “Super Ditch”. There was discussion regarding the original design developed by David Sims (NRCS) and contacting him to obtain his institutional knowledge regarding the original design at the splitter.

ACTION:

1. *The splitter needs yearly maintenance in the spring to make sure that it is sealed.*
2. *The splitter could possibly be raised another .2’*
3. *Keeseey will contact Sims (NRCS) regarding the original splitter design.*

b. Conifer Thinning along meadow fringes/Pine Creek instream waterhole removal/road and railroad decommissioning-recontouring (Hunt/Blaschak)

The conifer thinning in Harvey meadow was covered in the Harvey Range NEPA EA in 2013. American Rivers applied to WCB to implement this project as well as the instream waterhole removal and road and railroad decommissioning. The Lahontan Regional Board has been working on the CEQA and submitted it for public comment in November.

ACTION:

1. *Blaschak will check with Hunt on the status.*

IV. Discuss Pine Creek CRMP planning projects including proposed actions, benefits, timeline for implementation and completion:

a. Confluence Meadow (Blaschak/Jones/Sloat)

Jones provided an update on efforts to reconnect Pine Creek in confluence meadow to the historic flood plain. Jones and Sloat completed the Proposed Action Purpose and Need (PAPN). The LNF Supervisors Office has completed their review. The PAPN will be going out soon with hopes of having a signed decision by spring. Concurrently, Jones and Sloat are working with the Honey Lake Valley RCD to complete the NEPA for the project. AR’s proposal to CDFW Prop 1 to implement the Confluence Meadow project was not funded. Efforts will be made this spring to acquire funding from WCB through the traditional routes rather than Prop. 1.

b. Logan Springs/Bogard (Sloat)

Sloat provided an overview of efforts to develop design alternatives for reconnecting Pine Creek to the historic flood channel in Logan Springs and Bogard meadow with funding from NFWF (*See Attachment C*). These are the next two meadows identified in the meadow restoration pipeline based on the results of the Pine Creek meadow assessment completed by Sloat in 2015. Sloat would like to have a meeting with the group to discuss the draft design report when it is complete in the near future.

c. Brook Trout removal (Divine)

CDFW completed the Brook Trout Lake Survey. This survey was necessary to identify other potential sources of brook trout that could enter the watershed and expand the project area. There were no brook trout in the lakes narrowing the project area. CDFW continues efforts to map all of the springs in the watershed. Scoping and environmental review will be the focus this year. CDFW has met with other landowners in the watershed. A Sport Fish Restoration Grant is being used to look at stream flow, temperature and flow rates, which are all important when using Rotonone.

d. Pine Creek Allotment Range EA (Blaschak)

The Pine Creek Allotment is located from the 105 road to the North Shore of Eagle Lake. A draft of the PAPN for the Pine Creek Allotment Range EA has been completed and is currently being reviewed by the LNF Supervisors Office. The PAPN should go out for scoping in early January 2018. The EA identifies different scenarios for rest/rotational grazing based on the grazing standards that need to be met. The EA also identifies waterhole decommissioning and aspen enhancements. Sloat has met with LNF and the permittee to incorporate grazing requirements following meadow restoration and the permittee is on board. U.C. Cooperative Extension (David Lile/Leslie Roach) is interested in developing monitoring protocols. Jones will be meeting with Lile in January to discuss monitoring objectives. Henery pointed out that meeting riparian vegetation objectives does not always result in good fish habitat.

V. Discuss Pine Creek CRMP Non-NEPA Projects including benefits, timeline for implementation and completion:

a. Habitat Typing (Henery/Purdy)

Sabra Purdy provided an update on habitat typing that is taking place in the Pine Creek watershed. Purdy is using a modified Forest Service stream condition inventory methodology. Purdy has collected data at Confluence, Logan Springs, and Bogard Springs meadows. She is working on the data analysis and processing and will complete her report in the spring. Purdy saw an Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout in Bogard Spring Creek in late Aug./Sept. She saw infant young of the year ELRT and suckers in Logan. Purdy thinks that Logan is in better shape than Confluence. Sloat requested Purdy's presence when the group meets to discuss the draft design for Logan Springs meadow.

b. ELRT Migration and spawning studies(Divine/Pustejovsky/Brazzanovich)

Pustejovsky provided an update on efforts to tag and track ELRT migration since 1997 and the results of recent efforts by the Susanville Indian Rancheria (SIR) with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Tribal Wildlife Grant (TWG) (*See Attachment D*). Pustejovsky emphasized that there is a real need to upgrade the equipment. There has been a tremendous problem transferring data from the pit tag array data loggers. Henery discussed conducting otolith analysis to see if wild reared fish are in the lake. Pustejovsky saw lots of spawning at Corbin Crossing. Divine has a master's student who is interested in conducting an assessment of natural production of ELRT. The study would track and tag juveniles and see if we see them in subsequent years. Purdy stated that the pools in the areas where she was working were pretty cold even in Aug./Sept. Are ELRT over-summering in the pools? There was discussion about funding opportunities to upgrade equipment (Biomark) and continuing the migration study. The group would like to fine tune where other spawning strategies are occurring and understand who's moving up and down and when. The USFWS TWG is due around September and is up to \$200,000. The NFWF Bring Back the Natives could be another possibility. Henery expressed TU's interest in assisting with the grant writing. There was discussion regarding when the trap is open to allow fish to move upstream and the use of Voke to monitor fish movements.

ACTION:

1. *Keeseey will organize a meeting of the Pine Creek CRMP TRT Fish sub-committee in January.*

c. SIR - Nine element watershed based plan (Lwenya)

Lwenya provided an overview of a nine element watershed based plan that the SIR is developing with funding from the U.S. EPA. The SIR is looking for partners to assist in this effort, which Brazzanovich the lead. Henery stated that TU has an open contract with the BLM to look at watershed conditions and could provide that information to the SIR. Lwenya expressed interest in developing partnerships to look at Climate Change Vulnerability as well. CRMP partners are interested in assisting the SIR, but need more information about which watersheds will be looked at.

VI. Discuss funding opportunities and alignment with project tracking (Henery)

Funding opportunities discussed included the Good Neighbor Authority, Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), NFWF, WCB, and a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA). The MSA would allow the CRMP to use revenue from forest management projects within the watershed to pay for restoration work in Pine Creek. There was discussion about how this mechanism will

probably be used more in the future due to low staffing levels at the Forest Service (1/2 of critical positions currently filled) and the resulting need for assistance.

VII. Adjourn 4:00 pm