

# 3rd/Year-end TBWP Network: Meeting Notes

Date: 12.11.20

## Opening

- **Opening Poll/Icebreaker:** answer the following question...  
*Q: Would you rather be able to talk to land animals, animals that fly, or animals that live under the water?*
  - Underwater animals was the most popular despite a strong representation across the three types (flying, land, water animals)
- Robert Gould of Ag Innovations opens the meeting, welcoming all and offering Zoom tip reminders.
- Carole Combs introducing those who are joining us for the first time:
  1. **\*\*Adest, Emma** – Generation Z, TBWP Network Advisor, [piecebookworm@gmail.com](mailto:piecebookworm@gmail.com)
  2. **\*\*Brigham, Christy** – SEKA Chief Resource Mgmt. & Science, [Christy\\_Brigham@nps.gov](mailto:Christy_Brigham@nps.gov)
  3. **\*\*Brown, Laura** – J.G. Boswell Co. Natural Resources Manager, [lbrown@jgboswell.com](mailto:lbrown@jgboswell.com)
  4. **\*\*Gutteriez, Raymond** – Eco-Cultural Ecologist, Wuksachi Tribe, [rgutteriez@gmail.com](mailto:rgutteriez@gmail.com)
  5. **\*\*Thoburn, Brian** – SCE SJV Government Affairs Mgr., [brian.thoburn@sce.com](mailto:brian.thoburn@sce.com)
  6. **\*\*Vink, Dan** – Six-33 Solutions Principal, [dan@six33solutions.com](mailto:dan@six33solutions.com)
- **Context-setting/ Our intentions** (Matt Hurley):
  - The concept of a network is to see more faces and create more connections.
  - Looking back, scoping workshop in 2019, we wanted 4 distinct quarterly meetings in 2020 & have had 3 due to covid. We are doing really well given that challenge. This has been an opportunity to build from the ground up, to come together to do good work, get out of our siloes, overcome that, we can be much more successful with broader impacts.
  - 2020 has been a hard year but good things have happened too and this Network is one of them. Looking forward to finalizing the Charter and turning to setting the stage for projects. We know there is a big desire to DO stuff, in truly collaborative ways, and we are on the verge!

- Acknowledged the work of the Design Team; reviewed Outcomes, Agenda, Meeting Guidelines

## **Building Consensus on Charter Elements**

Robert Gould: The Design Team has taken members' feedback from previous meetings and have made some good changes. Our goal is consensus and a reflection of what this group really wants to do. The Design Team has done great wordsmithing to reflect the ideas and goals of the group, yet we still need your agreement it is good to go.

We are really holding out for consensus-based decisions particularly on larger decisions that impact all and will shape our collaboration together. **Consensus is a key element of our governance**, especially early on when are not delegating decisions to an Executive Steering Committee or equivalent.

### **Group Breakouts**

Goal to seek agreement/consensus amongst the group on each of the five Charter elements. We also want input on what works about these elements, as well as any upgrades needed to get to consensus and/or improve for the future.

*Our practical definition of Consensus requires:*

1. Everyone understands the topic,
2. Willing to support public & private,
3. You are willing to help implement.

### **Break Out Group | Group 6**

Paul Peschel - Kings River Conservation District

Denise & Kayode Kadara - Allensworth community leaders

Carole Combs - TBWP Exec Dir

Laura Brown - JG Boswell Natural Resource Manager

Dezaraye Bagalayos - TBWP & APA

Agreement on the elements

1. Purpose Statement - all agree  
 Captured all issues as it relates to the ecosystem & socio economic, Inclusive.  
 Parts we can all play in helping the effort  
 Language broad enough to create enough room to doo all that needs to be done for our region
2. Critical Shift - When we look in terms of true integration, to going from sep/overlapping to having them nested reflects the most effective means of addressing discussing issues, and reflective of how things should be approached  
 Reflects dependency accurately. Everything is interrelated and should be interdependent . It's interconnected and often times we have projects that only address 1 piece and those projects lose steam bc they miss critical pieces
3. Scope of Work - Where? Is embedded in the Purpose  
 A bit overwhelming but covers some of the other elements. Focus on the How?  
 And the Who? In this area. Likes the How? And the Who? Focus on those
4. Big Goal - When you look at a big goal it should be succinct to the point and this covers all the bases doing just that
5. Guiding Principle - Could live with this, put Leadership last. Like the succinctness.  
 These are key values that could be exhibited

## **SMALL GROUP REPORT OUT**

### Key:

- + = A highlight in terms of what's positive and works
- △ = An area for enhancement or upgrade for the future

### **Group 1:** Reached consensus on all 5 elements.

- + Really liked the Purpose statement & resilience definition. Well balanced, speaks to a variety of initiatives, broad applicability, all inclusive and open-ended, does a nice job of addressing resilience and sustainability, keeps resilience and sustainability at the forefront of the conversation, inclusive and written to engage a variety of groups
- + Critical Shift - Conveys the idea that these systems are intertwined, represents all interests
- + Scope of Our Work - all-inclusive, framed in a logical manner; tie in all groups
- + The Big Goal - bold, motivational

- △ Only question was on Big Goal - Need to define watershed health going forward in light of all partners, like the definition of resilience. Different groups could/will interpret that radically differently. Really liked the purpose statement. All inclusive, open ended.

**Action Item:** Create Watershed Health definition, and perhaps key functions, going forward. A subgroup to work on and propose to the Network.]

---

## **Group 2 :** Consensus on all elements

- + Even though he's new to the work, Mark Larsen found the Elements effective; noted additional water stress relative to SGMA, esp. land retirement
  - △ Focused on the word "established" and whether or not something can be or already is established. Watershed health, you'll know it when you get there.
- 

## **Group 3 :** Reached consensus on discussed items with a few minor corrections

- + Purpose Statement and Resilience - they are good; ecosystem and resilience/sustainability are important elements, working together holistically
- + Resilience: Ecosystem processes as health is useful
- △ Resilience - maintains its integrity and enhances its health suggested change Should mention (native) ecosystem integrity as resilience [Addressed by Design Team]
- △ Change working of 'green' and 'grey' infrastructure as they are jargony; change to clearer terms. [Addressed by Design Team]
- △ Critical Shift - concern about relationships between circles and perceived relative importance; moving bottom left corner to top right, q - whether or not you can have a social system that is healthy if the economic system is not, poss. change to top right circles - switch social and economic circles  
[Action: this item is to be addressed over time, with more definition and graphics; clarify the difference between nested/interdependent systems, the nature of that interdependence, and their relative importance. The key is exploring the quality of the relationships between those 'circle's. ]
- △ Consider "elevator pitch" versions of slides for future applications
  
- △ Scope of Work - "Who" could be more specific when mentioning stakeholders, i.e. public and private lands [Action- refine in the future and in the context of specific projects]
- + The Big Goal - Laudable goal

- △ The Big Goal - Not necessarily realistic, but timeline keeps accountability. “Establish or improve” avoids suggestion that no watershed resilience is established; “Establish and/or maintain watershed-wide health” as suggestion from Larry Saslaw  
[Addressed by Design Team]
  - △ The Big Goal - What are the metrics? [Action: form a subgroup to establish a definition of health and metrics]
  
  - △ Guiding Principle - a problem with something we didn't have a chance to discuss. I don't understand what the Guiding Principle actually means. The guiding principle is balance? Is this really the most important thing? [Addressed by the Design Team]
- 

**Group 4 :** Got consensus on all five.

- + We appreciate the term resilience and the definition includes recovery.
  - + 2040 deadline aligns with SGMA.
- 

**Group 5 :** Achieved consensus. No deal breakers.

- + Scope: very comprehensive. As we move into projects & priorities, we will need to be more explicit about gaps.
  - △ Big Goal: as we move forward get more explicit that systems are changing and require ongoing engagement (i.e., stewardship and restoration are ongoing/'forever' processes, not one time events)
- 

**Group 6 :** Agreement on the elements

- + Captured all issues as it relates to the ecosystem & socio economic issues; inclusive.
- + You can see we can all play a part(s) in helping the effort; language is broad enough to create enough room to do all that needs to be done for our region
- + Critical Shift - When we look in terms of true integration, going from “separate/overlapping” to having them nested reflects the most effective means of addressing discussing issues, and reflective of how things should be approached.
- + Shift Reflects dependency accurately. Everything is interrelated and should be shown as interdependent . It's interconnected and oftentimes we have projects that only address one piece and those projects lose steam b/c they miss critical pieces and/or don't address the needs of a broad enough set of stakeholders.

- △ Critical Shift - Some of us weren't sure how this adds value, but we're all ok w/ it. Message is good, some indifference to the graphic. [Action - will continue to clarify and refine as we go per other comments about the Critical Shift.]
- + Scope of Work - a bit overwhelming but provides in some of the other elements. Big statement. We like the broad/comprehensive scope. Appreciate the note not to duplicate work of other groups in the region, yet be sure to also address gaps [if that's best done by this Network]. Capitalize I in Indigenous. [Addressed by Design Team; will also clarify the core intention of the Network to do work that is not otherwise possible.]
- + Likes focus on the How? and the Who?
- + Big Goal - it is succinct, to the point and this covers all the bases; we don't want to treat this as an end goal that we get to and then stop.
- + Guiding Principle - Like the succinctness; these are key values that could be exhibited
- △ Guiding Principle - Could live with this, but put Leadership last. [Addressed by Design Team.]

**Group 7** : Consensus (but lost Gary Adest mid-session due to internet issue)

- △ Socio economic sustainability, good its in the Purpose, but will be difficult to reach with expanding population. [Note: working with Gary to address population concerns.]
- △ Guiding principles - "Balance through" difficult to interpret, suggested "Balance of" or Leadership, Collaboration, Action. Balance should be assumed. [Addressed by Design Team.]

**Poll on overall agreement with Charter Elements:** split pretty evenly between "Really Like" and "Good Enough" ; no "not there yet" votes

Matt Hurley: clarified the 3 circles on the **Critical Shift** are all meant to be the same size effectively in terms of the value and attention we place on them, even if there are different levels of interdependence. (i.e., in the long term, a healthy economy depends a healthy society and ecosystems)

## Envisioning Potential

We began with exploring the questions:

- What are the top 2-3 key issues in the Basin that need to be addressed?
- how we can work together to address those issues?

### **Discussions in new Breakout groups** (different configuration than with first activity)

The intent of these discussions was to brainstorm/state top issues and concerns, and ways to address them as a network, not analyze, refine

### **Group 1 Topics** (only one that submitted notes; will refer to the individual comments submitted via the Poll)

- **Needs/issues:** Uncontrolled population growth needs to be addressed somehow; disconnect between upper and lower watersheds in that regard; also need to address fire and climate change (overgrown forest- hard to control the control burn, current action is not a match to what is needed, very expensive), and potable water for underserved communities; addressing water scarcity, compounded by climate change, policy changes (i.e. SGMA), and overgrown forest, in the basin – sustainably w/o compromising the economic opportunity that this region provides
  
- **How might work together:**
  - A large collaborative network that addresses the whole picture
  - Headwater to groundwater coordination and integration along the way
  - Try to figure out ways to fit small solutions into the big scheme
  - Actively go out and recruit participation of all the players
  - Addressing the capacity gap between different stakeholders and build partnerships to create greater capacity

See the [full set of ideas](#) generated from these questions.

[**Action Item:** identify themes for these and work with them at the next Quarterly meeting]

### **Report outs from attendees:**

**Dennis T.** - Need to look at land-use issues, land-use planning, breaking into general plans. [Note: some creative thinking here involves reframing from land-use planning, to 'land relationship' planning, shifting the focus from land as a thing to be used or utilized to a vital resource and being we depend upon for life, economy, etc.]

**Matt H.** - We plan everything in our municipalities, but you get to the Sierra and there is little. Many of the real problems is density in the Sierra and foothills

**Julie Vance** - Need to start to address strategic land retirement (aka, "land re-purposing"). Real opportunity for habitat and connectivity on retired lands. Absent of that happening we could end up with dead landscapes that do nothing, don't sequester carbon, provide habitat, help recharge aquifers, etc.... Restoration has to be done in a thoughtful way

**Don Cameron** - There are a lot of plans from NGOs for the CV but they've not come out to talk to us about it. We need better engagement, throwing out a plan for the CV that don't know here is not useful. Funding opportunities for mitigation/restoration projects. We aren't thinking about creating wetlands where there aren't any, but with recharge basins we can look at ways to incorporate those nicely into habitat restoration.

These lands are people's livelihood and they do have value in an of themselves.

No one is talking about taking someone's land to do this. Some of the least productive ag lands will be good candidates for habitat restoration in a lot of cases and that's what we are looking at.

**Mike Hagman:** Kaweah Subbasin Regional Conservation Strategy, Wildlife Conservation Board has a document that allows individuals and provides a resource for them to understand local species and their needed habitats. No doubt there will be **land repurposing**, trying to make sure they are repurposed with habitat conservation projects.

---

**Project Example:** Deer Creek and the Sequoias-to-Sloughs Pilot Concept

**Jeff Powers | SRT : Deer Creek efforts, Sequoias to the Sloughs**

Looking at Tulare Basin and [Deer Creek area maps](#)

**Project:** around 2000 acres in size, this is about existing work being done. We are looking at this as a potential first pilot project. Have pieces in place in the Deer Creek area, number of organization working in that area

Jeff gives overview of what the map is showing; helpful to get all oriented.

SRT has two parcels of land with easements, working with local farmers and ranchers.

**Dan Vink:** Have multiple efforts going on. Wants to echo Don Cameron, need to be aware of what we're doing here. Need to be careful not to blame landowners for groundwater extraction, they were just following the laws/rules. We can't expect multi-generational landowners to turn on a dime. SGMA presents the opportunity to strategically create more open spaces and maintain good farmland.

1. Watershed plan, PL 566 working with Pixley ID, grant from NRCS, finishing up key resource reports, being led by Pixley ID with a lot of different players, TNC, Kathy Wood McLaughlin, Audubon, team approach.

2. Watershed Coordinator for the lower Tule watershed, going for the CA funding 3. Land Trust, it's not Dan Vink's Land Trust, we've formed out our board.

3 land owners, 2 technical seats, 2 at large, have their 501 c3 alliance and working on the certification process with the Land Trust Alliance.

Working on 500 acre project above Pixley that will be the first project for the Land Trust. Working closely with SRT on the Tule Trust. Trying to stay focused on SW Tulare County. The goal is to merge all into one lane.

### **Larry Saslaw and Rob Hansen - Sequoias to Sloughs concept elements, activities and outcomes**

**Rob H** - Riparian portion of CAP projects done in 2010. Carole, Bobby K, Steve Laymon, working on projects on land on west side of valley from Corcoran to the Grape Vine. Looking at lands that have potential for conservation. The riparian corridor protection of the plan looks at bringing that all together. Evaluated each stream based on a number of criteria.

The Deer Creek area is a really different area with so many different parts, and an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of land use. Deer Creek along the drainage the river length contains 56/83 known habitats known to exist in the County. Anchor in the Alpaugh area, Ton Tachi wetland, the other anchor is the National monument and in between is private land. We tried to document the treasures that can be enjoyed by all and noted places that can be enhanced. One challenge is that Deer Creek and White River are undammed. Can be compared to the Consumnes River. There is a complete riparian corridor along the Deer Creek. What will the balancing act be as we move forward with SGMA

**Larry Saslaw:** We have to take the 30k foot view. Think about the upper watershed as source, how do we contend with climate projections, how do we find means to have healthy function riparian corridors that does all the things we want using both manmade and natural stuff.

Upper watershed in Deer Creek, how to invest, get biggest bang of the buck for uplands and riparian areas that restore and bank what comes down. How can we get better grazing/fuel management. Let them tell us where we can support on water yield, habitat. Once we are off federal lands how can we promote cost share through NRCS programs with landowners. Meld values, integrate needs, keep productive farmlands safe and restore unproductive lands. Conservation recovery of Valley species at a landscape level with linkages. Been through 20 years of doing upland restoration and have been growing upland habitat but terrible at managing. We can grow plants but how do you manage in the long run. Integrate uplands, upper part of the watershed. Restore in recharge areas and then restoration and linkage. Those listed species are the economic engine for this land to be retired to be restored through credits. Long term applied management, especially in wet years.

On the ground, landscape-based issues with strategies on how to address them.

This is just one example of the kinds of work we could do in the network.

## **A Call for Projects and Tools to Define and Scope them**

Safeeq: You've now got a sense for the kind of project we are looking for in Deer Creek, but it's not the only project. There may be projects in early conceptual stage and we'd like to capture those as well. Our challenge how can we align and make things fit to fulfill our overall objective. Need a good way to summarize projects.

### The Project Matrix

- Info that will help identify where the project might fit in the grand picture and other things happening around that area.
- Dimensions: Land-Ecosystem-Water-Air-Human Environment
- This is the breadth of things we are looking at. All collected information will help us know where the project fits.

### Project Summary template

- As the project takes shape it's good to summarize in a document. Identify, outline, articulate elements of your project then carry over into second document and flesh out a little more. The template is a working document. As we use it we may find that it needs to be changed or altered, yet this would be a good standardized process. Links will be provided for partners to start using.

Looking forward to project ideas, the call is out!

## **Post Fire Recovery & Impacts in the Southern Sierras**

We will hear on update on the impacts and issues related to recent fires. There will be needs we have to address - that have been foisted upon us by a combination of climate changes and prior forest management - and we have to address. Project ideas will be coming in the new year.

**Chris Sanders:** Sequoia is assessing affects of the fire and looking for areas to reforest, looking for natural regeneration possibilities, site prep. Removing dead trees & planting trees in areas that wont have natural regeneration *since the soil has been killed due to the severity (heat of the fires).*

Notes being put together assessing what occurred there and possible projects. Removing dead material, restoration along streams. In assessment mode. What we need to do. Next meeting will have a better idea. In regards to collaboration can talk about that further the next meeting.

Question: How would you characterize the damage? Catastrophic? Destroyed soils? Range?

High intensity burn areas in the Tule River and Basin; the fire was really hot. Nuked, high severity. Within the Tule Basin half is catastrophic, no vegetation cover left whatsoever Camp Nelson to Ponderosa high intensity burn. Expect to see concern about flooding.

**Julie:** Any work being done to hold the soil?

They did receive funding, roads, trail stabilization, clean up culverts. Hazmat was a big deal and a major focus point for hazardous materials from structures that burned down. Not much in the way of soil transport or mitigate that. Funds only go so far.

**Julie:** Sounds like the problem is money as far as dealing with soil stabilization. Is that fair to say?

I'm guessing it was a funding problem vs willingness to do it. Will receive \$1.5 million for road/trail stabilization & HAZMAT

**Julie:** Whatever you can share about priority tasks that lack money? Particularly projects around communities. Good to know the extent to which early restoration efforts have been stymied. What do you all really think should be happening there?

**Brian Thoburn:** There were two fires in the SCE territory. Creek Fire and Sequoia complex fire. Creek Fire short operational capacity at most of our power houses. Restoration will continue throughout the year. Significant damage to communication and distribution lines. Reservoirs good due to some pre=emptive mitigation action. Reservoir levels down, also continue to work with Reclamation to meet downstream user contracts. Damage in Kern River basin, large portion of the watershed from the Sequoia complex. Magnitude of debris flows in the Kern River intake area.

**Steve Haze:** The Creek Fire has created substantial damage. ⅓ of watershed impacted above Millerton. Showing us the former community of Alder Springs, Big Dry Creek watershed, and Sycamore Creek watershed. The big concern is sediment and debris. Most of the trees have been killed or destroyed. If there is rebuilding that will create more disturbance. The estimation of sediment in woody debris. Conducting analysis on anticipated debris flow into PineFlat and other reservoirs that ultimately land on the Valley floor. Working on meadow restoration to mitigate debris flows, haven't been able to get out to all project locations.

This is uncharted territory, never had something so broad to address. This is going to take decades to recover and restore. Water supply that flows into these reservoirs are critical to our ag economy. The damage from these two fires combined are going to take a lot of resources. These watersheds are critical and important for the health of our economy and environment.

SCE has been participating in phase one and phase two removal. **Phase one** captured household hazards, once that's complete they look at the structural area. **Phase two**, containment around the perimeters. The role for all of us that don't have expertise comes in **Phase 3**, to establish a stewardship approach to private property ownership.

Robert: We will circle back to looking at how we can partner, collaborate, and get involved.

**Road Map and Objectives (aka The Path Forward).** We are in Phase 3 Envisioning and continue envisioning into the New Year. For now sticking to a basic governance structure until there is a clear need to develop further. Want to keep it lean and as simple as possible. Looking to foster smaller, subgroup efforts in between meetings, including project-related ones, added work on the Charter (e.g., defining watershed health), and/or project funding and governance.

Matt Hurley: We are moving from envisioning and now have to organize ourselves accordingly.. Certain target subject areas we have to talk about. Funding, admin, etc. Want to remind all that from the beginning we have one good thing and that TBWP has a 12 year history, very clean and productive as a 501 c3. We have an excellent track

record to build off of. Hub of the wheel to do accounting and admin. Not asking to create a hierarchical structure to start tying satellites to the mothership and start getting some projects done. I have an absolute sense of urgency to get things going.

**Dates for 2021 meetings:** March 11, Sept 10, Dec 10. In addition to quarterly meetings, we hope to have activity in between them and perhaps make them shorter.

[TBWP donation form](#) attached.