



Tulare Basin Watershed Partnership Network: Q1/'21 Network Meeting - Agenda

LOGISTICS

Dates/Times	March 12, 2021, 1:00 to 4:30PM
Location	Zoom Video Call

MEETING OVERVIEW

Desired Meeting Outcomes	<p>Purpose: To build momentum and collective capacity to develop solutions and projects for a strong 2021 network effort.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of and input on the 2021 Objectives and Roadmap - achieved 2. An understanding of and (draft) agreement on the Project Criteria and Approval process - achieved 3. An open forum to create an initial prioritized set of problems and a sense of what is needed that enables the formation of Action Groups - achieved 4. Updates on key efforts in the region, including upper watershed post-fire recovery and resilience project opportunities and the Sequoias-to-Sloughs project-achieved 5. A set of actions and next steps
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Project Criteria and Approval Process [link](#) to proposed ideas

Input and discussion with the Network

John Austin: Must all criteria be met?

Answer: We are still open at this stage; would be good to have a scoring system, albeit subjective, for items 2 & 3

The #4 is somewhat arbitrary. Even if we have a project in early development, if there is strong enough interest then we should still consider and encourage leads to continue to pursue.

Kayode: Key part here is #5. There is a vote at the end that 60% of the partners think this is good. That's the bottom line.

Safeeq: Everything will be reviewed and scored by and in front of the Design Team, the Board, and/or the network

Richard H: Practically speaking if folks can't assemble a partnership of 4 or more we can potentially have a kind of "minor league/farm system" that can start working on new ideas/solutions together

Safeeq: A lot will be subjective and will depend on how we assess. Some kind of scoring criteria will be good, especially for Criteria 2 & 3.

Robert G: *The spirit is not to be exclusive but to supply a standard and some rigor for a greater chance of success. We want to foster innovation in projects that can take off*

Sarah C: *Network project will be a project applied for by the NGO or a project spearheaded by participating partners?*

*Projects will be spearheaded by any partner or combo of partners;
Three basic project creation approaches:*

- **Adopt** - take on an existing type of solution or project & seek to transfer to or scale up in the TBW (e.g., launch a 'French Meadows' type project in So. Sierra)
- **Adapt** - to tailor, expand, or amplify an existing or nascent initiative (e.g., Deer Creek work expanded to Sequoia to Sloughs)
- **Develop** - create a solution and project from scratch, including integrating previously-separate elements into a coherent project (e.g., strategic land-use planning for ag lands that includes multi-benefit solutions).

Robert G: *Even if there are projects that some are interested in and want to pursue, we may not take it on as a Network, but those partners may still want to be involved and pursue. Not exclusionary.*

Richard H: *Whatever the process is it will in some way shape what is happening. If we have some sort of application process who will be reviewing that and deciding?*

Robert G: *We will try out the criteria, test & use it and see where we need to make adjustments, if any.*

Matt H: *This is asking for a slightly different approach from the norm, what this encourages is for us to increasingly **cooperate, coordinate, and collaborate**. The most important is #5 and how we get there is talk to our partners early on for support and input then work your way up the list.*

Go outward first with your idea then bring it back to the larger group. It's a different process. Most of us work in such a rigid framework going step by step so this diverges from that norm. Building a strong team first, it is a creative process so it'll tend to be fluid, open, and dynamic as you gather ideas, feedback and refine it.

Safeeq: *Collaboration does not just involve resources, partners could have really fruitful input as well*

Project Criteria

Mostly thumbs up from the group - saw no apparent dissent - on using these criteria, with the following input in mind:

- May lighten up on #2 - the number of partners be flexible depending upon other factors
- #3 in the spirit on inquiry
- #4 should be 60%
- next steps, develop some scoring criteria.

Safeeq: *What constitutes a member of the network? We will discuss this at our next quarterly meeting in June.*

Robert G: *We will discuss this at our next quarterly meeting in June. Decided to table that conversation, **whoever is participating in the meeting is a network partner for now.***

Project Selection process

Anyone opposed to us adopting this process?

Barbara B: Do we know what the scoping tools are?

We do: The Project Matrix, The Project Summary (links in the attached Powerpoint)

Ryan M: Perhaps a Letter of Support can constitute an approved member?

Robert G: Good idea. Seems intuitive. Maybe a member of the project per se, but not necessarily of the Network

Updates on Key efforts in the region

Be thinking about project criteria as we listen to updates...

Steve Haze is sharing 2 maps

Kings River above Pine Flat Dam, Sycamore Creek sub watershed within the Creek Fire

The burn perimeter is showing to the southwest. A number of defined neighborhoods, Headwater for Sycamore Creek were not burned. Crestman area on the way to Shaver Lake, was destroyed in the fire. Crestman Rd area is called Pine Ridge, Pine Ridge HOA, then a different lifestyle on Peterman Rd, Shaver springs a small hamlet, the fire was stopped just short. None of the homes in this area were destroyed but the area did burn.

Hope Springs Rancheria, very remote, looking at USGS hook, based on aggregation of homes 271 were burned or destroyed. Greater than 50% of the homes were destroyed. Many of the homes congregated at the headwaters then at Shaver Springs, a lot of work was performed for fire prevention. Looking at additional analysis.

Each sub watershed is a source. We can see all the homes destroyed on this watershed, Sycamore Creek.

Did a debris analysis, USGS link. Estimated that a million tons of material could flow down Sycamore Creek, past Cold Springs Rancheria, and into Pine Flat

Kate Wilcox is performing a GIS analysis, applying for \$10million in FEMA funding; we have until May to submit. Cost analysis is 1:1. \$400 million is being requested with only \$45million available. Our request would be 25% of the available funds.

**Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC), you can think of these as watershed*

At HUC-12 scale, a watershed size can be between 15-60 mi²

How they delineate all the watersheds in the United States

Other area we are looking at is where Matt and I are co-watershed coordinators, upper San Joaquin to Lake Isabella (Tulare Basin watersheds) Sequoia Complex fire.

They prefer the term "Intermix" instead of interface because of all the overlapping land patterns and jurisdictions.

Primarily public lands and national forest. Same situation with communities here. These are hot spots. Looking at water quality, working closely with Cal OES, FEMA, Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team, each one has 3 aspects:

- 1. Phase 1: Contain outflows from the properties; a range of household hazards to be contained*
- 2. Phase 2: Remove debris and damaged materials on properties*
- 3. Phase 3: Outside of the home footprint. Limit inflows & outflows*

Been working with all the usual state and federal agencies and NGOs. Things are moving somewhat slowly. Just got permission from Dept Conservation to focus on these two fires, see what the impacts are for downstream users and landscapes.

Working on meadow restoration in 4 meadows with Trout Unlimited. At least one was impacted by the Sequoia Complex fire. This is just a snapshot. If I showed you all the activities... it's like a war zone. Absolutely terrible

Matt H: It would seem that the Fire damaged areas are clear potential project "incubators" for Network partner participation....not as a grand attempt, but rather incremental recovery efforts....in cooperation with the efforts currently underway....

Seems like focus on mitigation and cleanup, less so soil stabilization, is that fair?

Did submit to the SWRCB, 319H funding, you could not apply if you were in the Central Valley. Only \$4 million available. Only way you could apply is if you had a fire. There are 4 million acres of watershed that burned last year, 11,000 structures destroyed and only \$4 million available with about \$40 million of damage/needs for recovery and restoration. Incredibly competitive.

Big Dry Creek that is diverted to Big Dry Creek Reservoir that then flows to the San Joaquin River restoration area. The homes were all built at the headwaters of Dry Creek, 1,600 acres. The intensity of the fires coming over these ridges and into these neighborhoods is intense. Debris flows and water quality for downstream users... 78,000 cubic yards of debris that could flow down into the multi-million dollar Chinook Salmon San Joaquin restoration area. Not much of a snowpack.

Hydrophobic soil conditions can increase runoff volume and velocity. 3 places with light rain fall with only small slides occurring. Infrastructure exposure, roads. Hydroelectric facilities exposure. Snowfall down to lower elevations is a little bit of a blessing this year since it prevents major runoff.

Julie A: Looking at the totality of burned watersheds and restoration requirements, is there a developed understanding of what the most important projects would look like? Dealing with several orders of magnitude when it looks at budgets and we will have to look at prioritization in a big way. What are we looking at in terms of restoration of those watersheds?

Steve H: A lot of individuals displaced, suppression costs over \$180 million for the Creek Fire alone. For Fresno Co alone \$400 million off the table, big hit. We are focused on 3 watersheds, when looking at all the homes destroyed, look at Jose Creek watershed, most homes destroyed in headwaters along the ridge area. A lot of activity, people inclined to rebuild homes instead of abandon them. Looking at increased debris creation. The Alder Springs area is so disturbed. Trying to prevent landslides there. A lot of things to get our arms around in terms of the range and types of watershed impacts. What will be focused on is where there are/were homes. We are looking at landslides and trying to create fire safe conditions.

DOC willing to rewrite the watershed program however we want. Focusing on these two watersheds. Have the resources to articulate the challenges in a relatively short amount of time.

Chris Sanders USFS update: Public Health and safety and property. Applied, received \$700k. Road and trail stabilization, cultural protection a major component, noxious weeds. Over \$100k to address noxious weeds.

2nd efforts, longterm, hazard tree removal along roads. 2nd project, larger, reforestation, stabilization. 3,000 acres, with planting and looking at natural regeneration areas where we have seed source. In harder hit areas looking at

doing prep work to stabilize soil to then open up for tree planting in the future.

Steve Haze: Opportunity to work with Sequoia National Forest, funding to work on meadows within the fire perimeter. Bobby Kamansky setting up a session to show the work that will be undertaken. Maybe a portion of the \$400k is to explore the best way to recover burned areas

Richard H: What are the terms in the length of the grant agreements? 2 years. 5 years?

Chris S: For BAER funding for the Sequoia NF, it's a year. Noxious weed within a year as well.

Steve H: DOC funding, 1 year. Provides flexibility to respond to collected information coming out of recons and LIDAR. Expand to the upper Kern River. Working with Univ of Washington. Going to have that session next week. We are out there pushing the envelope for additional tools. Meadow Restoration for Sequoia Complex we have until 2023. Other funding we have received along the way gives us stepping stones.

Under DOC we could be eligible for a 2 year renewal. Push out and use those funds into February. Very helpful.

Robert G: Rich set of opportunities from the work being done. Great to highlight potential downstream risks and an opportunity to continue looking at the whole watershed.

Updates on *The Sequoias-to-Sloughs* project - Jeff, Safeeq, others (15')

Jeff Powers: Presentation, overview stakeholders in watershed, purpose and metrics, next steps coordination efforts, initial meetings of stakeholders and create a "sub-action group" come up with a group of some partners to look at viable projects. Talked about how to

Safeeq: Overview of what scoping might look like.

Steve Haze: Like the way it's structured. We have a meadow restoration underway with the Southern Sierra Integrated Watershed Management group (SSIRWM), partnering with that group, established for over a decade. There is a process in place. Struggling to see how, codified in place mechanisms

Jeff Powers: SSIRWM is its own mature network with similar partners already working in a collaborative way.

Steve Haze: I can see how this can work structurally and complimentary. Like the GSAs we are innocent bystanders. Down on the valley floor it's a different ballgame that we subordinate ourselves to another process, but I can see how we can do coordinated overlapping work. Adjustments can be made with a whole watershed perspective. I like this as a proposal.

Safeeq: This is not finalized, the way it's put together may not be fully informative. Also looking at where the state is heading with watershed monitoring. Just make sure all is lined up

Sarah C: This is where the state is going. 10 Resilience Pillars, looking at the matrix it looks like it can align nicely. Align vocabulary with how the state is talking about this. We should have a conversation and will keep the group apprised. TCSI Resilience Pillars are [here](#).

Safeeq: I learned about the document after I put this together and plan on aligning with it.

Chris S: Wondering if botanical resources should be included?

Robert G: Have separate scoping documents, Jeff shared a summary of the contents here, it's a tool we are going to work with and get your feedback on:

- [Project Matrix](#)
- [Project Summary](#)

How does Sequoia to the Sloughs align with project criteria presented earlier?

Julie A: We just have to try it. What's been drafted is perfectly fine in principle, now we need to test drive it.

More work around engaging communities to make sure they are engaged around the process and make sure there are benefits that accrue to the

2021 Objectives and Roadmap [link](#)

Matt Hurley: Have moved from convening and exploring into envisioning. Phase 4 to be moved into, how are we going to innovate and implement. This year propose to the group a refined list of 6 Objectives *see Roadmap

Expand tiers, resources, people, energy.

Get finer development of watershed health definition and determination

We need to reach out, need to educate about where we've been, need get good messaging out there

Discussion:

Denise K: Outreach falls in line, this is a road map. I like what Matt has laid out, it's a good process, especially with how we will do outreach. We do want to bring in more partners, fill in the puzzle.

Julie A: Developing watershed health... that more precise kind of thinking will help us refine our objectives and approval process. We have a common understanding of what those things are. We are going to find ourselves looking at a variety of goods. Do I personally have a refined definition right now, no?

Matt H: That's exactly why it's bolded. We won't know what progress looks like until we get going. It needs more work, especially from folks like you who are already deeply thinking about these questions and definitions. We relish the input from those in the group and will be relying on it to define

Barbara B: What I'm not seeing is how this partnership creates a synergy that is greater than the sum of its parts? Looking at the upper & lower watersheds and all its components and players, I don't see how it works together and how it creates a bigger whole. What makes it better together than not? How do we create this larger whole?

Matt H: It started to show itself when we discussed what our project criteria and process looks like. We are all so use to doing things that just trying to do things differently is a part of the stretch of change. I agree with you, we are working on generating that, it's the missing sauce

Julie A: Unless we can show that in a given instance that there is synergy where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts then maybe those not seeing that can go and do on its own. This collaborative will be composed of constituent groups. Unless the collaborative adds value to individual groups projects then they can opt out and proceed on its own

Steve H: I see this as an overlay of initiatives. The way we are structured under DWR, etc see a lot of potential for regional synergy in the Tulare Lake Basin. The sum is greater than the whole, just by going through this exercise I see great value

Robert G: On the Design Team to more clearly articulate creating synergy. It is being built so there will be additive value in how we learn and think together, in developing a common language, especially as we work cross boundary, incumbent of the Design Team to go farther on that.

This is a call for us to make sure this is something unique and valuable

Emma A: Outreach messaging and education plan, a good idea to make an online document where people can put in suggestions of community groups they know of that have similar aims or should be involved so that when the time comes for outreach there will already be some suggestions

Barbara B: Going off of what Emma said in an online document, we meet 4 times a year but not a lot of opportunity to meet up in between.

Robert G: We are going to talk about this very thing. We would love to have a few people who are willing to take a crack at defining watershed health and resilience

John Austin

Barbara Brydolf; Julie Allen; Larry Saslaw; Safeeq Khan; Sarah Campe (?)

We have now representation from upper, middle, and lower watershed in creating the definition (!)

Julie A: The just published forest plans should have those kinds of definitions and standards that we at least somewhat recognize and not go creating a definition that disagrees

Should have representation from upper, middle, and lower watershed in creating the definition

Prioritizing Problems & What is Truly Needed

Report outs (ideas from breakouts listed [here](#), starting on slide 20)

Group 1 (Barbara B reports):

-Changing role of federal reservoirs, climate change, changing snowpack, altering capacities. Create more storage below the dam.

-Wildfire exacerbated by climate change and groundwater depletion changing land use, legislation and RCIS

-Widespread ecosystem degradation, zoning changing

-Social Inequity and enviro degradation, must address social inequality problems first and when those are addressed enviro degradation addressed as well

Group 2 (Emma A reports):

Drought, capturing rainwater, lack of groundwater recharge, loss of access to clean water, all under the umbrella of climate change. Loss of generative land from Ag uses and lack of discussion around use of materials and Ag waste. Thinking about the importance of the negative economic impacts of SGMA.

Group 3 (Safeeq K reports):

Headwater management in the burn and unburned/overgrown areas and what to do with biomass

What to do about loss of snowpack, losing surface water storage capacity, groundwater recharge

Salt management in the Tulare Lake Basin, exacerbated by climate change especially with drought coming and increased irrigation.

Thematically, we will propose 3-4 Action Groups to assess solutions and potentially develop projects. Based upon the above, it will likely be to engage Partners on solutions:

*1) **Healthy Headwaters/Wildfire Risk Reduction & Recovery**,*

*2) **Watershed Connectivity** (Sequoias to Sloughs project),*

*3) **Storage/Reservoir Mgmt.** (to address changes in weather/snowpack),*

*4) **Advanced Groundwater Mgmt** (incl. recharge, demand reduction/sustainable ag, water trading, planning).*

