



- Cohesive Strategy Goals**
- Resilient Landscapes •
  - Safe & Effective Wildfire Response •
  - Fire Adapted Communities •

## Collaborative Group - Meeting Summary

Meeting held November 8, 2017  
 Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

### Meeting in Brief

At the November SOFAR Collaborative meeting, the Landscape Vision Committee presented proposed Desired Conditions and Zones for the SOFAR landscape. The committee will refine the document based on Collaborative feedback. Generally, the collaborative was supportive of the approach, recommending clarifications and the importance of capturing economic engines and other assets in the region.

Patrick Wright from the California Tahoe Conservancy presented the Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative and Lake Tahoe West Partnership, an all-lands initiative to increase the pace and scale of restoration work across the watersheds of the Central Sierra Nevada and Lake Tahoe areas.

Richard Thornburgh, Craig Thomas, and Duane Nelson presented recent prescribed burn activities and benefits in the Caples Ecological Restoration area, a multi-year effort. The vision is to complete prescribed burning across 8,800 acres of the Caples landscape over a 10- to 15-year period.

The SOFAR Collaborative will not meet in December and will next meet on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, 1:30-4:30 pm. The Landscape Vision Committee will meet December 13, 1:00-4:00 pm.

### Action Items

Who	What
Landscape Vision Committee	Revise Desired Conditions document based on input from Collaborative participants
SPI	Write Desired Conditions for industrial forest lands
Cal Fire	Write Desired Conditions for wildfire response themes
CBI	Post presentations to SOFAR website
All	Write letter of support for CCC Greenwood Facility

# Meeting Summary

## Introduction

The Cohesive Strategy is an all-lands approach to achieve the goals of resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities and safe and effective wildfire response. As described in the SOFAR charter, the Collaborative is charged with shared problem solving, identifying areas of agreement, and moving forward in such a way that meets all interests in the room.

Facilitator Gina Bartlett reviewed the following **working agreements** for the meeting. The working agreements are intended to support a productive dialogue and advance the Collaborative's goals.

- All ideas have value
- Respect
- Listen to understand and create a problem-solving environment
- Be comfortable
- Avoid editorials
- Humor welcome

## Proposed Desired Future Conditions and Zones for SOFAR

The Landscape Vision Committee presented proposed Desired Conditions and zones, which describes conditions or the vision for the landscape for the South Fork American River Watershed (SOFAR). Many Collaborative participants contributed to the development of Desired Conditions over the past several months. The [draft Desired Conditions document](#) is posted on the SOFAR website, as are the [presentation slides](#).

### What are Desired Conditions?

- Describe the aspirations or vision of what the plan area (or portions thereof) should look like in the future.
- Are attainable and sustainable.
- Integrate resource management for multiple objectives.
- Should be written clearly enough so that progress toward achievement is determinable.
- *Should not* direct taking action, prohibit taking action, or require specific tools to be used for attainment or maintenance.

### Why develop Desired Conditions?

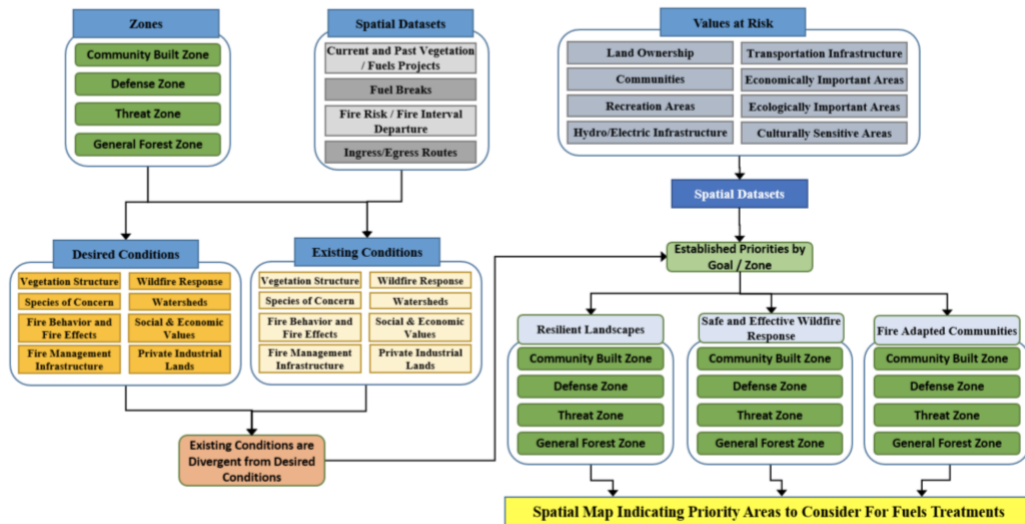
- Desired conditions create a shared **vision** for the SOFAR landscape condition.
- Desired conditions can provide a **comparison with existing condition** and direction for identifying priorities and tracking progress in the future.
- Partners can **use the Desired Conditions to communicate** to their constituents, apply for grant opportunities, etc.

### Integration of Desired Conditions into Landscape Strategy

The Desired Conditions document includes the following **conceptual model** of information (including zones, spatial datasets, desired conditions, existing conditions, values at risk and established priorities by goal and zone). These categories of information will ultimately feed into a **spatial map indicating priority areas** to consider

for fuels treatments. In 2018, the Collaborative will discuss Values at Risk and Priorities (two categories included in the Conceptual Model).

**SOFAR Cohesive Strategy Landscape Vision Conceptual Model**



### Why Zone SOFAR?

Resources at risk to wildfire and fire management objectives are not uniformly distributed across the SOFAR landscape. Other benefits of zones are to spatially categorize areas that have similar levels of risk, desired future conditions, and fire management objectives.

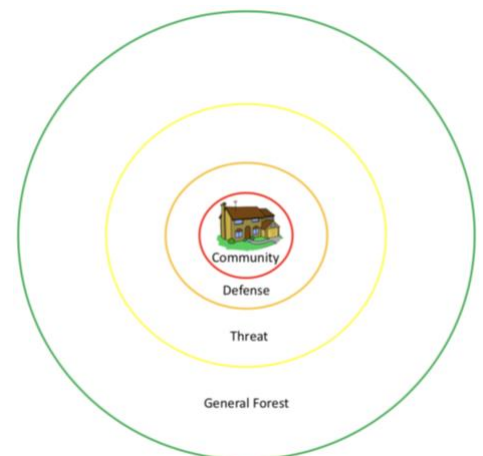
### The Four Zones

#### 1. Built Community Zone

- Space needed to slow or stop spread of wildfire to protect valuable infrastructure from being irreparably damaged from radiant heat or direct flames and to provide protection for firefighters defending infrastructure.
- The area within 100 - 200 feet from valuable infrastructure that is susceptible to damage by wildfire flames or radiant heat.

#### 2. Defense Zone

- A buffer in closest proximity to the Built Community Zone.
- Extends roughly .25 miles out from Built Community Zone and valuable infrastructure that is susceptible to damage from radiant heat or direct flames.
- Zone is of sufficient extent that fuel treatments within it will reduce wildland fire spread and intensity to allow for suppression forces to succeed in protecting human life and property. There should be a zero probability of crown fire in this zone.



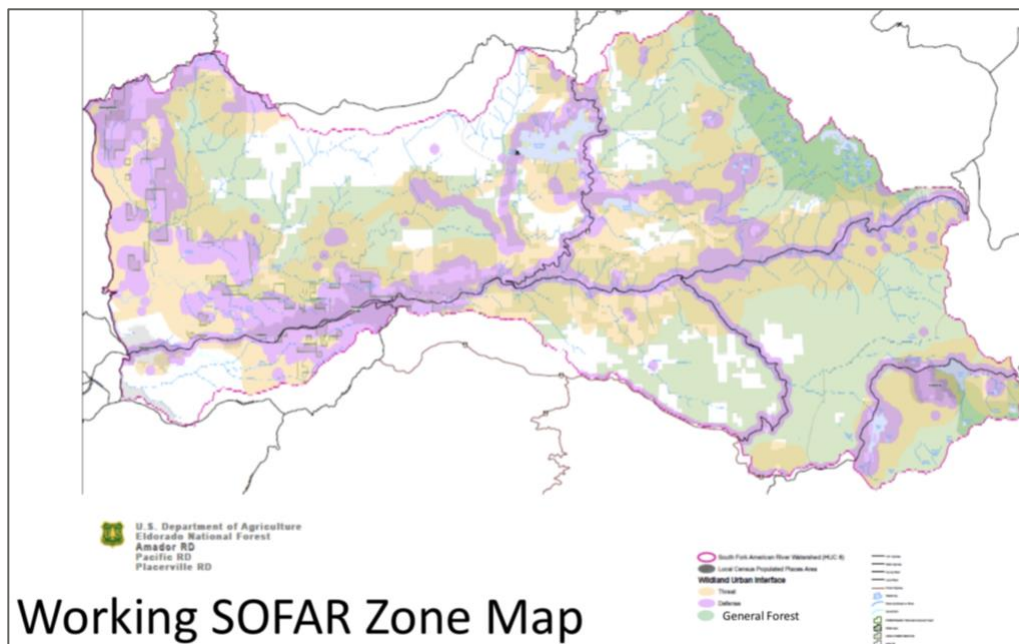
### 3. Threat Zone

- Zone generally extends approximately 1.25 miles out from the Defense Zone boundary; however, the actual Threat Zone boundaries should be based on fire history, local fuel conditions, weather, topography, existing and proposed fuel treatments, and natural barriers to fire.
- Fuel conditions in the Threat Zone should moderate fire spread and intensity. In this zone, fire should have lower flame lengths, lower rates of spread, with low risk of crown fire.

### 4. General Forest Zone

- Zone corresponds to all areas outside of the Built Community, Defense, and Threat Zones.
- Forest conditions within this zone are resilient to most disturbance events and pose a low threat to valuable human infrastructure under most fire weather conditions.

In the working draft **SOFAR Zone Map**, below, the Built Community and Defense Zones are represented by purple, Threat Zone is tan, General Forest is green, and private areas (not yet mapped) are white. These private land areas will likely be zoned General Forest.



### Desired Condition Themes

When Desired Conditions are achieved for each of the ten condition themes, the Collaborative's goals will be accomplished:

1. Vegetation Structure
2. Fire Behavior and Effects
3. Fuels Condition

4. Species of Concern (environmental impact statement will need to address rare and endangered species)
5. Wildfire Response
6. Social and Economic Values and Benefits
7. Hydrologic Function
8. Water, Power, and Communication Infrastructure
9. Industrial Forest Lands
10. Non-industrial Private Forest Lands

## **Collaborative Feedback on the Draft Desired Conditions**

### Theme #1, Vegetation Structure

- Consider adding climate change to the list of disturbances. Suggested statement: “Resilient to current and future climates.” Hard to plan for an unknown future but important to plan for resilience.
- Add language around desired condition of native plants and not trending toward invasive plants.

### Theme #6, Social and Economic Values and Benefits

- Consider separating social and economic. Incorporate language that describes the Desired Conditions needed to ensure community-level sustainability and productivity (e.g. ensure that agricultural lands are protected).
- Incorporate public education and surrounding communities' understanding of the risks and benefits of fire.
- Integrate sustainable products
- Add a bullet from Mark Egbert about protecting the economic engines of agricultural and grazing lands, or add agricultural as a theme.
- Identify agricultural areas and economic engines and ensure that they are protected moving forward.

### Theme #7, Hydrologic Function

- Maintain existing content while clarifying that maintenance of soil quality and quantity are the conditions needed to reach the goal of soil conservation and soil productivity while minimizing fuel loads.
- Consider including narrative that describes the scale (acreage) of each zone. While Desired Conditions are largely defined in terms of resilience, also include attributes related to watershed productivity, recreational value, soil productivity, water productivity, ecological and economic products.
- Incorporate text about economic markets and benefits, including delivering timber products to market (existing edit that was accidentally omitted).
- Incorporate text about homeowners within and adjacent to the SOFAR footprint understanding both the risk and benefits of fire for landscape restoration (exact language can be drawn from page 68 of the Cohesive Strategy) and understand the significance of building materials and urban fuels.

### Additional Comments

- Consider other non-industrial private landowner types (e.g. agricultural or rangelands) and conduct outreach to see if there are additional Desired Conditions.
- Consider how to include agricultural lands and timber/working landscapes on maps.
- Change “fire adaptive” community to “fire adapted” community.
- Define the word “resilient” early in the document. One possible definition for resilient: “Resistance to type conversion.” Alternately, the Landscape Vision Committee may create a glossary to include in the document.
- The County Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) could filter relevant projects through desired conditions.

### Next Steps

The Landscape Vision Committee will integrate Collaborative input and refine the Desired Conditions document. Sierra Pacific Industries and Cal Fire will contribute desired conditions text for the industrial forest lands and wildfire response themes, respectively. Additional next steps include:

- Finalize Zone Maps and Desired Conditions
- NRV (Natural Range of Variation) Explanation and Application to Desired Conditions
- Identify Values at Risk Spatially
- Delineate Potential Fuel Breaks and Strategic Locations
- Compare Current Conditions to Desired Conditions
- Prioritize Areas in Need of Management Action

## Overview of Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative and Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership

Patrick Wright, Executive Director of the California Tahoe Conservancy, presented the Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative, which encompasses the Lake Tahoe West Restoration Partnership ([view presentation](#)). Patrick focused most of his remarks on the Lake Tahoe West Partnership. The Partnership utilizes an all-lands restoration approach by addressing fire resilience along with watershed and forest health across 60k acres.

### Goals of the Partnership

- Restore within ten years the **resilience** of the west shore's forests, watersheds, recreational opportunities, and communities to a variety of **disturbances**.
- Serve as a model for rapid, large-scale restoration in the Sierra Nevada.

### About the Partnership

- Covers 60k acres
- Collaborative through all phases
- Integrates science from the outset
- Utilizes an all-lands approach and supports inter-agency coordination
- Aims for the scale of solution to match the scale of the problems
- Has a strong science team

The Partnership explicitly anticipates and **accounts for uncertainty, creates efficiencies** to increase pace, scale, and impact, and **serves as model** for other landscapes throughout the basin. The Partnership established 31 indicators of resilience and developed a composite graph of resilience to the ten disturbances of greatest concern.

### Key Issues

- Navigating management tradeoffs between:
  - ecological fire and potential water and air quality impacts;
  - mechanical treatments and potential water quality impacts
  - high fuel loadings and dense canopy needs of sensitive species
- Coordinating interagency environmental review
- Implementation and treatment logistics, including how to scale-up permitting

### Next Steps

<b>Phase 1.</b> December 2017	Finalize Landscape Resilience Assessment (LRA)
<b>Phase 2.</b> November to June 2018	Develop Landscape Restoration Strategy (LRS)
<b>Phase 3.</b> June 2018 to March 2020	Develop site-specific Restoration Project(s) and conduct NEPA-CEQA-TRPA review
<b>Phase 4.</b> June 2020	Obtain permits
<b>Phase 5.</b> 2020 to 2025	Implement, monitor, evaluate, improve

### Discussion

The Partnership aims to develop models that are scalable and replicable for other collaboratives, including SOFAR, and can be implemented at a range of levels based on the available technical resources. With education, the public and other stakeholders will come to understand the interconnections between landscape resilience and air quality.

Calculating the carbon benefit of this work by assessing the avoided emissions from catastrophic wildfire would benefit other collaboratives..

Rather than submitting many small grant applications, the Partnership aims to compile all relevant projects into one integrated package, with a list of every permit-ready project on the landscape. They will bring this compilation to Cal Fire for funding. There is concern that there would otherwise be a dearth of compelling projects for Cal Fire to fund.

### Prescribed Burning at Caples Ecological Restoration Project

Richard Thornburgh, Duane Nelson, and Craig Thomas shared insights from recent prescribed burning activity at the Caples Ecological Restoration Area ([view presentation](#)). The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) recently conducted two days of pile burning and understory broadcast burning within Caples, with the aim of removing ladder fuels to protect large, old trees from wildland fire. For the initial understory burn, staff treated 145 acres in Caples unit A1 and 90% of piles in unit B1. Burning began with piles near the control line on the northern ridge of the project, in a mix of open conditions and dense forest. The fire largely stayed on the ground, though sometimes climbed a tree and burned lower limbs. Future burns can take place from below, with

reduced risk of fire moving over the ridge. While the area burned to-date represents only 2% of the Caples project area, it is an important accomplishment because the elevation of the terrain requires a particular alignment of smoke and weather conditions for safe burning.

The vision is to complete prescribed burning across 8,800 acres of the Caples landscape over a 10- to 15-year period. Some areas have extremely high fuel loads, which USFS will treat in segments to increase the likelihood of establishing a good fire regime. Crews may need to return for several treatments on the same piece of ground to ultimately reach fuel load desired conditions.

Over the last decade, USFS developed the vision for this prescribed burn project, conducted the NEPA work, and coordinated with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Eldorado Irrigation District.

The 1989 forest plan revision designates this section of Caples as **recommended wilderness**. This means that no action can be taken that would preclude the area from becoming future wilderness. Thus, prescribed burning in this area requires wilderness-compatible techniques, with mechanized equipment exceptions for chainsaws and pumps if needed.

**Smoke monitoring** shows that prescribed burn is a much better choice than wildland fire with regard to air quality and human health impacts. The USFS Public Information Officer published a news release to notify local residents about the burn activity. Tahoe Basin received some phone calls about smoke.

Duane Nelson advised that Collaborative members remain vigilant about the ongoing progress of the Caples Restoration Project. Nelson was a strong advocate for this project; however, now that he is retired, there is need for a new champion for this project in order for it to remain high priority for USFS. Sierra Nevada Conservancy is an invested partner.

## Updates

**Funding Available:** \$200 million from California cap and trade funds are allocated for forest health for the current year, with no funds allocated for next year. Patrick Wright hopes that the Sierra Nevada will receive annual funding for forest health.

**Biomass Pilot:** Lawrence Livermore Laboratory and Iowa State are interested in siting a biomass fast pyrolysis process in El Dorado County at the Camino Mill site. An initial pilot process will begin start in spring. Sierra Pacific Industries is involved.

**Biomass:** A Collaborative participant suggested inviting Jonathan Kusel, Executive Director of Sierra Institute for Community and Environment, to present at a future Collaborative meeting.

## Burning Underway

- There is currently prescribed burning in the southern portion of the King Fire area.
- The Eldorado National Forest has burned more than 1,000 acres, mostly piles.



- The National Wild Turkey Federation is completing 63 acres of burning in the Cleveland Fire area and 232 acres of mastication.
- Watershed restoration is beginning in General Sherman.
- The purpose of some pile burning is to allow for tree planting, which will sequester carbon.

**Greenwood Closing:** The California Conservation Corps (CCC) plans to close the Greenwood facility. Mark Egbert encouraged Collaborative members to send letters of opposition as soon as possible.

**SCALE:** Ben Solvesky and Kendal Young recently attended a two-day SCALE meeting. At the meeting, ecology staff presented GTR256 – Natural range of variation of yellow pines and mixed-conifer forests in the Sierra Nevada ([view paper](#)), which the Collaborative used in developing SOFAR desired conditions. Kendal hope that over time more Collaborative members will become involved with SCALE.

**Richard Thornburg Departure:** This is Richard Thornburgh's last Collaborative meeting; he is moving out of state.

**Partners:** It is important that the Collaborative build a partnership with Cal Fire and support the agency in spending allocated funds.

**2017 SOFAR Collaborative Goals:** Facilitator Gina Bartlett congratulated Collaborative participants on reaching their 2017 goals, which included developing a charter, expanding participation, and establishing a biomass facility in the area.

## 2018 Meeting Calendar

Collaborative	Landscape Vision Committee
<p><i>The SOFAR Collaborative meets on the second Wednesday of each month, 1:30-4:30 pm.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• December – NO MEETING</li> <li>• January 10, 1:30-4:30 @ El Dorado Irrigation District</li> <li>• February 14, 1:30-4:30 @ Office of Emergency Services</li> <li>• March 14, 1:30-4:30 @ Office of Emergency Services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location:</b> <i>Placerville Supervisor's Office, 100 Forni Rd, Placerville, CA.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• November 14, 3:00-5:00</li> <li>• December 13, 1:00-4:00</li> <li>• January 24, 1:00-4:00</li> </ul>
<p><b>Always check <a href="http://sofarcohesivestrategy.org">sofarcohesivestrategy.org</a> for meeting location and latest information.</b></p>	

## November Meeting Participants

Lori Parlin	
Kathy Smith	

Sue Taylor	
Pamela Hoover	California Native Plant Society
Patrick Wright	California Tahoe Conservancy
Norma Santiago	Catalytic Connections
Paul Wisheropp	Dudek
Brian Veerkamp	El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, District 3
Heather Campbell	El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
Mark Egbert	El Dorado County + Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District
Rod Pimental	El Dorado Northern
Kevin Vella	National Wild Turkey Federation
Kathy Lewin	Northern Sierra Summer Home Owner Associations
Jon Bertolino	Sacramento Municipal Utilities District
Ethan Koenigs	Sacramento Municipal Utilities District
David Zelinsky	Sierra Club / Republican CC
Ben Solvesky	Sierra Forest Legacy
Craig Thomas	Sierra Forest Legacy
Andy Fristensky	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Chris Dow	Sierra Pacific Industries
Duane Nelson	Trout Unlimited
Richard Thornburgh	U.S. Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest
Michelle Havens	U.S. Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest
Eric Nicita	U.S. Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest
Dana Walsh	U.S. Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest
Kendal Young	U.S. Forest Service – Eldorado National Forest