

# South Fork American River Cohesive Strategy Collaborative Group - Meeting Summary

Meeting held April 26, 2017

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

## Meeting in Brief

At its April meeting, the SOFAR Collaborative discussed the upcoming local pilot of a biomass gasification system, reviewed the draft charter with the aim of finalizing it in advance of the May Collaborative meeting, and confirmed next steps in development of the SOFAR Cohesive Strategy website. The Collaborative will move forward with establishing a Funding and Finance Committee, per recommendation of the Steering Committee. The next Collaborative meeting will be held on May 24, 1:30-4:30 at Office of Emergency Services in Placerville.

## Action Items

Who	What
CBI	Look at availability on first, second and fourth Wednesdays for standing Collaborative meeting
Kendal	By 5/11, revise Charter and send to Collaborative
All	By 5/24, bring revised Charter to boards and signatories for briefing and review
Kevin Vella + Chris Dallas	Inaugural members of the Finance Committee
CBI	Publish basic website by early June; publish a more finalized site by mid-June [Note: CBI is unable to have site up and running by May 9; on track for a full site launch by mid-June]
CBI	Include attendee list in future meeting summaries
CBI	Distribute Collaborative participant contact list
CBI	Distribute finalized February meeting summary

## Upcoming Meetings

May 10, 1:00-4:00, Landscape Visioning Committee, Eldorado Supervisor Office in the Pyramid Room, Placerville.

May 24, 1:30-4:30, SOFAR Collaborative, Office of Emergency Services (OES) Meeting, Room, Building A (downstairs), **330 Fair Lane, Placerville, CA 95667.**

## MEETING SUMMARY

### Meeting Summary and Protocol

The Collaborative reviewed and approved the draft meeting summary from the March 22 Collaborative meeting.

Moving forward, the group will use the following **protocol to review and finalize meeting summaries**: following each Collaborative meeting, CBI will email a draft meeting summary to Collaborative participants for comments. At the next month's meeting, the Collaborative will approve and finalize the draft summary, and once approved CBI will post the finalized version to the SOFAR website (once available) for public access.

The group also agreed that in the future, Kendal Young will bring only a few **photo copies** of each handout to Collaborative meetings. Collaborative members will print copies in advance of the meeting or view meeting materials digitally.

## **Gasification Pilot**

Supervisor Brian Veerkamp shared that the Collaborative is moving forward with a **gasification pilot project** for the 100-ton biomass gasification system that Energy Inc. described at the March Collaborative meeting. Mountain Enterprises will host the pilot on a 30-acre site located at the intersection of Springvale Road and Lotus Road in Placerville. The pilot will last two weeks and utilize up to 200 tons of feedstock. As discussed at the March meeting, any material besides nuclear waste can be used as feedstock, and the system produces biofuel or electricity, biochar, and distilled water as marketable outputs. The system is fully self-sustained electrically, and SMUD and PG&E could receive energy credits for it.

The pilot is intended to serve as a marketing campaign for the system with the goal of a local entity ultimately purchasing the system. Ideally the system will remain at Mountain Enterprises. The system can be leased to purchase, with an eight-year return on investment.

The system is mobile, but for the greatest efficiency it should operate in the same location for 20 years. Lisa Ann Worthington, CalTrans, suggested that once the system is in a long-term location, it be included on the Tree Mortality Task Force map for greater visibility.

Norma Santiago will travel to Las Vegas on May 11 to view Energy Inc.'s 3-ton biomass unit.

## **Identifying and Meeting with Small Mill Owners**

Norma Santiago discussed the importance of engaging small mill owners around the use of biomass materials for value-added products. Next steps include further networking with and getting to know small mill owners.

Rod Pimenthal, a Collaborative participant and small mill owner in the town of El Dorado, has a sawmill and a planing mill. Some milling processes utilize smaller timber, and Rod's mill is set up for 10-20" material. In order to be cost effective, materials must come from within 30-mile radius of his mill. Rod's mill currently runs under capacity because it's difficult to source logs that provide adequate value to justify the cost of processing.

## Funding and Financing Committee

The Steering Committee recommends establishing a Funding and Financing Committee, with the charge of raising awareness about the SOFAR Cohesive Strategy and cultivating relationships with potential funders and identifying grants and opportunities to fund SOFAR work.

John McEldowney, El Dorado County Emergency Services liaison to the Tree Mortality Task Force, recently created a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes all of the publicly available funding and some private utility funding. This presentation could serve as a good starting point for the Financing Committee.

A function of the Funding and Financing Committee would be to coordinate activities so as to minimize competition among organizations seeking funding. It may be of benefit that there has not yet been an application from within the SOFAR area, while the southern and central Sierra have already received substantial funding.

**Initial Volunteers:** **Chris Dallas** (Sierra Nevada Conservancy) and **Kevin Vella** (Wild Turkey Federation). Chris can help with identifying grants and the application approach.

**Next Steps:** Clarify the committee's charge and immediate next steps. At the next meeting, identify committee leadership and participants.

## Committee Updates

### Landscape Vision Committee

The Landscape Vision Committee will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of the month, at 1:00 in the Pyramid Room of the Eldorado National Forest Supervisor's Office. The committee's objective is to identify priorities for shared projects and to assess the Collaborative's data needs. The Research and Monitoring Committee is currently partnering with the Landscape Vision Committee.

The committee used criteria that it developed to assign priorities to different treatment areas on the landscape, and will discuss next steps at the May meeting. The committee is working to develop a variety of materials, including a description of desirable landscape conditions; a map of fuel breaks in the SOFAR area; a platform to store and share information (such as Google Drive); Google Earth time series; regional data layers; and infrastructure layers.

The committee is also looking at areas for a defensible space zone, a community defense zone, and a management zone. They are considering pre-attack and evacuation plans for the SOFAR watershed, which involves identifying firepads, evacuation routes, and other relevant infrastructure.

The Landscape Vision Committee will collaborate with the Funding and Finance Committee (once its established) and is seeking volunteers from partner agencies, including Sierra Pacific Industries, Fire Safe Councils, CalTrans, fire management experts, and SMUD. Sierra Pacific Industries plans to attend the next Landscape Vision Committee to learn more.

**Discussion:** A Collaborative participant recommended that the Landscape Vision Committee assess existing products from other efforts taking place statewide, such as a multilayer, QR-enabled CalFire map. A participant further observed that the Landscape Vision Committee mirrors the goals and objectives of the Tree Mortality Task Force's Mapping and Monitoring Group, which is presently moving into a monitoring phase centered around future landscape conditions and desired outcome. The Task Force's data is free, available, and transferable.

## Communications Committee

The Communications Committee met in April, with the priority of developing a SOFAR website. The Committee shared the draft website outline and requested input from Collaborative participants. The Collaborative approved the committee's recommended website url [www.sofarcohesivestrategy.com](http://www.sofarcohesivestrategy.com). The website will be live by mid-June, and CBI will manage all site updates.

The Communications Committee is also developing a Communications Plan to guide broader outreach and communication efforts.

## Draft 2017 Goals

The Steering Committee recommends developing goals for the Collaborative's 2017 work (see Goals handout).

## Draft Charter

Kendal reviewed comments received on the draft Charter. The Charter is intended to serve as a high level, guiding document that outlines how the Collaborative will work together.

- Moving forward, the facilitator will **review meeting protocol** at start of each meeting to create an inclusive space for newcomers and to support clarity around meeting protocol.
- Make more explicit that **committees are developing recommendations** for the Collaborative.
- Clarify that Charter will have **one signature per organization**.
- Clarify that during a vote, there is **one vote per signatory organization**.
- Participants raised the question of whether the ability to fall back on a supermajority vote will distract the Collaborative from its **goal of reaching full consensus**.

- The Collaborative will center around **signatories** to the Charter. In deciding whether to sign the charter, entities should consider whether they want to be consulted in the final phases of decision making, or simply contribute the Collaborative's conversations.
- Each organization will designate a **participant** and an **alternate**. The participant needn't be the same person who signs the charter.
- The Collaborative will review and renew the Charter, Collaborative participant list, and other materials (such as Goals) annually.

**Next steps:** Kendal will revise Charter in early May, and then send the document to Collaborative participants to bring to signatories for briefing and review, so that all entities can sign the charter beginning on **May 24**.

## Presentation: CalTrans Tree Removal

Lisa Ann Worthington, CalTrans Senior Landscape Architect, presented on lessons learned from CalTrans tree removal efforts.

In 2016, CalTrans conducted 26 tree removal projects in 18 (out of 56) California counties – including 12 projects in 8 High Hazard (HHZ) counties - for a total of \$78.8 million and an average, all-inclusive cost of \$1,200 per tree.

2016 lessons learned:

- **Initial tree count was unreliable** (it was a significant underestimate)
- Arborists RFP crucial
- Mortality of **non-pine species** could have broader use options beyond chipping for biomass; for example, small mill operators could make use of other species.
- Significant time spent obtaining rights of entry
- **Environmental process:** Inconsistent application of Directive 15 (streamlining environmental processes) led to slowed contract progress. In turn, a large sum of money was spent on liquidated damages to contractors due to slowed contract progress.
- **Timber sales:** Use of weekly Response Form vs. Daily Cut Log
- Red-legged frog habitat zone
- Recommendation to stick to a single method of marking trees, whether painting or flagging.
- Presented to Little Hoover Commission hearing about how funds were spent
- Submitted use of public funds memo to the California Transportation Commission to justify why public funds were used to remove hazardous trees from private property.
- CalTrans supports **legislative tours**, which they have planned in 10 high hazard counties, including El Dorado County.
- CalTrans partnered with CalFire and CA Conservation Corps to remove fuels that were not part of state contracts in an effort to help with thinning.
- CalTrans's **disposal strategy** centers around chipping and transporting chips to biomass facilities. Hauling costs are expensive.

- **Tree disposal** decisions were delegated to contractor. Difficult to delegate specific end use and to track chain of custody.
- CalTrans uses a **USFS map of large and small biomass plants and wood processing facilities**. Recommendation to **add sawmills to the map**, as many contractors use the map to assess disposal options. This could be a good opportunity to bring small mills into play.

Tool: FRAP Tree Mortality Viewer, Jan 2017 - <http://egis.fire.ca.gov/TreeMortalityViewer>

For 2017, CalTrans allocated \$68 million for tree mortality projects in 17 counties. There is a possibility that flooding will impede projects.

### Next Steps

The Landscape Vision Committee will next meet on May 10 and the next Collaborative meeting will take place on May 24, 1:30-4:30 at Eldorado Irrigation District. At that meeting, Greg Stangl of Phoenix Energy will present on a biomass-to-energy conversion technology, and the Collaborative will identify Financing Committee leadership and participants and discuss planning a summer SOFAR field trip. Collaborative members will continue to hold the fourth Wednesday afternoon of each month while CBI assesses group availability on first, second, and fourth Wednesdays for a standing Collaborative meeting.

### April Meeting Participants

Hardie Tatum	Associated California Loggers
Randy Hackbarth	Back Country Horsemen
Ryan Bellanca	Bella Forestry Inc.
Bryan Pooley	Cal Fire/AEU
Lisa Worthington	CalTrans
Norma Santiago	Catalytic Connections
Annie Walker	CNPS
Paul Wisheropp	Dudek
Brian Veerkamp	El Dorado Board of Supervisors, District 3
Pat Dwyer	El Dorado County Fire Safe
Dan Corcoran	El Dorado Irrigation District
Rod Pimental	El Dorado Northern
Lester Lubetkin	El Dorado Resource Conservation District
Kendal Young	Eldorado National Forest
Michelle Havens	Eldorado National Forest
Kathy Lewin	ENFIA
Kevin Vella	National Wild Turkey Federation
Heather Campbell	Pollock Pines Camino FSC
Barbara Brydon	Sierra Club
Andy Fristensky	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Rich Wade	Sierra Pacific Industries
Tim Tate	Sierra Pacific Industries
Ethan Koenigs	SMUD

