



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

Collaborative Group - Meeting Key Outcomes

Meeting held Nov. 10, 2021

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

Meeting in Brief

The SOFAR Collaborative expressed appreciation and support for everyone who worked on the Caldor Fire.

Forest Supervisor Jeff Marsolais spoke to the multi-faceted, robust response to the fire and the plans to remove hazard trees along roadsides and prepare burned areas for winter in the near term and initiate the forest resilience strategy and restoration process over the coming years.

Province Ecologist Becky Estes presented a framework for post-fire restoration strategy. ([Link to Brief](#) and [Link to GTR 270 – Technical Report](#)).

Next Meeting: January 12 at 1:30

Updates and Announcements

Biomass Work Group underway and working with County Consultant – more to come

Chili Bar-to-Georgetown Focus Area just received \$1mil grant from BLM and is developing a 300-400 acre fuel break. The focus is public safety and evacuation.

Steve Graydon, Open Canopy, on modeling prescribed fire, is available to work with individuals to be trained to perform prescribed fire. Contact open.canopy.fp@gmail.com 530.521.8441 (cell)

Community Meeting in Pollack Pines 11/10/21 6:00-8:00 – Heather Campbell, Camino-Pollack Pines Fire Safe Council.

Forest Products Infrastructure / Biomass Panel (with RCD, ENF, SMUD, and Private Industry) Nov 17 6-9pm at Pioneer Park hosted by the Amador Eldorado Forest Forum, Robert Little

Have an announcement you would like to share via the SOFAR list-serve / website? Send information to Cameron Hager, CBI (chager@cbi.org)

Meeting Overview

Jeff Marsolais | Caldor Fire: What we understand and what's next?

Supervisor Jeff Marsolais described the Caldor Fire, its aftermath, and the forest's resilience strategy. The conditions related to the fire were unprecedented. Multiple huge fires were underway putting pressure on resources nationally. Fuels had high loads and extremely dry drought conditions. The fire was all-time-level-high in burn release, fuels, and heat.

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Jeff explained that the Forest Service and Calfire had been on alert and immediately dispatched crews. Conditions were extremely dangerous, and early sites were very challenging to access. The probability of ignition was 85-90% so crews were challenged again and again by spot fires. The fire was incredibly dangerous, and the teams are thankful that no staff were lost.

ENF has been actively treating the forest via its resilience strategy and is redoubling its efforts to carry this forward. The forest is going to expand its coordination with adjacent private landowners so treatments are better coordinated to enhance resilience. The forest needs to burn and routinely maintain areas. ENF is working on a number of areas that are almost ready for prescribed fire, especially in drainages. The ENF is also planning to do a forest-wide NEPA document.

Caldor restoration nests within this resilience strategy. The Regional Office of the Forest Service is assessing the area that is already underway. A timber team has been deployed. The ENF is determining where it will need to replant and where it will employ prescribed fire. Soil depletion is another issue. There are many board feet available in the forest although timber volume could emerge as an issue. At this point, data indicate that 85-90,000 acres were high severity burn so restoration will be needed. The recently passed Infrastructure Bill should provide funds for this work.

Jeff closed expressing appreciation for the SOFAR Collaborative and its continued support as efforts move forward.

Discussion

ENF welcomes help and is working with the RCD to set up partners to assist in the recovery process. Anyone can email District Ranger Scot Rogers or Forest Supervisor Jeff Marsolais. Mark Egbert at the RCD underscored how quickly everyone is moving and putting contracts in place to complete work, etc.

Safety and potential land slides near Strawberry: Lots of entities, including road crews, are working on these issues of concern, including a team to look at soil movement. NRCS can come to sites and provide technical assistance to private landowners. Here's the link to the RCD web-site where you can find contact information to schedule a site visit.

<https://www.eldoradorcd.org/caldor-fire>

Non-industrial private forest landowners can also reach out to Farm Services Agency for other post-fire assistance programs in Caldor.

Recreation. For now, the area will remain closed to recreation. However, the ENF will reassess in March.

Sierra-at-Tahoe. Andrew Bray expressed appreciation for community cooperation and support. The ski area has been working with ENF, the county, and many others who have been amazing. The ski area will not be able to open this year, but has so much work underway including preventive efforts to protect for the future.

Salvage. The market is flooded with salvage timber so the team is exploring creative options with railroads, overseas shipping, and other tactics to move the materials rather than pile and burn.

The FS and PG&E have been stacking trees in certain areas; this is temporary. The stacks should be removed by summer at the latest. The Forest Service is anticipating a shortage of trucks next summer so is issuing an RFP for this immediately.

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Presentation | Post-Fire Restoration Strategy, Becky Estes

([Link to Brief](#) and [Link to GTR 270 – Technical Report](#))

Province Ecologist Becky Estes presented the *Framework for Post-Fire Restoration Strategy for National Forest in California*. The purpose of the framework was to develop a science-based framework for the development of the post fire strategy that is based on restoration science.

The need for the framework emerged after the Rim Fire in 2013 in Tulumne County, California, and Yosemite National Park.

The previous approach was largely tactical, conventional, short-term. Scientists recognized the need for a long-term commitment and arc of activity over a large footprint. A narrow range of restoration can be problematic.

The steps in the process include assembling a team and gathering and analyzing spatial data to assess post fire conditions, consider factors that may influence recovery, incorporate other tools, and then move forward.

The Framework:

- Uses landscape-scale.
- Focuses on long-term recovery.
- Recognizes positive and negative fire effects.
- Promotes integrative and creative approaches.
- Explicitly evaluates climate change effects.

Discussion

The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team will conduct the analysis of soils in the near term.

The post-fire restoration strategy will work well with the ENF resilience strategy. SOFAR can also call upon the efforts of the Landscape Vision Committee over the years to inform future efforts and work.

Becky doesn't typically worry about invasive species on ENF. However, invasives may need to be watched given the size of the fire and corresponding tree removal. District Ranger Scot Rogers noted that the District has a significant invasive weeds response funded over two years via the Burned Area Emergency Response.

The Caldor fire has 80-90,000 acres of high severity. The framework recommends reforestation in areas with a threshold of greater than 50% burnage. When developing the threshold, fires of this size and severity had yet to occur. Perhaps creating separate groupings for treatment (50-75 and 75-90) might be a way to think about strategies at scale. Mortality must also factor in to the response to move toward resilient conditions. Following the 50% + would be too much so thinking in groups may help to manage the strategy and work.

The design team is looking at the forest and can factor in where SOFAR should focus its energy.

SOFAR would be interested in understanding of how the areas that had been burned prior to Caldor behaved in the fire. This work may be able to come forward soon.

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Resource

[LINK](#) to Stevens et al. 2021, *Postfire landscape management in frequent-fire conifer forests of the southwestern United States*. While written for southwest forests, the paper is applicable in scope and focus to ENF and Caldor.

Upcoming Meetings - Always check [sofarcohesivestrategy.org](https://www.sofarcohesivestrategy.org) for meeting location and latest information.