



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

## Collaborative Group - Meeting Summary

Meeting held October 11, 2023  
Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

### Updates & Announcements

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#### Caldor Field Tour October 12

Eldorado National Forest is hosting a Field Tour of the Caldor Fire on October 12. RSVP to Michelle Wolfgang (Michelle.Wolfgang@usda.gov).

#### ENF Staffing Updates

**Travis Thane** is the **acting Placerville District Ranger** while ENF hires a permanent replacement for Scot Rogers. ENF hopes to have an update on a new hire by the end of October.

**Jen House** is now the ENF post-fire recovery lead, working on both the Caldor and Mosquito fires. Jen can be reached at 530-913-8435 or [Jennifer.house@usda.gov](mailto:Jennifer.house@usda.gov).

#### Caldor Recovery Status Update

ENF is working with Great Basin Institute (GBI) on a range of treatment options across the Caldor landscape. ENF is using condition-based management to be flexible in treatment, building to a long-term plan.

#### Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI): November Webinar Series, Data Tracker, and New Data Management Staff

TCSI is hosting three webinars in November:

- **November 1**, 11:00-12:00: **Defining Resilience** in California's Forests [[Registration Link](#)]
- **November 8**, 11:00-12:00: Planning for Change: **Integrating Climate Modeling** into Forest Management [[Registration Link](#)]
- **November 15**, 11:00-12:00: Case Studies: **Smoke and Health Impacts** from Wildfire and Prescribed Fire [[Registration Link](#)]

In Spring 2024, TCSI will launch a **Regional Project Tracker** that will spatially demonstrate current, planned, and forecasted projects across 10 years.

TCSI is starting a **quarterly newsletter**. Email [amilici@thegreatbasininstitute.org](mailto:amilici@thegreatbasininstitute.org) for more information.

**Rae Dunston** is TCSI's new **Project & Data Management Associate** and can be reached at 757-738-2945 or [rdunstan@thegreatbasininstitute.org](mailto:rdunstan@thegreatbasininstitute.org).

#### Amador-El Dorado Forest Forum Upcoming Monthly Meetings

Social Hour at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m. Strings Italian Cafe 11976 State Highway 88, Jackson.

- **October 18**: Joe Stout, Forest Supervisor, Eldorado National Forest  
RSVP by 5 p.m. on Monday, October 16th by calling Diane at 530-417-1960.

- **November 15:** Mark Egbert and Ed Struffenegger presentation on Grizzly Flats grant, El Dorado County
- **December 13:** Holiday Party, Amador County
- **January 24:** Ken Pimlott, Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience (OWPR), El Dorado County

## Series Kickoff: Wildfire Response & Recovery Lessons Learned

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Lester Lubetkin, California Native Plant Society, introduced an upcoming SOFAR panel series on best practices learned from catastrophic fire response & recovery, and applicability to the Caldor National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation. The series will entail:

**October 11:** Kickoff and introduction

**November 8:** Panel on past fire response & recovery (discussion of contexts, actions taken, outcomes for King, Mosquito, Power, and Rim Fires). Followed by SOFAR open discussion synthesizing lessons learned.

**December 13:** Panel on Caldor recovery and discussion of activities such as reforestation, salvage and fuel reduction, and maintenance. Followed by SOFAR open discussion on applicability of lessons learned from prior panel on recovery efforts in other fires.

After Lester's introduction, a recorded presentation by Becky Estes, USFS Central Sierra Province Ecologist, on Caldor Post-fire Restoration Priorities provided background for how the forest service learns from past fires [\[LINK\]](#). In the video, Becky referenced SOFAR's June presentation from Jonathan Long on GTR-278 and Guiding Interventions in Wildfire-Altered Forests in California [\[LINK\]](#).

SOFAR members made the following suggestions for the panel content:

- Invite Mark Egbert from the Resource Conservation District and Ken Pimlott from the County Office of OWPR.
- Explain more about how heterogeneity and "clumpy" reforestation relate to resilience.
- Describe how seedling farms coordinate with restoration efforts. Robert Little from the Amador-El Dorado Forest Forum can speak to this.
- Highlight the importance and challenges of Red Fir in forest recovery.
- Alan H. Taylor could be a dendroecology panelist with expertise in red fir/fire dynamics in western forests.

Lester, Sue Britting from Sierra Forest Legacy, and Norma Santiago of Catalytic Connections will be reaching out to speakers.

## Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission Outcomes

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The Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission [\[LINK\]](#) just released its report [\[LINK\]](#). SOFAR's Craig Thomas, Fire Restoration Group, was a Commission member. The report makes 148 recommendations achieved with 100% consensus from a very diverse Commission. This includes recommended adoption of the vision and goals of the Cohesive Strategy that guides SOFAR as the national framework for wildfire mitigation and management. Craig worked primarily on the Enabling Beneficial Fire and Work Force recommendations.

## Local Workforce Development Needs & Opportunities for Wildfire Resilience

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Biomass Working Group coordinators Greg Stanton, OWPR, and Norma described the CalFire work force development grant that they supported Black Oak Mine Unified School District (BOMUSD) to apply for. BOMUSD already has an award winning technical education program and the grant would fund development of a career technical education program for high school students to learn biomass industry skills. After graduation, students would be placed directly in an industry job or into a related field of study at a 2- or 4-year college. Eventually, the program would feed a biomass-run micro grid powering Georgetown during power shortages. This is the third time that BOMUSD has applied for this grant and will be the last opportunity. To be more competitive, they are volunteering to match the grant moneys, which is not a requirement.

In the previous SOFAR Collaborative meeting in June, participants had named the following regarding workforce development:

- To ensure wildfire resiliency, there is a strong work force need for vegetation management, prescribed burning, and maintenance of replanted areas.
- There is potential to team with CalFire and other fire agencies for year-round employment for their current seasonal employees.
- There may be opportunities to partner with local Tribes that have year-round crews doing this work. Some SOFAR partners already are partnering with Tribes.
- There isn't enough affordable housing to attract and retain enough workers, even for current needs.

In this meeting, SOFAR participants, including Norma and Greg, made the following comments:

- TCSI has heard that entities throughout the region have significant staffing needs that are not being met. TCSI could elevate the issue publicly.
- Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) alone reports a need for 225 new hires, 40% of which would be skilled labor positions.
- Work force retention will be as important as hiring.
- Some opportunities at the intersection of work force and biomass utilization, like starting a particle board plant to fill the void from the Amador plant's fire, but infrastructure costs are prohibitive.
- Conservation Corps may be an option to help fulfill the work force needs.
- OWPR would be a good partner to engage around work force development.
- There needs to be a gap analysis to gauge work force needs. Then SOFAR and EDC might host a public forum to understand work force needs and opportunities.

## Next Steps

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The next Collaborative meeting is scheduled for November 8, 1:30-3:30. The next working group meetings will be October 26, with Biomass 11-12:30 and Landscape Vision 1-2:30.

The CBI facilitation team will work with Lester, Norma, and Sue to plan the November and December panels. The facilitation team will work with the Steering Committee to determine if and when a forum on work force development would be appropriate.