



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

## Collaborative Group - Meeting Summary

Meeting held November 13, 2019  
Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

### Meeting in Brief

Any one pursuing a CAL FIRE grant may request a letter of support from SOFAR via Jason Sieg ([jmsieg@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmsieg@fs.fed.us) or (530) 333-5501). Here's the [link](#) to noncontroversial "green light" activities on the web site projects page. Many fire safe councils are willing to write letters of support as well.

The Collaborative held a Science Talk with Dr. Pat Manley on the Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative's assessment process and potential benefit to SOFAR. SOFAR will likely be able to develop a project using the assessment and modeling process in fall 2020.

The El Dorado County Water Agency has prepared a water resources development management plan. The plan identifies resource management strategies to address challenges and opportunities, including water supply, drought, and flooding vulnerability. General Manager Ken Payne looks forward to collaborating with SOFAR on complementary projects and funding support.

**MEETING – DEC 11, 1:30-4:00:** The meeting will feature Barbara Hayes, Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), speaking on Biomass Economic Opportunities.

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Have an announcement you would like to share via the SOFAR list-serve / website?  
Send information to Stephanie Horii, CBI ([shorii@cbi.org](mailto:shorii@cbi.org))

## Summary

### Presentation | Science Talks

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#### Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative Assessment, Dr. Pat Manley

[\(View Slides\)](#) TCSI covers almost 2,000,000 acres on public and private lands, including the SOFAR area. TCSI has had a robust science effort focusing on the best methods to assess current conditions and enhance restoration to achieve resilience, including how to measure progress on the ground both before and after treatment. TCSI has estimated that almost 60,000 acres of treatment per year, or more, would be necessary to make the landscape resilient; this is more than double the current amount of work underway.

Dr. Manley presented the TCSI assessment process, which she and others are nearing completion, that SOFAR could rely upon to assess or analyze conditions on the ground and then be able to determine where work may be necessary to advance management goals. The TCSI assessment has two components: an assessment of conditions to identify areas that might need treatment of some sort, and a model that will produce anticipated results of management scenarios.

TCSI has identified a set of metrics that include focal species, water supply, and other forest-related indicators. TCSI is able to run a model to determine how well potential management scenarios achieve future conditions. The modelers can also change the frequency of the return interval, which has a significant effect on the ability of the treatments to realize resilience over a longer time period.

Management scenarios build on one another, starting with community protection and then building outward in the following sequence:

- Community protection (defense only)
- Expanded community protection (most closely resembles “business as usual”)
- Fire-safe communities and forests
- Healthy forests–healthy fire
- Resilient landscape (more fire)
- Sprint to resilience (more fire and treatment)

This building block approach creates a “blueprint” for progress. The work will essentially identify specific patches that are opportune for treatment. For example, it would not identify old growth areas adjacent to Highway 50 because of frequent fire hazard associated with the heavy traffic and use. It essentially characterizes the landscape into blueprints or “personality” for forest structure, biodiversity, focal species, carbon and timber products, and fire occurrence, identifying high opportunity areas to chart a course to resilience. TCSI hopes to develop a template for restoration that others can use to realize progress toward resilience across landscapes.

Blueprint for progress: mapped attributes chart the course of the landscape and what will be realized. Attributes are the outputs of the Landis model, i.e., what the landscape will look like based on the management scenarios.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is proposing large regional resilience units (about 1-5 million acres each) across the Sierra Nevada to apply these principles. The goal is to scale up this work to a high level and apply it to guide investments for treatment.

### **What does this mean for SOFAR?**

The TCSI blueprint would help SOFAR design projects.

TCSI and this process seek to replace the traditional assessment process with this tool. It would jump start any project from doing all the initial assessment data collection and work. The TCSI assessment tool could be used for any project. It could help SOFAR identify cumulative effects, etc. The researchers are working on the North Yuba effort of 250,000 acres to test the assessment.

### **Discussion**

### *How should we identify areas that should be left alone?*

A number of researchers, including Malcom North and others, are trying to identify types of areas that should remain or not be treated, primarily linked to vegetation. In some areas, researchers and land managers can decide whether or not to burn an area. They can determine which areas may or may not burn. TCSI can model what areas will not burn under any potential future so those might be areas that we leave alone, and alternatively, TCSI can model where we need more work.

### *Disturbance Return Interval*

Return intervals essentially indicate the amount of time after treatment when an area needs follow-up treatment to achieve the desired conditions or maintain results. The TCSI analysis identifies return intervals of 20-40 years. The modeler identifies the preferred interval in years. Then the model can determine whether the interval will work to achieve the desired results given the potential planned treatments (prescribed fire, commercial thinning).

A primary goal of the work is to be able to determine what work will advance toward the land managers' goals. The disturbance return interval determines how much we need to treat. Then, planners can say, how much for fire and how much for other treatment options.

### *Climate*

The modeling for the next hundred years considers the pathway for climate change that is currently underway.

### *When and how could this be used for SOFAR? We at SOFAR have a need for strategizing.*

The assessment would be available in January. The LANDIS modeling should be done by June 2020; this component is necessary to create the blueprint – i.e., determining what it will look into the future (the characterization of the landscape). TCSI researchers are now working to make the assessment and model a web-based product so anyone can use it.

### *More about the Model*

Invasive weeds and other very specific small-scale are not included because of the difficulty of modeling at this scale.

The model does not factor in sociological considerations, such as attitudes about smoke or concerns around recreation. It only focuses on operational considerations.

### *North Yuba and Applying the Assessment*

North Yuba is doing some progressive planning and considering a conditions-based environmental analysis. USFS District Ranger Scot Rogers responded to a question that he is not aware of any plans for the Eldorado NF to develop a conditions-based environmental analysis, but he would be interested in applying the assessment and modeling approach, that Dr. Manley has developed, on some upcoming projects.

### *Next Steps*

- Consider learning more about North Yuba.

- Think about how to use / apply these tools to the SOFAR landscape and a potential project on the Eldorado National Forest.

## **Introduction to the El Dorado County Water Agency and the Water Resources Development and Management Plan**

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General Manager Ken Payne introduced the agency and expressed hope that SOFAR and the agency could coordinate and bolster each other's projects and applications to secure funding for complementary work.

The agency recently finished the Water Resources Development and Management Plan to further develop its water resources, including collaborative relationships. About half the land in the county is federally managed. Another third includes where residents live either in urban areas or rural residential. The plan identifies wildfire vulnerabilities in the county. Challenges are characterized on the West Slope and others in the Tahoe Basin. A number of resource management strategies align with challenges and opportunities, including water supply, drought, flooding vulnerability. The strategies address those challenges as well as implementation components.

The El Dorado County Water Agency has applied for grant funds with EID and SMUD to update the water supply gauging stations. EDCWA is also developing a climate analysis for water supply on the American River.

## **CAL FIRE Climate Change Investment Grants**

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One goal and advantage of SOFAR has been to coordinate work on the landscape. The CAL FIRE grant process has served as an opportunity to coordinate projects to maximize impact, making projects more competitive for grant funding. SOFAR partners shared potential grant applications.

CAL FIRE has requested that the RCD apply to continue working on Fire Adapted 50. The RCD is also thinking of applying via TCSI.

Pat Dwyer reports that the county currently has 23 or 24 fire safe councils around the western slope. The El Dorado County FSC has encouraged all of the councils to submit applications because the grant guidelines do not limit how many are put forward from the SOFAR area. Pat Dwyer would anticipate that 4 or 5 may make it into this cycle. Usually the applications are for 100-200 acres. Some of the FSCs do not feel able to submit grants but would be happy to write letters of support.

The County will submit for education and outreach related to the vegetation management associated with the County's Department of Transportation.

EID is putting in 5 different applications: many of which are to continue projects that EID has been working on for a while.

Steve Brink observed that at the grant workshops, CAL FIRE said that it didn't want to administer a lot of smaller grants. The County Fire Safe Council is strategically planning to pursue about \$500,000. Another participant recommended that CAL FIRE might be more interested in \$5 mill requests.

Pat Manley announced that PSW has a Prescribed Fire Strategy that it would like to apply for, but PSW needs a location. It's about how to prepare for fire. It might be around \$20-30,000. Pat Manley is also putting in for TCSI and will include one element that covers the SOFAR landscape.

## SOFAR Upcoming Topics

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- **Dec 11** (Newly added meeting) – Barbara Hayes speaking on Biomass economic opportunities; meeting will be at the El Dorado Irrigation District.
- **Feb 12** – Science Talk with Dr. Malcolm North speaking on Resilient Landscapes; meeting location TBD.

## Updates

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**SMUD.** Ethan Koenigs of SMUD shared that SMUD has done vegetation clearing around its utility corridors in the area. SMUD is working with Blue Forest and the Eldorado National Forest to identify a landscape-level fuels reduction project. SMUD wants to serve as an environmental leader.

**Caples Fire Treatment.** The Eldorado National Forest planned a burn of about 1000 acres, started during a wet period, this fall. However, the wind picked up, and the ENF had to declare it a wildfire to access additional resources (normally unavailable for prescribed fires). A total of 3400 acres burned, and it is now contained. The effects seem quite positive. ENF has had crews up there. It's been through multiple wind events and is holding. The Forest brought in fire behavior teams to participate so they can be clear about the work and "story." The team also did a facilitated debrief; the results will be available in about 30 days. The team will do a more detailed presentation to SOFAR once all the results are available, probably at the March SOFAR meeting.

**Pat Dwyer.** Reports that a recent fire ignited and was successfully contained partially as a result of the homeowner treating the property, located at the top of Crystal Ridge. The fire stopped at that home because of the homeowner's defensible space. With the wind in favorable conditions, one air drop controlled the fire to about 6 acres.

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