

Greater Battle Creek Watershed Working Group Meeting Summary
March 21, 2017

Kathy Bishop, BCWC

PRESENT:

USFWS: Jim Smith, Brett Galyean, Laurie Earley, RJ Bottaro, Ryan Cook

USBR: Mary Marshall

USFS: Melanie McFarland, Justin Mapula

Cal Fire: Dawn Pedersen

CDFW: Doug Killam

CVRWQCB: Shane Edmunds, Ronna Bowers

PG&E: Jon Walsh, Elisabeth Rossi (on conference line)

SPI: Ted James

Rugraw LLC: Charlie Kuffner, Jim Tompkins

BCWC: Steve Tussing, Amber Farrell, Kathy Bishop

Shasta Trinity Fly Fishers: Glenn Graham

I. Convene/Introductions – Acting Chair Amber Farrell

II. Meeting agenda

Reviewed and approved.

III. Review of meeting summary from January 19, 2017

Summary reviewed. Correction to Forest Service report noted; summary revised.

Final summary posted to the Working Group page: http://www.battle-creek.net/docs/gbcwwg/GBCWWG_MeetingSummary_1_19_17_Final.pdf

IV. Presentation

Watershed-Based Plan

Presented by Steve Tussing, representing the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy

The Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy was awarded funding provided by the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Program in June 2016, to:

- Conduct a watershed sediment dynamics assessment that will quantify erosion rates for 5 sources of sediment:
 - Soil Erosion
 - Channelization
 - Landslides
 - Floodplains
 - Unpaved roads

- Develop a Watershed-Based Plan (WBP) focusing on sediment threats and wildfire/forest health threats
- Implement a pilot/demonstration project

Increased sediment production in the Battle Creek watershed post-Ponderosa Fire has resulted in degraded fish habitat. Fine sediment loads delivered to streams have smothered spawning gravels and filled adult holding pools.

The watershed assessment will identify and quantify sediment sources and determine what natural factors and land management actions influence sediment production. The Watershed-Based Plan will be based on data resulting from this assessment.

The assessment will use SWAMP protocols to quantify stream conditions rather than AREMP protocols that were used in earlier assessments. Though SWAMP is different than past protocols, it uses many elements from Forest Service protocols.

Landsat data will be used to track changes in land cover/vegetation over the last 30 years.

The [Data Collection Plan](#) was finalized in December, 2016, and can be found on the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy website: <http://www.battle-creek.net>

Sediment dynamics assessment

- **Soil erosion:**

Randomly selected sample sites chosen fall within 2,000' to 6,000' elevations, where there is a greater density of logging, unpaved roads and wildfire areas. The sites include combinations of burned/unburned and logged/unlogged areas, with pyroclastic, rhyolitic or "hard rock" lithology. A larger number of sample sites occur along South Fork due to greater post-fire erosion.

Depth increment samples will be collected for radionuclide concentration analysis and grain size at some sites, while bulk samples will be collected at other randomly chosen sites.

- **Channelization:**

A subsample of gullies and ravines in the watershed will be identified and mapped using GIS. Photogrammetry techniques, using two series of aerial photographs capturing the watershed in 1952 and in 2014 (post-Ponderosa Fire), will be used to create digital terrain models to detect and analyze geomorphic changes over time.

Rather than just fire impacts, the study will look at the characterization of the broader watershed such as rain on snow events and floods, in an effort to identify areas subject to erosion.

- **Landslides:**

The same photogrammetry techniques used in the channelization study will also be used to quantify the rate of erosion of slides and debris flows over time, again using a subsample of landslides.

A variety of information about slide and debris flow attributes will be collected and recorded. The study will try to identify factors that triggered the slides. LiDAR data collected in 2011 (pre-fire) may be used to determine whether a particular landslide occurred before or after the Ponderosa Fire and salvage logging.

- **Floodplains:**

Planform analysis will be used to quantify the contribution of floodplain sediment sources to the total sediment load.

Photogrammetry will be used to determine the rates of change in the channels, such as width and meander rates. The study will also seek to identify locations of sediment sinks in the stream network, using either DEM or LiDAR.

- **Unpaved Roads:**

Unpaved roads throughout the watershed will be surveyed to estimate road-related sediment production and delivery, using the GRAIP-Lite model. That model can help identify road surface sediment sources and prioritize future road segment rehabilitation efforts.

Watershed-Based Plan

The Watershed-Based Plan (WBP) will be developed by Terraqua, Inc., in coordination with the CVRWQCB, for the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy.

It will be structured around the nine-element requirement of the EPA for 319(h) funding, with particular emphasis on Elements 1, 2, and 3:

1. Identify causes and sources of pollution.
2. Estimate pollutant loading into the watershed and the expected load reductions.
3. Describe management measures that will achieve load reductions and target critical areas.

The WBP's focus will be on sediment threats and wildfire/forest health threats, i.e., dead and dying trees. It will identify treatments to address issues.

Shane Edmunds explained that the CVRWQCB permits things on a small-scale, project-by-project basis. Looking at the watershed as a whole is a new approach.

Steve has just received information on sample sites and is currently working on landowner access agreements.

Pilot/Demonstration Project

A demonstration project will be implemented on the Forward Tree Farm above Manton, on land that was burned in the 2012 Ponderosa Fire.

The goal of the project is to implement recommendations of the Cooperative Forest Management Plan, and to correct major drainage problems and stabilize soils in an area burned by the Ponderosa Fire.

The project area is located between Forward Road and the Boole Ditch intake. The existing road that runs along the creek provides Boole Ditch users access to the intake.

Project scope: Abandon a segment of the existing road and replace it with a new segment that will be built up above the creek. Watercourse crossings will be rocked and soil will be stabilized on the abandoned road.

Jim Smith asked if there is a distinction between a decommissioned and an abandoned road. Steve said that there is a difference.

Shane said they've just finished CEQA on the old road.

Steve said they are trying to dovetail their project with past efforts, i.e., U.C. Davis/Andrew Gray. Dr. Gray has provided information to Steve.

V. Issue Tracking Log

ITL voting to prioritize issues will be held during the May meeting. The group decided that voting representatives will continue to use a maximum of three stickers, rather than five, to cast their votes.

Requirements for ITL voting eligibility were discussed. To earn voting eligibility, signatory members must have attended 4 consecutive meetings prior to the meeting when votes are cast.

Laurie reviewed the terms under Organizational Structure in the [Working Group MOU](#) that defines requirements for signatory group membership. Initial signatory membership was comprised of 8 public agencies and 8 non-public entities.

The MOU's eligibility requirements for establishing subsequent signatory membership reads in part:

An entity or public agency wishing to become a signatory member of the Working Group subsequent to the Working Group's initial formation shall submit a letter of

commitment to the Working Group that describes the organization's commitment to ongoing involvement in the Working Group and discusses the organization's consistent and significant involvement and knowledge of Battle Creek issues and of the Working Group in the previous four consecutive meetings. If attendance records show consistent attendance and involvement for the previous four consecutive meetings and upon submission of the letter, the entity or agency may become a provisional member of the Working Group for the ensuing four consecutive meetings. If the provisional member regularly attends meetings and is consistently involved in the Working Group for the four meeting period, the provisional member may become a signatory member. Because the Working Group signatory members strive to achieve balance between the public agency and non-public entity representation, at no time shall the number of public agency signatory members or the number of non-public entity signatory members total more than one additional member than the other group.

Signatory members are expected to regularly attend meetings of the Working Group. The signatory members shall annually review attendance and if a signatory member has missed meetings for four consecutive meetings, the signatory member shall become a provisional member and is subject to the provisional membership provisions described above. A signatory member may withdraw as a member of the Working Group at any time, and for any reason, by submitting a written letter to the Working Group expressing the desire to no longer be a member. A withdrawing signatory member shall incur no liability to the Working Group or its other signatory members as a result of such withdrawal. If such a withdrawal creates an imbalance between the number of public agency and non-public entity members, the Working Group shall seek another signatory member to rebalance the membership, or if no additional signatory member is available, the Working Group shall maintain the imbalance until another signatory member is available to reestablish the balance.

Current signatory membership is comprised of 5 public agencies and 4 non-public entities.

Jim Smith said that when a group drops off, they should be informed that they are not eligible to vote. He asked Laurie to contact those members.

Jim Tompkins (Rugraw, LLC) commented that they have been here for many meetings though they have not formally joined.

ITL review:

Issue 1. *Improving fish passage at natural barriers in Battle Creek requires funding.*

Jim: “The cost estimate is about \$5M.” He asked Laurie to provide an update.

Issue 4. *Long term watershed condition monitoring is needed*

Steve: “With current funding, we are able to get a snapshot for some sites but we don’t have long-term funding, so this issue is not resolved.”

Issue 6. *Concern about sediment delivery from roads negatively impacting Battle Creek streams*

Steve: “The WBP will point us in the direction but we don’t have funding. We need to get moving on seeking funding for implementation. That should be a high priority.” Shane will provide an update.

Issue 7. *Coleman National Fish Hatchery emergency intake doesn’t have a fish screen.* Brett will provide an update.

Issue 8. *Funding: The cost of implementing the Restoration Program increases as funding issues are being resolved.*

Mary conveyed that it is currently estimated that \$24 million more is needed to complete the project. Reclamation is pursuing all potential funding sources, including Federal infrastructure funding.

Shane asked Mary about the funding gap. She responded that there is currently \$12 million remaining, which allows for work to continue while more funding is being pursued. The Phase 2 Hydropower Facilities Modification (HFM) - Stage 2 work could be split into two contracts. Construction of the access road and powerhouse tunnel tailrace connector (including dike) could occur under one contract, and construction of the fish screen and fish ladder and removal of diversion dams could occur under another contract. The current remaining funding could be used to support the access road and powerhouse tunnel tailrace connector work.

Non-prioritized Issue A: *The Lassen Lodge Hydro project plan could conflict with restoration of the watershed.* Charlie will provide an update.

Non-prioritized Issue J: *The Restoration Project requires the development of agreements with the landowners for temporary and permanent construction easements.*

Mary conveyed that Phil Mackey (Mt. Lassen Trout Farms) recently purchased Rocky Springs Ranch, and that Phil has indicated that he supports the restoration of Battle Creek. With Phil as the new owner, Phase 2 HFM - Stage 2 access road and powerhouse tunnel tailrace connector construction (located on Rocky Springs Ranch property) could occur sooner than Phase 2 HFM - Stage 2 fish screen and ladder construction and diversion dam removals. PG&E will pursue a landowner agreement with Phil.

VI. Nominations for Chair and Co-Chair

Elisabeth Rossi will be stepping down as Chair. Jim Smith reminded the group that only non-federal signatory members can Chair and Co-Chair but they cannot be from the same organization.

Seth Lawrence (DWR) was nominated for Chair and Ted James (SPI) was nominated for Co-Chair. Jim said to let Laurie know if anyone else wants to be nominated for Chair or Co-Chair.

VII. Announcements/Public Comments

- **Ronna Bowers** (WQCB):

- New [2017 Timber Fund grant program](#)
- Western Shasta RCD is working with Pacific Watershed Associates on a two-phase project to assess and prioritize sites along approximately 23 miles of Rock Creek Road in Shasta County. Project components include training and workshops.

Elisabeth asked when will be an appropriate time for the WSRCD to give a presentation on the Rock Creek Road project. Shane responded that it will probably be the fall of 2017. He added that project funding is through the same grant that is funding the BCWC's Watershed-Based Plan and the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County's Ponderosa Way project.

- **Jim Smith** (USFWS): The Upper Sacramento River Monitoring Project Work Team will meet tomorrow at the RBFWO beginning at 10:00 AM. The meeting will last until about 3:00 or 4:00 PM.

VIII. Roundtable

- **R.J. Bottaro** (USFWS):

- Video monitoring begins March 31st.
- Fish counts:
 - Juveniles – 290 since October, 2016. Screw trap out of the creek for 40 days during high water.
 - Lamprey – 2
 - Sacramento suckers – 8
 - Rainbow trout - 5
 - Spring-run – 0

- **Mary Marshall** (USBR): provided status on the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project: http://www.battle-creek.net/docs/gbcwwg/BattleCreek_BOR_Update_GBCWWG_March%202017.pdf

The Phase 2 HFM – Stage 2 work could be split into two contracts.

- **Elisabeth Rossi** (PG&E):
 - Eagle Canyon trail safety improvements are underway
 - South Powerhouse & Canal Annual outage is scheduled for 4/2 – 4/29
 - Feeder outage for North Fork Screens and Ladders Restoration construction is scheduled for 5/15 – 7/13
 - All agencies were sent outage schedule for the year

- **Doug Killam** (CDFW):
 - Flows out of Keswick are up to 80,000 CFS
 - They are rescuing stranded fish but with water so muddy in late winter it's a challenge
 - AFRP grants were extended until May
 - There are record low numbers of fall-run in Battle Creek

- **Jim Smith** (USFWS): Jim referenced River Partners' [Rancho Breisgau Habitat Restoration](#) proposal that included plans for levee modification. The levee has now breached in 2 spots, raising concern that smolts released from Coleman may become stranded in that pool. FWS is thinking of removing the levee and connecting the floodplain.

- **Dawn Pedersen** (Cal Fire): The Resource Conservation District of Tehama County has been awarded a 2-year Cal Fire grant to complete a fuel break along Plum Creek Rd. They are currently completing CEQA.

- **Ted James** (SPI): SPI is harvesting near Viola and on Blue Ridge, and they are rocking roads.

- **Brett Galyean** (USFWS – Coleman NFH):
 - Eight new people were hired at Coleman
 - They may release 1.8 million fish, of 4 different sizes, in the creek tomorrow. They can later evaluate how different growth stages fare
 - They plan to release 10.2 million juveniles in April
 - They are currently tagging juveniles
 - Jim Smith: "We don't expect enough trucked fish to come back to meet our production goals because they've strayed everywhere else."

- **Glenn Graham** (Shasta Trinity Fly Fishers): Shasta Trinity Fly Fishers finished their new clubhouse.

- **Shane Edmunds (WQCB):**
 - They conducted radioisotope sampling on Battle Creek. There was less suspended sediment than expected in February during high flow events in both North and South Forks. They weren't able to get good sediments for sampling.
 - They are replacing their Timber Harvest Waiver. There is a 30-day comment period on the new general order.
 - Cal Trans is straightening a section of Hwy 36 between Canyon View and Mineral.

- **Charlie Kuffner (Rugraw, LLC) – *Charlie sent the Lassen Lodge update to Kathy prior to the meeting:***
 - FERC has requested additional information from Rugraw, LLC on the environmental mitigation elements in the license application. Rugraw is working on that response, and plans to issue by the end of this week.
 - FERC will be issuing the NEPA EIS document sometime after that response is issued.
 - The CEQA EIR, led by the State Water Resource Board, will follow the issuance of the EIS, as the EIR needs to evaluate the Alternatives that will be described by the FERC in the EIS document.

IX. Action Items Summary

- Presentations:
 - Laurie will contact the Tehama RCD to ask if they will give a presentation on their Ponderosa Way project
 - Laurie will Contact Naseem to ask if NMFS will give a presentation on their Five-year Review of Salmon and Steelhead
- ITL:
 - Issue updates to be sent to Kathy prior to ITL voting in May:
 - ❖ Laurie will update Issue 1: Improving fish passage at natural barriers in Battle Creek requires funding.
 - ❖ Shane will update Issue 6: Concern about sediment delivery from roads negatively impacting Battle Creek streams.
 - ❖ Brett will update Issue 7: Coleman National Fish Hatchery emergency intake doesn't have a fish screen
 - ❖ Charlie will update Non-prioritized Issue A: The Lassen Lodge Hydro project plan could conflict with restoration of the watershed.
 - New issues for consideration to be sent to Kathy prior to ITL voting in May:
 - ❖ Steve will write a description for "Funding needed to implement Watershed-Based Plan"
 - ❖ Doug will write a description for "Funding needed to implement Winter-run Chinook Salmon Reintroduction Plan"

- ❖ Laurie will write a description for “Marijuana grow sites cleanup in Battle Creek”
- Other ITL action items:
 - ❖ Laurie will contact groups that have not been attending to let them know the group will be voting in May to prioritize the ITL but they are not eligible to vote.
 - ❖ Kathy will revise the ITL to list Doug Killam as contact on Non-prioritized Issue O: The Fisheries Management Plan has not been completed
 - ❖ Per group decision, Kathy will move to Resolved Issues, Issue P: The Coleman NFH Adaptive Management Plan has not been completed
 - ❖ Per Elisabeth, Kathy will update all non-prioritized issues with “2017” whether or not status has changed
 - ❖ Kathy will add verbiage to the ITL noting that votes may be cast for Resolved and Deleted Issues
 - ❖ Kathy will add submitted updates to the ITL, post the revised document to the [Working Group](#) page, and provide it to Laurie prior to the May meeting

X. Identify Future Fieldtrips and/or Presentations

- Doug Killam (CDFW) – Winter-run Reintroduction and Barrier Plan
- Five-year Review of Salmon and Steelhead – NMFS
- Ponderosa Way Assessment – Tehama County RCD (Fall 2017)
- Western Shasta RCD/Pacific Watershed Associates – Road assessments in Shasta County (Fall 2017)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next GBCWWG meeting will be held on May 16st at the RBFWO.