

# SIERRA CASCADES DIALOG

OVERVIEW PREPARED BY CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE POLICY, UPDATED 10/13/10

## INTRODUCTION

In February 2010, the Forest Service and University of California convened a conference on *Pre- and Post Wildfire Forest Management for Restoration and Resiliency*. At the close of the conference, participants provided recommendations for additional discussion and work that can be categorized into four broad topic areas: strategic fuels treatments across landscapes with mixed ownerships, adaptive management, increasing public and agency education and ecosystem services. As an outgrowth from this conference, the Forest Service and stakeholders are interested in forming a new working group in California: the Sierra-Cascades Dialog Group.

*The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.*

This document summarizes the structure and framework for establishing a Sierra - Cascades Dialog. The intent is to hold regular conversations among engaged stakeholders on a range of issues across the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades. The term "stakeholder" refers to any individual or organization that has a direct interest in public lands. This would include the Forest Service as the convener. The goal is to create shared understanding among participants with diverse opinions. The outcomes of the dialog will inform future Forest Service decisions.

## GOALS

The dialog will focus on the future of the Sierra Nevada and Cascades, with a focus on the national forests in these regions. Dialogs provide an opportunity for learning, shared meaning, aligned actions, mutual respect and understanding different perspectives.

The goals are to:

- Bring together public and private land managers to grapple with an “all lands” approach to planning and conservation, beginning with fire protection issues
- Lay the foundation for Forest Plan revisions
- Develop stakeholder collaborative capacity to address challenging complex issues on a broad scale
- Create shared responsibility and understanding
- Build relationships and trust among all stakeholders

## PARTICIPATION

All meetings will be open to the public. Anyone is welcome to participate.

The Steering Committee, with facilitator guidance, will conduct outreach to support participant diversity.

### Diversity Goals

- Age & Cultural Diversity
- Geographic Diversity
- Socio-economic Diversity

### Interest Group Representation

- County Governments
- Environmental Organizations
- Fire Safe Councils
- Industry
- Land Managers
- Private Landowners
- Recreation Groups
- Rural Communities
- Scientists
- State Government
- Tribal Environmental Officers
- Youth

## PROPOSED DISCUSSION TOPICS

Dialog participants will play an active role in defining the topics to be discussed. This is essential to establish the relevance of the topics at hand and to generate interest and participation. The following range of broad topics will serve as the preliminary

framework for developing the dialog. This list reflects the February 2010 conference outcomes and other topics of interest.

- “All Lands” Approach (Forest Service and neighboring lands) | Strategic planning for ecological restoration across ownerships | Coordination of fire protection across ownerships
- Ecological Restoration
- Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation
- Historic Contexts of Landscapes
- Changing Climates
- Ecosystem Services (biodiversity, wood, water, recreation, wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, carbon sequestration, etc.)
  - Program Planning
  - Economic Assessments (Monetary Value)
  - Sustainable Funding
- Economic Sustainability and Community Vitality—The Role of Forests
- Monitoring, Research & Adaptive Management
  - Adaptive management for pre- and post-fire work
  - All party monitoring
- Water Resources, Water Quality and Watershed Management Planning
- Salvage Logging: Terms, Planning, Science and Goals
- Social Science Issues of Public Land Management
- Attitudes, Values & Beliefs
- Planning Rule Implementation: the Role of Tribes in Collaborating

## OUTCOMES

Agreements and understanding achieved through the Dialog Group will inform Forest Service decisions. Outcomes will be shared with the Regional Leadership Team and other staff of the Forest Service. (The Regional Leadership Team includes the Regional Forester, Deputy Regional Forester, key regional leaders, and the Forest Supervisors.) Dialog participants may participate in briefings to the Regional Leadership Team to represent the diversity and breadth of discussions.

Outcomes would likely take the form of **Statements of Understanding**. These Statements might consist of a common set of definitions, agreements, proposed strategies, issue summaries, etc. The Statements will be driven by the content of the discussion.

## 2010-2011 MEETING FRAMEWORK

The Steering Committee will re-evaluate the meeting framework regularly to be responsive to pressing topics while addressing a range of issues that need attention and dialog.

### MEETING 1: NOVEMBER 4, 2010, 9:30AM-4:00PM

LOCATION: GARDEN PAVILION HOTEL, MCCLELLAN AIR FORCE  
BASE, (NEAR SACRAMENTO) 5640 DUDLEY BOULEVARD,  
MCCLELLAN, CA 95652 (COMPLIMENTARY PARKING)

TOPIC: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

### MEETING 2: JANUARY 2011

TOPIC: WHY HERE, WHY NOW? ATTITUDES, VALUES & BELIEFS

### MEETING 3: MARCH 2011

TOPIC: ALL LANDS APPROACH

- a) COORDINATE FIRE PROTECTION ACROSS OWNERSHIPS
- b) ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION ACROSS OWNERSHIPS

### MEETING 4: MAY 2011

TOPIC: SUSTAINABILITY, PLACE, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES,  
(BIODIVERSITY, WOOD, WATER, RECREATION, WILDLIFE HABITAT,  
ETC.) ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY VITALITY

### MEETING 5: JUNE 2011

TOPIC: MONITORING & ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

### MEETING 6: JULY 2011

TOPIC: CHANGING CLIMATES

## KEY FEATURES OF DIALOG & DELIBERATION

- **Exploration:** learning about the issues and discovering innovative solutions
- **Conflict Transformation:** resolving conflicts and improving relations among groups
- **Collaborative Action:** empowering groups to solve complicated problems and take responsibility for the solution by generating/developing ideas for action plans and implementing them collaboratively

## FORMAT

The typical format for a group dialog might follow these steps:

1. Set the context for the day.
2. Brief presentations to the group set the context for the first issue topic.
3. Issue is then explored at individual table groups to flesh out participants' interests,
4. Breakouts on subtopics of the theme (participants go to topic of choice) and record key ideas to seek common ground.
5. Return to plenary to review new possibilities and common ground forming in each group.
6. Create opportunities for participants to review work done by each group and add-in their own comments.
7. Pursue subsequent topic using steps identified above.

## WORKING TOGETHER IN DIALOG

All participants agree to adhere to several basic working agreements

1. Use common conversational courtesy
2. Be honest, fair and as candid as possible
3. Balance advocacy with inquiry
4. Explore impasses
5. Intentionally suspend judgment
6. Honor time
7. Think innovatively and welcome new ideas
8. Invite humor and good will

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is focused and representative of the interest groups active in the Sierra Nevada. The purpose of the group is to guide the dialog process, helping to frame discussion topics and the meeting format. The facilitator will work with the Steering Committee on meeting design. The facilitator will be responsible for finalizing the agenda and facilitating the meeting.

### MEMBERS

Mike Chapel, USFS—LEAD ORGANIZER

Jim Branham, Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Steve Brink, California Forestry Association

Kim Carr, Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Merv George, Region 5 Tribal Specialist

Bruce Goines, Region5 Ecosystem Services Program Manager

Stacy Heaton, Regional Council of Rural Counties

Trinidad H. Juarez, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region

Susie Kocher, UC Cooperative Extension

Stephanie Lucero, Indian Dispute Resolution Service

Chris Nota, Region 5

Ron Pugh, Region 5 Planning

Kim Rodrigues, UC Davis

Frank Stewart, California Fire Safe Council

Joe Stringer, Region 5 Planning

Craig Thomas, Sierra Forest Legacy

Stan Van Velsor, Wilderness Society

Deb Whitall, Region 5 Social Scientist

Deb Whitman, Region 5 Ecosystem Conservation

Donald (Don) Yasuda, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (R5)

## FACILITATOR ROLE

The facilitator will remain impartial toward the content of the discussions. The facilitator will:

- Formulate the agenda and desired outcomes for sessions;
- Identify and synthesize points of agreement and disagreement
- Assist in building consensus among participants
- Work with participants to ensure a productive working environment
- Serve as a confidential communication channel for participants who wish to express views privately because they do not feel comfortable doing so in front of the large group
- Advocate for a fair, effective and credible process, but remain impartial with respect to the outcome of the deliberations