



SNAMP Environmental Thresholds/"Triggers" Planning Meeting Notes

**Wednesday, January 24, 2007
10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Background/Context:

The morning session convened key agency partners including UC science team members, USFS, USFWS, California resource agencies, and other interested stakeholders in discussions to address implementation of the Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project (SNAMP), focusing on the topic of thresholds and "triggers."

In several places, there are constraints that affect the UCST work plan: e.g. how treatments affect resources. UCST is not designing or applying any treatments, simply providing information to USFS based on their research and other scientific information. The "Record Of Decision" (ROD) sets the treatments. UCST is not responsible for the NEPA process and actual management treatments – UCST is responsible for conducting regular monitoring of the treatment responses in study areas and tracking how the management agencies integrate this new information into future management decisions and practices.

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS FROM THIS MEETING

- 1) UCST and the USFS will develop closer working relationships before, during, and after implementation as a means to enhance USFS adaptive management. There is a commitment to quarterly meetings. It was understood that quarterly meetings with UCST and District staff will not be driven by triggers/thresholds – there will be a focus on all elements of the project. It is also important that the scientists are not impacting the initial management treatments.
- 2) An important goal of SNAMP is for the UCST to share and advance understanding of other projects that may inform adaptive management practices of the USFS in these two districts. (I'm not sure what this means – don't recall this discussion)
- 3) Scale (i.e. – geographic and temporal scales of watersheds and firesheds over this seven-year study period) is a critical issue and needs to be defined up front in the initial

discussions of triggers/thresholds. Furthermore, there needs to be a clear understanding of the questions that are being addressed before choosing scale.

4) The current SNAMP work plan calls for at least annual data sharing along with other implementation data developed by the USFS.

5) The research design has to be clear enough so that responses to treatments can be as clear as possible. It also is important to clarify if and how adaptive management can affect levels of certainty around identified resource values.

6) There is a commitment to conducting an open, transparent process between all parties while exploring cause and effect in the research. This will allow the development of a process to help support the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) activities, as well as specific UCST activities.

7) The UCST agrees to include information from the public meeting in the website topic issues to encourage comments from others not at the meeting.

8) The SNAMP partners are willing to define baselines from the different projects and identify how these baselines might tie to legal requirements, specifically as they may relate to defining triggers and thresholds. (Not sure what this means)

9) All parties understand that there is a balance between the need to monitor for seven (7) years to observe results and the need to look for responses in the near term. It was understood that there is a need to come up with a process for a reasonable response time. This may be coordinated with quarterly reporting.

10) A key lesson learned from SNAMP, so far, is that open communication, strong relationships, and an effective process to identify and document key understandings and agreements are very important.

11) It is important that, when they will be used, thresholds are framed early on in the project, certainly before treatments are applied in either of the study areas. These can then be modified, but front-end development helps with the overall project success.

OTHER KEY COMMENTS & IDEAS CAPTURED AT MEETING

- Need to define baseline data for project(s).
- Should look at how information on thresholds/triggers (TTs) relates to meeting the NEPA and other legal requirements for the project.
- Need both the ability to respond immediately to new information, as well as have an annual review process: e.g. site visit and meeting.
- Basically setting and adjusting hypothesis. Look at this in relation to TTs.

- Important that there is a budget in place to support immediate responses as/if needed.
- Need to establish a more permeable interface between science and actual land management. Need a more open, transparent, and responsive exchange. Valuable to have more interaction and integration between scientists and managers.
- Implementation of monitoring component of project needs to be considered and enhanced.
- We (SNAMP team) need input on how to make process more open and transparent.
- Identify logical links between legal requirements for adaptive management and TTs.
- It would be useful/valuable to strengthen connections between District Forest Service staff and the UC science team members – before, during, and ongoing throughout the project.
- However, need to be careful that interactions between Forest Service and Science Team don't drive actual responses – roles need to be clearly defined and separated.
- Q: What is the magnitude of the project?
A: There are two study areas identified for the project – one in the American River District in the northern part of the state and one in the southern part in the Fish Camp/Bass Lake area east of Merced/Madera. Sites will be described in the afternoon session today by UCST members.
- May want to touch base with other, similar adaptive management efforts: e.g. there is one that has been going on in the Tahoe Basin.
- Need to establish a reasonable response timeline for updating stakeholders on project progress and the data that has been gathered.
- Need to define the scale of monitoring for the overall project up front.
- Need to link monitoring and other project activities to the overall hypotheses and the questions being asked.
- Some results may extrapolate to the entire Sierra Nevada ecosystem.
- Need to identify MIS (Management Indicator Species) early on in the study. Some MIS may be throughout the Sierra.

- Study is being set up as a seven (7) year experiment in order to provide useful and reliable findings. There will be quarterly reports on the data as project progresses.
- Annual data sharing and consideration can be set up and include public hearings.
- Won't have to wait seven years to consider responses in management of forest if/when needed.
- It will be a challenge actually linking the treatment effects with changes observed in the environment.
- We may have valuable outcomes in terms of how to talk to one another better about the overall adaptive management process, and how to share information broadly and get more diverse input. Learning how to conduct a more open and transparent process may help lead to the types of results and benefits we are looking for in the actual environment: e.g. wildlife, water, forest health, catastrophic fire prevention, etc.
- The SNAMP website is up and running – we want your input. Go to <http://snamp.cnr.berkeley.edu/>. We also want ideas on how to get input from less verbal people, and/or how to get more people engaged in the public participation process like today.

FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH OUR WORK TODAY

- Summary of accomplishments – we have captured key comments, ideas, understandings, and agreements today that we will share with all meeting participants and post on the web site for other review/comment.
- We'll capture specific NEXT STEPS – see below.
- Action Planning – identify specific tasks: who and when.
- Meeting Review – capture “+” – What worked well today & “++” – What to change to make it better in the future – see “Evaluate this morning's meeting below”.
- Acknowledgements: Thanks and gratitude for assistance/participation of:
 - All MOU partners and meeting participants;
 - Powers Inn Mansion staff/manager for their generous support of meeting;
 - Eastern Sierra Institute for Collaborative Education – Susan Clark, Deborah Bendinelli for leadership in planning/conducting meeting and web/telephone conferencing.

NEXT STEPS

- Ask for individuals to join workgroup for follow-up on thresholds/triggers planning and implementation:
 - Commitment initially is probably 3 or 4 meetings over the next few months along with some e-mail interaction.
 - Sign-up today on sheet on back table.

Workgroup sign-ups:

Name	Organization
Dean Cromwell	CDF
Rich Gresham	PCRCO
Lori Kleifgen	SNFPC
Mike Skenja	DOW
Sue Britting	SNFPC
Mike Chapel	USFS
Peter Stine	USFS
Cay Goude	USFWS
Roberta Gerstein	USFWS
Tom Efrid	USFS
Kim Rodrigues	UCCE

- Maggi Kelly will provide input received via the SNAMP website to the workgroup for their review and consideration in their deliberations.

Evaluate this morning's meeting:

"+" – What worked well was....

- The presentation on the background for the project, and then having an open agenda to discuss the thresholds/triggers topic and overall SNAMP project.
- Revisiting key ideas and understandings at the end of the meeting on screen to confirm.
- Good work capturing the key ideas/comments in computer and in bullet points on easel paper for group to view.

"++" – To make it better in the future...

- Missed having introductions of the people that were here.
- Useful to send the most relevant documents as attachments to the e-mail announcing meeting: e.g. working draft on thresholds/triggers at today's meeting.
- Be sure to include the URL to the SNAMP website in the e-mail announcements for meetings.
- Put up signs to the meeting room – somewhat difficult to find.