

SNAMP UCST Statement of Neutrality Questions and Answers

Last Updated: October 11, 2010

Q: Can a UCST member openly and actively and/or publicly disagree with the USFS and/or other MOUPs management decisions?

A: In most circumstances, yes.

The Statement of Neutrality (<http://snamp.cnr.berkeley.edu/documents/67/>) only restricts UCST members from open discourse that involves condoning or criticizing MOUP management decisions specific to the SNAMP study. In other words, UCST members are restricted from condoning or criticizing MOUP management, or from taking advocacy positions that are in support of or in conflict with MOUP management, only when it involves the use of SNAMP data or pertains to management actions within the geographic scope of the project as defined in the Statement of Neutrality. The UCST understands and supports the idea that active discourse is vital to mutual learning and is essential to adaptive management. The Statement of Neutrality does not place any restrictions on the reporting of data or findings related to SNAMP, making hypotheses (a statement that is untested and does not make a conclusion), or dissemination of scientific knowledge.

When the UCST Academic Coordinator checks UCST member statements for conflicts to agreements made in the Statement of Neutrality, he/she looks for references to SNAMP study areas or SNAMP data that are made during the course of the SNAMP project (start date: August 2007). Statements by UCST members that pre-date the SNAMP project but may involve the geographic scope of the project are not in violation with the Statement. General statements about MOUP management that do not specifically reference SNAMP data or the SNAMP study area are also exempt.

Q: Does the Statement of Neutrality restrict UCST members from making management recommendations?

A: After the USFS project NEPA processes are complete, no.

The Statement of Neutrality does not specifically make restrictions or provide guidelines related to management recommendations from UCST members. However, due to the experimental nature of the research, UCST members have tried to minimize their influence on USFS management decisions by not becoming directly involved in treatment design for USFS projects located within the SNAMP study area (study area as defined in the Statement of Neutrality). This is important for study design considerations – the UCST was charged to study the results of SPLATs as implemented by the USFS; not as implemented by the USFS with the advice and increased resources of the UCST in SNAMP. Once the treatments within the SNAMP study area are completed, this concern will no longer be an issue. The Public Participation Team limited themselves only through the completion of the NEPA public processes and gave feedback and advice to the USFS in January of 2009.

UCST will report the results of their SNAMP research in a final report, once the results are known at the end of the SNAMP project. This report will include an integrated analysis and interpretation of the effects of USFS treatments upon the resources studied. UCST members will be free to make management recommendations in this final report, and also in individual or collaborative peer-reviewed scientific publications once the effects of the treatments are known.

Q: Does the Statement of Neutrality limit or restrict data and information sharing?

A: No, the SNAMP Data Sharing Agreement (March 2010, <http://snamp.cnr.berkeley.edu/documents/302/>) guides this exchange.

The SNAMP Data Sharing Agreement states the UCST commitment to share as much information/data as soon as possible with the MOUP and the public, without jeopardizing the research or intellectual property rights of the scientists. UCST members may also consider withholding locations of sensitive species, equipment, or other data that might jeopardize sensitive species or equipment unless it is required by law or required by the researcher's contract to provide such information to the funding entity.