Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project
First Stakeholder Meeting
12-9-05

Public comments

Public Participation

o   Why is public brought in so late? 10 months into

o   Why no socio-economic module? Needs to be comprehensive work plan

o   Need monitoring plan for capacity to achieve what is wanted: infrastructure, social capacity

o   There are RCNDs already in existence, utilize these

o   How well are you satisfying concerns of people: giving answers, resolving, not just addressing

o   Reduction of appeals is a good measure

o   Success linked to spatial scale of research; may need different measures for success

o   Success=do you walk your talk, i.e., everything that's being presented

o   Success measured by activities and not Powerpoint presentations: where meeting with people, how are you talking to them; show how input is utilized, be honest about how input is used or not used, and reasons why

o   Success: understanding steps of overall work plan, and how they link together and to FS Work Plan; this is successful public participation

Ecosystem Health

o   QLG treatment approachs

o   Lack of scientifically defensible definition of what we want forests to look like

o   Heterogeneity of landscape will affect definition

o   Need to integrate ecosystem and forest health; clarify differences

o   Need to know where we're headed

o   Watershed modeling applicability to fireshed? Is this appropriate? Definitions are critical here.

o   Include humans who live in Sierras in definition of a healthy ecosystem; include all people who depend on Sierra Nevada system (broader); blend needs of people with needs of system

o   Recognize disease and insects are part of a healthy forest, include in definition

o   Primary value of forest is watershed and needs to be part of definition; what's the target or vision?

o   Moving target: climate change modeling suggests difficulty of prediction

o   Use Water Quality as a measure of success for forest health to acknowledge linkages

o   Need a digital rosetta stone to accommodate different terminology and perspectives

o   Need to treat an area at the scale that strategy suggests; see barriers to such testing

o   Intensity is linked to scale: what's the least intensity that can achieve an effective result?

o   Need to get to regulatory mechanisms like bio-regions so this information can be used by regulators

Water Quantity/Quality

o   If 5100 ft and above is criterion this is only a small part of the overall Sierra; how address this issue?

o   Ecosystem below 5100 ft is really important

o   Is the question relevant to Sierra Nevada overall: rain on snow? Much of SN has vast areas of non-perennial stream?

o   We need to ask what the goal is before choosing the research site.

o   What about looking at flow timing? Seasonal and peak flows; and look at water temperature

o   Look at areas with significant amount of road, either proposed or re-construction

o   How are background comparisons being set: what's the time period, how far back and why? What are the time scales? How will you measure your results when you look at sedimentation-need to be clear about time scale.

o   Water yield is key indicator: agree on focusing on areas where you have data, look at rain on snow, then yield

o   Meadow restoration in Feather River area: important modeling is being done at UCD

o   Site selection criteria need to be able to sort watershed variability: historic, background, natural events. Need to be able to accurately attribute to current management practices

o   Use common vegetation classifications, and canopy and crown closures; and wildlife concerns

o   How do we integrate all modules if a single site, including wildlife, so they all come together?

o   Water quality parameters: need to put erosion in a historical perspective, not simply near-historical (sedimentation needs to be analyzed in context: see similar comment above)

o   What's anticipated cost, how will it be funded short and long-term?

Wildlife

o   Do you intend to use a single species, or a suite? Concern if a single species.

o   Need high signal to noise ratio in species selection: species that will give us a response to treatments, as opposed to a variety of other influences

o   Short time-frame for response

o   We need power to detect change; could be impacted by available funding.

o   Why not successful species as well as those negatively impacted?

o   If a single species, need to look at other species it relies on, e.g., prey, nesting

- Consider species for which there is good understanding of relationship between habitat and that species in order to evaluate response to treatment

- Pacific fisher and CA spotted owl: monitoring needed, will be expensive; if we divide limited pool of money too often we won't get enough information
- Agreement these are important species

- Power to detect, short time frame for response: are [need to clarify this one]

- What are we testing? Relates to intensity of treatment on ground. If it's improved fire resiliency, frame question around minimum amount we need to do to maintain resiliency and improve habitat conditions

- Question: broader focus suggested, what do we need to do for healthy ecosystem and all wildlife, not just individual species?

- We ought to be able to predict results and measure in short time period.

- Identify some other sites where same management activity is at a different stage, e.g. 20 years later.

- Spotted owl: include its two hypothesized main prey species since we don't know much about these; and link to forest components like black oak and shrubs

- Wildlife includes plants: focus on T&E or rare

- How fit with ongoing wildlife research at federal and state levels?

- Focus on relationships of habitat change to today's treatments, wildlife responses, and fire: make sure information can contribute to adaptive management

Additional comments:

- What are the sideboards for assessing resiliency?

- Not sure how we are assessing how well we will do at reducing risk? This is a success question.

What's needed to move toward development of work plan?

- Find opportunities to link with ongoing projects given limited funding

- Work on definition of adaptive mgmt and monitoring; we need an experiment we can monitor and these definitions are critical.

- What options in addition to web site? Will there be a draft work plan, iterations, that can be shared and commented on? Preference for paper documents, overwhelmed by volume of emailed links to web pages.

- Relationship between stakeholder input and decision outcomes isn't clear. SH need to believe their input has something to do with the decision to justify their time.

- Need realistic attention to cost in work plan; avoid replicating past problems matching resources to desires.

- Look at appeals in litigation. Which ones can be resolved through adaptive management? Focus plan on these.

- UC Role: will there be continuity once we generate data? Will UC develop a feedback loop to management?

- Pacific fisher example of perceived need for management change and transparency in decision making that's not being addressed.

- Helpful to articulate action items in work plan by citing to key elements of ROD

- Will this evaluate what FS is already doing, or do some additional projects? There appear to be opportunities for stewardship projects and other additional efforts.

- Lots of distrust within local communities about government research programs; need long-term UC involvement as a buffer, to ensure information comes out.

- Need key time points if you want people to go to the web site: when do people need to review and send back comments? E.g., when you have done some narrowing of candidate sites or watersheds, decisions on species.

- Clarify: is this about effect of SN FP amendment, or is it more concentrated on impacts of treatements in concentrated areas?

- What is response of 3 key variables from USFS implementing a SPLAT strategy on a fireshed: this is the focus. Work plan will propose a series of studies in areas the FS is treating.

- There is uneven implementation of Framework across SN: which areas will be studied?