

**HFQLG Collaboration Meeting  
August 7, 2009  
DRAFT Summary Notes**

**Introduction**

On Friday August 7, 2009 members from the United States Forest Service (Plumas, Tahoe and Lassen National Forests and the Regional Office), the Quincy Library Group and Sierra Forest Legacy met for a field trip in Meadow Valley.

Discussion topics included incorporating the management recommendations presented in the recent PSW-GTR-220 publication into the design of future projects, restoring forests to appropriate conditions, what worked and what needs improvement and /or modification, what opportunities and challenges exist, and whether to continue with the collaboration.

The first stop was at the 70 acre Defensible Fuel Profile Zone (DFPZ ) unit 30, bordering Meadow Valley to the north and a Spotted owl Protected Activity Center (PAC) to the south. Before treatment, the area contained older Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine and more ladder fuels. The current canopy cover is 51%, as measured with a densitometer. The prescription was to mechanically thin the unit to 40% cover and follow with an under burn. Due to a small window of opportunity the under burn has not occurred yet, as the unit is susceptible to community concerns about smoke due to proximity to Meadow Valley and wind patterns. Discussion included if the DFPZ had met objectives to reduce fuel and provide an anchor point in case of fire and the possibility and time necessary to treat only with fire.

The second stop was near the UC Forestry camp. The group entered the Spotted owl PAC adjacent to DFPZ unit 29. This site differed from the preceding location in many ways; cover was 81%, there was community diversity, multiple complex canopy layers, legacy trees and rotting logs. This area was described as typical Spotted owl habitat. No activity has taken place in this PAC.

Discussion included the use of DFPZ to create heterogeneity and strategically place them to protect the decadent PAC areas. The possibility of some treatment in the PAC, perhaps handwork, was mentioned. Both the care needed in conducting work in areas such as this and the susceptibility to total loss due to fire if left untreated were mentioned as concerns. PACs are defined as 300 acres, and questions were raised if it would be better to have smaller, more numerous refugia areas mixed within and around treated areas to spread risk. Questions about the size, location and key characteristics necessary for the refugia were also discussed.

The group moved to the edge of DFPZ unit 29 where canopy cover is 39%. The group talked about areas of potential middle ground and creating heterogeneity by considering serial stage, topography and aspect at each project site. Discussion on group selects began.

Unit 269, a group select area, was the last stop of the day. This area is about 1.5 acres where all trees under a minimum diameter at breast height (d.b.h.) were removed. The area was replanted with 60% Ponderosa pine, 20% Sugar pine and 20% Douglas fir. After a lunch break, the discussion turned to group selects and included: the intensity of which they are used, where they are placed, what ecological replicant they model, and how they can be modified to better meet objectives.

Discussion also included the pace and scale of prescriptions, and whether and how economic and social aspects factor into decisions about prescriptions and projects. It was noted that money generated from

projects could help support infrastructure and other restoration projects, and that profits should not be the driving force behind project design.

Discussion about next steps concluded the day.

### **Potential middle ground**

The following areas were identified as topics for future discussion where consensus and/or agreements might be reached:

- Activity in PACs in conjunction with creating other protections for Spotted owls
- Creating forest heterogeneity by considering slope aspect, topography and designing project prescriptions, including canopy cover based on the site specific characteristics
- Using group selects as a tool to create heterogeneity and replicate ecological processes
- The number of acres treated
- Developing criteria for marking trees other than d.b.h.

### **Future collaboration**

The possibility of future collaboration at the landscape level during Plan of Work (POW) meetings and on specific projects also was discussed:

- The intent of the collaboration would be to engage stakeholders at both the landscape and project levels and incorporate stakeholder input in technical reviews.
- POW meetings likely will be held annually in the late fall, after fire season and should involve the interested stakeholders, including local fire safe councils.
- At the landscape level, discussion might include what's known and uncertain, concerns, actions the Forest Service could take, and review of the topographical map. There also might be field visits to identify and discuss pinch points.
- For proposed projects, discussion might include project objectives and refining the design.
- Representatives from groups should have the authority to speak for their group.
- There will need to be some general agreements on the process, expectations and ground rules.
- The process should allow for both stakeholder review and input and timely implementation of approved projects.

### **Potential issues for further consideration**

- Economic and social aspects.
- Pace and scale of work and whether the objectives of the HFQLG Act would be achieved.
- The intensity with which group selects are used.
- Whether group select areas are suitable spotted owl habitat and the relevant research.
- Conducting a thoughtful review even when project objectives are not contested.
- Using standardized terminology to foster informed communication between stakeholder and technical groups.
- Level of distrust between groups, including how the groups communicate with one another and how to have constructive interactions on POWs and projects.

### **Next Steps**

Participants decided this collaboration is complete. A letter will be prepared jointly from USFS, QLG and SFL to send to the Senator Feinstein and the Congressman Herger informing them about outcomes of the meetings and next steps for the group. Robert Fisher will prepare the draft letter and work with everyone to finalize it.

HFQLG Collaboration  
Field trip to Meadow Valley, August 7, 2009  
List of participants

Name	Affiliation
Bill Wickman	AFRC/QLG
Ryan Tompkins	USFS/MHRD
Pat Terhune	QLG
Mike Jackson	QLG
John Sheean	QLG
Gary Rotta	USFS/MTHRD
Rich Bednash	USFS/MTHRD
Pete Duncan	PFN/RO
Rayn Bauer	USFS/MHRD
Craig Thomas	SFL
Serge Birk	LNF/SO
George Terhune	QLG
Mike Wood	QLG
Beth Pendelton	USFS/RO
Frank Stewart	QLG
Sue Britting	SFL
Ed Murphy	QLG