

DRAFT - SUMMARY

STAKEHOLDER SCIENCE AND STAKEHOLDER COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

LAKE TAHOE WEST RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP

Monday, October 7th, 2019, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Sierra Room, Avenue, 128 Market St, Stateline, NV 89410

All meeting materials are publicly available on the Lake Tahoe West website

<http://nationalforests.org/laketahoewest>.

For questions please contact facilitator Julia Rose Golomb at jgolomb@cbi.org.

Meeting In Brief

On October 7, 2019, the Lake Tahoe West joint Stakeholder Committees held their first meeting on proposed action development in the Lake Tahoe West (LTW) project area. Proposed action refers to on-the-ground actions that address a stated purpose and need and will undergo NEPA, CEQA and TRPA environmental analysis. The LTW Interagency Design Team (IADT) will develop the proposed action between October 2019 and January 2020, with iterative input from the joint Stakeholder Committees. At the October 7 meeting, the IADT presented its timeline and approach for Proposed Action development. Meeting participants provided input on how the IADT could use geospatial data to identify priority areas of interest and locations for the proposed action, which will be designed to meet multiple LRS objectives. Participants highlighted need for a clear methodology to prioritize actions on the landscape. Additionally, participants identified priority geospatial layers to include in a publicly accessible, interactive LTW web map. At the November 5 joint Stakeholder Committees meeting, the IADT will present and receive stakeholder feedback on a preliminary draft proposed action. The IADT will then refine the proposed action based on stakeholder input. The IADT will present a refined proposed action at the December 11 joint Stakeholder Committees meeting, along with a description of how the refined version reflects stakeholder input. The joint Stakeholder Committees may meet in January 2020 (date TBD) to review the final proposed action.

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Action Items

1. **Stakeholders** will provide input on the IADT's approach to prioritize treatment areas by 10/16.
2. **Stakeholders** will provide Mason Bindl and Jen Greenberg with feedback on spatial data by 10/18.
3. **Mason Bindl** will develop the LTW web map.
4. **IADT** will develop a draft proposed action in advance of 11/5 stakeholder meeting.
5. **Julia Golomb** will send a scheduling poll for December and January meetings.
6. **Sue Britting and Stephanie Coppeto** will discuss the draft LTW lessons learned survey.
7. **Silver Hartman** will send Mason Bindl and Jen Greenberg California State Parks data on planned, underway and completed projects.

Update on Landscape Restoration Strategy

Sarah Di Vittorio, National Forest Foundation, provided an update on the LTW Landscape Restoration Strategy (LRS). The final formatted version of the LRS will be complete by November 15.

Final edits to the LRS included:

- Enhancements to Executive Summary
 - Clarified purpose
 - Added short list of expected benefits/outcomes
 - Called out support for activities that protect communities
- Chapters 1 and 4
 - Added references and links to key regional documents (TRPA Regional Plan and Multijurisdictional Fuel Strategy)
- Chapter 3
 - Made Goal 5/Objective A consistent with the Forest Action Plan (five years to complete initial-entry fuel treatments in the WUI, rather than ten years)
 - Added language about addressing the road system to reduce erosion and increase resilience
 - Added support for community water infrastructure to the matrix.
 - Fixed map of regional forest products facilities
- Chapter 4
 - Re-organized for flow and clarity
 - Removed costs for treating invasive species in the lake from total LTW cost
 - Noted that LTW will develop a funding strategy
 - Added a short inset on BPMs and RPMs
- Throughout document
 - Changed "managed wildfire" to "naturally ignited wildfire."

Overview of Proposed Action: Timeline, Process, and Roles

Julia Golomb, Consensus Building Institute, presented the timeline for proposed action development.



The LTW IADT is now beginning to develop the proposed action, which it will finalize by January 2020. In this stage, stakeholders’ role is to provide iterative feedback on the draft proposed action. Input shared at the October stakeholder meeting will inform development of a draft proposed action, which will be shared for stakeholder input at the November 5 joint Stakeholder Committees meeting. At the December 11 joint Stakeholder Committees meeting, the IADT will present a refined version of the proposed action for stakeholder review. The joint Stakeholders Committee may meet in January 2020 to finalize the proposed action. The proposed action will serve as the foundation for NEPA, CEQA and TRPA environmental analysis. During environmental analysis, stakeholders will provide comments through formal public comment; however, the Joint Stakeholders Committee will continue to engage around monitoring plan development.

Sarah Di Vittorio presented on the relationship between the LRS and the proposed action. The 2017 LTW Landscape Resilience Assessment (LRA) and the 2019 LRS serve as foundations for the proposed action. The LRA describes current and desired conditions on the LTW landscape. The LRS expands on the current and desired conditions as outlined in the LRA, and provides guidance for selecting treatment areas and developing and implementing treatments in those areas.

The proposed action will identify restoration actions and locations, using the LRS, LRA, and spatial data.

Proposed Action: Source by Section

- Location: 59,013-acre LTW landscape.
- Existing Conditions - Source: LRA and LRS
- Purpose and Need - Source: LRA and LRS
- Proposed Action - Source: LRA and LRS, spatial data, and NEPA/CEQA teams

Discussion

- The EMDS is a decision support tool that LTW used in a unique way to bring together modeling data to inform the LRS. Other efforts have used it to help operationalize project planning. While the EMDS was used to develop the LRS, it will not be used to develop the proposed action.
- Where informative, scenario modeling results will be used to analyze the proposed action. Science modeling results will likely be useful for water, roads, and wildlife.

- The LTW Science Team is developing a science report on the modeling used to develop the LRS. A draft will be complete by the end of December, 2019.
- LTW will develop a Lessons Learned document to inform the work of other forest collaboratives. Stephanie Coppeto, USDA Forest Service, is developing a survey through which LTW participants can capture key ideas to be reflected in the Lessons Learned document.

Preliminary Dataset and Mapping Exercise for Proposed Action

Mason Bindl, TRPA, and Jen Greenberg, CTC, presented a LTW dataset depicted as geospatial layers that overlay a map of the LTW project area. The dataset utilizes EcObject, internal datasets, and additional data to reflect landscape conditions. Greenberg and Bindl noted that some critical components of the LRS, such as recreation value, are a-spatial.

The document titled “Opportunity Mapping for Lake Tahoe West Phase 3 – Project Planning” describes the contents of the dataset. Within this document, Table 1: Prioritization Dataset identifies highest priority areas for treatment. Table 2: Current Projects, depicts areas covered by other planned projects undergoing separate environmental review, included West Shore WUI. Table 3: Resource Considerations Dataset will inform prescriptions for how and potentially when an area is treated. LTW plans to make these geospatial data available via web map for public use.

Bindl and Greenberg requested stakeholder feedback on the following:

- Any missing data
- Effectiveness of the proposed approach to identify priority treatment areas
- Geographic locations of interest, including other resources or impacts of concern

Bindl and Greenberg displayed the following groupings of geospatial layers:

1. Opportunities for forest thinning. Layers include:
 - Overly dense stands in mid and late seral.
 - Potential for > 6' flame lengths in > 40-acre patches.
2. Seral Stage/Wildlife. Layers include:
 - Mid to late seral
 - Areas of dense mid seral could be pushed into late seral phase, to support habitat connectivity; yet also important to maintain diversity on the landscape.
 - Comment from stakeholder: Important to consider live crown, not only density.
3. Fire/Erosion Risk. Layers include:
 - WEPP modeling, including erosive soils and areas of high severity fire.
 - More data is needed for the Truckee River watershed and Homewood
 - Modeled erosion rates:
 - Background erosion condition
 - Erosion from thinning
 - Erosion from different severities of fire
 - These areas of fire and erosion risk represent areas where a high degree of caution is needed for treatments.

- Suggestion to highlight treatment opportunities in the upper watershed areas, where streams are already in good condition; potential to treat additional upland areas after stream restoration has occurred.
4. Meadows/Aquatic. Layers include:
- Culverts and bridges (primary barriers to fish passage)
 1. Nearly every culvert at Hwy. 89 prohibits fish passage
 - SEZ
 1. Current layer represents any potential SEZ
 2. An forthcoming update to this layer will contain more SEZ metrics
 3. Aspen stands are included in SEZ
 4. All meadows are SEZs, but not all SEZs are meadows

Discussion

A key question emerged: *How will the LTW team prioritize treatment across the landscape?* To develop the proposed action, the IADT will use geospatial data to identify areas on the landscape where LTW can meet multiple LRS objectives, for multi-benefit.

Participants highlighted the following combinations of geospatial data as particularly useful for prioritizing treatment areas:

- **PODs:** Potential wildland fire operations delineations
- **High severity fire in large patch size**
- **Mid seral + stand density**
- **Hill slope + erosive soils**
- **Multi-benefit:** Where can we achieve multiple goals?
- **Areas with existing roads**
- Consider **watersheds + watershed boundaries**

More broadly, participants suggested that the following considerations might inform prioritization:

1. **High severity wildfire in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) defense zone (first ¼ mile) and threat zone (next 1.25 miles)**
 - **There is significant opportunity to leverage multiple actions occurring on the landscape.** Much of this WUI and threat zone will be treated under the Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR). LTW could conduct treatment that complements the PTEIR, which is solely focused on vegetation treatment.
 - About the PTEIR: PTEIR will result in the submittal of a CEQA-equivalent document, which allows for private, local government and CTC fuel reduction projects within the WUI for the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Significant CA State Parks and Federal lands are not being analyzed under PTEIR.
 - CalFire is the lead agency.
 - PTEIR takes a programmatic approach.
 - The goal of the PTEIR is to increase pace and scale. It is fuel reduction based, with standard project requirements. PTEIR aims to treat 1000 acres per year, predominantly through mechanical treatment.
2. **Threat zone:** Most of the defense zone has planned treatment, but there will be significant treatment gaps in the threat zones.
3. **Mid seral stands**
4. **Stand density**

5. **SEZ, soils, impacts, connectivity, roads**
6. **Hand thinning treatments that could become mechanical under code change**
7. **Fire pattern on critical fire weather days:** Most fires will burn on specific fire days and burn to the northeast. Design treatments to disrupt fire behavior.
8. **PACs:** How much treatment should LTW conduct in PACs?
 - Should a PAC be treated all at once or in smaller sections?
 - Suggestion to treat the areas *around* PACs.
 - Enhance reproductive habitat outside of PACs as well. Young have the ability to disperse.
 - Prioritize areas with large trees outside of PACs: Tree height and habitat.
9. **POD** could be a useful conceptual starting point.
10. **Completed and proposed projects**
 - LTW could treat adjacent to completed and planned projects, to create a greater footprint of resilience.
11. **Hillslope and fire risks:** Useful combination of layers to prioritize. Reduces fire risk near communities and improves water quality.
12. **Impacts to lake clarity:** Consider prioritizing treatment in areas with more erosive soils, particularly at stream crossings.

Additional comments:

- Stakeholders encouraged documenting a clear process for identifying priority treatments areas, so that the approach is logical and explainable.
- Consider utilizing different geospatial layers based on funding source.
- Root the proposed action in the LRS objectives, with attention across themes.
- Work with USDA Forest Service specialists to identify where the hydrologists' and the fire team's areas of interest overlap;
- Remove areas already planned for WUI treatment from areas under consideration for LTW treatment;
- Rather than automatically treating the densest stands, consider treatments in less dense stands and make use of other features, such as ski resort areas.
- Consider prioritizing areas with more resilient trees per acre for prescribed fire.
- Consider access:
 - Cable system with significant reach
 - Helicopter logging
 - Need ballpark financial estimates for these.
- Consider the seed bank (i.e. future fuels) that will be released when introducing fire to areas that have not seen fire in a long time.
- The LRS describes achieving resilient conditions over a 20-year period.
- LTW should not cue up more than can be accomplished in the NEPA time frame, though this time frame is not yet certain. There is some risk associated with doing too much planning, in the event that landscape conditions change over time.
- Need to clearly define sensitive areas.

Stakeholders prioritized the following geospatial layers for Bindl to upload to a publicly available LTW web map:

1. Mid to late seral opportunities
2. SEZ + aspen + meadows + riparian
3. Opportunities for fire breaks

4. Risk for large patches of high severity fire
5. Current prescribed fire opportunities
6. Opportunities to increase water yield (note: this layer is in development; will add if possible)
7. Reducing fire risks on highly erosive soils (question: what soil types are most important?
Discuss with Mariana)
8. Opportunities for mechanical
9. Current + completed projects (dating back ten years; include CA State Parks + TFFT projects)
10. PACs: spotted owl, goshawk
11. Erodibility (important to consider *when* highly eroded areas should be treated)
12. Distance to road
13. Wilderness
14. Roads + slope + vegetation (LiDAR)

Meeting Participants

Organizing and Participating Agencies

CTC – California Tahoe Conservancy

FWS – Friends of the West Shore

NFF – National Forest Foundation

USFS LTBMU – USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

NDF – Nevada Division of Forestry

KTB – Keep Tahoe Blue/The League to Save Lake Tahoe

SFL – Sierra Forest Legacy

SPF – Sugar Pine Foundation

NTFPD – North Tahoe Fire Protection District

TRPA – Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

CBI – Consensus Building Institute

CSP – California State Parks

EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Stakeholder Science Committee Members

1. Jennifer Quashnick, FWS
2. Roland Shaw, NDF
3. Zach Bradford, KTB
4. Sue Britting, SFL
5. Maria Mircheva, SPF

Stakeholder Community Committee Members

1. Skyler Monaghan, Tahoe Fund
2. Jack Landy, EPA

Staff

1. Christine Aralia, CTC
2. Mason Bindl, TRPA

3. Stephanie Coppeto, USFS LTBMU
4. Sarah Di Vittorio, NFF
5. Shannon Friedman, TRPA
6. Brian Garrett, USFS LTBMU
7. Silver Hartman, CSP
8. Eric Horntvedt, NTFPD
9. Bri Tiffany, NFF
10. Kat McIntyre, TRPA
11. Gina Bartlett, CBI
12. Jen Greenberg, CTC
13. Julia Golomb, CBI