

VTAC Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2012

Mendocino National Forest Supervisor's Office
Willows, California

Attendance

The following VTAC member attended the meeting:

Mike Liquori (SWC-Chair), Peter Ribar (CTM), Richard Gienger (public).

The following VTAC agency representatives attended the meeting:

Bill Short (CGS) and Pete Cafferata (CAL FIRE).

Attendees:

Duane Shintaku (CAL FIRE), Dennis Hall (CAL FIRE).

Conference Line Participants:

Dr. Kevin Boston (OSU), Bryan McFadin (NCRWQCB), Dr. Matt O'Connor (OEI), Bill Stevens (NMFS), Mark Lancaster (5C).

[Action items are shown in bold print]

SBIR Phase II Grant Proposal Update

Mike Liquori reported that Sound Watershed Consulting submitted their Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II grant application by March 1st. Up to \$450,000 is available from the Phase II grant over two years, which would be split between Washington and California if the grant is received. The grant application focuses on "incentives" for active riparian management using "ecosystem service markets." The basic idea is that by developing additional sources of revenues, landowners will be more likely to re-engage in management using a more stewardship-oriented model. This approach has the potential to more efficiently restore and conserve important ecosystem services using private market forces, reducing reliance upon prescriptive harvest restrictions as a regulatory mechanism. A team has been assembled to help with the development of this approach, including an economist from Oakland familiar with carbon credits and the Spatial Informatics Group. Mike stated that SWC should know if they are funded for Phase II by the end of July or early August. He has put together a paper abstract on this topic for the National SAF convention in Spokane in October.

Discussion on the Revised VTAC Guidance Document

Most of the meeting was spent reviewing the draft VTAC guidance document, including recent revisions and comments incorporated Bryan McFadin, Mike Liquori, and Pete Cafferata. While not comprehensive (complete notes were recorded by Mike Liquori and Pete Cafferata in electronic and hard copies of the document), some of the significant points raised for each section of the document included:

Executive Summary:

- Modify the table (include larger scale or more complex proposals).
- Search for “pathways” and use different words to distinguish different uses (too many different “pathways” are currently used in the document).
- Search “rule”, “pathway”, “option”, and “approach” and determine if they are used consistently throughout the document.
- Remove Dr. Bill Trush’s name from the list of members.
- Add Dr. Doug Martin’s name as a contributor (perhaps as a footnote).

Introduction:

- Add references for the 2nd paragraph.
- Last paragraph, page 2, modify to: larger scale or more complex proposals.
- Figure 1: make titles in the boxes consistent with text language and consider adding page numbers into Figure 1.
- Reword the last paragraph on page 4.

Goals and Desired Outcomes:

- Table 1: modify the “generally available” text.
- Add a sentence that refers to Table 1 and provides an example.

Pre-Consultation Guidelines

- Make this section IV.
- Modify language in the 2nd paragraph (“intended to be” instead of “are”).
- **Mark Lancaster is to complete a simple pre-consultation document example for reduced wildfire risk to be included in the document.**

Conceptual Framework: Summary of Riparian Zone Beneficial Functions

- Make this section III.
- Consider adding a qualifying statement acknowledging that the bullet points are not universally appropriate (“soften” the bullet points).
- **Bill Stevens is to provide 1-2 paragraphs describing how practices on private timberlands are important for the recovery of listed anadromous salmonid species, and a brief description of habitat functions needed by salmonid species.**

Pathway 1) Standardized Rule Matrix

- For the Riparian Vegetation Classification and Relative Stand Density categories, add “or” following choices.
- Figure 2: determine if a more regional table is available for northern California.
- Provide greater clarity for the Relative Stand Density section and provide examples.
- For the Geomorphic Classification section, spell out VW and CW each time (do not use abbreviations).
- Make the channel gradient and typical bed morphology choices into bullet points.
- Change the gradient breaks to be consistent with Montgomery and Buffington (1997).
- Pg 14, for debris and alluvial fans, add a footnote explaining confluence angles.

- For the figure at the bottom of page 14, consider adding “see table xx” for each part of the diagram.
- Pg 15, state what the purpose is of Table 2, and explain what the table is able to do for an RPF.
- Explain what “functional priority rating” means.
- Pg 16, state what you can learn from Table 3, and how it will assist the RPF.
- Add a sentence that explains “inherent functional levels.”
- At the end of the 2nd paragraph, add “In this case, it tells us that wood is very important, nutrients are...”
- Pg 17, change “Fair” to “Moderate” in Table 4.
- Add a sentence(s) stating how this analysis provides a justification for an RPF to propose activities which improve wood loading in this site-specific setting (i.e., tie it all together, and do this for all the example paragraphs).
- Pg 18, change the label for Table 5 to “Segment priorities matrix.”
- Under the “improve” category for Wood in Table 5, add “add wood, plant trees, etc.” Add text to all the boxes to cover all the approaches available to RPFs (all treatment options). Rethink the language in the boxes.
- Pg 19; after Step 3, add an example.

Pathway 2) Situational Scenarios

- Move Step 4 so that it follows Step 3 on page 21.
- Add language that addresses how site specific proposals will be implemented and enforced (FPR compliance; deal with “enforceability”).
- Add “Situation” in front of each of the 5 types of situations listed.
- Remove “Expertise Likely Required” section from each of the 5 types of projects.
- Add one or more sentences indicating that if the RPF does not have appropriate expertise for a given type of site-specific proposal, then she or he needs to obtain that expertise (i.e., many types of proposals will require additional expertise, such as fire modeling) [reference the RPF code here]. Also, the RPF must have cognizance of the state and federally listed species that may be impacted by the project.
- Instead of listing a website for footnote 6, put a map of the ASP area in the appendix.
- Pg 22, under treatment options, add “other” (including combined treatments). Do this for each of the 5 categories. Add Quid pro quo opportunities (e.g., trading trees,...).
- Under Hazards (Red-Flags), change language to “take of state or federally listed species (e.g., felling trees in channels...).
- **Pg 23, Ask Dave Wright for permission to use photos.**
- **Under Headcutting and/or Incised Channels, Mike Liquori is to reword this section.**
- **Pg 25, under Design Factors, Matt O’Connor is to provide language.**
- **Add another photo for a North Coast situation (Matt O’Connor to supply photo).**
- Under Hazards, broaden the list (e.g., flooding, LWD risk, channel avulsion, etc.)
- Pg 26, check the Benda and Sias reference for spelling of Sias.
- Add a new sentence regarding planting conifers in riparian areas at the end of the first paragraph.

- Cite Spence et al. 1996 (ManTech Report) regarding planting, thinning operations in 2nd growth riparian areas in coastal areas.
- Under Design Factors to Consider, add “Affecting mortality rates.”
- Under Treatment options, change California bay to tanoak.
- Pg 27, make a separate bullet for “Conifer tree planting.”
- Add “Other” (including combined treatments).
- Pg 28, under “Hazards” remove “(e.g., for coho salmon, see Welsh et al. 2000).”
- **Pg 29, first paragraph: Mike Liquori is to provide a more robust treatment of the topic.**
- Under Design Factors to Consider, add: sediment, loss of wood in the channel, loss of wood recruitment potential from the riparian zone.
- Under Treatment Options, add “Other (including combined treatments).
- Under Hazards, add subdivisions, sensitive species present, historical arch sites, etc. **Mark Lancaster is to provide language for hazards and values.**
- Pg 32, under Typical Suitability Criteria, Mike Liquori is to talk to Ken Cummins and Doug Martin to develop this section.
- Add “perennial streams” (with different criteria for intermittent streams).
- Pg 33, under Treatment Options, add clearcut. Also add inter-planting, instead of under planting.
- Under Hazards, add “affect wood recruitment, possible destabilization of slopes.”
- Add a new Situation 6 titled Sediment Reduction (dealing with roads, crossings, etc.).

Pathway 3) Analytical Design Process

- Pgs 37-38, toolbox for potential riparian assessment techniques. Work the bullet points into Table 6 or into the situational examples in Pathway 2).
- Pg 46, incorporate Bryan McFadin’s suggested language.
- Add more references (look at the water temperature section in Liquori et al. 2008 report (SWC report for the BOF).

Submission Requirements

- Pg 62, incorporate Bryan McFadin’s suggested language.
- **Ask Drew Coe to review what Bryan wrote and ask him to revise the CVRWQCB section so that it is consistent with that for the NCRWQCB.**
- **Contact Mike Higgins, CCRWQCB, and Mike Napolitano, SFBRWQCB, and determine if they want to be engaged and be included in the review process.**

Monitoring Strategies

- Add photo point monitoring protocols.
- Add the concept of cooperative monitoring that addresses longer-term monitoring of site-specific proposals.
- Add more verbiage on effectiveness monitoring, and include language on the BOF’s Monitoring Study Group’s proposed Effectiveness Monitoring Committee, and how it might relate to Section V monitoring strategies.

Pete Cafferata and Mike Liquori will generate a new version of the guidance document and post it on the VTAC ftp site prior to the next meeting.

VTAC Pilot Project Update

Pete Cafferata provided a brief update on the VTAC pilot projects. Gary Rynearson of Green Diamond Resource Company provided CAL FIRE staff with a 2-page handout on the GDRCO riparian canopy experiment proposed for 4 sub-basin watersheds of the Lower Klamath River (Tarup Creek, Mainstem Ah Pah Creek, South Fork Ah Pah Creek and Little Surpur Creek). Pretreatment data will be collected in all streams over a minimum two year period starting in 2012. Initial canopy modifications will be conducted at the stream reach level starting in 2014 with subsequent canopy modifications implemented throughout selected watersheds through about 2021. **Pete Cafferata sent Dr. Lowell Diller, Matt House, and Gary Rynearson the VTAC pre-consultation document on April 11th; it was requested that Pete determine whether GDRCO is planning to fill out the document.**

Regarding the Collins Pine Company plan (THP 2-12-002 TEH) in the Deer Creek drainage, Pete reported that no Pre-Harvest Inspection has occurred to date. **It was requested that Pete send the VTAC pre-consultation form to RPF Andy Juska for possible completion.** Approximately 5-10 acres is to be proposed for mechanical thinning in the WLPZ to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

Next Meeting Date and Location

We tentatively scheduled the next VTAC meeting for June 25-26 in Weaverville. A field trip to Mark Lancaster's parcel would occur the first day (allowing for travel), followed by an office meeting on the second day.