Buckeye Forest Project

April 7- 8, 2005 Workshop

Reconfiguring CEQA Analysis for Timber Harvest at the Planning Watershed Scale

NOTES

Workshop Overview

In April 2005, the Buckeye Forest Project (BFP) convened a workshop at the Fieldbrook Grange Hall in Humboldt County to discuss how to make the cumulative watershed effects (CWE) assessment required by CEQA for timber harvests more efficient for NIPF landowners and more effective for watershed enhancement and recovery. BFP chose this issue in the context of its mission to support sound resource management and improve the economic and ecological well being of family-owned resource land. (See list of acronyms on second-to-last page.) (See list of acronyms on second-to-last page.)

Attending were foresters, landowners, state and federal resource agency staff, consultants, resource managers and environmentalists (see participant list on last page.) Presentations were made on past, current and proposed ideas to implement CWE assessment on a watershed scale; and attendees shared experiences and discussed ideas and strategies. The first day's agenda focused on "understanding the situation." The second day's discussions were about "finding solutions."

Day One: Understanding the Situation

Introduction

The two ideas that BFP workshop organizers hope to address in this workshop:

Creating a public database of watershed conditions that could be used to make future planning of timber harvests on NIPF properties less costly; and

Discussing how CWE analysis can be used more effectively to positively impact watershed conditions.

Ken Hoffman: His agency (USFWS) has no policy regarding CEQA and timber harvest but it wants to see habitat for NSOs maintained. Since NIPF landowners provide most NSO habitat, USFWS seeks to foster continuation of their management, and that rising timber harvest plan costs threaten this continuity.

To reduce plan preparation costs, he advocates compiling watershed-scale databases of current conditions, as well as past, current and proposed activities. The data would come from biologists, RPFs, agencies and other sources. Geological, archaeological, hydrological, silvicultural, botanical and sensitive species' habitat would all be combined together in GIS layers. As more data is put in computer formats, quality control could become more effective. Individual NIPF landowners are now required to pay to collect data (such as NSO surveys) that are often redundant with that already collected by nearby landowners, but not readily accessible. Landowners need a database that captures information they have paid for – otherwise it goes into a black hole (warehouses.)

Comments:

Marty Berbach: NSO and NDD databases have become less expensive to use, and that within the year CDFG hopes to have them on the Internet. CDF is asking for THPs to be submitted electronically, which will allow better access to data and possibly result in fewer repetitive surveys being done.

Leslie Markham: CDF is just beginning to work with electronic THP data ("e-filing") and plans to beta test Internet systems by the end of 2005. The agency also plans to post old THPs.

Dennis Hall: AB47 required CDF to start accumulating web-enabled maps of watershed activity.

Steve Grantham: Archaelogical data has been compiled for 30 years and is available in a database, via the Information Centers around the state, although it is only partly computerized. This could provide something of a model system to look at.

Jim Able: RPFs often collect redundant NSO data, costing as much as 15 percent of a THP or NTMP. He said agencies review the data differently and require different formats. He advocated creating a common site where landowners' RPFs could get such data.

A Brief History Of Cumulative Watershed Effects Analysis - Richard Gienger

Despite court decisions and legislation requiring CWE analysis for proposed timber harvests, it still isn't being done. There have been mixed results from pilot efforts such as CDF's postponed IWAT.

He advocates a pilot project in a watershed where landowners agree to participate. Such a pilot would demonstrate how landowners could reduce their THP/ NTMP costs while providing a blueprint for repairing legacy environmental problems.

He noted that progress on the issue was hampered by the political conflicts over industrial logging, saying that any legislative solution has to have the support of the Sierra Club and the California Forestry Association – each effectively has "veto" power.

Comments:
Marty Berbach: CEQA's requirement for CWE analysis is process-oriented, not resource-oriented. It emphasizes checklists and paperwork, and leaves the public concerned about resource protection frustrated.

Holly Lundborg: Since 1988 regulation has been driven by citizen lawsuits; I anticipate this trend continuing.

Yana Valachovic: Initiatives from the executive branch have been sidelined because of leadership changes.

Past and Current Efforts

A) NCWAP – Vikki Snider

Before NCWAP was de-funded, CDF, CDFG, CGS and NCRWQCB participated with landowners and other stakeholders in watershed assessments on Redwood Creek, Gualala River and the Mattole.

NCWAP focused on land use, geological processes and water use, and investigated the history and trends of salmonid populations; current habitat conditions; past and present relationships of geologic, vegetative and fluvial processes to habitat; how land use has affected these processes; limiting factors for salmonid production; and habitat improvement activities.

The Mattole NCWAP focused on reaching out to landowners to create a document that they could use in timber harvest planning.

Discussion:
Has the document has been used by landowners?
Some landowners have used it, but more outreach is needed. It is available on the Internet (landowners present weren't aware of that.)
A letter to landowners and RPFs, with guidance on how to use the existing document, would be helpful.
Could UCCE publicize NCWAP and other data sources to landowners?

Jim Able: The NCWAP Mattole plan contained broad-brush data that wasn't intensive enough for use in THPs or NTMPs, suggests incorporating THP/NTMP data into the document.
Marty Berbach: Merge *all* relevant data merged into a web-based product.
Vikki Snider: Agency data on fishers, owls and other species could be included. But some information is considered proprietary by landowners.

Bob Stansberry: It must be updateable, and be updated as conditions change.
Vikki Snider: Agree, but DFG currently lacks the needed staff. Politicians tend to create new approaches to natural-resource planning, then strip the funding while still claiming credit for trying a new approach.
Marty Berbach: Funds for NCWAP were reduced with general cutbacks, but there was also political opposition to the program.

B) IWMA – Ken Moore
IWMA was a year-long project with DFG and industrial timberland owners Green Diamond and Sierra Pacific Industries on pilot watershed assessments initiated by the BOF. The intent was to look at a larger landscape (than THPs) where salmonids were present to determine if relief from Threatened and Impaired watershed rules could be justified. The watersheds studied were Lower South Fork of Little River and the High Prairie and Lake Prairie tributaries to Redwood Creek.

The team focused on watershed products needed by salmon, such as LWD and temperature, and evaluated how watercourses met the biological requirements of salmonid species. Geologic differences in sub-watersheds had a major impact on how land management impacted salmonid habitat.

Cooperation between the parties was strained at first because they came in with different objectives; it took a lot of discussion to arrive on the same path. A particularly controversial point was defining reference conditions, i.e., the state of watersheds prior to logging, road building, etc. Even on unmanaged lands, conditions change dramatically over time.

Comments:
John Rice: Monitoring programs are often hampered by lack of information about historic conditions as well as contention over what the desired conditions in a watershed should be.

Ken Hoffman: It is difficult to agree on desired conditions, especially in actively managed watersheds. It is more useful to focus on habitat protection measures, with the effectiveness of such measures evaluated based on habitat conditions rather than fish counts, since fish abundance can be affected by ocean conditions.

Jared Gerstein: The IWMA project yielded recommendations such as repairing roads, avoiding mass wasting and increasing LWD recruitment, that could have been developed with less effort.

Ken Moore: the focus was on trying a new process to do watershed analysis on a landscape with mixed ownerships.

Jared Gerstein: In Washington State, watershed analyses yielded the same conclusions so often that the state published BMPs which guide timber harvest planning.

Ken Hoffman: CFPRs include BMPs as well.

C) CWE Workgroup - Dennis Hall
The CWE workgroup was a collaboration between CDF and state and regional water quality boards. The process was hampered by the agencies' differing statutory authorities, but participants generated a matrix describing problems, potential solutions, ways to implement solutions and impediments to solutions (handout.) Due to regional differences and differences between individual watersheds, however, the matrix proved less helpful than expected.

The workgroup was more optimistic about the utility of a project-scale CWE assessment outline it developed (handout.) The document recommended contents and methods for a prospective CWE analysis that could be performed by RPFs in preconsultation with reviewing agencies.

As large landowners submit more THPs electronically, creating online watershed databases will become more possible. But, it will be difficult to agree on common methodologies.

D) IWAT - Richard Gienger
Andrea Tuttle initiated the Forest Stewardship Committee when she was CDF Director (c. 2000.) The committee drafted several proposals, one of which was the Interagency Watershed Analysis Team pilot project. The goal would be to develop, test and refine a simple and credible interagency method, in cooperation with landowners and stakeholders, for analyzing watershed conditions, trend of resources of concern, and to identify protection and recovery needs, opportunities and priorities on a planning watershed or sub-basin scale – consistent with both private and public trust values. (handout)

No action has been taken. The Dept. of Fish and Game didn't have the resources to be part of the team, also statewide budget cuts have impacted everyone.

Richard advocates for a pilot watershed assessment project, suggesting it focus on two watersheds: one that had been assessed under NCWAP and one that had not been. The goal would be to create a CWE analysis process that assured resources are protected and provided relief to responsible landowners. He reported that there are indications the Schwarzenegger Administration supports such an approach.

<u>Comments:</u>
Yana Valachovic: Recounted the history of this proposal, noting that support for it within CDF eroded when Davis-appointee Andrea Tuttle lost her position. Mark Stanley, who had been supportive, is now chief deputy director.

Richard Gienger: Hopes that CDFG and the BFP would collaborate on the project, noting that CDFG supports Ken Moore's participation in the BFP.

Jim Able: Advocates more landowner input into the process of developing a pilot IWAT.

Holly Lundborg: CWE analysis is hampered by divergent agency mandates; a solution needs to be brought to the legislature or governor's office. NCRWQCB staff is consumed with reviewing Pacific Lumber Co. THPs. It would require citizen pressure to shift agency resources toward other priorities. Need to get top-down action to get necessary positions funded.

The Current Process of CWE Analysis - Mike Atkins

To illustrate the regulatory burden imposed by CFPRs, Mike contrasted an NTMP for a California property, 150 pages, with an Oregon THP application -- four pages.

He described the process of CWE assessment for timber harvest planning in general, as well as the specific analysis for an NTMP named Mountain View. Noting that the CWE assessment requires looking outside plan boundaries, he typically writes to county planning departments to learn about recent and proposed projects nearby; he usually receives no response. He tries to consult watershed groups, which are difficult to contact unless he knows members.

Often the best source of information about conditions in a watershed are previously filed THPs, which he reviews in hard copy at CDF offices. For Mountain View, he reported finding needed botanical information in THPs for adjacent properties. One adjacent landowner, Mendocino Redwoods, provided a lot of relevant data of its own. But several new surveys were required for the Mountain View NTMP, which along with other components, brought its cost to $51,569. Mr. Atkins estimated the CWE assessment portion cost $3,600.

It is difficult to analyze whether an THP/NTMP would result in CWE, given the requirement that past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects be included in the analysis. His ethics and his RPF license require him to be truthful when he checks the "no" box for CWE on a particular plan. To his knowledge, only one THP/NTMP has been submitted with the CWE box checked "yes"; and that plan was rejected.

CWE assessment for THP/NTMPs is driven by plan compliance; in-depth watershed analysis is too expensive for a single landowner to conduct. THP/NTMPs should be reviewed in the context of size, silviculture methods and permit types; and that performance-based systems with BMPs should be used. Plan costs could be reduced by better sharing of data within watersheds.

Why We Need To Change The Timber Harvest Review Process - Ken Hoffman

We need watershed-scale databases of all relevant information on watershed conditions and projects. Without them, THP/NTMP preparers have to re-create data that already exists -- a particularly burdensome obligation for NIPF landowners. Such databases would allow agencies to assess THP/NTMP impacts more effectively. A 4-page THP, a la Oregon, should work here.

NSO surveys, which typically cost $8,000, could be reduced or eliminated in many cases if information on past surveys were available. By gaining better knowledge of NSO

territory, buffer zones around NSO sites could potentially be reduced, allowing for more economic use of land.

CEQA itself states that it is the policy of the State to maintain a database.

Comments:
Vikki Snider: Raised the confidentiality concern; landowners have the right to keep competitive information secret. State agencies are being sued by landowners in the Garcia watershed over release of proprietary data.

Marty Berbach: Sometimes private parties seek to claim data is proprietary when it is not. Large landowners concerned about their GIS systems becoming public could provide the data in PDF formats.

Landowners and biologists have been concerned about releasing data on sensitive species for fear that people, out of malice or opposition to species-protection laws, would kill or harm the creatures. This concern is overblown; that such vandalism that does occur is haphazard and not based on data, and that more can be gained by disclosing such information.

Ken Hoffman: Landowners' fears about revealing timber inventories were also becoming moot in an era when aerial photos are so detailed and widely available. By the end of 2005, low-altitude, high-resolution photos will be available for the entire state.

Jim Able: It upsets him when agencies minimize landowner concerns over proprietary data. Such data can be used in error or manipulated deceptively.

Ken Hoffman: Advocates convincing landowners that allowing their resource data to be compiled with that of their neighbors would help them in future timber harvest planning.

Jared Gerstein: Are costs for data collection and analysis lower for larger timberland owners?

Ken Hoffman: NSO survey costs have decreased for large timberland owners because their NSO sites are well mapped, and they have a history of data on NSO territory that makes future research needs less intensive.

Sally French: Reiterated concern about environmental lawsuits driving up the costs of regulation, resulting in more trees being cut to cover THP/NTMP costs.

Ken Hoffman: Agree; it is important to begin to look at THPs and NTMPs as *opportunities* as well as threats. The proposed watershed-scale databases would facilitate using plans to correct problems in watersheds.

Dennis Hall: Surveying and monitoring needs vary greatly from one resource to another. While archaeological sites are static, watercourse conditions can change annually or even more frequently. A point raised in the NCWAP process was that data must be updated constantly, ideally by a specialized team.

Johanna Rodoni : The burden of data collection requirements are a factor in some landowners deciding to convert their property from natural resource land to other uses.

Mike Atkins: Some Able Forestry clients have chosen to invest in timberland elsewhere because of California's regulatory burdens, and that some have changed land uses from

forestry to residential or commercial.

Jim Able: The state is sending economic signals to landowners to convert their lands from timber management. He compared the costs of the recent Mountain View NTMP ($51,569) with that of an NTMP prepared eight years earlier for a property three times as large (about $20,000).

John Rice: He's not eligible for an NTMP; why aren't THPs valid for 20 years? -- a change that would make it easier for his heirs to carry on ranching after he's gone.

Dennis Hall: There are currently two bills in the legislature to extend THPs to 10 years, but CDF's proposal to expand the size limits for NTMPs failed in the legislature last year. Another approach is: a Program Timber Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR) that would cover CEQA analysis for longer periods.

Jim Able: Underscored the difficulty of bringing stakeholders together and working through personal and political differences to create solutions.

Richard Gienger: Argued for a pilot project to include watershed-scale THP data and other sources. The environmental laws creating difficulty for NIPF landowners were the results of pressure from citizens who saw places dear to them being devastated.

Lawrence Dwight: Urged agency staff to explain to landowners why information on their watershed conditions and resources is needed. The Endangered Species Act has placed severe burdens on landowners, while giving them no credit for providing habitat for listed species.

The Lindsey Creek Watershed Project - Ruth Blyther
The Lindsey Creek Watershed Project engaged residents in assessing and setting goals for their watershed and community. Lindsey Creek watershed was chosen because it is both a salmonid refugia and a growing community (Fieldbrook) where a great deal of resource land could be developed for housing in the future.

With Stillwater Sciences, NCRWQCB and other collaborators, RCAA/NRS polled residents (who prioritized slow growth and less septic pollution) and collected data on fish populations, water quality, timber harvest and other elements from available sources (including Green Diamond Resources and NIPF landowners). The agency published a matrix of fish habitat values and risk levels to foster the protection of high-quality fish habitat. Implementation of the plan will depend in part on the county general plan update process now underway. There are also recommendations for the local community, other local governments, and state and federal agencies.

The Mattole Watershed Analysis – Panel presentation
Bob Stansberry, a rancher and 60-year resident of the Mattole, discussed his experiences and knowledge about changing watershed conditions there. The channel has historically been aggraded with gravel, as evidenced by stories of pioneers using the river in the 1870s as a route down the valley. But after intensive logging and floods in the 1950s and 1960s, the channel became more aggraded. He recalled a landslide burying Four Mile Creek, then a later landslide redirecting the flow and creating a large pool where the creek entered the mainstem.

Noting that American Indians used fire to keep forests from encroaching on grass prairies (which were important for deer grazing), Bob reported that in recent years, prairies seem

to be shrinking as forests encroach. Encroachment varies season to season depending on weather, seed production and other factors.

He underscored NCWAP's conclusion that more rural subdivisions would harm the eastern sub-basin. He expressed support for a proposal to preserve his ranch as part of a wildlife corridor between Humboldt Redwoods State Park and the King Range, but he said some payment would be required to make it work economically.

Sally French described the process the NCWAP group went through in building trust with landowners. She said CDFG was helpful in convincing ranchers to share information without fear of incurring regulatory liabilities. She recounted the history of the MRC, saying that it changed from representing the full spectrum of landowners to being dominated by environmental activists. This happened in part because meetings went late into the evening, when ranchers could not feasibly attend. She said that ranchers have recently become more engaged with the NCWAP process and the MRC. But she warned that legal and regulatory pressures on large and small landowners would likely result in more subdivision.

Chris Larson said that the regulatory complexity in CFPRs was an unintended consequence of the public's desire for a good environment. Each year they become more complex, he said, requiring more and more data -- little of which is used after plan approval. He likened this process to one in which 10 people make a large dinner, then throw it away because no one comes to eat it. He suggested that watershed groups such as MRC become repositories of watershed-scale databases. MRC has historical data to supplement the Mattole NCWAP document, and MRC would be more able to keep the database up to date than tax-funded public agencies that are subject to cutbacks.

Chris and Sally noted that NCWAP was successful because Scott Downie (CDFG) had built up trust with landowners prior to the project. Holly Lundborg said the NCWAP was a great success and reflected a healing of the divisions between NIPF landowners and new settlers in the Mattole. Chris said the two sides have evolved from taking positions against one another to doing projects together. Sally credited Chris with making progress in this regard. Yana Valachovic observed how important personalities, historical knowledge and funding are to the success of cooperative watershed projects.

CDF Gualala Watershed Analysis - Don Morse (CDF)
Don Morse presented a slide show of aerial photographs showing logging and road building practices in the Gualala watershed prior to the enactment of CFPRs in 1973. Photos showed roads built in streams, salmon-bearing creeks buried in sediment, massive denuded landscapes and debris flows triggered by tractor logging. Mr. Morse explained that the watershed began to recover naturally by the late 1990s.

Proposal for CEQA Analysis at the Planning Watershed Scale – Ken Hoffman

CEQA analyses in forested watersheds be conducted at the planning watershed scale rather than at the scale of individual THP/NTMPs. This would reduce the need for costly, duplicative data; increase opportunities to incorporate restoration work in proposed THP/NTMPs; and make it possible to ease the scrutiny of smaller NIPF timber harvest projects. He recommended treating these watershed analyses as ongoing, never complete but continually updated with new data, including non-timber activities.

Under the current system, RPFs have a strong incentive to keep their focus narrow so they can justify stating that a THP/NTMP will not have CWEs. In the 13 years since

CWE analysis has been required, about 5,000 plans have been submitted and only one (which was declined) acknowledged that it would cause CWEs. It is a fantasy to think that 4,999 THP/NTMPs had no cumulative impacts; we need to get over that and stop trying to pretend that nothing has an impact.

We need a fundamental change in plan review – a larger context; identify impacts and mitigation – focus on opportunities to *fix* things. We need to put the process in context, make a fundamental change in the criteria under which plans are approved – i.e. 20 acres is different than 400 acres.

Comments:
Chris Larson: A watershed-wide analysis of the Mattole was only possible because landowners were convinced it was a good thing to do. It could be difficult to build such trust in other watersheds.

Ken Hoffman: The fear of seeing one's project reach a threshold of cumulative effects would be the root of landowners' reluctance to participate in watershed-scale CWE analysis.

Richard Gienger: We need pilot projects to demonstrate how such an approach could work.

The challenge: *How* do we go about altering the process?

Timmons Ranch Field Trip (Thursday aftenoon)

Rancher Jim Timmons took participants on a tour of his ranch in the lower Lindsey Creek watershed. Originally logged in the late 19th Century, the ranch has been managed by Mr. Timmons' family since 1919. Its uses have evolved a great deal, and today Mr. Timmons runs sheep and harvests young-growth timber, while his associate Lawrence Dwight runs beef cattle.

With the tour occurring during rainy weather, low-lying fields were inundated and Mr. Timmons said his ability to deal with flooding had become increasingly constrained by requirements to protect salmon habitat. He also described cooperative efforts with CDFG and RCD to stabilize banks and enhance habitat.

Mr. Timmons said Lindsay Creek rises more quickly during rains than it used to, a change he attributes to increased residential development upstream. Summer and fall flows are often so low -- due to increased water use, in his opinion -- that he can no longer irrigate his pastures as he used to.
Sharon Kramer, a watershed resident and scientist, noted that many upstream residents have put in drainage structures on their properties which increases runoff rates. Surface water contamination from septic tanks is also common in winter.

Other discussion topics included the threshold of activity that would necessitate a permit for the removal of riparian vegetation; landowner-agency communications about such; and the classification and relative values of different types of wetlands, especially those already modified (or created) by human activities, and conflicting mandates among agencies over wetlands issues.

The PTEIR (Program Timber Environmental Impact Report) – Greg Blomstrom

(after-dinner presentation – incomplete notes)

Baldwin, Blomstrom, Wilkinson and Associates prepared a PTEIR for the Weaverville area after the large fire a few years ago. It took 2-2.5 years to get approved, cost $80,000. It covered a range of fire safety treatments for potentially several hundred parcels. A big issue in the area is privacy and aesthetics – people don't want to see their neighbors – limits the amount of thinning people are willing to do.

Plusses of the PTEIR: gets people talking to each other within a watershed; gets them thinking about road access and other issues; treatments can be coordinated; it's in place for 10-15? years, it can be amended; cost to individual landowner about $3-$5,000.

Exemptions have taken some of the wind out of the PTEIR sails (but they have a sunset date.)

Day Two: Finding Solutions

Recap And Further Discussion from Yesterday

Ken Hoffman recounted the evidence heard on the prior day about the costs of repetitive surveys and data collection and the need for watershed-scale databases to facilitate CWE assessment and streamline THP/NTMP preparation by NIPF landowners. He said such databases would also facilitate agencies' review of proposed THP/NTMPs and incorporation of restoration projects into THP/NTMPs. He noted that non-timber related impacts could also be better assessed -- and that THP/NTMPs could be designed to address these impacts.

The process would be difficult and expensive. But, in addition to publicly maintained databases, there is a great deal of watershed data in past THP/NTMPs as well as in the GIS systems of industrial landowners. A key step is convincing landowners that sharing this data would be to their advantage.

Comments:
Holly Lundborg: NCRWQCB tries to find restoration opportunities in THP/NTMPs and other proposed activities.

Bob Stansberry: Need to verify, correct and update data.

Sally French: Concerned about requiring landowners to correct problems not of their own making. It would be unfair to expect a landowner to mitigate offsite impacts -- such as erosion from a county road -- that exceeded their own impacts.

Johanna Rodoni: Humboldt County's public works budget has declined (while social service expenditures have increased), resulting in more erosion from county roads.

Sally French: Erosion problems are severe on county roads near her ranch. Suggested that BFP consider a project to work on this problem.

Jim Able: Predicts that landowners would expect the state to compile data from existing filed THPs. He said his firm tries to incorporate projects such as reforestation, road rocking and culvert upgrades in timber harvesting, often making use of the same heavy equipment.

Lawrence Dwight: Public agencies may have a hard time convincing landowners to contribute to watershed-scale databases. He recalled the frustrations of ag and forestry groups that pooled data and proposed habitat protection measures for coho -- only to be rejected the California Fish and Game Commission.

Yana Valachovic: It is difficult to agree on the quality of data regarding salmon habitat.

Holly Lundborg: Focus on compiling databases, and develop quality assurance protocols later. A pilot watershed-scale project would be a good place to begin.

Johanna Rodoni: Some ranchers are on the edge of survival now, pilot projects won't yield results fast enough.

John Rice: Focus on multiple approaches. The BFP workshops themselves are part of the solution.

John Rogers: It would be helpful to compile all policy recommendations, along with an overview of different agencies involved and the projects they've proposed or discussed. BFP should identify the characteristics of a watershed that would work for a pilot project.

Lawrence Dwight: Bear River, Mattole River, Yager Creek and Lindsey Creek would be good pilot watersheds; data for all four have been compiled to varying degrees.

Holly Lundborg: NCRWQCB will soon take action a sediment basin plan. Urged NIPF landowners to become involved. Also, ask the legislature to expand the size limits of NTMPs.

Lundborg and Hall: Recommend that people review the CDF/water quality CWE documents (handouts) to learn more about possible solutions and impediments.

Yana Valachovic: We need to influence CDF to put more resources into the process and develop it further.

Finding Solutions

Group discussion ended up with some focus on identification, access and centralization of databases, and a potential planning watershed pilot project.

Databases

A. Create an Inventory of *Existing* Databases

It became apparent during this workshop that there are many existing databases that many people are not aware of. There was agreement that it would be great to have a master list of existing sources of data (without getting involved in QA/QC - quality assurance and control.)

- Mike Atkins volunteered to do some compiling; Yana offered to assist.

>> Send data sources to Mike by April 14 (identify authorship, source, why, etc. - metadata) matkins@ableforestry.com The list may be made accessible via the Buckeye Conservancy website, at least for starters. [Postscript: as of mid-May, Yana Valacovich is the contact re the metadata list: <yvala@ucdavis.edu>

Some next steps could be:

- Ideally: create a website, with links to data sources and watershed groups.
- Ca. Licensed Forestry Assoc. should be a driving source to get this information to foresters.

Others: CDF; ICE (Information Center for Environment, hosted by U.C. Davis)

B. A Centralized Database – More Discussion and Ideas

- Who to house it? They need to be trustworthy
- NRCS, as a non-regulatory agency, might be appropriate.
- It needs to be user-friendly
- Make information available in more than one format – paper as well as electronic. Many landowners don't have internet access.
- Make it physically accessible – such as at local offices like NRCS.
- It will need to have processes for updates, improvements, and corrections.

- Note that quality of data varies.
- Need criteria for what to include.
- Address concerns and rights regarding proprietary data.
- Integrating data from divergent formats will be technically difficult. Agencies and stakeholders would need to hammer out protocols.

Pilot Project: A Planning watershed cumulative effects analysis

- How would a pilot project work? (need more work on a description)
- Is there consensus do one? (not yet; see suggestions for next steps below)

Possible template or framework:

- Revive NCWAP?
- Use the IWAT proposal
- Use the CWE Workgroup ideas
- IWAT would be an implementation of NCWAP
- Compare to a watershed with less data: no NCWAP
- Do a pilot project in a watershed that brings all the data together, combines timber harvest planning and restoration, and produces on-the-ground results. Obtain funding from the Resources Agency.
- A PTEIR would be an ideal format for incorporating restoration and fuel hazards reduction into timber harvest planning. Lindsay Creek watershed might be a good case; the Mattole might not be ready for a PTEIR.
- A PTEIR could be tiered to a pilot watershed-scale CWE analysis.
- Individual landowners could tier their proposals to a PTEIR for their watershed, resulting in less work for plan preparation.
- Note: Jackson State Demonstration Forest developed CWE analysis methodologies as a demonstration for private landowners, but the forest's management plan has been set aside by litigation.
- CDF has developed a master EIR for VMPs. The agency is trying to raise funds to update it. This might serve the same purpose as a PTEIR; and it could be performed by an individual, group or agency. It would be accomplished much more quickly with private or foundation funds.
- Note: A somewhat parallel process – Sustainable Conservation (a non-profit organization) is leading an effort to create programmatic permits (state and county) for restoration projects within Humboldt Co.

Logistics and Leadership:

- Budget cuts make it difficult for agencies to commit staff. Budgetary woes are too extreme and statutory commitments too great. The Charter Forest concept and the IWAT pilot project were sidelined by budget cutbacks. Possibly the legislature could appropriate more money but that agencies were tapped out.
- Funding/staffing for any big ideas probably needs to come via legislature
- Leadership options: Agency or watershed group(s); BFP as a supporter (not lead).
- Can the BFP "empower" the Mattole Restoration Council to do it?
- BFP could partner with MRC to extend the NCWAP process into a longer term watershed-scale project.

- While IWAT called for inter-agency coordination on CWE analysis, watershed groups should lead the envisioned pilot project. Ask the BOF to bless a pilot to be conducted by MRC, with agency review later. This would match what Sierra Pacific Industries has done.
- What watershed? Needs to have diverse activities going on, especially logging.
- Note: RWQCB ranks proposals higher for funding if there's a watershed management plan and collaboration in place.
- MRC has leveraged $600,000 in grants to implement projects identified in NCWAP, due in part to the Davis Administration's interest in showing the effectiveness of NCWAP.
- How would the lead agency responsibility be handled in a planning watershed?
- Mechanisms to reach more landowners?

Summary of some options:

1) IWAT led by an agency
2) IWAT led by a watershed group
3) PTEIR in a watershed
4) Master EIR for NIPF activities – i.e. statewide vegetation management program. Or define the scale – Buckeye could do it, or we could ask agencies to do this.

Sidebar:

- PTEIRs would help avoid repetitive analysis and duplicative effort; why they aren't used more widely?
- One reason they aren't used more is because a PTEIR is not a living document. A mechanism is needed to keep such documents current.
- How can any (proposed) plan be "kept alive", be adaptive, through time?

Other Potential Projects or Actions

o Advocate for county and private road maintenance.
o Provide input for the Sediment Basin Plan Amendment.
o Go to the legislature to advocate for increasing the NTMP acreage.
o Compile a list, and information about successes and challenges, of all of the active watershed groups.
o Compile an overview of the relevant issues, proposals, sources, references, etc.
o Reinvent the policy perspective – i.e. viewing THPs & NTMPs as *opportunities* rather than threats.
o Look for shorter-term solutions (in addition to long term ones), as some landowners face critical challenges that need to be resolved soon.
o Meet with landowners in their areas – Kneeland, Briceland, etc.

Suggested Next Steps for the Buckeye Forest Project

Specific Topics:

- The Cumulative Effects/Pilot Project proposals are hard to understand – need more work to sell to landowners.
- Database proposal is easier to understand, but: create a one-page description of the process and the benefits, to communicate with landowners.
- Develop a task force to focus on CWE and monitoring issue(s) (landowners, public, academia, others). Solidify solid options with broad support and press legislators/governator/administrators, & media.

Process and Outreach Suggestions:

- Find ways to engage more landowners!
- The Buckeye Conservancy should do more social mixers
- Go to the legislature and/or Resources Agency – at least let them know what we are up to. Send a delegation to CalEPA/Resources Agency to press for change – e.g. pilot project(s). Real people, real land.
- Give a BFP update to the Board of Forestry (May 5 is a joint meeting with the Fish & Game Commission.)
- Identify and work with any other related efforts.
- Go to the other local and statewide (Farm Bureau, Forest Landowners) organizations with the BFP show.
- Continue the education and communication.
- BFP's 2003 presentation to the BOF had a lot of impact, legislative staff have called and asked for copies of the June 2003 BFP Report. BFP should focus the content of previous workshops into its next report.

Suggested Topics for the Next BFP Workshop:

- NTMP acreage expansion
- Focus on needed reform of CWE/Cumulative Impacts process. Administrative and Legislative movers & shakers in attendance. Message: State must weigh in with personnel, funding, and program to aid this change to achieve positive, cooperative results for landowners, public, and the environment.
- A forum on how private landowners, watershed groups, land trusts and communities can center around a legislative agenda on incentives
- Address all three past workshop topics, and next steps for each one – legislative and/or programmatic strategies.
- Focus on how to keep the momentum going (if additional funding or other mechanism for BFP not identified yet.)
- Recruit more landowners and more environmentalists to participate.
- Focus on coalition-building

o Regarding field trip(s) and looking at great stewardship but not problem areas:

- Looking at problems can be helpful, if we can see an example of a problem and a *collaborative* solution.

- Haven't heard issues about *not* seeing the "bad" stuff on NIPF land; there is not a sense of anyone "hiding" something, or putting on a false front.
- It can be valuable to see problems on the ground, however.

Buckeye Forest Project April 7-8, 2005 Workshop Participants

Note: Not all individuals were present both days

First	Last	City	Affiliation
Jim	Able	Eureka	Forester
Mark	Andre	Arcata	Forester
Mike	Atkins	Eureka	Forester
Marty	Berbach	Sacramento	Ca. Dept. of Fish & Game
Greg	Blomstrom	Arcata	Forester
Ruth	Blyther	Eureka	Redwood Community Action Agency
George	Brightman	Bridgeville	Landowner
Jorie	Brundy	Kneeland	Landowner
Pete	Bussman	Blue Lake	Landowner
Maya	Conrad	Bayside	North Coast Land Trust
Lawrence	Dwight	Arcata	Landowner
Ali	Freedlund	Arcata	Mattole Restoration Council
Sally	French	Garberville	Landowner
Jared	Gerstein	Arcata	U.C. Cooperative Extension
Richard	Gienger	Whitethorn	Environmental Interests
Steve	Grantham	Fortuna	Ca. Dept. of Forestry
Dennis	Hall	Sacramento	Ca. Dept. of Forestry
Jim	Hight	Arcata	Writer
Ken	Hoffman	Arcata	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Sharon	Kramer	Fieldbrook	Stillwater Sciences
Chris	Larson	Petrolia	Mattole Restoration Council
Holly	Lundborg	Santa Rosa	N. Coast Reg. Water Quality Control Board
Sungnome	Madrone	Eureka	Redwood Community Action Agency
Leslie	Markham	Santa Rosa	Ca. Dept. of Forestry
Ken	Moore	Eureka	Ca. Dept. of Fish & Game
Don	Morse	Santa Rosa	Ca. Dept. of Forestry
Nancy	Reichard	Arcata	Facilitator
John	Rice	Kneeland	Landowner
Jim	Robbins	Fortuna	Ca. Dept. of Forestry
Johanna	Rodoni	Ferndale	Buckeye Conservancy
John	Rogers	Redway	Inst. For Sustainable Forestry
Mark	Smelser	Eureka	Ca. Geological Survey
Vikki	Snider	Fortuna	Ca. Dept. of Fish & Game

Bob	Stansberry	Honeydew	Landowner
Jim	Timmons	Arcata	Landowner
Yana	Valachovic	Eureka	U.C. Cooperative Extension
Andy	Westfall	Eureka	Landowner
Michael	Wheeler	Eureka	Hum. Co. Community Development Dept.

Acronyms

BFP: Buckeye Forest Project
BMPs: Best Management Practices
BOF: California Board of Forestry
BU: Beneficial Uses
CDF: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CDFG: California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act
CFPR: California Forest Practice Rules
CGS: California Geological Survey
CI: Cumulative Impacts
CWE: Cumulative Watershed Effects
EIR: Environmental Impact Report
GIS: Geographical Information System
ISF: Institute for Sustainable Forestry
IWAT: Interagency Watershed Assessment Team
IWMA: Interim Watershed Management Addendum
LWD: Large woody debris
MRC: Mattole Restoration Council
NDD: Natural Diversity Database
NIPF: Nonindustrial Private Forestland
NTMP: Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan
NOAAF: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Fisheries
NCRWQCB: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
NCRLT: North Coast Regional Land Trust
NCWAP: North Coast Watershed Assessment Program
PTEIR: Programmatic Timber Environmental Impact Report
RCD: Resource Conservation District
RPF: Registered Professional Forester
RCAA/NRS: Redwood Community Action Agency, Natural Resources Services
THP: Timber Harvesting Plan
USFWS: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UCCE: University of California Cooperative Extension
VMP: Vegetation Management Program
WDR: Waste Discharge Requirements
WLPZ: Watercourse and Lake Protection Zone