



BUTTE COUNTY FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE



December 18, 2017 - 4:30 P.M. - potluck treats!! – Gold Nugget Museum 502 Pearson Road, Paradise

ITEM NO.

- 1.00 Call to order – Gold Nugget Museum, 502 Pearson Road, Paradise, CA
 - 2.00 Pledge of allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America
 - 2.01 Roll Call – **Members:** Nick Repanich, Thad Walker, Teri Faulkner, Peggy Moak, Trish Puterbaugh (via phone)
Alternates: Vance Severin, Jim Shary, Bob Gage, Angel Korte, Pete Moak (voting Alt)
Invited Guests: Dave Daley, PhD (President, California Cattlemen’s Association), Tracy Schohr, UC Cooperative Extension, livestock and Natural Resources Advisor), Dr. Kate Wilkin (Forest and Fire Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension), Steve Feher (Exec. Director, Sustainable Community Development Institute), Russell Nickerson,(Acting District Ranger, Almanor Ranger District, Lassen National Forest), Katherine Carpenter (Acting District Ranger, Feather River Ranger District; Plumas National Forest), Laura Page (Congressman LaMalfa); Dave Derby (Cal Fire); Dennis Schmidt (Coordinating Committee, Public Works)
 - 2.02 Self-introduction of Forest Advisory Committee Members, Alternates, Guests, and Public – 5 Min.
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- 3.00 **Consent Agenda**
 - 3.01 Review and approve minutes of 10-23-17 – 5 Min.
 - 4.00 **Agenda**
 - 4.01 Grazing Science Panel Discussion: Dave Daley, PhD, Dr. Kate Wilkin, Tracy Schohr – 45 Min.
 - 4.02 Bio Char - a means to convert forest waste to usable material – Steve Feher – 30 Min.
 - 4.03 Forest Projects Review – Current Quarter: Discussion & required FAC action for USFS projects affecting Butte County residents’ forest management, recreational, environmental, socio-economic interests(Chair)
 - Lassen NF Almanor Ranger District- Russell Nickerson (Acting District Ranger): Report and Q & A on pending, proposed and modified projects, SOPA and Non-SOPA – 15 Min.
 - Plumas NF Feather River Ranger District, Katherine Carpenter (Acting District Ranger): Report and Q & A on pending, proposed and modified projects, SOPA and Non-SOPA – 15 Min.
 - 4.04 Board of Forestry Comment Letter – Proposed Statewide Vegetation Treatment Program – 10 Min.
 - 4.05 Ponderosa Way Board of Supervisors’ Letter – Information Only
 - 4.06 New Business – considerations for upcoming meeting agendas: Next meeting is January 22 Chico, 5:00 PM
 - Whitewater Recreation – January
 - Terra Fuego Prescribed Burns as Forest Management Tool-February
 - South Feather Water & Sewer District - Recreation and Water Projects – January or February
 - Sierra Club Trails Guide – invite them to make a presentation
 - Tree mortality Update - February
 - 4.07 Public Comment (THE COMMITTEE IS PROHIBITED BY STATE LAW FROM TAKING ACTION ON ANY ITEM PRESENTED IF IT IS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA.)

GRAZING PANEL PRESENTERS – December 18, 2017

Dr. Dave Daley

Dr. Dave Daley serves as the Associate Dean and Farm Administrator of the College of Agriculture at CSU, Chico. Dave is an animal scientist who received his M.S. and Ph.D. from Colorado State University in beef cattle systems management. Dave has done extensive work in animal welfare, byproduct feeds utilization, DNA fingerprinting of cattle, electronic identification of livestock and numerous other research interests. Dave lectures nationally and internationally on beef cattle production.

More importantly for this discussion, Dave is a 5th generation Butte County Cattlemen who ranches on public land in Butte and Plumas counties. He is past president of Butte County Cattlemen, an active Butte County Farm Bureau member and the current President of California Cattlemen. In this role, he represents producers in Sacramento and Washington, DC on many resource issues. He is on the National Cattlemen's Board of Directors and works in a variety of leadership roles for the cattle industry. His son (Kyle) is a full time partner in the business and will be the 6th generation grazing cattle in Butte County—and his daughter (Kate) and son (Rob) also intend to return and ranch in the area.

Tracy Schohr

Tracy Schohr is new Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor for Butte, Plumas and Sierra County. In this role, she assists assist ranchers and land managers in addressing livestock production challenges and environmental concerns. Tracy conducts research in the region focused on irrigated pasture, livestock predation and mountain meadows. Tracy is also a managing partner for Schohr Ranch where she is engaged in all facets of the operation. Previously, Tracy worked with the UC Rangelands team on a variety of research and outreach projects, was the coordinator of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition and a policy staff member for the California Cattlemen's Association. She has a Master's Degree in Horticulture and Agronomy from University of California, Davis and has a Bachelor's of Science Degree from California State University, Chico.

Dr. Kate Wilkin

Dr. Kate Wilkin is the new Forest and Fire Adviser with UC Cooperative Extension in Butte, Nevada, Sutter, and Yuba Counties. She recently moved here from Berkeley, CA where she was postdoctoral researcher focused on wildfire emissions and fire-forest-water relations. Her PhD, also at UC Berkeley, focused on the efficacy of fuel treatments in Northern California shrublands to reduce fire hazards and on mixed conifer forest-fire-water and fire-biodiversity relations. Before moving to California, Kate grew up in rural Appalachia and then explored other fire-prone regions of the US as a natural resource manager and prescribed fire burner on public and nonprofit lands. Based on these experiences and more, she knows that we need to use solutions responsibly, both old and new, to solve our forest health crisis. Now more than ever we need collaborative and creative solutions, and she looks forward to being part of the solution.

BIO CHAR PRESENTATION - Stephen I. Feher

Stephen I. Feher is a retired engineer, founder and president of the Sustainable Community Development Institute (SCDI) an international consulting organization based in Paradise, California. Mr. Feher has an MS degree from UCSD (1967) and BS from West Virginia University (1961) in Aerospace Engineering. He has over 55 years of professional engineering experience ranging from aerospace to development and construction of prefabricated housing, and management of large international construction projects. During the past fifteen years, he has served as management consultant to large development projects world-wide. Currently, he is teaching engineering at Butte College part time, and he also serves as a volunteer engineering mentor and technical director of BIOCHAR R&D at Butte College.



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January 9, 2018

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
ATTN: Edith Hannigan, Board Analyst
VTP Draft PEIR Comments
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Dear Ms. Hannigan:

The Butte County Board of Supervisors supports the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP). The Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the VTP adequately analyzed the potential environmental impacts that may occur from undertaking the VTP. Further, the PEIR clearly identified the limitations of the program in regards to environmental impacts and the mitigation measures that will minimize those impacts. For the health and well-being of those facing wildfire risks, we strongly encourage the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Board to accept the PEIR and begin implementation of the VTP.

Butte County has first-hand experience in the dangers posed by wildfires. We experienced four catastrophic wildfires in 2017. Unfortunately, this year's impacts are not unprecedented. We routinely face wildfire devastation along the vast wildland-urban interface (WUI). The Butte County community, primarily through the leadership of the Butte County Fire Safe Council, have taken considerable efforts to reduce wildfire fuels and risk. However, local wildfire fuels reduction programs have been stymied by existing rules and procedures that are outdated, inefficient, and costly. Under current rules, wildland fire prevention programs require conducting a project-by-project Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which results in increased costs and delays without any environmental benefit. A typical project can take up to 3 years to go through the EIR process. In the case of a small 45 acre project, the EIR costs alone could be \$45,000. The cost of conducting an EIR has increased from 2-5% to 10-15% of project costs, and has become a major cost component of wildfire reduction programs.. The increased cost of conducting EIRs comes at the expense of wildfire fuel reduction projects. Having the ability to work under the VTP would have enormous benefit without posing adverse impacts to the environment.

The VTP describes a well-reasoned strategy to reduce wildfire fuel threat on SRA lands on a state wide scale. The program has undergone extensive review and refinement over the past four years. The treatment activities such as manual (hand crew work), mechanical, prescribed herbivory, and targeted ground application of herbicides are clearly described with appropriate limitations. The VTP PEIR

adequately assessed the potential impact from the VTP as it is implemented in the wildland urban interface (WUI), including strategically placed fuel breaks and ecological restoration. The VTP PEIR offers the right balance of a state-wide program, local implementation and environmental safeguards. Given the enormity of statewide wildfire risks, adoption of the VTP is long overdue.

The Butte County Board of Supervisors offers its support for the VTP. The draft VTP PEIR adequately analyzed the potential environmental impacts that may occur from undertaking the VTP. We recommend that the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Board accept the PEIR and implement the VTP.

Sincerely,

Bill Connelly, Chair

cc: Butte County Fire Safe Council
Butte County Forest Advisory Committee
Butte County Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
Website: www.bof.fire.ca.gov
(916) 653-8007



November 7, 2017

Re: Notice of Availability of Recirculated Revised Draft Program Environmental Impact Report Regarding the Proposed Statewide Vegetation Treatment Program

To Interested Parties:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has added significant new information to the previously circulated Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the Board's Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP). The Board prepared this PEIR to provide the public and responsible and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed VTP.

Since the public comment period in 2016, the Board has revised the VTP PEIR to include additional data and significant clarifying information. This revised VTP PEIR was prepared in compliance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. (California Code of Regulations, title 14 (CEQA Guidelines), section 15000, et seq.) The Board is now recirculating the revised VTP PEIR and invites public comments on the adequacy and completeness of the environmental analysis in the document.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Pursuant to CEQA Guideline 15088.5, subdivision (f)(1), commenters are required to submit new comments, exclusively pertaining to this recirculated revised VTP PEIR, during this new public comment/recirculation period. The Board will only respond to comments exclusively pertaining to this recirculated revised VTP PEIR, submitted during this recirculation period (e.g., the Board will not respond to any comments pertaining to prior versions of the PEIR, including comments that were previously submitted during earlier circulations). (CEQA Guideline 15088.5, sub. (f)(1).) Although previous comments submitted during the VTP PEIR's prior recirculation periods will be part of the administrative record, those comments do not require a written response in the final EIR. (*Id.*)

PROGRAM LOCATION: The mission of the Board includes developing policies and programs that implement a fire protection system that protects the people of California. To accomplish this mission, the Board proposes the implementation of the VTP to reduce the wildland fuel threat on State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands and restore economically and environmentally sustainable range landscapes.

The SRA is the land in California where the state has the financial responsibility for the prevention and suppression of wildfires. (Pub. Resources Code, §§ 4102, 4125.) The SRA landscape consists of approximately 31 million acres across California that include lands covered wholly or in part by forests or are principally used for range or forage purposes. (Pub. Resources Code, § 4126.) The VTP provides a process for the implementation of specific vegetation treatment activities at appropriate locations and scales in the SRA to meet the VTP's objectives for fire prevention, fire protection, and/or ecological restoration. Proposed VTP subsequent activities are limited to approximately 22 million acres in the SRA. Vegetation treatment activities will be implemented primarily on privately owned land within the SRA, and only on a voluntary basis.

It is anticipated that subsequent activities under the proposed VTP will take place on approximately 60,000 acres per year, less than 2% of the SRA landscape. Because this program depends on willing landowners, available funding, and available treatment days, it is expected that subsequent activities will take place on fewer than 60,000 acres and that number each year will vary. Those limiting factors also make it impossible to determine in advance exactly where in the state subsequent activities will take place. However, this PEIR utilizes historical

The Board's mission is to lead California in developing policies and programs that serve the public interest in environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable management of forest and rangelands, and a fire protection system that protects and serves the people of the state.

vegetation treatment data and other attributes to estimate subsequent activity acres implemented by bioregion (see Table 1). This PEIR analyzes the potential environmental impacts that may occur from undertaking the VTP at this scale, and identifies project level limitations and mitigation measures that will minimize any impacts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: A combination of manmade and natural factors has led to a situation where wildfire acreage, fire suppression cost, and losses of residential structures have increased dramatically in the past three decades. A problem of this magnitude goes beyond jurisdictional boundaries and requires a statewide strategy. An overarching goal of vegetation treatments is to alter fire behavior and reduce harmful effects of wildfire. However, California displays astonishing diversity in plant, animal, and social systems, and without proper design, the statewide planning and implementation of vegetation treatments can potentially come with significant costs. To this end, the VTP PEIR provides a framework for prioritizing, planning, implementing, and monitoring fuel treatments across the SRA.

To attain the objectives of the VTP at a statewide scale, the VTP PEIR organizes subsequent activities into three general types:

- Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI): treatments will be focused in WUI-designated areas, and generally consist of fuel reduction to prevent the spread of fire between wildlands and structures, or vice versa.
- Fuel Breaks: strategically placed vegetation treatments that actively support fire control activities.
- Ecological Restoration: projects will generally occur outside the WUI in areas that have departed from the natural fire regime as a result of fire exclusion. Ecological restoration treatments will focus on restoring ecosystem resiliency by moderating uncharacteristic wildland fuel conditions to reflect historic vegetative composition and structure, including cultural landscapes.

Possible treatment activities under the VTP include prescribed fire, manual activities (i.e., hand crew work), mechanical activities, prescribed herbivory (targeted beneficial grazing), and targeted ground application of herbicides. These activities will be used singularly or in combination depending upon the treatment type (i.e., WUI, fuel break, or ecological restoration) and environmental considerations.

Similar projects are currently undertaken by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) as part of the existing Vegetation Management Program (VMP), the Fire Prevention Program, and the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP). Each of these statewide programs are ongoing and implemented through a separate CEQA process. The VTP is part of this comprehensive fire prevention strategy from the Board that is implemented by CAL FIRE. This program intends to lower the risk of damaging wildfires on nonfederal lands by managing vegetation to modify and/or reduce hazardous fuels. The key objectives of this program are to prevent loss of lives and property, reduce fire suppression costs, and protect natural resources from damaging wildfire through the use of appropriate vegetation treatments. It is important to acknowledge that the VTP is not meant to resolve all hazardous fuel conditions, but rather provide a tool to address them on a voluntary basis for all stakeholders within and associated with the SRA.

This PEIR contains both programmatic and project-level analysis and would govern decision making under the VTP, including when CAL FIRE decides whether to approve subsequent activities as proposed or with specific mitigation measures. This PEIR provides Standard Project Requirements (SPRs) and mitigation measures using the most current technology and scientific information to avoid significant environmental impacts. The PEIR provides CAL FIRE with a consistent implementation process, including public participation, to develop

Table 1. Approximate annual acres treated in each bioregion. See Chapter 2.

Bioregion	Approximate Annual Acreage Treated
Bay Area/Delta	6,276
Central Coast	7,159
Colorado Desert	1,003
Klamath/North Coast	14,685
Modoc	7,265
Mojave	2,630
Sacramento Valley	2,328
San Joaquin Valley	1,348
Sierra Nevada	12,405
South Coast	4,902
Total:	60,000

subsequent activities that best meet the objectives of the VTP while avoiding significant environmental impacts and ensures CEQA compliance.

The below Table 2 summarizes the environmental impacts from the proposed VTP. With the application of SPRs and mitigation measures, the proposed VTP demonstrates no significant environmental impacts. The environmental analysis is in Chapter 4 and the cumulative effects analysis is in Chapter 5.

Table 2. Impact Summary Analysis and Reference Locations. See Chapter 4.

Resource of Concern	Significant and Unavoidable	Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures	Less Than Significant	Significance & Threshold Criteria	Mitigation
Aesthetics and Visual Resources			X	4.2.2.1	NM*
Air Quality		X		4.3.2.1	4.3.3
Archeological, Cultural & Historic Resources		X		4.4.2.1	4.4.3
Biological Resources		X		4.5.2.1	4.5.3
Climate Change/Greenhouse Gas		X		4.6.2.1	4.6.3
Geology, Hydrology, Minerals and Soils		X		4.7.2.1	4.7.3 5.5.6
Hazardous Material, Public Health and Safety		X		4.8.2.1	4.8.3
Noise		X		4.9.2.1	4.9.3
Population, Employment, Housing, & Socio-Economic Well-Being			X	4.10.2.1	NM*
Recreation			X	4.11.2.1	NM*
Transportation and Traffic		X		4.12.2.1	4.12.3
Utilities and Energy			X	4.13.2.1	NM*
Water Quality		X		4.14.2.1	4.14.3

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The revised VTP PEIR is available for download from the Board’s website: [http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov/board_committees/resource_protection_committee/current_projects/vegetation_treatment_program_environmental_impact_report_\(vtpeir\)/](http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov/board_committees/resource_protection_committee/current_projects/vegetation_treatment_program_environmental_impact_report_(vtpeir)/)

Hard copies of the revised VTP PEIR can be reviewed at the Board’s office in Sacramento (address below). To arrange to view documents at Board offices during business hours, call (916) 862-0120. The document can also be reviewed at libraries throughout the state; for a full list of locations, refer to the VTP website. CDs or printed copies are available at cost on request by phoning (916) 862-0120 or emailing VegetationTreatment@bof.ca.gov. Copies will also be available for review only at any regularly scheduled Board meeting where the VTP PEIR is on the noticed agenda.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The revised VTP PEIR is available for a 60-day public review and comment period, which begins November 13, 2017 and ends at 5pm on January 12, 2018. **Please send comments on the PEIR at the earliest possible date, but postmarked no later than 5pm on January 12, 2018 in order for your comments to be considered.**

Written comments are preferred via email and may be submitted to VegetationTreatment@bof.ca.gov. Emailed comments should include your name, address, and daytime telephone number so a representative of the Board can contact you if clarifications regarding your comments are required.

Comments may also be mailed to the following address:

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
ATTN: Edith Hannigan, Board Analyst
VTP Draft PEIR Comments
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official public record. A Final VTP PEIR will be prepared which will only include responses to comments received during this public review period for this revised VTP PEIR.

Sincerely,



Matt Dias
Executive Officer, Board of Forestry & Fire Protection

Locations where the recirculated revised VTP PEIR can be reviewed:

Online:

http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov/board_committees/resource_protection_committee/current_projects/vegetation_treatment_program_environmental_impact_report_vtpeir/

California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, 1416 9th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816 (by appointment during normal business hours; please call (916) 862-0120 in advance)

Libraries throughout the state; see VTP PEIR website for a list of locations

http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov/board_committees/resource_protection_committee/current_projects/vegetation_treatment_program_environmental_impact_report_vtpeir/



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Fourth District

DOUG TEETER
Fifth District

December 12, 2017

Mr. Dave Hays
Lassen National Forest Supervisor
2550 Riverside Drive
Susanville, CA 96130

RE: Letter of Support for Efforts to Improve and Maintain Ponderosa Way

Dear Mr. Hays;

Butte County is aware of the efforts currently underway to perform a road assessment and sediment reduction analysis for sections of Ponderosa Way, north of Cohasset, in Tehama County. Butte County is supportive of any and all efforts to improve the condition of Ponderosa Way and implement a long term maintenance strategy for the roadway.

As you know, Ponderosa Way north out of Cohasset provides access to several important recreational areas (Lassen National Forest, Ishi Wilderness and the Tehama Wildlife Area) along with providing for a potential development of a secondary means of ingress and egress to the community of Cohasset. A secondary means of ingress and egress is critical in these times of increasing size and intensity of wildland fires affecting communities all over California.

Butte County appreciates any efforts that the Lassen National Forest can make to work with the Tehama County Resource Conservation District to improve access into this area, and to develop a long-term maintenance plan for these roadways.

Respectfully,

Bill Connelly
Chairman, Butte County Board of Supervisors



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Fourth District

DOUG TEETER
Fifth District

December 12, 2017

Mr. Rob Rianda, Project Manager
Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
2 Sutter Street, Suite D, Red Bluff, CA 96080

RE: Letter of Support for Efforts to Improve and Maintain Ponderosa Way

Dear Mr. Rianda;

Butte County is aware of the efforts currently underway to perform a road assessment and sediment reduction analysis for sections of Ponderosa Way, north of Cohasset, in Tehama County. Butte County is supportive of any and all efforts to improve the condition of Ponderosa Way and implement a long term maintenance strategy for the roadway.

As you know, Ponderosa Way north out of Cohasset provides access to several important recreational areas (Lassen National Forest, Ishi Wilderness and the Tehama Wildlife Area) along with providing for a potential development of a secondary means of ingress and egress to the community of Cohasset. A secondary means of ingress and egress is critical in these times of increasing size and intensity of wildland fires affecting communities all over California.

Thank you for demonstrating leadership by taking on this project. Please know that Butte County supports any and all efforts to construct improvements and to develop a long term maintenance plan for Ponderosa Way, north out of Cohasset.

Respectfully,

Bill Connelly
Chairman, Butte County Board of Supervisors