

Butte County Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee

August 16, 2017 from 4:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Auditor-Treasurer Conference Room

25 County Center Drive, Suite 125, Oroville CA

Minutes

1) Self-Introductions (committee members and public) – Members present: Dennis Schmidt, Paul Gosselin, Peggy Moak.

2) Discussion of FAC proposed support letter for CDFW Table Mountain Trail Project.

MOTION: Approve issuance of the letter from the Coordinating Committee. (M: Gosselin, 2nd Schmidt, Approved 3-0)

3) Comment letters requested by Butte County Fire Safe Council on the Magalia Forest Management Plan.

MOTION: Approve both letters and incorporate FAC comments (M: Gosselin, 2nd Schmidt, Approved 3-0)

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 PM.



BUTTE COUNTY FEDERAL/STATE LAND-USE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965

August 16, 2017

Wildlife Conservation Board
Attention: Public Access Grant Proposal
1416 9th Street, Suite 1266
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Wildlife Conservation Board:

The Butte County Federal/State Land-Use Coordinating Committee (Committee) supports the North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve Trail Project ("Trail Project"), proposed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The Committee understands that this project will provide improved public access to the North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve (NTMER), while also reducing ecological damage and human safety concerns. This project falls within guidelines established in Butte County's General Plan 2030. Butte County's General Plan 2030 addresses Butte County's commitment to protection, enhancement, utilization and management of natural resources; the importance of agricultural enterprises, and the need for parks and recreation opportunities.

The Committee based its support for the project on the recommendation from the Butte County Forest Advisory Committee (FAC). The Butte County Board of Supervisors established the FAC to facilitate public involvement and assist the County in its quest to meet these guiding principles of the Butte General Plan 2030 as it pertains to use of public lands. The FAC serves to gather information and opinions from interested parties, to present pertinent recommendations to the Butte County Board of Supervisors through the Committee, and to serve as a resource in Coordination efforts.

We understand that 1.2 miles of trail will be developed, with various designs being used to best preserve the existing natural resources. This is important as the NTMER is known for the wide array of native flowering forbs and grasses, including many rare and endangered and threatened species. The NTMER is also home to various wildlife species, including songbirds, raptors, lizards, and newts, as well as mammals such as foxes, bobcats, and deer. The Committee and FAC based its support for the Trail Project with the assumption that the planned property acquisition is also approved. We request another opportunity to comment if the plan must be altered due to lack of the designated parcel acquisition.

Butte County is in need of more trails on public lands, especially in the foothills areas of the county. The NTMERTP is consistent with Butte County's General Plan 2030, and will promote further nature recreation, which is important to Butte County. Surveys have shown that as many as 28,000 to 30,000 people visit this site annually, so having an established and accessible trail is important. The Committee is willing to support and collaborate with the CDFW on the Trail Project.

In summary, the Butte County Federal-State Land Use Coordinating Committee supports the North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve Trail Project, and asks for your favorable consideration of the CDFW grant application. Approval of this project will greatly improve access, reduce the impact on the ecological environment, and increase safety for visitors.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dennis Schmidt
Butte County Federal/State Land Use Committee

cc: Butte County Forest Advisory Committee
Butte County Board of Supervisors
Bruce Forman, CA Fish & Wildlife



BUTTE COUNTY FEDERAL/STATE LAND USE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**7 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE
OROVILLE, CA 95965**

August 25, 2017

Calli-Jane De Anda, Executive Director
Butte County Fire Safe Council
5619 Black Olive Drive
Paradise, CA 95969

Subject: **Letter of Support in Response to Magalia Forest Health Plan**

Dear Ms. DeAnda:

The Butte County Federal State Land Use Coordinating Committee (“Coordinating Committee”) is writing in support of the Magalia Forest Health Plan. The County fully supports fuels reduction projects in and around Butte County communities vulnerable to wildfire, and this project is deemed essential to the welfare of the Magalia and Paradise Pines communities. The project falls within the guidelines established in the Butte Unit Strategic Fire Plan, generally known as the CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan, developed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Butte, Cal-Fire, Butte County Fire and the Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC).

The Magalia Forest Health Plan (“Plan”) has been presented to the Forest Advisory Committee and demonstrates to our full satisfaction that this project is imperative to the safety and welfare of the community, and an excellent example of collaborative planning and stakeholder readiness. We commend the Butte County Fire Safe Council for their outreach efforts to local organizations, government agencies and community members in order to undertake the landscape level fuels reduction planning. We understand that the project is planned for implementation over the next decade, and will involve collaboration with the California Conservation Corps, CalFire, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and private property owners in the designated areas identified as being overstocked with trees and brush, experiencing tree mortality and being hazardous to the public due to dead and dying trees or due to the potential for crowning behavior in the event of a wildfire.

The Coordinating Committee has reviewed and supports the Silvicultural Recommendations, which include provisions for leaving a number of young trees to regenerate the overstory once mature trees start dying. The plan includes thinner fuels with sharply reduced ladder fuels, which would provide a defensible fire protection zone along the roads, greater visibility through the forest, and enhanced safety near infrastructure, with an emphasis on treating the most critical areas early in the implementation of the plan. This project will complement fuels reduction projects that have already been completed by the BCFSC, private lumber companies and community members, and demonstrates the commitment of the BCFSC to help protect the

communities of Magalia and Paradise Pines from the effects of devastating wildfires. We agree that effective partnership amongst stakeholders is necessary and critical to help protect communities from wildfires.

It is requested that implementation of the final Proposed Action include provisions that are viable alternatives to biomass removal, due to short supply of biomass plants and the cost of delivery, such as: piling timber/brush in small piles that may be burned safely and allowing local woodcutters to have access to firewood piles under specified times and conditions. We would also like to see additional outreach for use of wood chips elsewhere in the area, i.e. erosion control, community members' personal use, local garden supply firms, etc.

We understand the pros and cons of vegetation prescribed burning and underburning and the potential for damaging root systems of trees, resulting in weakened trees and potential tree die off and blow downs in future years. This is especially pertinent since the project area has not burned in decades, and the duff on the ground is very thick and tends to burn more hotly. Another concern is the likelihood of losing control of a prescribed burn, so we believe small acreage fires after rains and in calm conditions are most prudent if prescribed burns are implemented. The County supports ongoing maintenance of fuels reduction projects, and believes that the assessment surrounding the 70% canopy recommendation to reduce the frequency of maintenance is likely a cost effective approach to reducing the re-growth of brush.

The Coordinating Committee strongly supports implementation of this Project, and other similar projects throughout the wildland urban interface zones, and agrees that action needs to be taken sooner rather than later; that "the next one to three decades are a critical period in mixed-use conifer forest management and conservation in the Sierra Nevada" (USDA Forest Service, 2012). We request periodic progress updates made available to the public, so that stakeholders and other interested parties continue to be informed and involved in this important fuels reduction project.

In summary, we stand united with the citizens of the Magalia/Paradise Pines, the Butte County Fire Safe Council, Cal-Fire and other stakeholders in support of thinning projects to create WUI safety zones that are critical for the welfare of the community and in the best interest of the forest. Accordingly, we urge timely approval and effective implementation of the Magalia Forest Health Plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Dennis Schmidt,
Butte County Federal/State Land Use Committee



BUTTE COUNTY FEDERAL/STATE LAND USE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

**7 COUNTY CENTER DRIVE
OROVILLE, CA 95965**

August 25, 2017

Pete Calarco, Assistant Director
Butte County Development Services, Planning Division
7 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965

Subject: Letter of Support in Response to CEQA-17-0004: Magalia Forest Health Project

The Butte County Federal State Land Use Coordinating Committee (“Committee”) is writing in support of the Magalia Forest Health Project, for which the above referenced CEQA document has been prepared. The Committee fully supports fuels reduction projects in and around Butte County communities vulnerable to wildfire, and this project is deemed essential to the welfare of the Magalia and Paradise Pines communities. The project falls within the guidelines established in the Butte Unit Strategic Fire Plan, generally known as the CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan, developed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Butte, Cal-Fire, Butte County Fire and the Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC).

The Magalia Forest Health Plan (“Plan”) and the CEQA document have been presented to the Forest Advisory and Coordinating Committees and demonstrates to our full satisfaction that this project is imperative to the safety and welfare of the community, and an excellent example of collaborative planning and stakeholder readiness, and a conscientious approach to necessary mitigation measures to ensure protection of resources and the environment.

The Coordinating Committee has reviewed the CEQA document and finds that the mitigation measures outlined to protect air quality, water quality, fish and wildlife, plants and other biological resources, cultural resources, and persons or resources exposed to potential hazards are satisfactory.

In summary, the Federal/State Land Use Coordinating Committee supports the Mitigated Negative Declaration proposed by Development Services Planning Division. Accordingly, we urge timely approval to facilitate effective implementation of the Magalia Forest Health Plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Dennis Schmidt,
Butte County Federal/State Land Use Committee

Cc: Butte County Fire Safe Council
Butte County Forest Advisory Committee