

Tehipite National Forest Chair March 2016 Report
Submitted by Trudy Tucker, National Forest Chair, Tehipite Chapter

Sierra Forest Planning Coalition Call

1. The probable new date for the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the three early adopter forests, the Sierra, Sequoia, and Inyo National Forests, looks to be June. This delay is a good thing because Forest Service leadership is reviewing the document because of information/comments contained in the Species of Conservation and Concern (SCC) comments the Sierra Forest Planning Coalition submitted last month. Al Olsen (Forest Service Region 5 leader of Forest Plan Revision) said that our SCC letter is having them go back/through to “clean up” text to reflect rationale for some species. We signed on to this document—so we can count it as a success along this very long process!

2. Northwest Forest Planning update: FS Regions 5 & 6 (northern California forests and southern Oregon forests) have begun meeting, are developing work groups, and are planning to begin the science synthesis process which will be coordinated by NW Research Stations (HQ in Portland, OR). The Sierra Forest Planning Coalition continues to work with the NW Coalition, advocating they following regional framework, include NW Forest guidelines; and the need to have a modern communication plan that includes the public. One issue: current Admin might want to ‘punt’ the start date to next administration.

Over-Snow Vehicle Use Designation

[This is shared as an example to be aware for the Sierra and Sequoia NFs.]

Stanislaus NF DEIS alternatives have been publicly shared with a proposed action to open up areas that are legally designated as non-motorized areas to OSV use. The Forest hasn’t been enforcing OSV use in these non-motorized areas that are listed in their current Forest Plan as not open to OSV use. This is now a problem because riders have been riding in these non-motorized areas so long without Agency enforcement, that they have created an historical use. OSV riders are demanding these areas be included in any new OSV designations. Public and partners are encouraging Stanislaus to wait until new Forest Plan Revision is begun next year to incorporate OSV, but the Forest doesn’t want to as it might be “easier” to do OSV now with current use/management. The Forest might just rubber stamp current OSV use to avoid looking at minimizing OSV use if pressured to review/admit the lack of enforcement in areas closed to OSV use all these years.

Adaptive Management Tidbit

A short report was shared from the Southern Fisher Working Group meeting concerning Adaptive Management* – a short sharing some Fisher conservation strategies. One outcome concerns the resiliency management guidelines for white pine and how to make a viable Fisher habitat: information presented on those areas that burned at medium to high severity recovered – Fisher habitat is able to recover; not so much with insect and disease effects now will be looking at. They also looked at other models, e.g. marijuana grow sites and their affects on Fisher habitat. Scientists are using “scat dogs” to find evidence of Fishers, and found fisher scat in burned areas. Our group will be receiving a copy of the science abstract and report - looking at the short term impacts of fire and fuels reduction type of logging that is not worth the Fisher habitat for long term fire impacts.

*One of these Adaptive Management areas concerned with Fisher habitat is in the Sierra National Forest in the Fish Camp area, just south of the south entrance to Yosemite. The other is in the Auburn area near Sacramento.

A THANK YOU "shout out" to a special volunteers, partners...

Many kudos to the Sierra Forest Planning Coalition leaders and partners for the good work writing, reviewing, supporting the SCC documents submitted to the USDA Forest Service for the Forest Plan Revision process for the Sierra, Sequoia and Inyo National Forests! This confirms how important these active partnerships are in moving forward with management and protection of our National Forests. These well-researched and sited comments are stronger when so many known, long-standing partners sign on, giving more weight to the comments.