**ACCG Planning Work Group Field Meeting – May 28, 2014 0900 to 1600 hours**

**Calaveras District Office and Hemlock**

**Attendees:** C Koos Breazeal, AFSC; Reuben Childress, FC; Pat McGreevy, Calaveras Rec; Robert Smith, Smith Grinding; Jim Dambacher, Dambacher Construction; and the following USFS employees: Derrick Bowden, Zac Croyle, Karl Graves, Rebecca Wong, Jose Hernandez, Bryan Boatman, Jeffery Hilson, Ronnie Hawkins, Justin Lamplur, Autumn Olsen, Dawn Conttusp, [name unreadable], Kevin Zeman, Daniel Palmer, Belinda Lo, Katie Wilkinson, Teresa McClung, Kendal Young.

[Remind Becky Estes – Red Fir GTR-type document]

1. **Stop 1 - Meadow off 6N97Y**. After a short office briefing by K Young, the group reconvened at the first meadow site. This is part of the Lower Blue grazing allotment. Fen structures and functions discussed. A fen is a peat-forming wetland. The meadow showed heavy use by OHV and livestock.

Recent mitigation measures include large boulders and signage placed along the road and meadow edge to prevent vehicular access. Across the forest road is a dispersed campsite which allows vehicles to park too far off the road. Additional concerns: a remnant aspen stand adjacent to the dispersed camping area; unauthorized motorized vehicle trails going upslope from the dispersed camping area; evidence of target shooting. Plantation area adjacent to dispersed camping area.

Sensitive aquatic lichen located in stream below meadow; moonwort (ventricium xxx); arch site; head cuts in meadow.

**Reference publications:** Fen Functions, R5-TP-028, 4/2009; Guide to Sensitive Invasive Plants for Rim Fire, 2014 (limited publication)

**Potential Actions discussed:**

* Use the current Stanislaus National Forest Plan as guiding document
* Create an off-meadow cattle watering facility
* Reduce number of conifers on the meadow edge (pre-commercial thin?) Soil samples may indicate the boundary of meadow-type soils for guidance.
* Road work
* Arch site – action/no action
* Upper aspen stand – relocate road, redefine campsite to manage access; remove trees near aspens
* Close vehicular access beyond 1-car-length and allow dispersed walk-in camping only
* Restoration needed near newly installed boulders
* Consider mastication of plantation
* Add more rock barriers
* Address head cuts in meadow
* Increase water to meadow from other side of road to improve conditions for aquatic lichen (sp?) and botrycium (sp?)
* (P McGreevy) Develop the area where we parked for camping, add educational and interpretative signs. He and Jeff Hilson have a signage and kiosk plan for the 7N09 circle – similar.
* Look at entire landscape; allow more access elsewhere and reduce access here
* (J Hilson) Grant available for kiosk, picnic table(s); display maps with designated travel routes; position fire ring where camping is desired.

1. **Stop 2 – Meadow at Middle Gulch.** This area reflects heavy dispersed recreation stressors such as heavy OHV use, dispersed camping, and heavy cattle use of the meadow. Camping is occurring at the meadow despite an improved campsite approximately 100 yards away. This meadow has fen and fen-like structures that have been impacted by grazing and recreation. Corn lilies give evidence of the meadow drying up. Soils are compacted. There is evidence of recent OHV use going across the stream and up the steep slope adjacent to the meadow.

This is a fish-bearing stream with a self-sustaining population, likely nonnative trout. Streams in this area have not been planted since mid-1980s due to whirling disease.

Some ips evidence in conifers near meadow.

Kevin Zeman reminds us to “let the forest tell you its story.”

**Potential Actions discussed:**

* Use the current Stanislaus National Forest Plan as guiding document
* Create offsite watering structure for cattle
* Install boulders or other barriers to reduce access to meadow
* Re-route roadway further away from meadow; fill in current roadway and bring level with adjacent ground
* Timber harvest is planned on the ridge above, staying away from riparian zone; use GTR 220 principles
* Rip compacted soil

1. **Stop 3 – Hay Gulch Meadow**. This meadow has many large willow clumps and some fen or fen-like structures. There is a possibly manmade diversion ditch along the slope above the natural stream. Less OHV use evident at this site, but some present. Heavy cattle use evident along slope; willows prevent some use. There is some hillside hydrologic disturbance due to road adjacency. This meadow is quite wet, and it should recover more quickly from cattle use. Comparison of 1944 aerial photos shows little change in the past 70 years.

**Potential Actions discussed:**

* Use downed logs to divert cattle; consider salt block placements
* Fill in ditch above
* Adjacent ridge – possible fuel break/OHV area

1. **Stop 4** – unable to locate/rejoin caravan.
2. Additional Post Meeting Comments, P McGreevy.

* The structure and function of the fens in the Middle Gulch Meadow were discussed with focus on their special capacity to retain water.  While the technology to build fens does not exist, the use of hydrophilic soils as infill when landscaping meadows might be explored.  If hydrophilic soil types exist, they might be used when restoring:
* The OHV ruts at the dispersed camp at the meadow on 6N97Y.
* Road 7N69 that bisects ‘Middle Gulch Meadow’.