STF 5-YEAR INTEGRATED PROGRAM OF WORK PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

April 2019

Objective: Create a systematic map-based process that is consistent for the identification and prioritization of project areas for the Stanislaus National Forest (STF) 5 – Year Integrated Program of Work (POW).

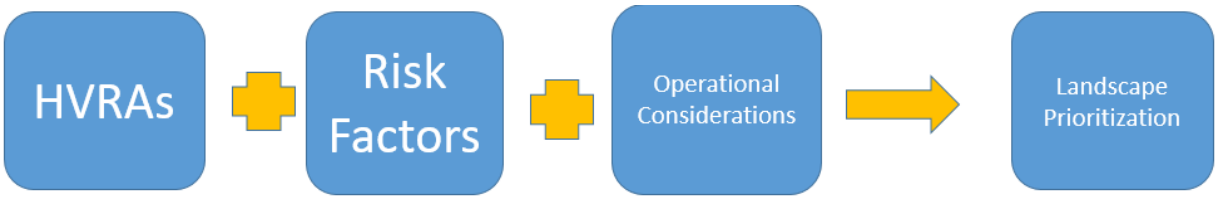
Why do we need this?

- Develop POW landscape level project areas
- Develop a POW that reduces risk of large, high severity wildfires while focusing on HVRAs and increasing ecosystem resiliency to future natural events including fire, drought, and insect induced mortality
- Improve the health and vigor of timber stands
- Create sustainable ecosystems that provide for future benefits to the public and the environment, e.g. wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and clean water.

Priority project list would be reviewed on a yearly interval unless significant events occurred that would warrant the reassessment of datasets to determine if a prioritization of project areas was necessary. This process will also be reviewed when new/updated datasets become available.

Process Summary:

The process is based on the identification of highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs), risks to those values, and operational considerations. The following graphic illustration gives an overview of the process:



Spatial datasets that represent the HVRAs, risk factors, and operational considerations are then used to analyze the landscape. Areas are identified as color- coded values dependent on the dataset, to show higher risks, locations, and higher concentrations. This data is then "layered" to create a composite dataset and map. Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) are then used to identify locations with similar needs to treat. PODs are defined as spatial summary units with potential fire operational delineations that are based on topographical features, roads, barren areas, and/or major fuel changes that are derived from subwatersheds (HUC6). The areas with "similar needs to treat" that were identified using PODs are then grouped based on project areas of 30,000 - 40,000 acres and proximity to each other.

April 2019

Spatial Datasets

The process is driven by GIS-ready, forest-wide (or HUC6-wide) datasets. To determine spatial datasets, broad scale parameters were initially identified to address high value concern and primary risk or environmental-process drivers, related to Forest and Community Values. Specific direction was then developed for each of the parameters to assess how each dataset would be analyzed in a spatial context. See next page for spatial datasets used.

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Table 1

Type	Parameter	Direction	Priorities/HVRAs	Datasets	
HVRAs	Protection Considerations	Identify areas of protection	**Human Habitation** (2010 Census data)	Census Data	High Density
					Moderate Density
					Low Density
					No Human Habitation
	Wildlife Habitat	Identify suitable habitat for protected species in need of restoration and/or in need of protection.	**Wildlife (Protected Activity Center - PACS)**	Locations and acres: CA Spotted Owl, Northern Goshawk, Great Gray Owl	
	Recreational Infrastructure, Administrative Sites, and Major Infrastructure	Identify locations of recreational and major infrastructure and administrative sites.	**Recreational and Major Infrastructure** (water, power, communications) **and Administrative Sites**	Location of infrastructure and Administrative sites buffered of 150 feet (tree fall length) to determine acreage of resultant polygon	
Risk Factors	Natural Event Processes	Identify PODs that are most vulnerable to disturbance	**Fire Risk** - Burn probability of wildfire with greater than 6 foot Flame Lengths	Burn probability (FSim Modeling)	
			Hydrologic Systems, or Erosion Hazard Rating Model	Erosion Hazard Rating Model (by STF staff)	
			Insect and Disease	NIDRM – currently being reviewed	
Operational Considerations	Forest Management Viability	Identify areas where restoration work is economically viable in the PODs	**Operational Timber,** slope less than 50%, DBH 11 in. or greater within 2,000 feet of road	STRATA timber data, that is Forest-wide	
			Tree Mortality (ADS cumulative datasets combined) 2014 – 2017	Aerial Detection Survey (ADS) cumulative datasets combined 2014 – 2017	
	Shared Stewardship	Identify areas of non – STF ownership lands and Cooperator Treatments	**Non-STF Ownership Lands** Within STF Administrative Boundary	Number of ownership acres	
			Cooperator Treatments (both wildland fire and mechanical) within the last 10 years	Number of treatment acres	
	STF Treatments	Identify areas of treatment acres completed and areas of treatment acres not implemented	**Treatment** (both wildland fire and mechanical) **acres** within the last 10 years	Number of treatment acres	
			NEPA Treatment Acres Not Implemented (Decision signed)	Number of NEPA treatment acres not implemented	

April 2019

Frequently Asked Questions:

Why were only certain spatial data used for the prioritization process?

- Spatial datasets that were used for the prioritization process represent those HVRAs, risk factors, and operational considerations that are widespread (e.g., not small populations of rare plants) and are most influential across the landscape. Those spatial datasets that were considered, but not utilized for the prioritization process would be analyzed at the project level.

Why are PODs being used as spatial summary units instead of subwatersheds (HUC-6)?

- Most PODs are similar to subwatersheds in size and represent the same area on the ground. The subwatersheds were reviewed and some were further divided into smaller sections to delineate potential fire operational delineations where needed, and to meet incident-derived actions and planning. PODs represent areas that would allow for the potential easier delineations of prescribed burn units, incident planning areas, potential containment areas during wildland fires, and potential breakpoints in ownership and project areas.

Will additional values be considered if several delineated project areas are similar in priority?

- Yes, additional values and the risk to those values may be considered as deemed necessary to further prioritize those areas. However, there is a general statistical limit to which criteria added still modify the outcome (approximately 15 criteria maximum).

April 2019

Presentation Discussion Questions:

- After viewing the presentation, do you have any general comments regarding the STF 5-Year Integrated POW Prioritization Process?

- Should the HVRAs, risk factors, and operational considerations be utilized based on relative importance? If yes, then in your estimation, how should they be considered (please list)?

- Should the subwatersheds (HUC6) be used to delineate project instead of the PODs? Please explain.

- Are we missing any criteria? Should the missing criteria be added to or replace existing datasets?