

## DRAFT MEETING MINUTES—July 15, 2023

### Jackson Demonstration State Forest – Recreation Task Force Saturday July 15, 2023; 0930 - 1600 Meeting Location: Woodlands CALFIRE Station, Mendocino

Task Force Members in attendance: Chris Ruddick, Stacy Bradley, and Sarah Bradley

CALFIRE Staff in attendance: JDSF Recreation & Roads Program Manager Erik Wahl, Unit Chief Luke Kendall, Battalion Chief Nate Deurloo, Station Captain, Ryan Blume, Forestry Assistant II Josh Theofanides, and JDSF Biologist Robert Douglas

Public Members in attendance (*per sign in sheet*): Phil Wockin, Roo Harris, Arky Cianculti, Francesca Cianculti, Elias Steinbuck, Dan Sweet, Lianne Voelm, Aram Canin. Chet Jamgockian, Jamie Armstrong, Will Powers, Linda Yowell, Kirby Yowell, Christina Pallmann, David Schleef, Teresa Kendall, David Gurney Robert Horvat, Skip Taube, Arow Yasskin, and Kyle Farmer (UCCE)

*Note: These minutes are not a “word for word” transcript of the meeting, though all points and speakers are covered.*

Meeting Starts: 0945

Forester 1 Erik Wahl Introduction:

- Concerns about Trail abandonment
- Land Use Allocation
- Complexity of Recreation
- Site Visits

Sarah Bradley makes comments on why meeting was being held today rather than another day to allow for more task members to be present. Expressed concerns about transparency and optics of not holding meeting when more members could be present. Suggest that this change in future meetings. Erik Wahl states decision to conduct meeting on Saturday based on previous public input to conduct meetings on weekends to increase public participation.

#### Task Member Action Item 1

Minutes from May 22, 2023, RTF Meeting. Motion to approve by Erik Wahl.

Yes: N/A

No: N/A

Other: Stacy Bradley suggests several proposed changes in Page 3 regarding task force members do not necessary represent a specific group but have more knowledge of a specific use type compared to other groups. Needs revision.

Expanding task force membership was discussed. Previously stating Chris and Stacy agreed that more members were needed but minutes didn't include request for all members to be present for voting and to “extend that conversation” to a later date. Erik Wahl stated revisions will be made and addressed at next meeting.

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Erik Wahl makes motion for approval for previous meeting minutes.

Stacy Bradley suggests several proposed changes.

- Changes in wording on Page 3 regarding that task force members don't necessary represent a specific group but have more knowledge of a specific use type compared to other groups. "Didn't care for the wording".
- Changes where expansion of Task Force Membership was discussed. Previously stating Chris and Stacy agreed that more members were needed but minutes didn't include their request for all members to be present for voting and to "extend that conversation" to a later date.

Erik Wahl comments that revision will be made and addressed at the next meeting.

**Revise meeting minutes to reflect changes is May 22<sup>nd</sup> RTF meeting suggested by Stacey Bradley and vote on approving minutes at next RTF meeting**

### Operational

Kyle Farmer discusses reasons for meeting and asks for reasons on public attendance.

- Robin- wants to know more about blue gum trail closure.
- Kirby Yowell- Advocate for recreation and trail use
- Jamie Armstrong- Wants better collaboration from CALFIRE and public for input on decision making and follow up to benefit not only the forest but the people.

Discussion on Kevin Conway and state forest. Chief Luke Kendall discusses organizational chart and his role as the "interim forest manager" and duties overseeing Mendocino County.

Kyle Farmer starts discussion on user-built trails or "illegal trails" and this challenge across many public use areas. JDSF currently has 38 miles of sanctioned trails but also a problem with user-built trails that are unmapped causing hazards for user due to first responders lack of ability to respond to possible accidents. Kyle Farmer uses 2 drawing boards to create categories of Communication and Actions for improvement CALFIRE can make based on public comment. Kyle talks about what is considered a "good trail". \*Hands out State Parks official definition on the topic\*. Correlates how road and trails are similar and that many elements of a good road are similar to a good trail. Talks about paradox of how "fun trails" might not be an environmentally friendly trails and how enjoyment of old growth forest is enjoyable to be inside but how they can be impacted from recreation. All trails have some impact to the environment but how we can minimize these impacts. Discussion on sinuous trail creation and the impacts of these areas such as 408/409 intersection.

Discussions of the challenges of navigating issues as many "official" trails were once "unofficial." Many of these trails are "legacy trails" that have been around for a long time and all of a sudden there are closed without discussion.

Kyle Farmer- What are the suggested protocols that CALFIRE should go through when wanting to abandon a trail?

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- Chet: Don't close right way, bring in people that use the trail, talk about issue to allow for public understanding, discussion on possible changes to trail to avoid impacts.
- Will Powers: Signage at trailheads stating CALFIRE Intention with times and date for discussions.
- Jamie Armstrong: ID current usage, environmental damage

Discussion on upcoming recreation survey and the structure of the survey. Many people want trail specific surveys and detailed assessments.

Dan Sweet talks about ongoing current trail development that isn't within CALFIRE knowledge. Task Force Member Stacy Bradley questions Dan about the lack of engineering and environmental review when creating these new users built trails created from bikers who aren't working with the club or CALFIRE.

Discussion on lack of staff and funding being challenges for JDSF. Recreation was highlighted being a very broad sector with many parts while being the most taxed for resources.

Erik Wahl starts discussion on "Trigger Points" that lead to decisions to close trail without public notification. Steep slopes, watercourse, bridge construction, habitat, access points to State Parks being used as some examples.

### Blue Gum Decommission Topic

Speaker Erik Wahl discusses the following points;

- Not official but still a proposed trail.
- CALFIRE's obligation to abandon roads affiliated with logging following the mandate by the Management Plan and Forest Practice Rules in order to erosion control points.
- Erosion points were identified resulting the abandonment of the road and restoring watercourses.
- Many safety concerns along the trail.
- JDSF is still interested on officializing the trail but due to the contract expiring this is TBD as funding and operation are within contract.
- Contracts will be discussed at future JAG meetings.

Comments from the public are made regarding the needs for timeline and more communication for trail plans. Tigger points for blue gum trail decommissioning were bridge safety, and environmental damage.

Luke Kendell and Erik Wahl talk about how the process of trail construction and work was being done with the equipment used for the CASPER 500 THP and the reason for the trail closure was due to the contract being canceled and not having the resources needed. Sarah Bradley comments on the comparison between timber harvesting receiving many forms of environmental review and illegal trails. Kyle Farmer makes correlation between THP and housing permits where once discoveries are made, they are official, and cannot be ignored even if the contact has been cancelled.

Luke Kendall comments on the problems with the trail and the effort of the bringing the bridge up to standard but having to work though the challenges of contracts to get the trail complete will take time but appreciate the work that all the community does but it takes collaboration to achieve our shared goals. Erik Wahl also covers the needs of trail construction requiring of a yarder to swing in the new bridge and the rock needed for the water

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courses. Makes note how trail is proposed and still considered for adoption, transitioning from an abandon road to an official trail.

Discussion on community outreach and pathways of information to communicate updates and changes to trails. Kyle Farmer comments on the benefits of Trial Forks but how it can also perpetuate the use of user-built trails that are mapped within its system because of the lack of designation of official vs unofficial trial. Roo Harris discusses a geo references map that he created that provides GPS location along all trail systems in and around JDSF and brings up the inability of Trail Forks to provide location services to users who aren't on the applications mapped trails. Brings up concerns about how his map has been "bad mouth" by JDSF but feels that he has done a public service by providing a increase in safety and first responders ability to respond to emergencies. Roo also states that if CALFIRE doesn't want certain trails it is their responsibility to decommission them. Dan sweet states that this would be counterintuitive as many of these user-built trails are proposed to be sanctioned. Luke Kendall talks about the efforts of CALFIRE to create more trails and officialized trials that fit within the management plan and the environmental plan to bring more people to JDSF. He also discusses the challenges of time, money, personal, and many areas of recreation that still but be attended too such as Camp 20.

Motorized Vehicle issues are discussed. Several members made comments about interactions with problem vehicles. Topics of law enforcement and consequences on the forest are addressed by Luke Kendall. More comments are made regarding unlawful behavior and lack of courtesy to many areas of the forest. Erik Wahl talks about challenges in staying ahead of problems like this in the forest. Several suggestions are made regarding possible avenues to help manage these problems. Chris Ruddick talks about past staff being reluctant in creating a volunteer group to help be eyes and ears to the forest, thinks that having volunteers patrol that takes information down would be helpful. Kyle farmers uses this conversation to highlight how every unit of effort that CALFIRE spends on this controlling unlawful and unruly behavior is one less unit of effort to they can spend on adopting new trails.

### Land Use Allocation Topic

Speaker Robert Douglas's Talking Points

\*Using JDSF designated area map as a visual aid\* Discusses the Management Plan regarding Land Use Allocation

- Western portion of the forest is directed to later seral development.
- Older forest structure zone: old growth forest, late seral reverses, older forest development areas which allow for limited harvest.
- Pygmy forest areas
- Special Habitat Concern Areas

Marble Murrelet Habitat Area

- Areas off rd. 750 and State Parks watershed that have been ID as habitat area.
- Marble Murrelet utilize old forest structure such as trees with large extending limbs as nesting sites.
- Very susceptible to disturbance
- Currently only a few occupied sites such as within Russian Gulch
- JDSF objective is to grow old growth structure up to 25% of the forest (forest wide) with potential recruitment of late seral species and marble murrelet occupancy.

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- Where trails are being implemented? Are there areas where trails are creating disturbance? Should trails be implemented in areas where we can reroute around disturbance/use? How can CALFIRE address best management uses based on archeology, biology, etc. for recreation?

Public Members comments on past dealing with Department of Natural Resources where they expressed no logging in the Big River watershed and does CALFIRE hold that same position and what is the current policy on logging in that area. Robert Douglas responds by discussing Late Seral Development growth and methods such as thinning from the below while leaving residual old growth and allow for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> growth trees all reach that objective.

Kyle Farmer asks what are the specific plans in place when protecting the marble murrelet Habitat? Erik Wahl discusses implemented practices where habitat enhancement was done by harvesting timber that would promote the residual stand by creating more sunlight to diversify the structure of the old growth forest. This process takes 100s of years to see the traits that we are working to achieve.

Kyle Farmer comments on how the concept of Land Use Allocation is based on the National and Regional level and talks about when these allocations were designed, they created a North/South and East/West corridor that would connect the old growth pockets by working to create a similar structure. Late Seral Development zones shifts away from the economic priorities in high quality timber to larger branches that create habitat. Recreation can counteract the timeline of late seral development and its objectives.

Robert Douglas discusses Marble Murrelet disturbance, talking about how the operational period (March-September) and the effects on habitat and how noise and land alteration can affect the species. Robert continues by discussing the needs of surveys and surveys that are currently being completed. Explaining experiments and studies that are in the works to try and recruit occupancy. Robert continues discussion on survey protocol. Each site has to be survey 5 times in 2 years, but new plan increases the extent of visits. Surveys are done through audio and visually.

Dan Sweet comments on communication between state agency and the public regrading which areas are sensitive and allowing users to understand user-built trail impacts. Erik Wahl states that the discussed map will be available to public via website. Robert Douglas comments on how reveling areas of sensitive resources can lead to public interactions or harassment which is a concern. Other concerns Robert expressed are people leashing dogs in the area during the fledgling season (May-July).

Discussion on the definition of matrix and how it's a catch all area for other areas of management. At JDSF the idea is to create multiple different management strategies that many landowners can identify and possible recreate in their own areas.

### [Trail Master Plan Topic:](#)

Many members of the public are interested in CALFIRE creating a master plan for many of the legacy trails with timelines for trails being sanctioned or decommissioned. Large amounts of interest in CALFIRE sharing their priorities or goals for trails. Chief Luke Kendall discusses options of an "ad hock" community to possibly put together a 5 yr. plan for trails and work to figure out location of these user-built trails and analyze which fit in to the management for possible adoption.

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Kyle Farmer discusses rec survey process and how could help with the work needed to create a master plan as the survey gather information from users to assess many needs.

Dan Sweet talks about working with Elias Steinbuck on a current plan that they have for a 3-year plan and the need for community collaboration to bring resources rather than being focused on many different aspects can lead to more productive efforts. Several staff and public members agreed.

**ACTION ITEM: Work with Elias Steinbeck on trail work list (presented at May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 RTF meeting) and long-term planning.**

750/Russian Gulch State Park trail that was abandoned is discussed due to the environmental impacts; illegal water crossing and steep ground with erosion points. Comments on how one or two section of the trail maybe have trigger points that result in shutting down the whole trail to discourage further damage, but potential solution could be rerouted, but it takes time and resources for this to be done.

### [Moving Closer to More Effective Multi Use Across Trails Topic](#)

Concerns expressed regarding the attitude toward horse riders from bikers and lack of information towards which trails are accessible to horses. Stacy Bradley comments on how bikers impact the safety of horse riders. Expressed concerns and frustration on the use of bells and lack of sharing the trail from bikers. Elias Steinbuck suggests creating more yield to horse signage along trails, Erik Wahl agreed and will provide.

Sarah Bradley discussed how lack of courtesy from bikers in the area is “the rule” and how the issue could be centered around out of towners and lack of knowledge of horses. Stacy Bradley agreed lack of courtesy is “the norm”

Discussions on education to increase safety for horse riders through radio stations, new letter, or the paper. Comments on bell usage seeming to be a common misunderstanding that is a danger to the horse riders but is falsely used as a way to be courteous. More educational information is proposed such as creating a video that can be shared around. Kyle Farmer discusses reaching out to the idea cooperative could create content to educate.

**ACTION ITEM: Purchase and post Trail Etiquette signs at major trailheads**

### [Ames Lodge Boom Rd/Little Lake Rd Trail Decommission Visit](#)

Trail Site 1: Old Growth Tree Site with potential Habitat

Discussion on vision of forest structure regarding old growth and 2<sup>nd</sup> growth. Forest history is covered regarding the area and the current Late Seral Development Allocation. Robert Douglas comments on the different tree structures present that is habitat for potential occupancy for marble murrelet. Also covers silviculture methods that can be applied to continue the LSD development. Erik Wahl discusses decision making process of CALFIRE in trail adoption in terms of fragmentation of land from roads.

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### Trail Site 2: Asses Impacts of Current Trail

Discussion regarding the trails current location routed directly across the channel of a class III water course that is capable of sediment transportation and would require a 1600 permit to implement a crossing. Robert Douglas talks about the proper environmental reviews needed to create a trail that crosses this watercourse. Erik covers some of the trigger points of the trail that are present. Kyle Farmer talks about Save the Redwood League and their study on root damage from traveling impacts. Discussion on alternative to avoid root damage by capping the trail. Erik Wahl comments on how JDSF is a public land, where recreation is managed to provide a service to everyone and the visiting public, not just a few local homeowners.

**ACTION ITEM: Improve and place temporary signage along non-sanctioned trails that inform public that trail has not been surveyed for ecological and cultural resources. Request trail community support in replacing signage if (when) removed.**

### Visit at Proposed Trail Rerouting near 408/409 Intersection

Erik Wahl discusses Recreation plan and the proposed improvements to the area through increase accommodations and user engagement. Forest history trail head and current location used as examples for increasing parking ability. Erik Wahl covers the needs for rehabilitation and adoption based on locality and impact. Discussion on the locality of trails avoiding existing skid trails based on future operations having to use these skid trails. Comments on “spaghetti trails” that are very prevalent in the area, possibly occurring due to mushroom collectors but once established further impacts from bikers in the area.

Erik Wahl lays out the location for possible rerouting of current trail off of the skid trail and be proactive in rerouting new trail sections to allow for avoidance in future veg. management operations. Along with adoption of this trail near the main rd. benefits the lack of fragmentation objectives. No current immediate plans for vegetation management project but will likely occur in future.

Many public comments regarding the choice in abandonment strategies through cutting nearby vegetation and the possible impacts of that. Several people voiced concerns regarding the counterintuitive action of impacting the forest to mitigate impacts of the trail. Erik Wahl and Kyle Farmer reiterate that using local vegetation to decommission a trail is common practice rather than a “message” from CALFIRE. Many comments are made regarding the distrust of CALFIRE in the community and how many view the priorities being focused on economics rather than resources. Robert Douglas comments on how timber harvesting is part of the management plan but so is the LSD land allocation. Erik Wahl comments on how JDSF is self-funded through timber sales that allow for money to be put back into the forest in protecting the watersheds and through creation of recreation opportunities. Many public members expressed the dislike of cutting Redwood trees. Kyle Farmer talks about the Redwood Rising Project that cuts redwoods and how they manage redwoods in a very similar way to JDSF, rather the difference in support is the public perception.

Erik Wahl revisits the idea of creating trust through improvements in communication, and how CALFIRE acknowledges past failure to communicate, but currently focused and improving on creating more outreach opportunities.

Erik Wahl calls for any more comments and motion to adjourn the meeting 1520.