

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE

David Goldemberg, *First District*
Kathleen Haff, *Fourth District*

Ryan Campbell, *Second District*

Anaiah Kirk, *Third District*
Jaron Brandon, *Fifth District*

MINUTES

Natural Resource Committee – SPECIAL Meeting

January 10, 2022 @ 10:00 a.m.

Board of Supervisors Chambers - 2 South Green Street, Sonora

1. Call the meeting to order: Meeting called to order by Supervisor Kirk at 10:02 am. (quorum reached).
 - A. In attendance:
 - i. Committee members present (quorum met)
 1. Jim Maddox (Committee Member) Fish & Game Preservation Fund Advisory
 2. Jim Phelan (Committee Member) Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District
 3. Dick Geiser (Committee Member) Agricultural Advisory Committee
 4. Supervisor Kirk (Committee Member)
 5. Supervisor Haff (Committee Member)
 - ii. Staff Present
 1. Dore Bietz (CAO Staff)
 2. Tracey McKnight (CAO Staff)
 3. Liz Petersen (CAO Staff)
 - iii. Partners
 - iv. Public
2. Public Comment:
 - A. Barbara Balen TUD asked for support of a Proclamation of a Local Emergency due to the recent storm. OES spoke about process and plan to Proclaim today January 10 and then ratify tomorrow under an urgency item at the BOS.
3. Consideration of approving the minutes of the meeting held on December 8, 2021.
 - A. Jim Phalen moved to approve. Jim Maddox seconded. All in favor. Motion passed
4. Partner Agencies - none
5. Committee Business
 - A. Staff Reports and recommendations:
 - i. OES reported out on Board of Forestry draft fire safe regulations
 - B. Committee member reports: none
6. Discussion items
 - A. Presentation of Resolution to take actions to request immediate USFS Initial Fire Attack Direction and USFS Promulgation of rulemaking for a Wildland Fire Management Rule/Policy including NEPA – request for committee support.

- i. Supervisor Kirk spoke about the policy and explained the proposal being presented to the Board of Supervisors tomorrow January 11, 2022. He expressed his concerns for policy on fires within forest lands, specific to initial fire attack policy. Supervisor Kirk also spoke to the urgency of the item having to come in front of the board due to NACO resolution deadline for a national conference. Attached are the items to be presented to the BOS. Proposing to NaCO a resolution to help decide the national priorities with Tuolumne County as a model.
- ii. Committee Members comments/discussion
 1. Supervisor Haff spoke about a plan that County and USFS had back in 2009? Regarding a plan. She reached out to staff to get a copy of.
- iii. Public Comments
 1. John Buckley – CSERC. Clear that there has been a lot of effort and wanted to provide clarity on statements.
 - a. There is no let it burn policy. There is a management policy that identifies how and when the forest service will manage a wildland fire within the forest. Called **Manage Wildfire Ignition Policy**. There is no managed wildfire ignition in the Stanislaus.
 - b. There are a lot of misguided information and non-truths to what is being said out there about the USFS policy. While the public is critical that they think the USFS just lets fires burn, there is no policy.
 - c. Resolution and letter is requiring that the Forest service immediately extinguish fires throughout the year. This brings up questions about process and the potential for internal policy for each local area. So many statements in the resolution that are not factually accurate.
 - d. Memo mentions YSS and the claim that we do not do any harm to all of the work YSS and many folks have been working on. John feels the resolution will harm the work already being done. John will send us his comments. Resolution is addressing something that is not an issue.
 - i. Supervisor Kirk wants when a fire starts in the forest to be acted upon immediately.
 1. John emphasized that there is no let it burn policy. Sometimes forest does not have staffing and they have no choice. The public thinks forest service is letting it burn when they do not have the staff or capacity to manage.
 - ii. Supervisor Haff asked why there is no wildfire ignition policy in the Stanislaus Forest?
 1. John responded about national plans and local plans in standard and guidelines. There are managed wildfire ignition plans for upper elevations. In the upper elevations they can allow fires to burn as a management tool.
 2. Liz Petersen – CAO staff added that the Forest plan for the Stanislaus has guidelines and policies. There are further detailed plans specific to Wilderness areas. The Stanislaus Forest plan does speak to how fire is managed.
 2. Committee member Maddox asked if there is more information needed. He stressed that the Stanislaus is different than other forests. There is a need to get more information of the specific areas Supervisor Kirk is asking for,
 3. John Buckley suggested to ask Jason Kuiken and his fire staff is there a managed wildfire ignition plan in the Stanislaus National Forest.

In accordance with Government Section 54954.3(a), the public may comment on any item on the agenda. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance (i.e. auxiliary aids or services) in order to participate in this public meeting, please contact the County Administrator's Office, (209-533-5511). Notification 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting will enable staff to make reasonable accommodations to ensure accessibility to this public meeting.

4. John Buckley suggested that we do not become a lead in the national rhetoric of a let it burn policy.
 5. Barbara Balen thanked committee for looking at this. She spoke of the history of work being proactive. Congressional testimony from Dr. Morris Max (?) on wildfire. Also, helpful may be the costs avoidance data out there on the Stanislaus and Mokelumne watershed.
 6. Jim Phelan Committee member stated that he understands why the public may perceive an issue with let it burn with fires like the Rim Fire, Donnell Fire. Concerned that NEPA is not being followed. Not understanding where Supervisor wants to go.
 - a. Supervisor Kirk wants to know if USFS Chief Moore can come out with a policy that they won't let it burn.
 7. Supervisor Haff feels that if we do not have it right then we should wait and not rush it until we further determine the best for Tuolumne County. Supervisor Haff recommends that we hold off with NaCO resolution.
 8. Committee members want to see more information in order to make an informed decision and not just approve something. We need to do something but need to thoroughly research and understand.
 - a. Supervisor Kirk believes that we need to get onboard because it is coming. He believes his resolution as drafted addresses everyone's concerns.
 - b. Supervisor Haff wanted to have resolution include language that emphasized that "public perception" is that there is a let it burn policy.
 9. CAO Staff Liz Petersen weighed in on current issues and work that the County is doing. Staff are requesting that we take a proactive stance on forest health projects not a one size fix all approach. Having a fire out by 10 am is a one size fits all. Stanislaus website has the plan if anyone is interested in looking at. It is dated but still current in many aspects.
 10. Committee members feel that this could be seen as political and that we need to be careful. There are several items that should be supported.
 11. Staff recommended that there is still time to support if it goes to NaCo from other counties. Then if the committee and the BOS does support can submit a resolution to support that just not be the sponsor.
 12. CAO Staff Liz stated that the rulemaking process for coordination between USFS and county changed it to include all stakeholders and not a special seat as the county. County staff has taken the more informal process of being proactive in developing relationships.
 13. Committee members felt that we do not need a national plan to control what happens at the local level. We need to have a county wide suppression/management policy. Supervisor Kirk questioned whether or not we could enforce on forest lands.
 14. Supervisor Kirk stated that it appears that committee members would want to look at the plan before going further with recommendation of resolution. No motion suggested to approve recommendation of the resolution.
 15. Motion by Supervisor to support resolution as is Motion denied for lack of second.
 16. Motion do not move forward and that we need more time to review.
- B. Change of regular monthly meeting date and times – due to new membership and conflicts committee will need to select a new monthly meeting date and time. Suggested times included:

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- First Weds of the month @ 10 -11:30 work for everyone? Or
- Fourth Friday of the month @ 10 am or
- Third Weds of the month at 3 pm

Unanimous decision to go with the first Weds of the month @ 10-11:30 am.

7. Meeting Adjourned at 11:53 am.

DRAFT

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