

**TO:** GCS D Board of Directors

**FROM:** Peter Kampa, General Manager

**DATE:** May 14, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item 3Av. General Managers Report

---

#### Overview

Highlights for the period of April 9, 2024, to May 14, 2024, include the following, with additional information provided verbally and in attachments:

**ATP Grant:** staff has spent a bit of time recently reviewing the active transportation program grant guidelines, securing a proposal from a technical grant writing consultant and submitting a request to the Tuolumne county transportation council for funding to cover the cost of the grant application preparation. The application is for the second phase of the Hetch Hetchy Trail, from Deer Flat Road to Wards Ferry Rd, and this item is on your agenda for discussion.

#### **Tuolumne County Natural Resources Committee**

On May 1, 2024 I attended the natural resources committee at the county offices, the meeting agenda is attached. The majority of the meeting was related to a proposal to form a biomass joint powers authority, which would provide opportunities to make fuels reduction projects more cost effective and also generate electrical power to offset costs. The presentation slides are attached.

#### **Groveland Community Local Perspective**

Attached to this report you will find the final Groveland Community Local Perspectives report prepared by County staff, with much input from GCS D and the community. The report contains several actions to be considered by GCS D in the future.

#### **Lift Station #15 Access Road**

Pine Mountain lake and GCS D staff met and discussed the concerns with the access road and our collective plan going forward. This item is also on your May 2024 meeting agenda for discussion.

#### **Downtown Groveland to BOF Water Improvements – CDBG**

We continue to work closely with County staff and providing information for the preparation of the CDBG funding agreement. We hope to have that agreement in our possession in the coming weeks.

#### **Short Term Rental Outreach**

Tuolumne County staff have been conducting community outreach meetings to gather input on community perception of the benefits and impacts of short term rentals. Following the initial meeting in Groveland, short term rentals. Following the initial meeting in Groveland, GCS D submitted a comment letter covering some of the impacts to the services we provide, and suggestions on how we may be able to further evaluate and offset impacts. There are over 400 STR in PML alone.

# TUOLUMNE COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

### 2024 Strategic Priorities

- Support our local water utility partners in their effort to modernize and improve water supply infrastructure and mitigate risk.
- Maintain awareness of pertinent State and Federal legislation regarding natural resources, land use, water, and water rights.
- Maintain awareness of Tuolumne County Federal land use policy, planning, and implementation and provide recommendations and advocacy as appropriate.
- Promote landscape and watershed resilience through innovative solutions and capacity building.

**Date/Time:** Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at 10:00 AM

**Location:** Board of Supervisors Chambers – 2 S. Green Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Sonora, CA 95370

**Contact:** Sean Hembree at [shembree@co.tuolumne.ca.us](mailto:shembree@co.tuolumne.ca.us) (209)533-5554

#### **Chair/Vice Chair**

*Supervisor Anaiah Kirk*

*Supervisor Kathleen Haff*

#### **Agency Representatives**

*Tuolumne Me Wuk*

*Diana Beasley*

*Chicken Ranch Me Wuk*

*Stephanie Suess*

*Tuolumne Utilities District*

*Don Perkins*

*Groveland CSD*

*Pete Kampa*

*Hetch Hetchy*

*Adam Mazurkiewicz*

*Fish and Game Preserve Fund*

*Jim Maddox*

*Agricultural Advisor*

*Dick Gaiser*

*Tuolumne Co. RCD*

*Jim Phelan*

#### **At Large Member**

*Chris Trott*

#### **Staff**

*County Administrator*

*Tracie Riggs*

*Water & Natural Resource*

*Analyst (CAO)*

*Sean Hembree*

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

#### **II. ROLL CALL (5 minutes)**

*Introductions during roll call*

*Confirm quorum requirements are met (Quorum = 6 members)*

#### **III. PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**

*The public may speak on any item, not on the agenda. No action may be taken by the Committee*

*Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes per person)*

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (5 minutes)**

#### **V. CONSIDERATION OF GIVING DIRECTION TO THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGARDING PROPOSED BIOMASS JPA**

#### **VI. CONSIDERATION OF CHANGING STATUS OF CHICKEN RANCH ME WUK TO ADVISORY MEMBER**

#### **VII. PARTNER AGENCY UPDATES (15 minutes)**

**a. Stanislaus National Forest:**

**b. CAL FIRE**

#### **VIII. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

##### **a. Staff Reports and Recommendations**

**i. Drought Resilience Plan update**

**ii. Grants update:**

**1. CAL FIRE Forest Health – awarded**

**2. WaterSMART – pre-award notice**

**3. IFNF – submitted**

**iii. SWIFT Coordinator vacancy**

##### **b. Committee Member Reports**

*Public Comment (limited to three minutes per person)*

#### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

*The Next meeting will be held on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024*



# Tuolumne County Natural Resources Advisory Committee Minutes

For the Meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

2024 Natural Resource Members <i>(or assigned delegates)</i>	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Anaiah Kirk	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Kathleen Haff	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Don Perkins	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Pete Kampa		✓	✓	✓								
Adam Mazurkiewicz		✓	✓	E								
Stephanie Suess			A	E								
Dianna Beasley		✓	A	A								
Dick Gaiser	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Chris Trott		✓	✓	E								
Jim Maddox	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Jim Phelan	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Present = ✓ Absent = A Excused = E												

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 10:01 A.M. and confirmed a quorum was present.
2. **MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Anaiah Kirk, Vice-Chair Kathleen Haff, Jim Maddox, Jim Phelan, Dick Gaiser, Abby Parcon (TUD), Pete Kampa, Sean Hembree (staff)
3. **PUBLIC FORUM:** The public may speak on any item not on the printed agenda. No action may be taken by the Committee. The amount of time allocated for the public forum is limited to 15 minutes. – None
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Consideration of approving the minutes of the meeting held on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Jim Maddox made a motion to approve the minutes. Jim Phelan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
5. **PARTNER AGENCIES UPDATES:**
  - a. Ben Cossel USFS Public Affairs Officer reported that:
    - i. There has been a significant comment on the SERAL DEIS regarding the use of herbicides. Interested parties should contact Mr. Cossel.
    - ii. Cossel also indicated that it appears that the USFS Office of Personal Management has determined that the Stanislaus Forest will be placed under

- the San Francisco salary rate allocation for staff salary adjustment.
- iii. Cossel indicated pile burns would soon cease to allow the transition to broadcast burning which is of more value in mitigating wildfire in the coming season.
- iv. CAL FIRE – none

6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS:

- a. Staff reports and recommendations:
  - i. SEC Natural Asset Company proposal was rescinded
  - ii. Board of Forestry Consideration of renaming Chinaman Creek as Chinese Miner Creek
- b. Committee member reports – There was a discussion about CAL FIRE project location near Priest Grade on BLM land. A request was made to reach out to BLM and encourage environmental permitting streamlining to facilitate the project.
- c. Pete Kampa gave a report on recent and ongoing GCSD projects including the completion of new wells as contingency water supply and 80 new fire hydrants which were installed from a County Grant with GCSD as a sub-recipient.
- d. Tony Diaz gave a report on recent and ongoing TUD projects. A discussion was held regarding water supply reliability.
  - i. Public comment: A comparison of wooden flume potable water supply currently under the jurisdiction of PG&E to the recent destruction of the PG&E penstock in Nevada County.

7. DISCUSSION OF the California Board of Forestry proposed update changes for utility vegetation management activities was held. Concerns were addressed. There was a consensus to track this issue and provide a recommended letter to the Board of Supervisors once the public comment period opens.

8. DISCUSSION OF endorsing the [Mountain Counties Water Resource Association - Forest Management Principle](#). There was a consensus to recommend that the Board of Supervisors formally support these principles. This will be brought before the next available Board of Supervisors meeting.

9. ADJOURNED: Chair Kirk adjourned the meeting at 11:03 A.M.  
The next meeting is scheduled for May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

# Forming a JPA to tackle Forest Biomass Management



CAL FRAME

SOUTH CENTRAL SIERRA

CALIFORNIA

*Christiana Darlington*  
CLERE INC



# Agenda

Topic one: update on member entity outreach

Topic Two: reports due

Topic three: New RFP / proposed project

Topic four: OPR Pilot budget and future



# Potential Member Entity Outreach

---

## UPPER MOKELUMNE RIVER WATERSHED AUTHORITY

- Update to group on 4/26
- Discussion about current state approach to biomass
- Discussion around USFS actions to support biomass removal

## TUOLUMNE RCD

- Attended three hour meeting in March
- Project developers and CAL Fire attended
- Further meetings needed

# Reports Due from team

---

## COMPLETED REPORTS

- Feedstock Assessment
- Entity Exploration Report
- Sort Yard feasibility Report (imminent release)

## REPORTS IN PROGRESS

- Financial Analysis
- Entity Action Plan
- Communication Plan
- Organizational Study

## UPCOMING REPORTS

- Continued development of JPA and associated documents
- Technology and locational study of additional wood utilization concepts in study area



# Current RFP in the Works

---

Mariposa RCD will be applying for the current RFP solicitation due May 20, 2024. The RCD will be looking to continue its work and develop new study on bioenergy locational analysis in the region with the new round of funds. Most critically, the Department of Conservation applied for federal funds to support the Pilots in the amount of 40 million dollars, which we should hear a response in July of this year.





# Next Steps

- Complete Organizational study
- Finish Communication plan and set up meetings with important industry leaders, and with local State and Federal Partners
- Start new business locational study
- Develop foundational mission, then develop documents to form a JPA
- Develop documents to warrant Seed Money Round



# Timeline



# Thank you

---

Please Contact

Christiana Darlington

530-305-4433

[christiana@clereinc.net](mailto:christiana@clereinc.net)



# Local Perspective on Economic Development

## Groveland/Big Oak Flat Community

### Characteristics and Values of the Community

The location of Groveland/Big Oak Flat area is a rural community, adjacent to or within the forest, yet close to some conveniences. For many, the community reaches from the top of the two grades, past Buck Meadows, all the way up to the entrance to Yosemite on Highway 120.

It stands out as one of the 2% of communities in the country that house a national park within its borders, providing a “sense of arrival” to this popular destination. The region enjoys a rich history, including the development of Big Oak Flat due to gold mining and Groveland's growth linked to Hetch Hetchy and the establishment of Yosemite National Park.

The area is recognized for having a small-town charm with a great sense of community. It's argued that it is not over or under-developed, lending to its quaintness. The population is primarily a retirement community and considered a safe environment with a different feeling from the Bay Area. Historically, there has been robust volunteerism in the community, however, this declined greatly during the pandemic, and now is gradually returning.

An entrepreneurial spirit exists with a distinctive absence of chain businesses, the majority of businesses being privately owned. Notably, it achieved the highest number of female entrepreneurs in 2019. Tourism is a significant part of the economy, with various outdoor recreation activities and a substantial transient use of residential properties, often geared towards visiting the nearby national park. Most who visit arrive by car, and some arrive at the local airport. Many visitors become future neighbors. It's believed those from abroad form their opinions about the US based on their impressions here.

However, for the Groveland/Big Oak Flat area, there are challenges, including a 55% poverty level. It has an aging population and a declining youth demographic. There is a perceived separation between the Pine Mountain Lake (PML) community and the towns of Groveland and Big Oak Flat. In addition, there is a divergence of opinions on growth, with a strong desire to preserve the peace and quiet that attracted many residents to the area. A universal concern exists about fire risk and emergency preparedness.

## Vision for the Future

The community's vision for the future of Groveland/Big Oak Flat includes developing the area to be a more enticing tourist destination, moving away from it being a pass-through location. Achieving this necessitates both infrastructure enhancements and the expansion of the business community and community relationships.

The overarching goal is to foster a cultural shift towards becoming an "outdoor" community that prioritizes preservation while promoting community engagement, leveraging existing recreational destinations, and highlighting the region's rich history tied to gold mining and the railroad.

An emphasis must be placed on developing a diversity of businesses, fostering a more permanent resident base to support local businesses. There's a keen interest in improving the availability of family-friendly dining options, managing overcrowding during peak summer months, and boosting business prospects in the winter season. One venture may be establishing a camping and RV facility near downtown.

There is a call for upgrades to infrastructure such as sidewalks, increased parking availability, and possible implementation of a shuttle service from the Community Resilience Center (CRC) to downtown. A more reliable electrical grid and the installation of generators at key locations like schools and the airport to ensure safety are critical. There is a recognized need for more affordable housing options to accommodate workers. However, all this requires a commitment to maintaining a billboard-free environment, and a focus on maintaining a small-town feel.

There is a strong desire for the County to listen to the community's input regarding development, as decisions are largely influenced by the County Board of Supervisors and the Groveland Community Service District (GCSD). Maintaining a small-scale, common-sense approach is emphasized, with a focus on preserving the community's intrinsic value. There's also a call for County policies to be updated to reflect current needs, and for improved education and communication between the County, residents, and visitors.

## Needs of the Community

The Community needs encompass a wide range of areas, including affordable housing, affordable fire insurance, emergency and long-term medical care, affordable childcare and youth activities, acknowledging the challenges of staffing and sustainability. Also beneficial would be improved coordination between community groups, and a stronger presence by social services to address issues of poverty, drug use, and mental health. Currently they staff the CRC one day a week.

In terms of promoting business, improved signage, technology for visitor information (potentially through an app), winter attractions, and the establishment of a local recreation department. The community also seeks more businesses that actively engage with and integrate into the community, a more active Chamber of Commerce, more diverse events, and historical education opportunities.

## Ongoing Projects

There are a number of ongoing infrastructure efforts within the community, such as initiatives by the Groveland Community Service District (GCSD) focusing on fuel reduction, recreation, and improvements in public facilities. These efforts include projects funded by "Clean California," grants from CalTrans for new restrooms, bus stops, picnic areas, and expanding our trail system, such as the Hetch Hetchy Railroad Trail. In addition, there is movement to develop an RV Park. GCSD and Chamber are looking into options to improve electrical reliability. The Chamber has requested Yonder Yosemite owner consider cleaning up "the Scar" property ahead of the development schedule. And Southside Community Connections and Tuolumne County Transportation Council (TCTC) are working to provide more transportation to the area by expanding services into the valley.

Recreation businesses are flourishing. There is a focus on accommodating visitors to Yosemite, especially those without reservations. Groveland Trail Heads is working to expand mountain biking trails which is beneficial for tourism. GCSD often holds "Movies in the Park." And the Tioga Baseball team, established since 2016, has also contributed to the community's vibrancy.

Emergency services are actively working on securing funding for expansion, while water projects that increase fire-flow for Big Oak Flat are in progress. CalTrans has also agreed to sidewalk projects for improvements of the downtown area. And PML has already started on their evacuation planning which can be expanded out into the community.

## Action Items to Bring Progress

### 1. Create a More Inviting Destination for Visitors

Comprehensive planning and active engagement with visitors are essential components to increase our customer base. This initiative involves enhancing visitor experiences through improved signage, sidewalks, restrooms, and increased parking facilities while being cautious not to exacerbate overcrowding issues. Additionally, leveraging historical education opportunities can enrich the visitor's understanding of the area. This may also involve the establishment of a local recreation department and the integration of technology, such as a dedicated app, for streamlined visitor information.

### 2. Improve the Business Culture

A proactive dedicated approach is needed to bring potential investors here. This should also involve establishing objectives and metrics to evaluate if progress is being made. In a bid to diversify the local business landscape, the community may introduce an array of offerings. This includes expanding family-friendly dining options, increasing the variety of lodging facilities, such as the addition of an RV park, and enhancing the appeal of the destination during the winter season by introducing more reasons to visit and stay. Regular bus trips from the other parts of the county, such as Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) to the area will assist in bring people to the area.

### **3. Fostering Community Engagement**

Fostering community engagement is a vital aspect of this endeavor. Establishing a dedicated community hub will serve as a catalyst for collaboration among local organizations and improve communication within this network. Key to this effort is identifying a representative who will play a pivotal role in ensuring that the community's voice is not only heard but also effectively addressed. Collaborative support from both the community and county government is crucial to shape future of this inviting tourist destination.



Groveland Community Services District  
General Comments on Short Term Rentals  
May 2, 2024

In general, STR at the level they are allowed today have not been determined to be a major impact on the **capacity** of GCSD water, sewer, fire and park services. Please understand that there has been no formal evaluation of specific STR service impact, as we have not found any source of accessible STR property data. They are, however, changing the water usage and wastewater discharge profiles to be higher and more consistent month to month, year round. In theory, the water and sewer rates charged by GCSD are supposed to cover the cost of providing the service, at whatever quantity is used. STR water and sewer rates will be considered once we can accurately identify that they exist.

We have not been able to capture an accurate data set related to fire department emergency responses to STR, and will be able to identify impacts from the increased, consistent population once STR are formally permitted through the county. Population increases do drive increases in emergency calls.

- An increase in customer service effort and time explaining higher than normal water use and associated high water and sewer bills. The increase in STR has strained our ability to provide the same/desired level of customer service (such as review and personal calls for high consumption)
- Difficult to impossible to communicate with and control water use in STR quickly in the event of a water emergency such as a major water leak or equipment failure
- No way to identify/confirm if the property is used as an STR, vacation home, rental or full time residence. This is important to understanding water consumption profiles by customer type, applying our regulations and state reporting
- Currently causing regulatory compliance issues in that we were required to reduce our water consumption by 20% by the year 2020, and were required to use water consumption data from 2000-2010, adjusted for population growth. Population has not grown since 2017 but consumption has by 15%, putting us on the verge of non-compliance which can lose us access to state grant funds.
- Significantly reduced housing inventory and rental properties, making job recruitment impossible
- The creation of over 400 STR in Groveland has contributed to an increased median household income profile, which has resulted in GCSD being disqualified from receiving the major source of grant funds from the California State Water Resources Control Board. A recent income survey revealed income variances of a low of \$20,000 outside PML to \$1.8 million within PML. The survey revealed that 48% of responding properties were owned by a transient population; vacation homes or STR, and state funds are not available to GCSD at all when over 50% transient.

**Solutions could be:**

1. A reliable system of documenting which properties are STR, kept updated and GCSD notified.
2. Require septic system testing and notification of GCSD on failures so that adequate engineering evaluations can be completed to take advantage of economies of scale and plans can be made for sewer wastewater treatment plant expansion
3. Require a new GCSD service application so we can document the use and monitor consumption, to determine if the meter is adequate and if different fees are required. Also provide contacts for the property owner and local property manager
4. Require flow and consumption monitoring, either by a personal device or paying the cost of a GCSD remote read meter, which would allow property owners to monitor water consumption daily through a GCSD portal.