

**Jackson Demonstration State Forest Advisory Group Meeting
Fort Bragg, Friday August 1 – Saturday August 2, 2008
Draft Minutes**

Friday, August 1

Attendance:

JAG Members Present:	CAL FIRE Staff:
Mike Anderson	Russ Henly
Kathy Bailey	Marc Jameson
Linnwood Gill	Pam Linstedt
Forest Tilley	Craig Pedersen
Linda Perkins	Helge Eng
John Helms	
Peter Braudrick	Public:
Brad Valentine	Bob Coppock
Jere Melo	Randy Marler
Vince Taylor	Larry Cosda
Mike Liquori	Ray Duff
	Bill Heil
JAG Members Absent:	Patrick Higgins
Dan Porter	
Mike Jani	
Facilitator:	
Steve Zuieback	

1. Agenda Changes

- a. Allocate as much time as needed to the Brandon Gulch report agenda item.
- b. Add an agenda item on process - how to allow everyone to communicate in an equitable basis without violating the Bagley-Keene Act.
- c. Add agenda item: Clarify the charge to the recreation committee.
- d. Add agenda item: Guidance on the Camp 3 timber sale.
- e. Postpone discussion on the work plan until the next meeting.
- f. Add an agenda item on recreation and signage on Road 500.

2. Update from JDSF

Most staff have returned from fire duty.

Camp ground use has been at a moderate level.

Deer hunting season opens in about a week.

The fish ladder replacement project remains on track.

Seasonal plants and animal surveys have been completed. They also survey for spotted owls and murrelet. They do botanical surveys in all potential sale areas.

THP preparation is in process, in the Dunlap, Whiskey Springs, and Hare Creek areas.

The 14 Gulch and Northfork Spur THPs have been submitted to Forest Practice for review. An initial PHI has been conducted in both THPs. Focused PHIs still need to be done, primarily focused on geology. The North Fork Spur THP has an associated Option A plan. The Option A plan will be provided to the JAG for their review.

Three of the Foresters are scheduled for the Fire Academy.

The Governor's executive order regarding temporary workers will not likely affect JDSF, as they are classified as safety and/or revenue-generating employees.

3. Approval of Minutes from the July Meeting

The draft minutes from the July meeting were approved, with a correction of the spelling of Ray Duff's name. Linwood, Mike Anderson and Mike Liquori abstained due to absence at the July meeting.

4. Brandon Gulch Report Part I

The JAG discussed in general what differences remained on the Brandon Gulch prescription report. Differences exist on the preamble, and how the report is set up.

John mentioned the large number of issues to discuss on the late seral prescription on the Brandon Gulch THP. John introduced Steve Zuieback to facilitate the process.

Steve provided a Power Point presentation on group communication, consensus and decision-making.

Steve organized an exercise to identify the critical issues, underlying principles in order to reach agreement and build on these shared principles. The JAG and staff wrote down goals and principles on slips of paper. The goals were posted on a board and sorted by category.

Once principles with a high level of agreement are identified, they can help guide the process for subsequent THPs, including the Camp 3 THP. These are principles to hold your work up against in future prescription recommendations.

Brandon Gulch – Principles and Possible Corrections

The following chart reflects all the comments regarding possible concerns for the Brandon Gulch report. The first entries in each column are the first drafts of possible design principles:

Visual Impacts	Definition and Quantification Guidelines		Rationale	Economics	Late Seral Characteristics	Exposition
Harvest activities should be conducted with sensitivity to maintaining visual quality, over time, with special consideration given to primary recreation areas. This would be accomplished through an agreed upon approach between JDSF staff and the Timber Operator in the following areas: Operational flexibility; Slash treatment; Directional falling Buffers			Rationale for choosing the specific prescriptions for Brandon Gulch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be up front about what we know and don't know • Recognize that a major purpose for the forest is research & demonstration • Explain how recommended prescription actions contribute to the goals 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for Late Seral Forest elements should be established prior to subsequent entry. • An ALSF prescription needs to explicitly address and provide for definitions of LSF elements. • LSF are those that are devised from the dominant trees. 	
Use caution with absolute limits on tree removals (e.g. diameter) vis-à-vis operational considerations	Prescription versus Marking Criteria	Should we have a basal-area removal maximum but not a minimum? Focus on # of trees remaining is counterproductive to focus on late-seral prescription	What technical basis leads to prescription? – opinion, model, empirical? Don't understand rationale for prescriptions	P 11: Ensuring that thinning is economically viable"	Want all (safety excepted) old growth trees retained Concern that focus appears to be toward "big trees"	Clarity to public should be a key goal P17: Locate all operational constraints in one place
Conflict between harvest and recreation in high use areas	Add – Clumps to thinning tables as guidelines	Define upper diameter limits of harvested trees	Cryptos "runs" for all levels of entry showed same results so ? (why bother?)	Stronger guarantee that the RX be economically feasible – make a profit	Concern that may not result in adequate "dead – dying" snag, down wood – which I see as essence of late seral	Clarify the intended audience for report and consider implications for content and technical level
Smaller setbacks	Keep the more quantitative info	Provision needed to recognize need for well-spaced co-dominant leave trees but horizontal	Do we have a working hypothesis for how treatment will allow the stand to develop – next	Timber revenues from this prescription must exceed costs!	P 11: Add > 40" DBH target goals	Would like underpinnings, rationale, accessible to lay

		diverse	entry; future endpoint?			person
Special considerations - #1 set backs are not necessary – the answer depending on yarding method and road location	Numerical removal target conflicts with specifying late-seral-acceleration prescriptions	Virtually any harvest prescription that opens the stand and leaves the largest trees will promote late-seral development	Should not give impression that there is scientific studies that support prescriptions specifics unless defensible	Profitability is not a requirement	P5 paragraph 2: add info from P 19 re: complex redwood canopy	Clarification of Objectives
P 15 – Road setbacks may not be necessary	What should the entries be in the cluster-thinning table? What should be the average thinning?		P3: 2 entry: must it happen or must it be considered?	Application Guidelines Across the Landscape		Not sure of our ultimate goal for Brandon – operate forever as late seral? 2 nd entry, then no entry for 100 years?
“The primary access trail between Camp 6 and Road 360 should receive the same visual protection provided to other recognized trails. Camp 6 is located adjacent to the Brandon Gulch THP area”	Need more specific (quantitative) implementation criteria (e.g. BA to harvest, residual volume). General issue: workable guidelines to staff vs. political compromises		Striking new ground – little research on developing accelerated late-seral Using virgin stand averages as reference is concern – deviation & variation implicitly ignored	Marking guidelines exploit the natural diversity (soils, hydro, aspect, etc) to advance late seral conditions, recognizing how management affects natural evolution of the stand over the long term		Improve clarity of goals Resist temptation to write a PhD dissertation. Keep it simple that it is implementable and objectively verifiable.
	Would like to lean in direction of some numbers (don't cut tree over certain sizes) that when exceeded, need an “explain & justify”		P5 paragraph 2: “does not necessarily preclude timber harvest”	Concerned that RX focus on which types of trees to cut ignores the spatial/eco- geomorphic context that strongly influences stand development		How does this unit help set the stage for broader principles application on future units?
				P3 last sentence – “may not be a primary goal for timber management” How will spatial diversity be accomplished?		

Guidance for Camp 3 Work:

1. Bullet the technical basis/ feasibility documents. Make some statements allowing the reader to follow the logic path. This is what we looked at and this is it how led us to make our recommendations.
2. Use actual data for the site
3. Use plain English in presenting the rationale and the thinking process leading to the specific recommendations.
4. Begin to build the monitoring framework for the entire forest inside of the Camp 3 work, or at least as much as is possible. Provide some reasonable, practical and economic recommendations for monitoring with any language from the actual settlement agreement. We need a comprehensive framework for monitoring for the entire project. How much of the Camp 3 discussion is constrained by the need for this framework. We need to develop our monitoring objectives, principles and strategies for the entire project. Identify the baseline monitoring to support and demonstrate the Camp 3 THP.
5. Clarify the finances. What costs come into play in the economics of this THP – (e.g. helicopter logging).
6. Experimental design is fundamental – who will do the research?

5. Report from the Recreation Committee

John introduced the topic by stressing the need for a better understanding of recreation opportunities, a better understanding of the charge to the recreation committee and the role of JAG as it pertains to recreation.

Vince reported on the recreation committee meeting. It was less well attended than the previous meeting. Approximately 12 people attended, primarily shooting and equestrian interests. They put together a list of priority items to be completed. This included an inventory of trails, (bicycling, hiking and equestrians) by the interested users. The next step will be to get this information into a GIS layer. There was some discussion about whether trails should be multiple or designated use, and whether all trails would be divulged.

Shooting interests will look for tentative sites and access.

Recreationists requested a JDSF forest map.

Discussions about users' group were started, and the communication between the Department and the Users' Group was discussed. There was some uncertainty regarding the concept of the user group recreation task force on page 118 in the Management Plan, and how it might relate to the users' group in the JAG charter.

The Users' group should build on the activities of all the users, and facilitate their communications with the Department.

The OHV interests will collect information on possible areas for OHV use.

Users were supportive of each others' efforts.

The next recreation committee meeting will be on September 19th, tentatively at the JDSF Learning Center.

There was considerable discussion about the appropriate role of JAG in recreation. There was concern about whether the recreation committee is going beyond the charter of providing advice and instead actually managing users' groups. Questions raised included what a users' group is and how JAG should proceed on the recreation front.

The charter states that the Advisory Group shall provide input on the process of conducting a recreation users survey, establishing a recreation user group, and developing a new recreation plan for the Forest. This plan would indicate the desired extent and location of recreation areas, corridors, roads, trails, and facilities that will be managed to enhance the full spectrum of appropriate recreational opportunities given JDSF's management goals.

Some felt the role of the JAG is to advise on how to do this rather than actually doing it, and make recommendations to the director on how to develop a survey and formation of a users' group.

A concern was raised that the JAG and the recreation committee has a lot of higher level work to do in a limited period of time, including advise on a recreation plan, a recreation user survey and the formation of a user group. There was concern the recreation committee be able to focus on these critical higher level issues and not bog down in lower level implementation issues.

The issue was raised whether department staff can fill the role of managing a recreation users' group.

There seemed to be general agreement on the following points: there needs to be clarification on who appoints the users' group, and to whom it reports. It does not report to JAG, and the JAG does not appoint it. The charter is asking the JAG to recommend on the users' group and the conduct of a survey. The recreation committee is giving this special attention. This will come back to the Director as a recommendation. The user group reports to JDSF. The role of JAG is to facilitate communication between the user group and the department.

A motion was made by Vince, seconded by Linda, that the recreation committee, Vince and Peter, will draft a letter for the JAG's review and approval, from the JAG to the director, advising him on what the recreation committee is doing, in terms of meeting with recreation interests, asking for his approval. The motion passed unanimously.

Vince discussed the issue of the sign that exists on Road 500. The road is a private road with private property on both sides. JDSF has an easement / right of way to use the road. The landowner has reportedly discouraged public access. The sign reportedly implies that public access is prohibited. He requested a sign that makes clear that public access is allowed. The road is a primary access for the public into JDSF, and it is inappropriate that there is a sign that discourages public access. A better sign would state something like "public road through private property."

Marc clarified the historical background. When JDSF was acquired from the Caspar Lumber company, they gained access, through a written easement from Caspar Lumber Company, to Road 500. The easement says nothing about the public. The landowner believes the easement is being over-encumbered and abused by the public, driving through at all hours of the day and night. The landowner wanted a gate, a request which the Department turned down. Marc gets

calls from him regularly about people driving drunk, speeding, etc. The sign states that it is private property, which is correct. The sign was produced by the Department, but it is not an official CAL FIRE sign. Road 500 is not a public road, and it is a legal issue, rather than a Department or JAG issue.

The Department suggested they consult with legal staff to draft new signs with different wording that are less likely to turn people around, and request the landowner put up the new signs.

Randy Marler stated that shooting interests be allowed to work with Marc and staff to move forward. JAG members agreed.

6. Brandon Gulch Report II

The JAG discussed the logistical issues of how to use the above principles. Formulating consensus principles to evaluate the Brandon Gulch prescriptions could take a lot of time and result in major changes to the report as it currently stands. There was concern about being able to incorporate all the principles in the Brandon Gulch document within the timeline. The JAG agreed not to go through all the principles and include them in the Brandon Gulch prescription at this meeting, but rather go through the document and decide how to address the principles as they go through the document.

The Brandon Gulch prescription document evolved from the following process used by the LSD committee: information was synthesized from the Brandon Gulch stands as well as old growth stands from elsewhere in the redwood region. These were compared, and inferences were made about how to get from the current stand in Brandon Gulch to these older stand conditions (number of trees in different size classes). Two entries twenty years apart were used. The Brandon Gulch prescription is the LSD committee's best estimate today for how to set the stand up for a second treatment twenty years from now. At the 20-year point, using adaptive management to evaluate stand conditions, we will re-evaluate stand conditions and apply further treatments as needed, with the expectation that at the 100-year point, the stand will be well on its way to late seral conditions. Three different silvicultural prescriptions were simulated in a growth model. 20 percent at 15 years cutting cycle, 30 percent at 20 years, 50percent at 40 years. A more frequent harvest or a heavier harvest would be more of a visual impact. The simulation results at elapsed time 50 years were not significantly different. A lighter harvest, 30 percent with a 20 years CC was chosen based on the above findings. Brandon Gulch is medium site quality.

The JAG briefly discussed the method of communicating results from the LSD to the JAG. One or a few versions of the final product would be best for transmitting the LSD findings to the larger group. Some JAG members felt they did not need to be a part of every draft version of the document, and that in fact, doing so, made it difficult for JAG members, who had not been part of the detailed discussions of the LSD, to identify what to read and comment on.

Draft 5 edits:

The JAG discussed the definition of late seral conditions, and the statement that little was known about late seral conditions.

A methodology section was requested, to establish more clearly how the prescriptions were selected, and the basis for the decision-making.

There was a lengthy discussion of criteria and scientific evidence used to support the Brandon Gulch prescription. Discussion included the old growth stands and their role in formulating the Brandon Gulch prescription.

Given the lack of convincing results of the simulations and scientific knowledge, one JAG member questioned whether it is defensible to have numerical targets for basal area and aiming for 100-years tree density targets. He recommended removing 100-year targets and basal area targets for removal.

The OG stands were for illustrative purposes, to guide in formulating the Brandon Gulch prescription, to start it on its way to similar conditions. It is impossible for the Brandon Gulch prescription to create these OG conditions. 30 percent of basal area is a moderate harvest. It is useful in order to prevent excessive harvest. If you harvest much less than 30 percent there is concern about opening the stand sufficiently to get a growth response. Distinguish between the prescription (30 percent basal area) and marking criteria (clump tree removal guidelines). The literature is relevant, it helps support the prescription formulation, but there is no direct link between them. We should clarify how the literature informs the prescription formulation, but state the actual relationships of lack thereof.

The JAG agreed to remove the tabular 200-years target tree density tabular data on page 11. Rather than tree number targets, state that 30 percent of basal area will be removed from the intermediate and codominant crown classes.

The rationale and attributes of a late seral forest would be helpful to have up front in the Brandon Gulch prescription. The section "Enhance old-growth characteristics" from Vince's July 30, 2008 draft was inserted into section 4 in the Brandon Gulch prescription, with minor edits (remove "following the harvest, selected trees can be climbed and the limbs and top manipulated by hand", "1) the temperature and humidity on the forest floor is not significantly altered", "Some of the larger redwood trees that are cut to create growing space should also be left on the forest floor").

Evaluate the amount of large woody debris (LWD) on the ground prior to the second entry.

Page 15, Visual buffers: instead of the 150 feet slope distance setbacks, the JAG agreed after some discussion to substitute the following language: Implement buffer zones 100 feet or within sight distance of the trail, whichever is less. Within this buffer apply a lighter treatment than elsewhere in the THP. All lopping slash within this buffer shall be lopped to within 30 inches of the ground, as uniformly as possible.

The JAG agreed the Brandon Gulch prescription report does not specify a maximum harvestable tree size. A better criteria is the existing statement that we are leaving all the dominants. The JAG also discussed this issue in the July meeting, and agreed that a maximum harvest trees size would not be beneficial.

A brief but vigorous discussion ensued about language to ensure that the timber sale is economically profitable. The settlement agreement does not specifically mention economic profitability as a criterion, although its statements about fair market prices can be interpreted to imply profitability at least for timber sale contractors. Some saw it as a moot issue, the timber sale will very likely be profitable. Some were concerned it may send the wrong message to the casual reader, because the purpose of the Brandon Gulch prescription is to demonstrate good,

sound forestry practices. Staff argued the fundamental purpose of the Brandon Gulch prescription and in a larger context, the State Forests, spelled out in legislation, is to demonstrate good, sound forestry practices that are economically viable. Demonstrating below-cost timber sales to our client base of private landowners who must make a profit to survive, constitutes a failure in our mission. The majority of the JAG were in favor of removing all language pertaining to economic profitability (top of page 10 and top of page 13).

This may become more of an acute issue on the Camp 3 timber sale, where profitability margins may be thinner, as a result of helicopter thinning requirements and other factors.

A writing team implemented the above changes on Friday night and brought the resulting document, Version 6 of the Brandon Gulch report, back to the JAG on Saturday morning.

Saturday, August 2, 2008

7. Discussion of the Brandon Gulch Report, Version 6

Editorial changes will be handled by Russ and John. Individual JAG members gave their notes on editorial changes to John and Russ. JAG member comments included:

Page 5. Include a statement to the effect that this is a first attempt at silvicultural prescriptions to accelerate the development of late seral conditions. We do not know everything about this subject, and we will learn more as we go forward.

Figure 5. Add a 20-years no-treatment projection to the graph.

The report is weak on justifying the prescription, i.e., how did we get to the prescription we selected?

At the end of section 6.a., insert the statement "JDSF staff will work with the timber operator to reduce the visual impact of the timber harvest."

There was discussion about language to guide harvesting as it pertains to visual quality. The JAG agreed to insert the following in the section on Roads and Trails on page 15:

"JAG members agreed on the objective of maintaining high visual quality for trails and campgrounds. JAG considered but rejected no harvest setbacks as a means to accomplish the subjective feeling that the adopted approach would not produce significant adverse effects. Setbacks would unnecessarily restrict harvest opportunities and operational flexibility in harvesting. Further, ruling out harvesting next to trails would in the long run prevent trail users from being able to see into the more visually rewarding late seral forest. Rather, JAG recommended allowing a lighter than average prescription within buffer zones along roads and trails, the prescription and operations implemented with the goal to recover visual quality within three to five years after harvest. The buffer zones will be 100 feet or sight distance from the edges of the above roads or trails, whichever is less."

Page 18. remove the statement to the effect that non-merchantable woody debris yarded to landings shall be returned to the forest floor, with a statement to the effect that methods for increasing the supply of large woody debris on the forest floor shall be considered prior to the second entry.

Page 20, add a bullet point: “evaluate in approximately 5 years whether there are feasible opportunities to enhance late seral associated habitat features, flora and fauna”.

The section “Background Information” was inserted before the discussion of the prescription. Appendix 6 and 7 were deleted.

The JAG unanimously adopted the Brandon Gulch report. 10 members indicated strong support, 1 member indicated general support.

8. Discussion of the JAG's Way of Doing Business

There was concern about the large number of emails describing different versions of the Brandon Gulch report.

One solution discussed was to address emails to the LSD committee and Google Groups, and for users to set Google Group settings to not receive emails, as desired.

Suggestions included developing one document to work on between each LSD meeting. The comment was made this will lead to tradeoffs, because free information sharing will inevitably lead to incremental comments.

There was a desire to allow all JAG members to provide feedback on a draft document. A tentative process emerged whereby a draft document will be distributed to all JAG members for comments. After a given deadline, comments will not be incorporated. A second, draft final document will be distributed at least a week before the next JAG meeting. Specific requests for comments from the JAG Chair can also be issued.

Jere handed out and discussed a memo to John dated 7/31/08, which addressed his concern regarding the Bagley-Keene Act and open meeting considerations.

9. Development of Work Plan to Address Charter

John asked Vince and Mike Anderson to form a committee to analyze how to approach a work plan.

Their charge will be to decide on the behalf of JAG to move forward with the development of a work plan, and report back to the JAG.

Subsequently, John envisions a team approach to developing the work plan using several groups of two people.

10. Guidance for the Camp 3 THP

At least two prescriptions will be needed.

It has to be done in the context of applied research. There was a brief discussion of how many replications, if any, could be implemented in the context of traditional forestry research.

The JAG needs to document the technical basis for whatever prescription they choose, the background information used to support the decisions on experimental design. Hypotheses to be tested and questions to be answered need to be clearly spelled out.

Monitoring recommendations is a new and non-trivial element of the Camp 3 THP.

There will be substitute timber for Camp 3 THP, but not from the 14 Gulch THP.

The field tour will focus on the Camp 3 THP area.

11. JAG Vice Chair

The duties of the Vice Chair is to act in the Chair's absence. The JAG unanimously passed a motion to make Vince Taylor Vice Chair of the JAG.

The JAG agreed to meet at the Camp 1 picnic area at 1300 hours for the field trip. The meeting adjourned at 1245 hours.

12. Field Trip

Participants: Brad Valentine, Kathi Bailey, Linda Perkins, Vince Taylor, John Helms, Mike Liquori, Marc Jameson, Pam Linstedt, Lynn Webb, Helge Eng. The participants walked the Camp 3 THP area. Discussions focused on silviculture, inventory and monitoring.

Sources of variation include harvesting methods and geographic sources.

Parameters to address variation include the size of individual plots as well as the number of plots installed.

There is an urgent need for JDSF to consistently implement a seamless and comprehensive system of inventory, research and monitoring plots. In order to avoid fragmentation into a plethora of incompatible project-specific inventory installations, staff strongly suggested incorporating plots on Camp 3 into the existing CFI inventory system. This can be accomplished by densifying the CFI plot grid as needed.

There was discussion of monitoring parameters to measure, including large woody debris and structural characteristics in addition to the current CFI parameters that are being measured. Monitoring parameters and the level of detail of measurements will depend to a large extent on the null hypotheses/parameters of interest that will be formulated for this project.

Current growth on the Camp 3 THP area is approximately 1,500 – 2,000 board feet per acre per year.

(the note-taker departed the field trip at 1600).