



Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group October 2019-December 2020 Fledgling Fund Grant Accomplishments Report Executive Summary

For seventeen years, the Working Group has connected a network of forest landowners, land managers and professional partners in Sonoma County. This robust network of land stewards shares a vision of a county with healthy forests, riparian areas, woodlands and watersheds, which are protected across landscapes and throughout generations by the proactive, responsible stewardship of forest landowners, both public and private.

Thanks to the dedication of numerous community partners and an essential handful of donors, most prominently the Fledgling Fund, the Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group closes the 2020 year with a significant list of accomplishments. A few highlights from the full Accomplishments Report include:

- Developed new website: www.sonomaforests.org
- Raised \$7,500 from members, private foundations, and members of the public, covering 40% of annual budget
- Increased membership by 25% for a total of 142 subscribed members
- Monthly meetings have had 47 unique attendees and represented 36 different agencies and organizations. Average attendance per monthly members meeting is 14
- Hosted or co-hosted five educational events:
 - “Cooperative Prescribed Burning with the Good Fire Alliance”
 - Cohosted with Fire Forward’s Good Fire Alliance
 - 10/19—Monan’s Rill, Santa Rosa, CA
 - “Forest Stewardship Workshop”
 - Supported UCANR
 - 01/2020—Ukiah, CA
 - “Summer 2020 Fire Outlook”
 - CALFIRE, local fire reps
 - 07/2020—Zoom

- “Wildfire Recovery for Forest and Rural Landowners”
 - Cohosted with UCCE
 - 12/2020—Zoom
- House Meeting on Joy Ridge Rd
 - Supported community on Joy Ridge Rd, Occidental, CA
 - 12/2020—Zoom
- Hosted five “brown bag” speaker events:
 - “Bouverie Preserve post-fire vegetation response analysis”
 - Presented by Arthur Dawson, principal ecological historian, Baseline Consulting
 - 11/2019--In-person presentation
 - “Biomass Utilization, Costs and Benefits,”
 - Presented by Daniel Barad, Sierra Club
 - 01/2020--In-person presentation
 - “Jenner Headlands Shaded Fuel Break Project”,
 - Presented by Brook Edwards, Preserve Manager of Jenner Headlands, The Wildlands Conservancy
 - 06/2020—Zoom
 - “Walbridge Fire Impacts on a Managed Healdsburg Forest,”
 - Presented by Fred Euphrat, consulting forester and owner Bear Flat forest
 - 09/2020—Zoom
 - PG&E Wildfire Settlement Funds for Vegetation Management collaborative meeting hosted by Sonoma County RCDs and Fire Safe Sonoma (two member organizations) was advertised to the Working Group membership, and numerous members attended to discuss the best use of settlement funds to prevent future wildfire
 - 11/2020—Zoom
- Produced quarterly newsletters, Summer 2020 and Fall 2020
- Produced *Forest Landowners Stewardship Guide*
- Held monthly Members meetings and Steering Committee meetings
- and more!

Please read on for a detailed report of the Sonoma County Forest Working Group’s accomplishments, as provided to our most notable funder, the Fledgling Fund. Many thanks again to the members of the Working Group and the county’s hardworking forest stewards.

Sincerely,
 Adriana Stagnaro
 Coordinator, Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group



Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group October 2019-December 2020 Fledgling Fund Grant Accomplishments Report

It is with the utmost gratitude that we provide the Fledgling Fund with a report on the accomplishments achieved during the 2019-2020 grant period. This grant has sustained the Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group (Working Group)'s incredible work in our community. For seventeen years, the Working Group has connected a network of forest landowners, land managers and professional partners in Sonoma County. This robust network of land stewards shares a vision of a county with healthy forests, riparian forests, woodlands and watersheds, which are protected across landscapes and throughout generations by the proactive, responsible stewardship of forest landowners, both public and private. The Working Group works towards this vision in the following ways:

1. Providing education and assistance to forest landowners on matters relevant to them, to better steward their land in an ecologically sound manner, across landscapes and through generations.
2. Gathering a diverse network of professional partners and landowners to meet, share information and resources, and discuss what we can do to improve the overall health of Sonoma County's forests.

The \$15,000 grant, awarded in October 2019, has supported the Working Group with a part-time coordinator, a Project Manager of the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (RCD), Adriana Stagnaro, for more than one year, lasting through December 2020. Sustaining the coordinator's time has enabled all members of the Working Group to conduct outreach and education more efficiently and effectively.

Below is a summary of the proposed tasks and accomplishments achieved during the grant period.

Task 1 - Lead Operations Committee & Tasks

Manage members, maintain a list of active members and interested landowners, maintain records and documents on DropBox for all members to access, collect and manage data relevant to Working Group efforts, and utilize Working Group members and interns to carry out Two-Year Work Plan.

Achieved: The Operations Committee has grown the Working Group's membership to 142 members (up 29 members, or 25%, since Oct. 2019). The Coordinator maintained the Working Group's membership listserv on Yahoo Groups, and in Fall 2020, migrated the listserv to Groups.io to better serve the membership's communication needs. Dropbox folder is robust and used often by the Operations Committee for storing Working Group documents. The Operations Committee developed agendas each month for the regular members meeting, and action items followed the objectives in the Two-Year Work Plan.

The Operations Committee also notably conducted fundraising. Because of the Fledgling Fund's initial investment, we have raised an additional \$7,500 from private funds and from the Working Group membership, during the 2019-2020 period. The Operations Committee continues to fundraise and grant write to support this work. We plan on applying to Rebuild North Bay Foundation's RiseUp Community Impact Grant Program, apply to a private foundation, and to fundraise at events including a possible Summer 2021 conference.

Task 2 - Coordinate Intern

Recruit, hire, and mentor a bachelors level University/College student or young qualified professional seeking experience in the field to assist with tasks as needed.

During this period, we did not seek an intern. Instead, the FWG has received some additional help from Gold Ridge RCD Project Coordinator, Isis Howard, with outreach activities. In the future, an intern may be recruited and hired to assist.

Task 3 - Coordinate Steering Committee

Prepare agendas, tasks and updates for the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee makes decisions on behalf of the Working Group and consults with the Working Group and its committees, when appropriate, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Forest Working Group as a whole.

Achieved: Monthly Steering Committee Meetings were held. Coordinator prepared agendas with work items for each month. The agendas and minutes of the Steering Committee are attached to this report. Steering Committee focused work on the tasks in the Two-Year Work Plan as well as discussing relevant news in local and state forestry. Also planned fundraising activities.

Task 4 - Coordinate General Membership Meetings

Prepare agendas, tasks and updates for the General Membership. The General Membership shares information about local and state forestry news, projects, events, learning opportunities, funding opportunities, etc., and supports the Working Group's Two-Year Work Plan tasks.

Achieved: Monthly General Membership Meetings were held. The Coordinator prepared an agenda with work items as described in the Work Plan for each

month; addressed relevant news and events; coordinated members and outside partners to present on relevant topics at meetings; supported the formation of new committees as the membership identified the need.

In numbers: Over the last 14 months

- Monthly meetings have had 47 unique attendees
- Monthly meetings had 36 different agencies and organizations represented
- An average of 14 members attended each monthly meeting
- The Monthly Attendance Roster is attached.

Meeting agendas and minutes are attached to this report. The following meetings were held on Zoom and recorded to YouTube. Note: Not all participants are visible because some members turn their videos off or join the meeting by landline phone.

- September 17, 2020: <https://youtu.be/1PvFa-D2F2Y>
- October 15, 2020: https://youtu.be/ey94_ZQmK0c
- November 19, 2020: shorturl.at/crR06
- December 17, 2020: No regular member's meeting held due to winter holidays

Task 5 - Facilitate Public Outreach and Events

Facilitate outreach, communications, logistics, and coordination of educational events for both private and public landowners and managers.

a) Co-sponsor five workshops for forest landowners. These events will be organized by members and co-sponsored by the Forest Working Group. Events are meant to educate forest landowners on basic forestland management principles. They will be hosted "in the field" as often as possible.

Achieved:

- The Working Group co-hosted a tour and talk called "Cooperative Prescribed Burning with the Good Fire Alliance" on October 5, 2019 at Monan's Rill, a forestland property in the Mark West Creek Watershed, east of Santa Rosa. The group toured two cooperatively burned private woodlands (spring 2018 and summer 2019), observed proactive forest thinning for fire resilience and discussed the benefits, liabilities, permitting, planning and coordination of collaborative prescribed burning on private land. Event flier is attached to this report.
- Working Group members promoted, supported and attended the UCANR Forest Stewardship Workshop, hosted in Ukiah over three weekends in January 2020. Member and Sonoma RCD Forester Jason Wells was a contracted educator for the workshop. Working Group Coordinator Adriana Stagnaro attended to study the workshop format and content. Five attendees were private Sonoma County forest landowners. The UCANR Forest Stewardship Workshop teaches landowners how to prepare forest management plans for their

properties that can then be approved by a licensed forester. Learn more about the on-going workshop series here:
https://ucanr.edu/sites/forestry/Forest_Stewardship/ForestStewardshipWorkshops/

- In February 2020, Working Group Coordinator hosted a volunteer tree planting event in Bodega on a forestland property. The event was advertised to landowners and the public through the Forest Working Group and Bodega Land Trust. Volunteers planted 300 redwood seedlings along the site of an instream coho salmon habitat project while learning about the importance of habitat features like creek-side vegetation, boulders and downed logs to the survival of the endangered coho salmon. Event flier is attached to this report.

Beginning in March 2020, in-person events were not possible because of the pandemic; however, we significantly enhanced our online presence and offerings with a new website and virtual meetings.

- In July 2020, the Forest Working Group hosted five guests to speak on the outlook for summer 2020 fire danger. Chief Turbeville, Chief Nicholls, Chief Knecht, Marshal Williams and Fire Prevention Specialist Caerleon Safford presented on their expectations for the Summer-Fall 2020 fire season and advised on how to be prepared for increased fire activity. The event was advertised to members and non-members. View the recorded event here, under 2020 Updates from CAL FIRE and Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention Division (July 2020):
<https://sonomaforests.org/library/wildfire/>
 - In December 2020, the Forest Working Group hosted a webinar for forest landowners on recovering from the summer 2020 fires (Glass, Walbridge, and Meyers fires) covering subjects such as assessing erosion potential, assessing tree mortality, preparing your property for winter weather, and technical and financial resources to connect with for more assistance. The event had 57 registrants and over 40 attendees. View the recorded event here, and access the Resources document that accompanies the event, under 2020 Post-fire Forest and Rural Land Recovery Workshop:
<https://sonomaforests.org/library/wildfire/>
 - In December 2020, Working Group members facilitated a House Meeting for the forested community on Joy Ridge Road in Occidental. The event was hosted by a landowner to draw interest from the community in developing a neighborhood collaborative forest management plan. 28 neighbors attended. Sonoma RCD forester Jason Wells presented on the history of redwood stewardship in the Joy Ridge area, the reason for management planning and implementation programs to help fund the work. This event recording is not yet available to view.
- a. Organize and host five “brown bag” events. These lunch-time presentations and discussions are designed to educate the membership of the Working Group and address critical issues identified by the Working Group.

- November 2019: “Bouverie Preserve post-fire vegetation response analysis,” presented by Arthur Dawson, principal ecological historian, Baseline Consulting, In-person presentation
- January 2020: “Biomass Utilization, Costs and Benefits,” presented by Daniel Barad, Sierra Club, In-person presentation
- June 2020: “Jenner Headlands Shaded Fuel Break Project”, presented by Brook Edwards, Preserve Manager of Jenner Headlands, The Wildlands Conservancy
View here: <https://youtu.be/13LXhrjhMBM>
- September 2020: “Walbridge Fire Impacts on a Managed Healdsburg Forest,” presented by Fred Euphrat, consulting forester and owner Bear Flat forest
View here: Start at 27:50
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PvFa-D2F2Y&feature=youtu.be>
- November 2020: PG&E Wildfire Settlement Funds for Vegetation Management collaborative meeting hosted by Sonoma County RCDs and Fire Safe Sonoma (two member organizations) was advertised to the Working Group membership, and numerous members attended to discuss the best use of settlement funds to prevent future wildfire
View here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=poyAt04e4IM>

- b. Develop a video for publication on the Working Group website. Video will inspire and educate forest landowners to take action as stewards of their woods.
After a set-back due to the pandemic and fire losses, the video project is still in development and is planned for spring 2021. The video will feature multiple forest landowners, fire survivors, foresters, and the trees and wildlife themselves. Video will focus on reasons landowners steward the woods, funding and technical resources available to them, how the Forest Working Group can help, and what this specific moment in history means to our community: climate change requires that we enhance every carbon sink and prepare our ecosystems for inevitable wildfire. Video will be hosted on the website and shared out in quarterly newsletter.
- c. Produce quarterly e-newsletter to keep members informed of events, opportunities and resources. Will be sent to General Membership as well as any member of the public that requests to receive it.
The newsletter listserv reaches approximately 500 recipients. Our inaugural newsletter went out in Summer 2020. View the Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 newsletters as well as the link to sign up for our news here:
<https://sonomaforests.org/get-involved/news/>
- d. Survey landowners to learn their most pressing needs related to forestry or forest care through the e-newsletter and website.

The Landowner Survey is hosted on the website, advertised through the quarterly newsletter, and has received four responses from non-member forest landowners (one of our key audiences to increase outreach to). We are incorporating this input into our 2020-21 Work Plan. View the survey form here: <https://sonomaforests.org/survey/>

- e. Develop additional future outreach opportunities, such as a conference or “Boot Camp” program for forest landowners.
The UCANR Forest Stewardship Workshop series has provided almost the exact service we had envisioned for the Boot Camp. We encouraged our membership and public to attend when the series was hosted locally in Ukiah in January 2020. We are in conversation with the program managers to bring the workshop even closer to home in Santa Rosa in 2021, with the Working Group’s support in advertising and arranging speakers and field sites.

Working Group members are conceptualizing a virtual two-day conference in Summer 2021. Early concept is that Day 1 will feature a series of presentations focused on landowner education (including topics such as: Forest planning, typical forest improvement project types, how to balance fire safety with other forest management objectives, resources to support your work). Day 2 will feature a series of presentations focused on academic research and progress made in the field to better understand the challenges facing our forests.

Task 6 - Lead Website Committee

Website committee is responsible for improving and maintaining the website.

- a. Coordinate a one-time major overhaul of the Working Group website to enhance its organization and ease of use and content. This project will be managed by the coordinator, however the webmaster will be funded by a Private Foundation.

Achieved: The Coordinator and Education Committee facilitated a major overhaul of the Forest Working Group Website. The web developer’s contract and the new website maintenance contract is funded by a private foundation; however, all the design work was funded by the 2019-20 Fledgling Fund grant. View the new and improved website here: <https://sonomaforests.org/>

Task 7 - Support Committees

Three committees motivate the work of the Forest Working Group: the Outreach and Education Committee, the Services Committee and the Operations committee. Their priority tasks are outlined in the Two-Year Work Plan.

Achieved: Each Committee made the following accomplishments with significant support from the Coordinator:

- Outreach and Education Committee produced the new website and organized the December workshop.
- Services Committee produced the Forest Landowner Stewardship Directory. This directory is designed to be a useful guide to forest landowners of all

parcel sizes to find the professional help they need to achieve responsible forest management. Our Forest Landowner Stewardship Directory will walk you through the myriad resources available to managers of forestlands, big and small.

View the Directory: https://sonomaforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Sonoma-County-Landowner-Stewardship-Directory_PRINT.pdf

- An ad-hoc committee was formed to discuss the PG&E wildfire settlement funds appropriated by the County, as it pertains to county-wide vegetation management. Members prepared and signed a letter to the County Board of Supervisors with suggested uses for the settlement funds to enhance vegetation management in key areas in the county. The letter is attached.
- The Coordinator also supported an outside team organizing a business competition focused on treating the county's vegetative fire fuels (launching spring 2021). The competition is called the Sonoma County Biomass Business Competition. Learn more about it here: <https://www.nosocoair.net/biobiz.html>
- Operations Committee supported all activities of the Working Group

Task 8 - Develop Charter

Finish developing the Charter and post to the website.

Achieved: The 2019 Charter update has been completed and is available here:

https://sonomaforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Charter-Draft-FINAL_2019.pdf

Task 9 - Contract Management & Reporting

We propose that the reporting and deliverables for this grant align with that of the 2018 Fledgling Fund grant.

Achieved with the submission of this Accomplishments Report.

Individually, our members work hard each day to protect and steward Sonoma County's forest lands. Through the Forest Working Group, they are provided an essential forum to collaborate, inform and support each other. It has also been a catalyst for community education opportunities that otherwise would not exist. This forum for outreach and collaboration is all the more needed in challenging times. The Fledgling Fund has allowed the group to expand its services despite the multiple challenges our community faces and continue to grow and evolve to meet the need of our community. We can't thank you enough for this support.

Sincerely,



Adriana Stagnaro

Coordinator, Sonoma County Forest Conservation Working Group