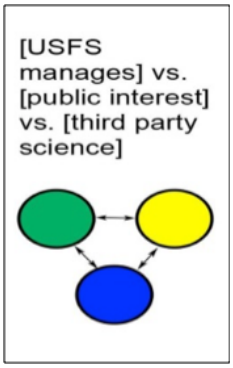
2015 Summer Edition **Public Participation Team** Vol. 8 No. 4


A Newsletter from the SNAMP Public Participation Team - Volume 8, Number 4, September 2015

Welcome! This issue focuses on the Public Participation Team's Final Report (Appendix F) and conclusions from 8 years of implementing and studying the public participation process within the Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project.

# the Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project newsletter

## SNAMP's Collaboration Model

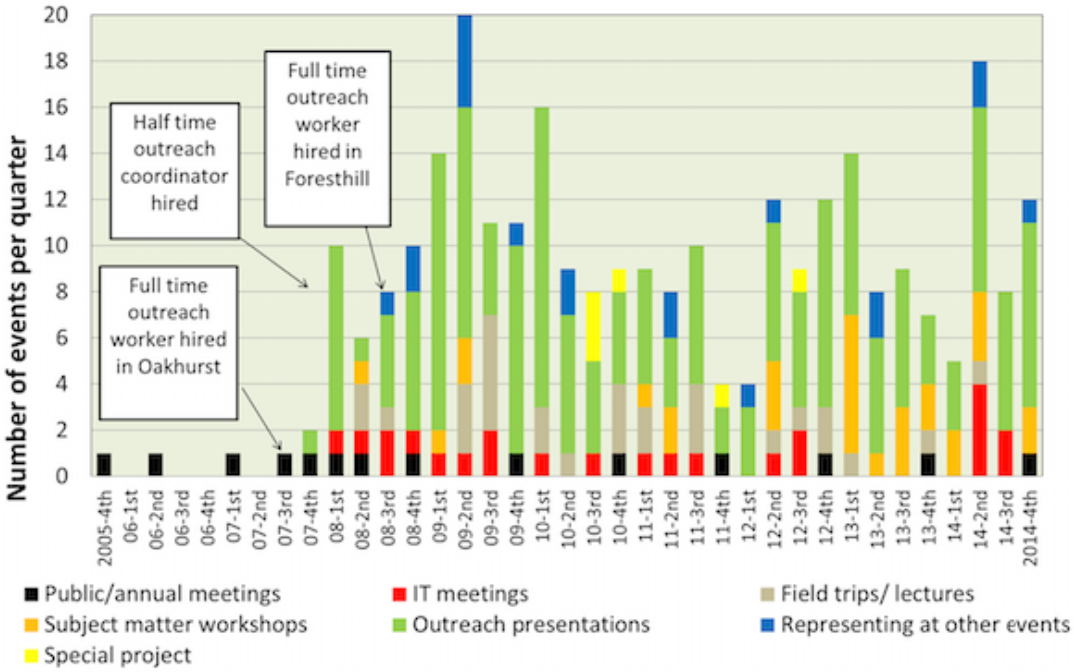



SNAMP was created as a third party adaptive management project to avoid conflict over the 2004 Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment developed by the Forest Service to manage the national forests in the Sierra Nevada. The University of California (UC Science Team) was chosen to play the role of the third party independent science provider because of its perceived credibility with participants on both sides of Sierran forest management debates. The SNAMP experiment was designed to reveal the impacts of SPLATs (fuels reduction treatments called Strategically Placed Landscape Area Treatments) on fire and forest resources and included two representative treatment study sites where the UC Science Team conducted the pre-treatment data collection, the Forest Service designed and implemented fuels treatment projects, and the UC Science Team collected post-treatment data, analyzed the findings and presented results and recommendations.

This three party system separated the experimentation and monitoring from management decisions made by the Forest Service and emphasized reporting the findings directly to the public and Forest Service in an open and transparent process. Transparency is critical in order to maintain public confidence in the information and decision making process.

SNAMP used a collaborative adaptive management approach where participation was encouraged in every phase of the project from study design through data collection, analysis and final recommendations. Shared decision-making was constrained by both the need of the

Forest Service to maintain their management responsibility as required by law and the need of the UC Science Team to maintain the standards of the experimental methods and approach. All partners committed to conducting a participatory process that would involve as broad a stakeholder base as possible. The Participation Team included both social scientists and UC Cooperative Extension outreach specialists to conduct and study the collaboration process. Our Cooperative Extension specialists were located both regionally and local to the SNAMP study areas.




## Outreach Model

The techniques of our outreach model were tailored to emphasize 5 objectives that are associated with successful collaborations (see box 1). We hoped that by focusing on these 5 core objectives we would continually improve the project, build shared understandings about the final project results and ultimately reduce conflict over forest management in the Sierra. With our objective of effectiveness we intended to report on SNAMP's attainment of basic milestones such as production of reports and implementation of treatments, none of which were assured but were essential to project completion.

### Box 1: Collaboration Essentials

Objectives: Inclusivity, Transparency, Relationships, Learning & Effectiveness

Have well-defined desired outreach goals/outcomes
Be clear about project constraints
Hold face-to-face events with nametags, field trips are best
Give sufficient notice of events
Share agenda development
Have a facilitator at meetings
Share notes/products promptly
Make products accessible and understandable to all
Accommodate participants' multiple levels and fields of expertise
Host a frequently updated website
Do outreach to those who do not attend your events
Evaluate your efforts together; adapt as needed

## Inclusiveness and Transparency

Outreach in SNAMP centered on engaging scientists, managers and all interested stakeholders in the study of the impacts of the Forest Service's implementation of SPLATs (fuels reduction treatments) on fire and forest resources and we

accomplished this through both in person events and at a distance methods. SNAMP planned and facilitated public and technical science meetings, subject matter workshops, and fieldtrips. Outreach professionals also gave presentations at meetings of local and interest based communities. At a distance methods included an email list, an interactive website and webinars. We also produced newsletters, technical publication summaries, stories in newspapers and blogs. Ultimately between 2005 and 2014 we hosted 287 in person events (see graph above on Page 2).

**Box 2: Because of the UC third party role in SNAMP…**

95% of survey participants stated they had "learned new things at SNAMP events"
94% reported that transparency was enhanced
85+% agreed that there was an "increase in shared understandings"
85+% felt "relationships have improved"
85+% thought that the process was "increasing trust"
66% said they were now "better able to participate in Forest Service planning processes"

(2014 email survey of the SNAMP email list)

We found field trips to be the best type of event for learning and developing relationships. At a distance methods helped to increase the inclusivity and transparency of the project but we found that online interactions could not replace the importance of face-to-face connections for building relationships and fostering shared learnings and understandings about other participants as well as the science. It was also beneficial to go to other group's meetings (including local civic, professional and conservation clubs) to present about SNAMP rather than expecting stakeholders to be able to attend SNAMP events.

## Learning, Improved Relationships and Shared Understandings

The Participation Team's social scientists conducted in-depth interviews (in 2008-2010, 2012, and 2013-2014) and email surveys (2010 and 2014) to collect participant views of SNAMP and how these views changed over the duration of the project. We also conducted participant evaluations after each event.

**Box 3: Shared understandings of SNAMP participants:**

Ultimately treatment impacts are likely to be positive
Treatments are preferred compared to severe fire
Treatments improved forest health
But treatments might have been too light to protect from severe fire and study may not have been able to detect impacts
Treatments might have had short term negative impacts on wildlife but long term benefits
Treatments unlikely to have had negative effects on water in short or long term

(2014 email survey and 2013/2014 interviews)

SNAMP's efforts toward inclusivity and transparency were noted by participants and made it possible to learn together because information was available and accessible to all and, as that happened, participants also got to know each other and experienced the many different types of people and interests that are involved with forest management. The extensive amount of new scientific learning was consistently cited as one of the biggest benefits of attending SNAMP events (see box 2). The years spent learning together in open settings that encouraged discussion and questions helped create shared understandings of the scientific results (see box 3) and research methods as well as larger more complex topics like adaptive management and forest health. Relationships improved over the long life of the

project, even among those historically opposed to each other, such as environmental and forest products groups. Nevertheless, we learned that some relationships were strained not because of the shared learning experience but due to limitations on the project such as funding changes. Important for future collaboration with the Forest Service, participants also learned about the agency and the challenges and constraints it faces.

## SNAMP Scientific Outcomes

A large volume of new scientific information was generated by the UC Science Team. This information was published through 39 journal articles (through the end of the project) and 'briefed' in science briefs developed by the Participation Team. Team members used citation analysis to track how fast and far the SNAMP publications were cited in journal publications, dissertations, and resource management reports. We found that the average time it took for a SNAMP publication to be cited in another journal was about 7 months, and that citations to our articles came from around the globe. The map above shows the locations of the institutions of researchers who cited our work.


## Collaboration Outcomes & SNAMP's Next Steps

The Participation Team concluded that the third party model was well demonstrated in the project and should be transferable in parts or in whole to other situations given adequate attention and funding. As has been reported in other large scale adaptive management projects, sizeable and consistent funding for many years is vital, yet very difficult, to achieve.

In 2015 the University of California completed its role in SNAMP by publishing a final report of project findings – this newsletter is a summary of the Participation Team's results; the full report is available at http://snamp.cnr.berkeley.edu/snamp-finalreport/.

The next steps are left to the Forest Service to work directly with stakeholders to use and adapt SNAMP products, results and recommendations to improve management of the forests of the Sierra. We hope that the shared understandings developed during this project along with the improved relationships between participants and increased familiarity with the Forest Service are the foundation for more productive and continued collaborative efforts in the future.

This SNAMP Newsletter created by Susie Kocher, Kim Ingram, and Maggi Kelly.