

Angora Fire – Future Forests Workshop

S. Lake Tahoe, November 3, 2007

Questions for the panel discussion

Gary Nakamura comments and recollection of answers

1. What sorts of measures are being taken in regards to Angora Creek monitoring and greater watershed monitoring? Have riparian zones been assessed? Are restoration plans in progress for riparian zones? *[Richard Harris and Judy Clot indicated a lot of restoration work was being done in Angora Creek, even prior to the fire.]*
2. Is the primary goal of fire management going to be fuel reduction? If it has been shown that fires are necessary for ecosystem health and that fuel reduction continues to lag behind, why are prescribed burns not being addressed more in the area?
3. Are there any proposed research efforts aimed at measuring tree species and density on private properties before and after the Angora Fire? [Research on what, the species and density of the regenerated forest versus the pre-fire forest?]
4. Given the continued mention of “structures and building materials” in this (Angora) and southern California fires (now twice), what effect in a “Future Forest” will be with/without change in human behavior and decisions?
5. Joe McBride – You gave us lots of facts about urban vs. “natural” forests. What percentage of Lake Tahoe forests are “urban”? Small, I bet. How much negative impact does the “urban” forest have on the Tahoe region? Do the numbers you have found in your studies have a big negative impact on the area? *[McBride - Urban forests less than 5% of Tahoe Basin forests. They contribute sediment and chemical runoff pollution to the lake. Helms raised the point that Henry Vaux Sr. made 20 years ago that all California forests are “urban” forests in the sense that urban citizens and their values and understandings regulate California forests, whether they are public or private.]*
6. Joe McBride – It seems there is quite a social component to restoring vegetation on private parcels. There seems to be a quick rush to plant trees, but now people have views of mountains they didn’t have before the fire when they had trees. Both vegetation types should be promoted in order to allow a mosaic to develop. Any comment on this? *[not clear what vegetation types are being referred to – conifer forest and lower growing vegetation, shrubs, which will allow a panoramic view? Seems to be an opportunity to design the new urban forest with these issues in mind.]*
7. What means/resources are there for citizens to get involved in 1) coordinated urban revegetation efforts and 2) fuels reduction in the unburned, wildland boundary areas? *[Fire Safe Councils are a good coordinating vehicle.]*
8. I am a homeowner whose residence burned along with all 49 of the trees on our lot. I want to replant vegetation and trees. Where can I get the best guidance on what, how and when to plant? *[Contact the Tahoe Resource Conservation District – 530-543-1501]*

9. Forest Service – when will we be allowed into the burn area? *[November 30, 2007]*

10. Is it necessary to remove the dead burnt trees to replant/reforest? Are there benefits to replanting among the dead trees? As well, is it necessary to use pesticides and herbicides to replant and reforest? *[Helms – If your goal is to create a treed forest, is it imperative that tree regeneration and weed control occur quickly, before the competing vegetation becomes well established. Weed control will be impossible or very expensive if you wait 3 years to treat. McBride – manual removal of competing shrubs can be practically done on a home lot, 0.25 ac, but probably not over 100s or 1000s of acres. Helms – there are not enough forest laborers willing to pull weeds, and even if there were the cost would be prohibitive]*

11. What do we understand about the additive impacts of timber salvage and fire on soil productivity/structure, rate of restoration, and water quality?

12. Might the burned area snags create beetle habitat that would increase susceptibility of adjoining unburned forests to beetles? *[Yes. Burned trees will be damaged and under stress next year. Especially if precipitation is low, burned trees would be more susceptible to successful bark beetle attack. Thus trees which have been burned and still have green needles may be removed now during the salvage harvesting, in anticipation of their succumbing to bark beetles next year. Burned tree survival depends upon the extent of the damage to the tree and next years weather – precipitation amount and distribution, and spring temperatures.]*

13. Why are brush fields more susceptible to frequent fire return intervals than a young tree forest?

14. Do you believe that the benefits of restoring the Angora Fire area has the same or greater potential than a similar level of effort directed at the fuel loads in the unburned forest? *[not sure of the benefits being referred to – soil erosion and sedimentation to the lake, reducing fire hazard, maintaining forest health.]*

15. Jacksonville, Florida has gone from pine to non-native hardwoods, but now there is a movement to bring southern pine back into the city. Is this good or misguided? Is this where Lake Tahoe will be heading in 50 or 100 years?

16. What are the implications of replacing the role of fire with mulching/mastication techniques to reduce forest densities that have been found in the Teakettle Experiment?

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