



### **Urban Forest Project Protocol Revision Process**

Workgroup Meeting 3

October 3, 2013

9:30 AM – 4 PM PDT

SMUD Customer Service Center

Sacramento, CA

#### **Workgroup Members Present:**

Cindy Blain (Sacramento Tree Foundation), Denise Farrell (Environmental Capital LLC), Nancy Hughes (California Urban Forests Council), Greg McPherson (US Forest Service), Mark McPherson (Hillis Clark et al), Brett Milligan (UC Davis), John Nickerson (Climate Action Reserve), Michelle Passero (The Nature Conservancy), Walter Passmore (City of Palo Alto, CA), Emily Russell-Roy (Climate Action Reserve), Misha Sarkovich (Sacramento Municipal Utility District), Andy Trotter (West Coast Arborists), Doug Wickizer (Cal Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection), Glenn Flamik (Cal Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection), Katie Hoeberling (UC Davis), John De Goede (UC Davis).

#### **Workgroup Members Not Present:**

Russell Hansen (City of San Jose, CA), Tom Hayes (Environmental Conservation Alliance), Robert Hrubes (SCS Global Services), Francisco Escobedo (University of Florida), Jeremy Williams (ArborVitae Environmental Services).

#### **Observers Present (on phone):**

Morgan Hagerty (CE2 Capital), Joe Liszewski (California ReLeaf).

#### **Other Participants Present:**

Katharine Young (Climate Action Reserve), Barbara Bamberger (Air Resources Board), Philippe Visintainer.

#### **Meeting Notes**

1. Workgroup members went around and introduced themselves.
2. John Nickerson presented an update on the status of the urban forest protocol revision process, including the latest round of team meetings and the most recent draft of revisions dated October 1, 2013. Many of the key policy elements have been outlined in these draft revisions, and the meeting

focused on coming to an agreement about these policy elements and identifying where more work is needed. After the key policy elements are finalized, the workgroup will turn its attention to drafting quantification, risk of reversals, monitoring, and verification sections, which it will bring forward for discussion during the next in-person workgroup meeting in December (date TBD).

3. Discussion of workgroup response/feedback on the key policy elements outlined in the draft revisions dated October 1, 2013.

#### Introduction – Project Type Definitions

- Prohibition against planting trees in areas that have been commercially harvested for the past 10 years might exclude salvage logging (i.e. removals due to health and safety that may then be used commercially).

#### Forest Owner – Project Operator

- Provide clear definitions of forest owner and forest carbon owner.
- In aggregation project, need to get permission from all of the various forest carbon owners and identify a single offset project operator (OPO) to serve as the point of contact for the project. Make it clear which rights and responsibilities are being transferred from the forest carbon owner(s) to the OPO for implementation of the project, including rights and responsibilities for crediting, reversals, etc.
- There was a lot of discussion about potential mechanism for aggregating forest carbon ownerships within a single project, whether individual landowners within a large urban area should be able to opt-in or opt-out, and whether rights could be transferred based on an election/ballot measure or some other kind of political process. It was discussed that the workgroup would develop a list of pre-approved methods for transferring rights and responsibilities within an aggregation project, as well as a list of methods that are potentially viable but still have certain questions or challenges associated with them. OPOs would also have the ability to submit new methods for review and approval prior to commencing a project (through a pre-consultation process) and as new methods are approved, they will be added to the list of pre-approved methods. In addition, the protocol could lay out the key criteria by which methods will be evaluated, including whether they: 1) involve all of the relevant parties, 2) clearly define what the rights are, 3) explain how the rights have been allocated, and 4) provide justification or legal standing for the proposed method.

#### Project Implementation Agreement (PIA)

- The Reserve needs to have one party responsible for undertaking the responsibilities for project monitoring, verification and replacement of reversals. If, in an aggregation-type project, the Reserve cannot put the PIA on the fee title to the land (e.g. there are too many individual landowners and it would be too cumbersome), are there other means by which the Reserve could enforce the requirements of the protocol?

#### Eligibility Rules/ Project Location and Project Area

- Use the U.S. Census definitions of Urban Area to define where a project must be located.
- Establish certain subsets or combined areas from the Census-defined Urban Areas (i.e., assessment areas?) in which there can only be one aggregation project, although there could also be tree planting projects within the same area undertaken by one of the 3 entities allowed in version 1.1 of the UFP, as long as there is no overlap with the aggregation project. Any new

forest carbon owners within the assessment area wishing to join or leave the aggregation project would be able to do so on an annual basis, and this would be tracked by the OPO.

- Project area would be partly defined by the scope of the participants in an aggregation project (i.e. how many and which participants within an Urban Area end up joining).

#### Project Participation

- Discussed above.

#### Project Commencement

- Want to make requirements consistent with ARB.

#### Additionality and Performance Tests

- Need to consider compliance with legal requirements and encumbrances in the project baseline (Katie and Brett are researching common legal constraints—e.g. tree planting ordinances and minimum canopy cover requirements).

- Projects must satisfy the performance test by achieving GHG reductions above and beyond what would be required under a business as usual scenario:

- Baseline under consideration for aggregation projects based on a trend analysis by assessment area that compares the change in canopy cover between two points in time using remote sensing imagery (one at least 10 years earlier than project commencement and one as close as possible to project commencement).

- Baseline for tree planting projects based on benchmarking process to define “common practice” within assessment areas for each type of entity. Evaluate utility tree planting programs within peer groups based on size, public/private, geographic location (maybe state by state), and type of utility (e.g. electricity, water, power and gas, etc.).

#### Project Crediting Period

- Want to make requirements consistent with ARB (25 year crediting period with opportunity to renew if eligibility criteria are still met).

#### Social Safeguards/ Environmental Safeguards

- It was suggested that instead of specific targets or requirements for social safeguards, projects would be required to provide a qualitative description of how they include social safeguards in their project design and implementation; this description would be included in the project documentation (e.g. project design document).

- There was support for the direction that the current language takes on environmental safeguards.

#### Quantifying GHG Emissions Reductions and Removals

- Didn't have time to discuss this in depth; topic tabled for the next workgroup meeting.

#### Other topics of discussion

- Creating a standalone document of pointers or tips for undertaking an urban forest project (e.g. suggested minimum size thresholds for project viability).

- Importance of educating all the entities and forest carbon owners in an aggregation project.

- Consider moving towards a remote sensing approach to verification as well as quantification.

#### 4. Wrap up. Identified times for follow-up workgroup and team calls:

- Individual teams will meet to finalize policy issues and start working on quantification, risk of reversals, monitoring, and verification language.
- The next full workgroup meeting will be in early to mid-December to finalize policy sections and bring new language to the workgroup for discussion. Date of meeting TBD via Doodle Poll.

5. Adjourned