ACCG Planning Committee Meeting

14 January 2015, Jackson CA

Scribe: Kimberly Grissom

Attendees:

*(Kendall, can you please add the names from the sign in sheet?)*

Kendal Young KY; John Hoffman (J. Hoffman); Julia Stephens JS; Amy Rocha AR; Chuck Loffland CL; Kimberly Grissom KG; Gwen Starrett GS; Pat McGreevy PM; Reuben Childress RC; Steve Wilensky SW; John Hiesenbuttle (J. Heisenbuttle); Marti Crane MC;

Action Items in Yellow

1. **Bear Creek \ Wilson Reservoir Restoration** 
   1. PM presents a slide show outlining the potential restoration project for meadow and riparian areas upstream from Wilson Reservoir near West Point. Descriptions include location, physical characteristics, historic uses, regulatory issues, and potential funding sources.
      1. CCWD is responsible for the dam, which is damaged.
      2. If restored, the reservoir could meet as much as 90 days worth of water use for West Point.
      3. Potential riparian/meadow restoration areas are upstream from the reservoir, and along Bear Creek, and the unnamed creek along Bald Mountain Road.
      4. Restoration could benefit the water resource for West Point, as well as reduced fire danger, and other ecosystem services.
      5. Stakeholders include SPI, CCWD, USFS, and local recreationists.
   2. RC - IRWMP is accepting grant applications now. Proposition 1 funds may be available after Prop 84 funds run out.
   3. General agreement that this project would fit ACCG parameters, and would be an interesting test case for how to manage an ACCG all-lands projects, because of the multiple land owners.
   4. SW – Burney Gardens is one example of how an all-lands project has been managed.
   5. J. Hoffman – A benefit of a project like this is that riparian zones have been treated as “flag and avoid” and so, as Malcolm North stated at an early ACCG meeting, those zones are often the most different from their historical state of all habitat/vegetation types.
   6. The Planning Committee agrees to recommend the issue be brought before the larger ACCG group, informing SPI and CCWD of the proposed project in advance of the meeting. Pat would probably do initial coordination of entities, and then ACCG would decide whether to approve whatever plan evolved.
2. **Power Fire Update – reschedule to next planning meeting**
3. **Cornerstone 2015 Program of Work (Kendal)**
   1. Two Handouts
      1. Handout One – tables of Program of work and project names
      2. Handout Two – comparison table of 3 years of Cornerstone Projects
   2. These are only implementation projects – those in planning stages are not included here, except some of the pre-treatment monitoring in meadows
   3. Comparison over years is complicated by name changes, and other changes that occur over the years, that are not crosswalked here. There is also an USFS issue in recording methods that is making road and trail projects difficult to report here.
   4. Projects not listed may still be progressing forward in the planning stages.
   5. J. Heisenbuttle – The Operations work group would find a chart like this which included a forecast 10 years out to be very helpful. Kendal will see if one can be prepared.
   6. Kendal asks the Planning Committee to please look at the lists of projects, and bring to the next meeting a list of those for which we may want more detail
   7. Julia asks if there is anywhere people can find brief descriptions of the projects. Kendal will see if one can be created and made available.
   8. Kendal asks if the Planning committee can bring forward at next week’s full ACCG meeting, an agenda item seeking concurrence with the Program of Work.
   9. Gwen asks why roads and watershed show as one item. Kendal explains that the USFS use integrated targets, so for example if a hydrologically connected road through a meadow is repaired, that is counted as road repair, watershed improvement, and possibly improvement of aquatic habitat.
4. Stewardship Agreement for Wilseyville Biomass Plant (Steve W.)
   1. There is an increase in deadline pressure to move forward with items involved in the Wilseville project. Steve has 3 requests.
      1. Steve asks if ACCG can review the “screens” on the 10, 20, and 30 mile radius biomass transportation assessments, especially those which have the least disagreement.
      2. Steve asks ACCG to endorse a 10 year stewardship agreement for fuels procurement. This agreement is essential to potential investors in this project, which will cost 3 to 5 million dollars to build. Fuel procurement reliability is essential to profitability.
      3. Steve asks for any technical assistance anyone can offer in clearing hurdles not already addressed by skills within the CHIPS organization, such as financing, obtaining county permits, engineering and local access to the Wilseyville site, and forming an LLC in such a way as to allow local members to retain some local control.
   2. Perhaps another working group could be formed to address these issues, or perhaps the Operations Work Group can address it.
   3. J. Heisenbuttle – Katherine Evatt already has this on the ACCG agenda for next week. Another challenge is that there are state limits on how much fiber can be supplied from even age managed stands – 20%.
   4. SW – That is why it is important to involve BLM and private lands who may provide more than that percentage. This would show investors that we are serious and capable.
   5. Bill – BLM has existing road networks, but not funding to do the harvest. BLM has a less complex process than USFS for establishing stewardship agreements. Weaverville has an example where the stewardship agreement is for a process, not for funding or fiber.
   6. SW – There is a proposal to put a staging area, which would be open to the public for firewood, and CHIPS could also use it.
5. Hemlock Project – Public Comments (Kendal)
   1. KY describes comment letters on Hemlock as very good. A letter from Craig Thomas of Sierra Forest Legacy (SFL) came in after the deadline to give them standing to object, but another opportunity to object will be available with the EA comment period.
   2. The SNL letter will probably require the development of an additional alternative to address new California Spotted Owl management practices that are about to be released. The timing of the letter and the new guidelines may cause a delay of up to 6 months on the Hemlock project.
   3. Chuck describes what the changes are likely to be in the soon-to-be-released guidelines. It may mean leaving areas un-managed, because of canopy closure issues.
   4. Chuck describes how, on the Callecat project, he included analysis of a commenter’s concerns in the written response which USFS does for all comments. In this way, they were able to satisfy the commenter’s concerns without the delay and expense of developing an additional alternative.
   5. Methods of better involving SFL in advance of developing the alternatives are discussed, including inviting them to be more involved in advance, so their concerns can be addressed in the first set of alternatives, and providing Skype or similar virtual meeting options to make attendance easier.
   6. Because SFL is a signatory on the ACCG MOU, which provides member protocol on resolving differences of opinion, and this action is not reflecting that protocol, a pre-objection meeting with Craig of SFL and other ACCG members is suggested. Julia of CSERC, Reuben of Foothill Conservancy, and other interested, non-USFS members will consult with each other about the pre-objection meeting with SFL.
6. **Challenges in 2014 – Review (Kendal**)
   1. Calaveras RCD, and possible formation of similar group to ACCG.
      1. Amy explains history of RCD, which is liaison between the public and the NRCS (a federal agency). Calaveras is the only county in CA without an RCD.
      2. There is general agreement that the best use of human resources in the area would be to include people and their concerns in the group which already exists to address such issues – ACCG – to avoid duplication of effort.
   2. SCALE could be useful in dealing with contentious issues.
      1. SW – A SCALE meeting is scheduled for March.
   3. Job Generation West of Cornerstone
      1. J. Hoffman – the Mokelumne environmental benefits group has done work to connect up-country contractors with work west of Highway 49.
      2. Rueben – this could be another instance when people could bring Oak Woodland or other projects west of Highway 49, to ACCG.
   4. GIS for all projects
      1. KY – A GIS for the USFS projects are being compiled, and ma be ready by next meeting.
      2. Amy describes Cal Fire efforts to have a comprehensive GIS for fuel management, which comes up in discussion, but has not been completed in several years. Bill has sent BLM shapefiles when requested, and the Fire Safe Council may have them now. Sierra Nevada Conservancy may have some GIS from it’s time doing ACCG coordination and admin.
      3. It is understood that there is not centralized ACCG information, in part because of the lack of Admin funding. ACCG’s administrative needs include website construction and management, record keeping, and centralized GIS and data management.
      4. The subcommittee on Finance is looking into a National Forest Foundation grant to fund administration needs.
      5. Discussion of allotting CFLR funds to administration can be brought up at the ACCG meeting next week.
7. Sierra Cascade Dialogue – Public Meeting
   1. Monitoring forest health and productivity to support adaptive management, and indicators that are useful for monitoring social, economic, and environmental trends.
   2. Thursday January 22, 2015. 10 am – 4 pm. Lion’s Gate Hotel, Sacramento
   3. USFS will provide van transportation down and back. RSVP to Kendal.
8. Roundtable
   1. Gwen – Amador General Plan EIR comment period is open.
   2. Pat – MokeWISE – this regional group may influence distribution of grant funding in the area. MokeWise invites ACCG to attend/present Feb 13. He suggests waiting until a more complete GIS is ready, to provide a better presentation and explanation of what ACCG does.
   3. Reuben – further explains MokeWISE as focused on water rights on the Mokelumne river, which is “fully allocated”. Tom Enfacino is Co-Chair, and Tom Francis of EBMUD is another possible contact.
   4. Pat and Reuben will discuss the ACCG and MokeWISE.
   5. Reuben reminds everyone that IRWMP is accepting projects.
   6. Founder of CalFauna is interested in signing the ACCG MOU.
   7. Amy reminds everyone that EQUIP applications are still being accepted at NRCS. These are for fuel management on private lands. The public meeting to discuss formation of the Calaveras RCD is January 20, 2015, 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm.
9. J. Hoffman will secure Amador County Room C for mext month’s meeting.