

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group Planning Meeting
Amador Ranger District

March 28, 2018

Participants: (16 attendees)

Joe Aragon, Heidi Beswick, Jeb Brooks, Jan Bray, John Buckley, Reuben Childress, Liz Gregg, Rick Hopson, Paul Leusch, Chuck Loffland, Martin Mackenzie, Pat McGreevy, Tim Tate, Robin Wall, Steve Wilensky, and Marc Young.

TREX

- Work ramping up on Lodestar property in Nov-Dec 2018
- Up to 40 training and 5 Fire Departments participating
- Meeting 4/3 with BLM for discussion of NEPA/CEQA, permits and burn plans
- Will be meeting with Air Quality Board in June
- 4/5 call (more info will be sent by Steve)
- Steve looking for additional interest in the TREX partnerships to include BLM, USFS and other agencies. Interest in working w/USFS to coordinate Rx burns.
- Amador and Calaveras RD will continue to assess partnership with TREX
- There will be a TREX phone call first week of April for those that are interested.
Plan to burn the Monday after Thanksgiving through the first week of December.

NEPA and Forest Service Planning (John Buckley)

- Update about the USFS hosted (WO and Region) roundtable John attended about potential changes to the NEPA process
- USFS is working to streamline the NEPA process
- Maximize proficiency through additional staff trainings, increase the use of CE documents, and public involvement early on in the NEPA planning process
- 10 years ago it took approx. 800 days to complete an EIS, now it takes over 1300-1400 days. EA 10 years ago took 600 days. Now it takes 830 days. On average it takes R5 folks 235 days to complete a CE.
- The focus proposed is to use CEs more for projects that used to be done with EAs.
 - Comment: Collaboratives can help identify zones of agreement on projects.

Scottiago Forest Health Project (Marc Young)

- Brief background of the project with developing Farm Bill CE; 3,000 acres of commercial thinning; estimated 5k-7k board feet per acre
- Project Leader open to discuss past unresolved issues such as commercial thinning and spotted owl PACS
- CSERC comment – This project offers some real opportunities to work to minimize controversy in this project area. CSERC supports the objective of thinning and doing other needed treatments to do all possible to protect the important spotted owl habitat/HRCAs

- CSERC comment – important to consider post-treatment prescribed fire treatment to be included within this 3K acre CE or consider using multiple CE categories in the project area
- The new Spotted Owl Framework Strategy will be considered, and depending on timing of the completion may guide some aspects of this project
(<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/plants-animals/wildlife/?cid=STELPRD3854419>)
- CE Project: PIL not signed yet, scoping out by mid-summer; will ask ACCG for support letter by end of summer

Scottiago Hazard Tree Project (Chuck Loffland)

- Overlap with Scottiago Forest Health Project
- Road Hazard CE; some USFS Specialist Reports and USFWS consultation pending
- This will be a contributing cumulative effect into the larger Scottiago Forest Health Project
- Planning to move on implementation start in summer 2018
- Potential for hazard trees to have little saw log value
- Will use of biomass mass be considered in this project? District is considering all avenues to reduce/remove the hazard, and deal with the fuel loading issues. These activities will be allowed for in the CE, and decisions will be made for implementation which will likely result in numerous methods being used to abate the hazards and deal with the fuel loading resulting from the tree mortality.

Update of Arnold/Avery Field trip & Next Steps

- Overall Supportive of identified need for WUI treatments; not in conjugation with PACS and need for prescribed fire treatments in the area
- Suggested to re-visit the use of livestock in fuel break projects
- Explore potential for involving TREX in future CEs?
 - Comment: May get more bang for your buck if you stay outside of PACs yet there are areas in PACs where treatment is more important for public safety near WUI areas.

Calaveras FY18-FY19 Program of Work

- Question: Is this project in the Mattley Meadow Restoration on the FS side or the Dell'Orto side of the meadow?
 - Suggestion: Reach out to Bobette with NRCS.
- Where are we with the Arnold Rim Trail 8-mile re-route?
- Are these projects financed? Does the FS need additional funding through grant assistance?
- If grants are needed. Then they must be moved on soon
- What about the McKay's fuel break area for CE project?

Amador FY18-FY19 Program of Work

- Ran out of time to effectively discuss the Amador projects
- Will discuss at the next Planning meeting

Follow-ups:

- Explore offering field trip before and after implementation field trip to Scottiago project area
- Encourage Planning Group to attend next ACCG meeting where Malcolm North will present paper on Spotted Owls and Forest Management
- Encourage Sierra Forest Legacy to be more involved in the Scottiago project
- Consideration of grant proposal; identified a need to develop a financial planning section of the Scottiago CE in order to assess funding needs
- Calaveras Ranger District asking for input for need/location area to development a new Farm Bill CE (consider timber targets)
- April 25, 2018 Planning Field Trip: Lily Gap; will involve BLM, CalAm Team, PG&E, Forest Service, SPI, West Point FD. Jan Bray and Pat McGreevy will take lead to develop the field trip and meeting location

Next ACCG Planning Meeting: April 25, 2018 with Field Trip to Lily Gap Project