

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group

c/o Regine Miller, regine.CHIPS@gmail.com

530-277-3843

July 10, 2019

Name: Richard Hopson

Title: District Ranger

Organization: Eldorado National Forest, Amador Ranger District

Address: 26820 Silver Dr., Pioneer CA 95666

Subject: Support for the 2019 Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project

Dear Mr. Hopson:

On behalf of the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the 2019 Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project.

The primary goal of this project is to provide a healthy growing forest into the future for multiple resource benefits. By controlling tree densities at a relatively early age in the life of the stands, trees will grow faster and develop into mature conifer stands much sooner than if left alone. Specifically, the Amador Ranger District of the Eldorado National Forest proposes to thin about 11,354 acres of post-fire mixed-conifer plantings and naturally regenerated trees through hand work (chainsaw) and mechanical operations such as mastication.

The ACCG has worked with the Forest Service in developing the Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning project. The ACCG members agree that on the ground work is needed in the Power Fire area. Some ACCG members fully support the Proposed Action while others have expressed concern that certain treatments within the Proposed Action, including lopping and scattering the slash, will contribute to fuel loads and limit the ability to use prescribed fire as a restoration and management tool. Additionally, some members have expressed concern about the post-treatment tree densities and potential for limited horizontal and vertical heterogeneity. ACCG members, including the Forest Service, have held numerous group and one-on-one discussions to work together to resolve these concerns. The Forest Service has stated its commitment to continue these good faith discussions to provide nuanced resolutions to these issues. The Forest Service expects to initially treat 200 to 300 acres of the project area, which will provide an opportunity for the ACCG to conduct a field trip to the site and view the treatments. That field trip will serve as a springboard for continued conversation regarding treatment specifications, including lop and scatter, tree density, use of prescribed fire, and heterogeneity. If lop and scatter is to be used within the project area, the scattered biomass shall be placed with careful concern to avoid excess fuel loading which reduces the ability to use prescribed fire in the future. In addition to these joint efforts, ACCG members expressed a common interest to develop a long-term landscape plan as a potential solution to avoid future concerns.

The ACCG appreciates the involvement of Amador Ranger District staff in developing the initial proposal, its good faith efforts to resolve issues, its creation of a project that meets the goals of the ACCG, and its stated commitment to ongoing discussions to resolve the remaining issues of concern. We support the project subject to a demonstration site field trip and continued discussions, and recommend the Responsible Official approve the decision for the 2019 Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project.

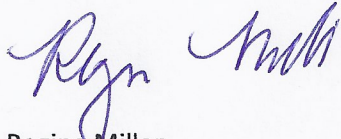
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The ACCG is a community-based organization that works to create fire-safe communities, healthy forests and watersheds, and sustainable local economies. Its members include state and federal agencies, business owners, nonprofit organizations, elected officials and private individuals. The group focuses on a triple-bottom-line approach to environmental, economic and community issues. It makes decisions by consensus and works primarily in the upper Mokelumne River and Calaveras River watersheds east of Highway 49.

Sincerely,



Regine Miller
Administrator For
Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group