*Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute*

# Meeting Brief

The Planning Work Group (WG):

* Supported the Strategic Landscape Assessment Work Group (SLAWG) moving forward with its short-term goal to develop a mapping tool of existing and planned projects to help identify areas for future projects.
* Supported integrated discussions between SLAWG and the Planning WG to ensure SLAWG outputs meet ACCG needs.
* Encouraged SLAWG to coordinate with the Monitoring WG.
* Briefly discussed how project proponents might utilize a “zones of agreement” document to develop their project development and ACCG engagement strategy.
* Revised project development and engagement flowchart.
* Participated in field trip of the Scottiago Forest Health Project area exploring management options for mechanically increasing forest complexity and spotted owl habitat quality.

# Action Items

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| --- | --- |
| **Actions** | **Point Person(s)** |
| Share Planning WG input back to SLAWG. | Megan Layhee |
| Connect with the Monitoring WG to coordinate with SLAWG activities. | Megan Layhee |
| Ask Lindsay Buchanan whether the USFS DC Office knows of good mapping and landscape-scale assessment tool examples. | CBI |
| Review the ACCG MOA and offer suggested updates/revisions for the role and responsibilities of the Planning Group | All (Tania will distribute MOA) |
| Update project development flowchart per Planning WG discussion | CBI |

# Summary

## Strategic Landscape Assessment Work Group (SLAWG) Draft Proposal

Megan Layhee, CSERC and SLAWG-Planning WG liaison, presented the work group’s proposed short- and long-term goals for Planning WG consideration.

* **Short-Term Goal – Mapping Tool.** Develop a mapping tool of existing and planned projects to help identify areas for future projects. SLAWG is currently focused on creating a pdf of fuels reduction projects to share at the July 24 Planning WG meeting. The group then plans to add ACCG-related projects. SLAWG invites input on how best to visually present the data.
* **Long Term Goal – Landscape-Scale Assessment**. Create a new, enhance an existing, or fund development of a landscape-scale assessment for the ACCG. SLAWG has been exploring various concept examples and data sources with ACCG members and partners for input on data management strategies, framework, etc.
* **Tool(s) Accessibility**. SLAWG has also been considering different data platforms to ultimately make these tools available to the full ACCG (e.g., ArcOnline webmap).

Megan emphasized that SLAWG wishes to collaboratively work with the Planning Group as SLAWG moves forward to ensure the strategic assessment and other tool(s) align with ACCG’s needs.

**Discussion**

* The Planning WG supported SLAWG moving forward with developing a “pilot” map of fuels reduction projects for the group to review at its next meeting.
* Members supported continued conversations with the Planning Group (e.g., the tools’ purpose and how they will be used) as SLAWG develops/refines the tools. For example, Rich Farrington, UMRWA, recommended the group further discuss how to determine / define vulnerabilities and priorities. Robin Wall, USFS, flagged a future discussion on associated costs, timelines, and funding sources to develop/maintain these tools (e.g., creating georeference PDFs can be free; ArcOnline requires paying for an account).
* Several members reemphasized SLAWG continue to work with partners and analyze existing information sources (e.g., project info mapping by CAL FIRE, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), Pacific Gas & Electric, fire safe councils, USFS DC office). Tania Carlone, CBI, suggested asking Lindsay Buchanan, USFS (who will guest speak at the July 17 General meeting), whether the USFS DC Office knows of good tool examples.
* Correction to the SLAWG proposal document: *Fall River Resource Conservation District* (member of Burney Hat Creek Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration [CFLR]) is using the 34 North analysis tool.
* Several members encouraged SLAWG to work closely with the Monitoring WG to include monitoring results into the mapping tool. The Monitoring WG’s next meeting is July 10.

## Collaborative Engagement Strategy: ACCG Project Development / Approval Process and Future Priorities

Tania Carlone, CBI, reviewed the finalized [Collaborative Engagement Strategy](http://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/04_ACCG-Collaborative-Engagement-Strategy-Next-Steps-Brief_FINAL.docx) strategic elements (SE) and priority actions for the Planning WG, including:

* **SE: 1, Action #2: Refine governance.** Planning WG members are to review the ACCG MOA and offer suggested updates/revisions for the role and responsibilities of the Planning Group.
* **SE 2, Action #4:** **Project evaluation tool**. Using the an [example list of project actions](http://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/09_EXAMPLE-LIST-of-Actions-v12-18-2018.pdf) (originally developed by the Sierra Forest Legacy (SFL) and presented to in 2018), the Planning WG will continue its discussions to identify “zones of agreement” and protocols for how to proceed with each category.
* **SE 3, Action #1**: **Project development flowchart**. The Planning WG provided input on the draft [project development flowchart](http://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/06_ACCG-Project-Endorsement-Guidelines_6-17-19.docx)  (summarized below)
* **SE 3, Actions #2-3: Landscape vision work.** Currently underway with SLAWG efforts.
* **SE 4: Education and outreach**. Admin WG will lead these efforts, seeking Planning Group input.

Tania oriented the group to the revised draft flowchart for project proponents to request support from the ACCG. She noted that project proponents would have a full project guidance package that would include information like the [ACCG principles and policies](http://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/08_ACCG-Principles-Policies_5-6-19.docx) background, [process flowchart](http://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/05_Process-for-requesting-support-from-ACCG_v6-20-19.pptx), [endorsement guidelines](http://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/06_ACCG-Project-Endorsement-Guidelines_6-17-19.docx), “zones of agreement” document (still in development), and [submission form](http://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/07_ACCG-Request-for-Project-Support-Submission-Form_6-17-19.docx).

**Discussion**

* The Planning Group did not share any comments on the Engagement Strategy document.
* Members shared suggested edits for project development flowchart; Tania made changes in real time. Revisions included:
  + **Collect Information.** Emphasize proponents should consult the “zones of agreement” document
  + **Planning WG Engagement.** Clarify that the Planning WG will convey to the Admin WG to place the project proposal on the general meeting agenda. Clarify that individual ACCG members have the freedom to provide support or opposition for a project, regardless of whether the project receives ACCG consensus.
  + **General Meeting Presentation**. Give members more advanced time to review materials (send the Wednesday before [1 week] rather than the Monday before).
  + **ACCG Support**. Clarify to whom the ACCG will send the letter of Support.
* Ben Solvesky, SFL, emphasized that projects falling in the “green” zones of agreement (where there would be high ACCG support) should follow an expedited process. Several Planning WG members agreed; however, the protocol for that expedited process requires further discussion. The group agreed that activities in the “yellow” or “red” zones required Planning WG discussion.
* John Heissenbuttel shared concerns that many grant application short timeframes do not allow for project proponents to develop, present/deliberate, and revise proposals within the ACCG standard meeting schedule. Rick Hopson, USFS, suggested that the project proponent could present at the ACCG general meeting if that occurred before the next Planning WG meeting. Katherine reiterated the individual ACCG members can send in letters of support regardless of the ACCG meeting timeline.
* The group briefly considered other scheduling alternatives, including holding Planning WG meetings before the general meetings to allow proponents to present project proposals. Ray Cablayan reminded the group that the ACCG decided to hold Planning WG meetings after the general meetings to give the Planning WG adequate time to prepare for the next general meeting.

## Scottiago Field Trip

The ACCG Planning Work Group hosted a field trip in the Scottiago Forest Health Project area exploring how to mechanically increase forest complexity and spotted owl habitat quality in uniform stands. Field trip participants visited two commercial thinning sites in spotted owl Home Range Core Areas that were treated under the CASPO guidelines (GTR 133, spotted owl strategy in place from 1992-2001). Units in these areas were previously treated with dbh limits in the low-to mid-20" range within the past 20 years. Under CASPO prescriptions, most of the trees less than 20" dbh were removed, and the residual trees are now fairly evenly spaced. Eventually the goal is to provide fire and climate resilient high-quality nesting and roosting habitat where appropriate in the project area.

Several forest management experts, including USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station ecologists Malcolm North and John Keane, attended to provide their insights on management approaches. Key takeaways included:

* **Grow tall trees in clumps ASAP**. To create suitable habitat for spotted owls, aim to have 20-30% canopy cover of large trees within a stand.
* **Canopy cover**. Spotted owls need canopy cover of *large* trees. Avoid high canopy cover of *ladder* fuels.
* **Pair clumps with gaps**. When creating “clumps” of tree stands, consider the spacing/gaps as well. Gaps are especially important for large clumps to allow for roots to expand.
* **Use water availability/soil quality as guide**. Wetter areas can support larger/denser clumps; gaps between trees can be as small as 6-8 feet. For drier areas, aim to create 12-15 foot spacing between intermediate-sized trees. After thinning ladder fuels and intermediate-sized trees, thin white fir and cedar co-dominants in *drier* areas; some co-dominant thinning may be needed in wetter areas.
* **Prey availability**. Small mammal (e.g., woodrat) abundance and availability also affects the quality of habitat for spotted owls.
* **Thinning around existing tree groups.** If the stand is in a good spot, thin around the clumps. If the stand is in poor/thin soil, create gaps.
* **Prepare future owl habitat.** Think beyond protecting existing protected activity centers (PACs). Explore opportunities to create new, high-quality habitat (that is resilient to future conditions).
* **Consider prescribed fire for large dbh areas**. Mechanical thinning treatments are limited for areas dominated by large dbh trees (i.e., cannot remove trees with >30” dbh). Prescribed fire may be an option in these areas.
* **Rely on multiple rounds of experts to mark trees.** After trained crews initially mark trees for thinning, bring in experts (e.g., wildlife biologists and local silviculturists) on site to check and provide recommendations.
* **Wildfire threats.** Analyze likely direction of wildfires when deciding on a thinning strategy. Perhaps create larger gaps in these areas.
* **Future field trips.** Perhaps visit the [C\_\_\_\_\_\_??] project site where GTR 220 was used for the first time.

## Future Meetings

The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on July 24, 2019 at the Amador Ranger District in Pioneer.

# Meeting Participants

(To be filled in before finalizing draft)

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| **Name** | **Affiliation** | **Miles** | **Time** |
| Rich Farrington | UMRWA |  |  |
| Megan Layhee | CSERC | Phone |  |
| Rick Hopson | USFS |  |  |
| Robin Wall | USFS |  |  |
| Ben Solvesky | SFL |  |  |
| Gwen Starrett | Local Resident | NFWF Match |  |
| Chuck Loffland | USFS |  |  |
| Ray Cablayan | USFS |  |  |
| Liz Gregg | CSERC |  |  |
| Katherine Evatt | Foothill Conservancy | Phone |  |
| Marc Young | USFS |  |  |
| Craig Ostergaard | SPI |  |  |
| Luke | SPI |  |  |
| Matt | SPI |  |  |
| Sarah Sawyer | USFS |  |  |
| Tracy |  |  |  |
| John |  |  |  |
| Tania Carlone | CBI |  |  |
| Stephanie Horii | CBI |  |  |