Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)
Project Support Evaluation Tool

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this document is to describe and distinguish among categories of project activities proposed in the ACCG landscape to help project proponents create a roadmap for successful collaboration with the ACCG and to anticipate the level of potential controversy associated with proposed project activities. Understanding the potential level of controversy can help project proponents prepare a strategy, timeline, and approach geared towards promoting agreement among diverse stakeholders in as realistic and expedient a manner as possible. The tool has also been designed to help the ACCG engage in constructive dialogue that promotes mutual understanding, learning, and trust-building within the collaborative. Its intent is to streamline the project development and approval process. In doing so, it outlines the protocols and procedures associated with each category in an attempt to right-size the level of effort when vetting projects.

Project proponents are encouraged to read the entire document and cross-reference the interrelated project activities found in each category. This document is a key component of the ACCG project development and approval package (link). This document is a living document that will be updated periodically, as warranted.

Categories and Protocols at a Glance

Category 1: *Green Light* project activities are broadly considered non-controversial by the ACCG and follow an expedited process.

Category 2: *Yellow Light* project activities may result in moderate controversy that could take up to a few months of ACCG engagement.

Category 3: *Orange Light* project activities are likely to result in significant controversy that could take several months to two years of ACCG engagement.

See below table for a more detailed description of the categories, protocols, and detailed project activities. The table further suggests considerations for project proponents and outlines procedures for each project category.

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Project Support Evaluation Tool

Category 1: *Green Light*

Description: These project actions are broadly supported by the ACCG and are generally considered non-controversial. For projects that clearly fall into this category, project proponents can follow an expedited protocol to seek ACCG support.

Protocol: Expedited Process immediately routed to ACCG General Meetings

Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
1. Re-routing roads and trails around meadows 2. Road and drainage maintenance and repairs to improve water quality and to provide for fire-fighting access 3. Meadow restoration that does not include removal of legacy trees, controversial restoration practices such as pond and plug, and special status species 4. Aspen restoration that includes logging trees less than 30" dbh 5. Maintenance and minor improvements to existing developed facilities 6. Prescribed fire with agency approved burn plan 7. Hazard tree (trees that impact public health and safety) removal from roadsides and developed sites, when consistent with the PSW Region 5 Hazard Tree Marking Guidelines (2012) (link) 8. Herbicide use to treat non-native plants, as a temporary treatment, and not as a long-term and/or large-scale maintenance strategy 9. Removing conifers less than 16-20" dbh outside of PACs and den buffers 10. Road reconstruction 11. Road decommissioning	• Expect at least 2-3 weeks from submission of the project form to receive a signed letter of support from the ACCG. • Legacy trees generally refer to trees that pre-date modern fire suppression practices.	1. Complete the Project Support Submission Form and send to the ACCG Administrator at least 10 days before the ACCG General meeting (which occur every third Wednesday of the month except in December). 2. The ACCG Administrator will place Category 1 projects on a general meeting consent calendar. for ACCG consensus approval. 3. If ACCG determines that any given project doesn't clearly fall into this category, it would be referred to the Planning WG for review (as described in Category 2 below).

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)
Project Support Evaluation Tool

Category 2: *Yellow Light*
Description: These project activities require some discussion and may result in moderate controversy.
Protocol: Discussion initiated at the Planning Work Group whose recommendations are sent to the full ACCG for concurrence.

Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
1. Commercial or non-commercial thinning in plantations or green stands when consistent with forest plan and General Technical Report (GTR) 220 and GTR 237 which would result in a fire and disease resilient condition 2. Logging trees 16 to 20" dbh in key habitat areas like PACS or den buffers 3. Logging trees 20 to 30" dbh especially in HRCAs and fisher den buffers 4. Aspen restoration that includes logging trees greater than 30" dbh (even if legacy trees are retained) 5. Herbicide use near water sources and other sensitive habitats and species 6. Herbicide use for creating or maintaining large fuel breaks 7. Salvage logging along roadsides, in strategic fuel breaks, and/or to protect property. 8. Reforestation projects	• Expect a minimum 1-3 months of engagement with ACCG. • Consider site conditions and resources at risk, especially when determining the removal of larger trees. • Project activities strive to maintain existing and future high-quality habitat values. • For herbicide projects, consider buffer width and impacts to wildlife. • These project actions should promote GTR 220 and 237. • Reforestation projects should incorporate fire, horizontal and spatial heterogeneity or climate change adaptation.	1. Ten days prior to Planning meeting, provide relevant project materials to Planning WG lead(s). 2. Present project at Planning meeting. 3. Conduct any follow up activities to address Planning WG concerns or information requests. 4. If concerns persist, the Planning WG will initiate the conflict resolution process, as described in the ACCG MOA. 5. Regardless of the outcomes of deliberations, once the Planning WG makes a recommendation on the project, the WG will refer to the Admin WG to be placed on the ACCG general meeting agenda. 6. Individual members may provide support or opposition for any project or aspects of a project.

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Category 3: *Orange Light*	
Description: These project activities are likely to result in significant controversy. However, ACCG could ultimately achieve support through a negotiated process. Because these actions are more sensitive, the ACCG anticipates needing considerable time to thoroughly discuss, deepen understanding, and find approaches that could achieve consensus support.	
Protocol: Project concepts initiated with the Planning Work Group early in the project development process. Small group meetings/calls occur between regularly scheduled Planning Work Group meetings to generate options to resolve conflicts. The Planning Work Group gives regular updates to the full ACCG at General meetings throughout the project development process. Ultimately, Planning Work Group recommendations are sent to the full ACCG for concurrence.	

Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
1. Permanent new road construction (adding new miles to the road system) 2. Tree cutting and removal in inventoried roadless areas 3. Logging trees 20" dbh or greater in PACS 4. Logging trees 30" dbh or greater for "forest health" (e.g., red fir dwarf mistletoe, etc.) 5. Reducing canopy cover in high quality spotted owl habitat to lower canopy cover class 6. Reducing canopy cover to less than 50% in spotted owl HRCAs 7. Multiple Categorical Exclusions (CEs) for logging used in a concentrated area over a short duration which could cause cumulative effects 8. Salvage logging outside of roadsides and fuel breaks especially where sensitive wildlife may be affected 9. Aspen restoration that includes logging legacy trees 10. Herbicide use for plantation establishment	• Expect many months to over a year engagement with the ACCG. • Project size and other project effects could affect the level of controversy. • The move from more directive forest plans to descriptive ones could increase the level of controversy. • Certain CE categories such as 36 CFR 220.6 (e) (6), Timber Stand and Wildlife Habitat Improvement. This exclusion category does not have an acreage limit. If large-scale logging projects that include controversial activities were implemented	1. Ten days prior to Planning meeting, provide relevant project materials to Planning WG lead(s). 2. Present project concepts at Planning WG meeting. 3. Conduct any follow up activities to address Planning WG concerns or information requests. 4. If concerns persist, the Planning WG will initiate the conflict resolution process, as described in the ACCG MOA. 5. Regardless of the outcome of deliberations, once the Planning WG makes a recommendation on the project, the WG will convey to the Admin WG to be placed on the ACCG general meeting agenda.

11. Herbicide use for creating or maintaining large fuel breaks over the long-term 12. Rare plant habitat used as a staging area	under such a category, the level of controversy would be high. • If projects do not engage stakeholders collaboratively and early in the project development process, the controversy is likely to be high.	6. Individual members may provide support or opposition for any project or aspects of a project.