

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, March 20, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

Meeting Brief

- Rick Hopson, Amador District Ranger, informed the ACCG that Kendal Young will serve as the CFLR Coordinator for the Amador Ranger District while Robin Wall is on detail.
- The ACCG approved letters of support for two separate decisions for the Scottiago Project on the Eldorado National Forest.
- The ACCG learned about a decision framework to prioritize meadows for restoration and requested a follow up workshop focused on applying the tool to example meadows.
- The ACCG discussed the status and future of monitoring in the ACCG landscape and identified the need to increase the ACCG's monitoring capacity and Monitoring Work Group (WG) participation.
- ACCG members formed an ad hoc Public Relations and Media WG.

Action Items

Actions	Responsible Parties
Revise February ACCG general meeting summary on page 4 to reflect the following change as underlined: " <u>Some members of</u> the ACCG would like to receive an accounting of how funds were spent..."	Regine Miller
Refine Scottiago Project letters of support and send to Rick Hopson on behalf of the ACCG.	Regine Miller
Organize a follow up meadow restoration decision support framework workshop.	Shana Gross
Distribute Planning WG meeting materials the Friday before each meeting.	Joe Aragon Tania Carlone
Convene meeting of the Public Relations and Media ad hoc working group to coordinate with partner agencies' Public Information Officers on communicating ACCG's activities and successes.	Katherine Evatt Steve Wilensky Joe Aragon

Summary

Modification of February 2019 Meeting Summary

Rick Hopson sought clarification on whether the Power Fire Settlement information request came from the ACCG or individual ACCG members (reference: ACCG 2/20 general meeting summary, page 4). The discussion prompted a process clarification where the ACCG agreed that going forward the protocol will be that working groups develop recommendations that are then conveyed to the full ACCG for consideration and action. While this information request was first generated within the Admin Work Group (WG), it was not referred to the full ACCG for action. All agreed that this process would be utilized in the future and that it was not necessary to revisit the Power Fire information request at this time since Rick intends to honor the initial request but wanted to clarify the process. The February ACCG general meeting summary should be changed to read, "Some members of the ACCG would like to receive the original business plan and an accounting of how funds were spent from the \$45 million PG&E-USFS settlement, as well as what funds remain with NFWF."

Presentations, Discussions and Business

Amador Ranger District Announcement: Rick Hopson, Amador District Ranger, informed the ACCG that Kendal Young will serve as the CFLR Coordinator for the Amador Ranger District. Kendal officially works

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, March 20, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

on the Calaveras Ranger District but will serve in this capacity while Robin Wall is on a detail with the recreation program on the Eldorado National Forest. Kendal will attend Monitoring Work Group meetings and general meetings when available.

Request to increase General Meeting length from 2.5 hours to 3 hours: The ACCG agreed to extend the duration of meetings to three hours to allow additional time for the work of the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) to implement the Engagement Strategy. The ACCG will revisit the duration of meetings once CBI's work is complete. The meetings will take place from 9-noon.

Update on the development and implementation of the Engagement Strategy: Tania Carlone, facilitator, informed the ACCG that the Admin WG will hold a special meeting on April 12th to refine the Engagement Strategy that CBI has been developing. Tania will present the Engagement Strategy to the ACCG at the April general meeting.

Request letter of support for the Scottiago Project Categorical Exemptions Draft Decisions: Rick Hopson requested two Letters of Support (LOS) for two separate decisions for the Scottiago Project (link to two letters: [..\03-March\ACCG Letter of Support Scottiago Forest Health.pdf](#) [..\03-March\ACCG Letter of Support Scottiago Fuels Reduction.pdf](#)). The project has two primary focus areas that have been broken into two decisions: 1) forest health (using insect and disease Categorical Exemption (CE) (Section 603) (link: [to signed Forest Health Decision Memo](#)); and, 2) fire and fuels/increase landscape resiliency to wildfire (Section 605) (link: [to signed Fuels Reduction Decision Memo](#)). The project area is entirely within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) adjacent to private parcels within highly productive California Spotted Owl (CSO) habitat. The Forest Service views this project as important for reducing potential loss of CSO habitat. As such, there are treatments within CSO Protected Activity Centers (PACs) to promote fire resiliency. The Amador Ranger District has been working with the Planning WG for nearly 2 years on this project. The Planning WG reached consensus at their February meeting to recommend the Scottiago Project for full ACCG approval. Individual Planning WG members expressed support for the project and thanked the Amador Ranger District for working through ACCG individual member concerns which made it possible for the Planning WG to achieve a consensus recommendation. The ACCG approved the two letters of support. Regine will make minor editorial revisions to the letters and send to Rick Hopson on behalf of the ACCG.

Presentation on prioritizing meadow restoration and discussion of the draft decision support framework: Shana Gross and Meredith McClure presented, "Translating Science to Management: decision framework to prioritize meadows for restoration and conservation in the context of climate change." (link to presentation: [..\03-March\ACCG Decision Framework to Prioritize Meadows for Restoration .pdf](#)). Shana and Meredith presented the 7-step process in the decision framework using two examples to illustrate the application of the tool. They closed the presentation by asking the ACCG for feedback on the decision framework's applicability, whether any changes were warranted, and requested the ongoing engagement of volunteers to apply the framework. Shana passed around a sign-in sheet for those interested in a follow-on workshop or webinar.

Discussion

- Michael Pickard suggested that it would be helpful to organize a webinar or workshop to allow for a hands-on opportunity to work with the tool. He offered that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy could host the webinar.
- The group suggested that High Onion, Foster and Indian Meadows would be good examples for application of the tool.

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, March 20, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

- Another ACCG member noted that the tool could be used when applying for grants and for monitoring purposes.

Presentation on the status and future of monitoring in the ACCG: Becky Estes presented, “ACCG Monitoring Accomplishments and Scenario Planning.” (link to presentation: [..\03-March\ACCG Monitoring Accomplishments and Scenario Planning.pdf](#)). Becky gave an overview of the ACCG’s notable accomplishments and priorities and engaged the ACCG in a discussion about how to build the Monitoring WG’s level of participation and capacity to secure funding in the near term and beyond the expiration of Cornerstone funding.

Discussion

- The CFLRA legislation requires monitoring for 5 years beyond the 10-year project funding period (to 2027), making it of crucial importance for the ACCG to identify ongoing funding to meet that requirement.
- Individual ACCG members should include funds for monitoring in grant proposals, when possible, in order to sustain monitoring activities going forward, including socio-economic monitoring. However, one of the challenges associated with funding monitoring through grant programs, is that grant terms usually do not allow for post implementation monitoring beyond 1-2 years.
- The group discussed capacity concerns not only to meet the requirements of CFLRA monitoring but for ongoing monitoring on public and private lands in keeping with ACCG’s All Lands approach.
- The group discussed expanding university partnerships as an effective way to increase the ACCG’s monitoring capacity, noting the it is important to ensure that monitoring projects are interesting enough to attract university partnerships.
- Kendal suggested that a lot of monitoring can be qualitatively assessed through photo documentation over time. This may be an effective qualitative assessment tool across the landscape. Shana mentioned that some photo monitoring is already occurring.
- The group noted opportunities through CalFire and USGS to utilize LiDAR monitoring.

In order to address monitoring needs over time, the Monitoring WG would benefit from enhanced participation from ACCG members.

UPDATES

Admin Work Group Update

Katherine reported to the ACCG that the Foothill Conservancy-US Forest Service (USFS) agreement for ACCG administrative functions will remain in place until it expires in the fall of 2019. In the meantime, the USFS and CHIPs will initiate discussions to get a successor direct contracting vehicle to replace the current agreement.

Planning Work Group Update

Rick Hopson informed that ACCG that the Amador Ranger District is coordinating with Ben Solvesky to schedule a field trip related to the Scottiago Project. He also noted that the Amador Ranger District will begin discussing two projects at the next Planning WG meeting, including the Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project and a project in the Upper Cole.

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, March 20, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

Joe Aragon informed the ACCG that the next Planning WG meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 27th from 9 am to Noon in Hathaway Pines. The Planning WG will also begin work to refine the ACCG project development and approval process and will bring it to the full ACCG for discussion in the coming months. Katherine Evatt encouraged Tania to review the past project checklist document and Kendal offered to provide Tania a thumb drive with ACCG archived documents.

Tania will coordinate with Rick and Joe to prepare the Planning WG agenda and associated meeting materials for distribution by Friday, March 22nd. The ACCG agreed that Planning WG agendas would be distributed the Friday before each month's meeting.

Public Relations and Media Work Group Update

Katherine informed the ACCG that the USFS Public Information Officers (PIOs) reached out to Katherine requesting assistance getting the word out about the ACCG's projects and successes. Katherine requested volunteers to join a Public Relations and Media ad hoc working group. In addition to Katherine, Steve Wilensky, and Joe Aragon volunteered for the working group. ACCG members suggested that the WG reach out to the CalFire and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) PIOs in addition to the USFS. Steve noted that the Sacramento Bee was interested in the work going on in Arnold.

Round Table

Steve Wilensky (CHIPS): Attended the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Board meeting and while accepting grants awarded to CHIPS, took the opportunity to talk about concerns associated with the SNC's road policy. Steve has an opportunity to meet with the SNC's Executive Officer, Angela Avery, later in the month and plans to address the issue then.

David Griffith (ABC): The Alpine Biomass Collaborative has been awarded an \$80K Economic Development Assistance Program (EDAP) grant to complete a scoping study for utilization of excess forest biomass and to benefit the local community.

Tim Tate/Jay Francis (SPI): Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) is not currently very active because of constrained access. Tim expects for tree planting to begin in a few weeks. SPI is collaborating with the USFS, Cal Fire, and NFWF to increase the pace and scale of implementing fuel treatments and shaded fuel breaks on the landscape. SPI will focus on 10 to 11 fuel breaks in its Martell district. This work represents a significant effort for SPI in 2019.

CSERC: Heidi Beswick is no longer with CSERC. Megan Layhee will be participating in ACCG meetings.

Monte Kawahara (BLM): Programmatic EA is out on the street. The EA streamlines the process for variance on private properties extending onto BLM lands. Motherlode Field Office is responsible for 9 counties and there is 1 forester, 1 fuels officer (Burns Brimhall), no biologist, and no archaeologist. The South Fork Mokelumne River project is now underway. There was significant interest in the project with approximately 25 contractors showing up to the project's pre-bid tour. Big Bar Scotch broom removal and clean-up is currently underway, while the Tiger Creek project is moving forward.

Ben Solvesky (SFL): Dr. Brandon Collins is coming to South Fork of the American River (SOFAR) Cohesive Strategy to present findings on General Sherman area. Ben will share studies for distribution to the group.

Sue Holper: There was positive feedback from Calaveras Board of Supervisors when Pat McGreevey shared about the work being done in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Katherine Evatt (FC): EBMUD salmon study completed by Cramer Fish Sciences for the Mokelumne River is complete and now receiving media attention. The study evaluated the Mokelumne River from Lake

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, March 20, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

Pardee extending upstream, and showed that 13 miles above Pardee are suitable for habitat restoration to support salmonid spawning and rearing.

Michael Pickard (SNC): SNC awarded a number of grants to this region. CHIPS is the recipient of three grants totaling approximately \$1.5MM, while UMRWA was the recipient of a \$1MM grant for the Black Springs Restoration project and the Amador FSC was the recipient of a \$80K planning grant for the Tiger Creek Fuel Break and Watershed Protection project.

Rich Farrington (UMWRA): Expressed appreciation for the USFS providing match of \$1MM toward UMRWA's recent SNC grant award for the Black Springs Restoration project. UMRWA's Road Erosion Control project and Three Meadows Restoration Implementation project NFWF grant applications have been submitted. EBMUD fishery study indicated 43% of the commercial catch is from the Mokelumne River fish hatchery.

Alissa Fogg (Point Blue): Expect to soon conduct the year's Power Fire burn and vegetation surveys to help evaluate the effects of reforestation. Point Blue's Power Fire Aquatic Habitat Special Status Species Surveys grant application has been submitted to NFWF.

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Brian Oneto	Amador County Supervisor
Helen Loffland Bombay	The Institute for Bird Populations
Rich Farrington	UMRWA, Amador Water Agency
Jay Francis	Sierra Pacific Industries
Jan Bray	Amador FSC
John Heissenbuttel	Cal Am, Amador FSC
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Jeff Brown	Amador County Supervisor
Ken Young	
Katherine Evatt	Foothill Conservancy
Gerald Schwartz	East Bay Municipal Utilities District
Ben Slovesky	Sierra Forest Legacy
Megan Layhee	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Liz Gregg	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Joe Aragon	Calaveras Ranger District (Stanislaus NF), CFLR Coordinator
Kendal Young	Calaveras and Amador Ranger Districts
Tim Tate	Sierra Pacific Industries
Terry Woodrow	Alpine County Board of Supervisors
Annie Dean	Alpine Biomass Collaborative
David Griffith	Alpine Biomass Collaborative
Rick Hopson	Amador Ranger District
Tracy Ellen	
Gwen Starrett	ACCG Member
Meredith McClure	Conservation Science Partners
Shana Gross	USFS
Becky Estes	USFS
Sue Holper	ACCG Member
Steve Wilensky	Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions

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General Meeting Notes, March 20, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

Tania Carlone	Consensus Building Institute
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