

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, March 27, 2019, Hathaway Pines, CA

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute

Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) began discussions about the Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project and will have a more comprehensive discussion of the project at the April Planning WG meeting. The Amador Ranger District will schedule a conference call before the April meeting to discuss ideas and issues raised at the meeting related to the project.
- The Planning WG reviewed ACCG project development and approval process materials. The Planning WG will review a revised project development process package at the April WG meeting and present to the ACCG at the May general meeting.

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Schedule a follow-up conference call before the next Planning WG meeting to discuss the Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project. See Summary for conference call participants.	Rick Hopson Marc Young
Revise ACCG project development materials and assemble package for the Planning WG's review at April Planning Work Group meeting.	Tania Carlone
Follow up with Kendal Young and Michael Pickard regarding convening a special meeting to move forward the landscape vision/mapping exercise.	Rick Hopson Tania Carlone
UMWRA and Forest Service coordinate to identify NEPA ready projects that are ready to seek funding in the immediate term while longer term discussions take place at the ACCG.	Rick Hopson Rich Farrington
Send an invitation to the Planning WG to participate in design review once the Three Meadows Project design elements are ready.	Gwen Starrett
Share with the Calaveras and the ACCG the Forest Service's updated insurance policies before the summer field season.	Rick Hopson

Summary

Amador Ranger District, El Dorado National Forest, 2019 Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project

Project Overview & Intent: Rick Hopson informed the Planning WG that the Project is in pre-scoping and the purpose of bringing the project to the WG at this time was to introduce the project (Links: [2019 Power PCT Scoping Map](#) [2019 Power Fire PCT PA Scoping](#)) and receive preliminary feedback. The Amador Ranger District anticipates a more robust Planning WG discussion about the project in April and hopes to bring it to the full ACCG at the May general meeting. The Forest Service does not have funding to implement the project at this time since there is not a timber harvest component in the proposed action and since PG&E Power Fire settlement funds have been borrowed and not yet returned which requires Congressional action. Nevertheless, the Amador Ranger District wants to get the project NEPA-ready, making it possible to implement once fire settlement funds are returned.

Discussion

- Ben Solvesky was not available to attend the WG meeting but sent his thoughts via email prior to the meeting describing what Sierra Forest Legacy would like to see in the project, including:

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- For the Forest Service to commit to creating a definitive number of gaps and total acreage of gaps per 10 acres, based on aspect and slope position to increase heterogeneity (See [Knapp Presentation](#) and [GTR-220](#) and [237](#)).
- Include an analysis for prescribed fire for the Power Fire plantations.
- Katherine Evatt confirmed that Foothill Conservancy has the same concerns and would like to see the project move the area toward GTR 220 group-and-gap structure.
- Liz Gregg asked for more definition about noxious weed treatments. (See separate decision for reference).-- [DecisionNotice FONSI signed](#)
- There was some discussion about concerns associated with flagging archeological sites to minimize the potential impacts of vandalism on cultural resources vs. treating the sites in a culturally sensitive manner. Rick informed the WG that the Amador RD engages directly with tribes in government to government consultation on topics, such as this.
- Rich Farrington asked the Forest Service to clarify the criteria for hand work versus mechanical thinning and the comparative costs associated with the two treatment approaches.
- Katherine noted that the proposed action identifies the Sierra Nevada yellow legged frog, aiming for no effect on the species. She noted that frog surveys associated with the PG&E hydro project have identified foothill yellow legged frog habitat in the project area and that the action should analyze and avoid potential impact on those frogs.

Next Steps

- The Amador Ranger District will organize a conference call to further discuss the issues raised at the meeting. Marc Young, Jeff Griffin, and possibly a botanist will participate from the Amador Ranger District. The call will also include the Calaveras Ranger District, Foothill Conservancy, Sierra Forest Legacy, and CSERC.

Amador Ranger District, Eldorado National Forest, Upper Cole Project (Pre-scoping)

Project Overview & Intent: Rick Hopson let the WG know that the Amador Ranger District plans to bring the initial proposal with defined project boundaries and host a field trip for the Upper Cole this summer. The Forest Service initiated work in the Upper Cole several years ago but priorities shifted to Scottiogo to focus on addressing fire risk in the WUI. The Forest Service is now revisiting Upper Cole. The project area wraps around Upper and Lower Bear River Reservoir. The Amador Ranger District may utilize a CE, if it fits, but may go to an EA. One of the purposes of the project is to remove conifer encroachment in meadows. A WG member noted that the training on tree marking may be applicable to the Upper Cole. Gwen Starrett reminded the WG that the first Upper Cole field trip was what created the initial impetus for the Three Meadows project. Gwen also encouraged the Forest Service to conduct a rangeland analysis associated with aspen release and noted that temporary fencing may be needed to protect the aspen from the potential impacts of grazing.

ACCG Project Development & Approval Process

The WG began a discussion about how to clarify and refine the existing ACCG project development and approval process. The WG reviewed the “Process for Requesting Support from the ACCG” and “Request for ACCG Letter of Support” and made suggestions for how to revise these documents. The WG referenced the “ACCG All-Lands Project Submission Form” which is a historical document no longer used by the group. The WG indicated that the ACCG principles checklist on the form is important to retain in some capacity. The WG directed Tania Carlone, facilitator, to revise the documents based on the discussion and to prepare a project development and approval process package for the WG’s review at

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the April Planning WG meeting. The revised package will then be brought to the ACCG for discussion and action in May.

Roundtable Updates and Information Sharing

Calaveras Ranger District/Stanslaus National Forest Joe Aragon informed WG members that: 1) the Black Springs Campground Environmental Assessment (EA) maybe on a future ACCG agenda; 2) the Stanislaus large landscape project will be on the Planning WG agenda in April; 3) the Stanislaus will make a presentation on Potential Operational Delineation (PODs) at the April ACCG general meeting.

Rich Farrington: UMWRA just received another \$1M in grant funding. UMWRA would like a five-year project list from ACCG. The WG discussed how the large landscape mapping exercise is an important first step in getting to this desired outcome. The group discussed the importance of following up with Kendal Young, given his relevant experience with SOFAR, and Michael Pickard, who's in the lead on moving the initial steps of the effort forward. Tania suggested that a Landscape Vision ad hoc working group could serve as a subcommittee to the Planning WG. They could begin by convening a special meeting to develop a proposal for how to move the effort forward and present to the Planning WG for consideration. In the meantime, there is an immediate need for UMWRA to coordinate with the Forest Service about the next funding cycle and upcoming fiscal year to identify projects that are NEPA ready. Rick Hopson may attend the next UMWRA board meeting to begin facilitating that discussion.

Gwen Starrett: Gwen informed that WG that the Three Meadows Project design concepts are nearly ready for review. Next steps are to coordinate with the Amador Ranger District. Gwen will send an invitation to the Planning WG once the design elements under development are ready for review.

Amador Ranger District/Eldorado National Forest: Rick Hopson reported that Kendal Young is working on the Power Fire Settlement information request. Rick also described the significant impacts on the Ranger District's ability to implement projects as a result of the loss of fire settlement funds. Rick is also coordinating a Scottiagio field trip with Ben Solvesky for June 26th. Rick will talk to Ben about who should participate in the field trip. The field trip will include Dr. Malcolm North, John Keene, and Sarah Sawyer. Rick further updated the WG on his communications with the national CFLR coordinator, Lindsay Buchanan, who is scheduled to make a presentation at the ACCG general meeting in June. Rick will talk to the Admin WG about preparing for that presentation. Some topics the ACCG might like to discuss with Lindsay are: 1) a possible extension of CFLR funds and the process for securing those funds if the ACCG should choose to pursue the full 10 years of funding; 2) models for succession planning, particularly related to the 5-year post project monitoring requirement; 3) best practices for collaboration under CFLRA, etc. Katherine asked if members of the national CFLR Coalition could also be asked to participate (The Nature Conservancy and Sustainable Northwest). Lastly, Rick will share with the Calaveras and the ACCG the Forest Service's updated insurance policies before the summer field season.

Future Meetings

The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on April 24, 2019 from 9-noon at the Amador Ranger District in Pioneer.

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Terry Woodrow	Alpine County Supervisor, District 4
Megan Layhee	CSERC

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Liz Gregg	CSERC
Gwen Starrett	Local Resident
Katherine Evatt	Foothill Conservancy
Rich Farrington	UMRWA/AWA
Rick Hopson	USFS
Ray Cablayan	USFS
Joe Aragon	USFS
Alaina Osimowitz	USFS
Sue	USFS
John	USFS
Scott	USFS
Tania Carlone	Facilitator, Consensus Building Institute