

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, June 19, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

Meeting Brief

- Rick Hopson of the Amador Ranger District sought consensus on a letter of support for the Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project proposed action. There was extensive discussion regarding member concerns. The ACCG achieved consensus on the letter subject to continued discussions with the Amador Ranger District and a field trip, as well as the formation of an ACCG ad hoc group to draft the letter of support which will be reviewed by the full ACCG.
- Rick Hopson and Gwen Starrett sought consensus on a letter of support for the Three Meadows Project Restoration Design Scoping. The ACCG achieved consensus on the letter.
- Tania Carlone, facilitator, led the group in prioritizing Collaborative Engagement Strategy Recommended Actions. Results indicated the group believes it is a priority to complete all of the Recommended Actions.
- Tania Carlone provided an update on the Planning Work Group's (WG's) revised project development and approval process.
- Tania Carlone conducted a mutual gains negotiation training module.

Action Items

Actions	Responsible Parties
Power Fire PCT Letter of Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Regine Miller to draft Power Fire PCT letter of support.– ACCG ad hoc committee to review and edit draft letter of support.– Regine to distribute revised letter of support to full ACCG for review within a tight timeline.– Regine to finalize letter for distribution to the Amador Ranger District (Eldorado National Forest)	Regine Miller Steve Wilensky Katherine Evatt Rich Farrington Full ACCG
Establish a second Administrative WG meeting per month	Tania Carlone
Joe Aragon to send Regine Miller Moving Towards Resiliency within the Mokelumne to Kings River (MOTOR M2K) briefing paper and official engagement meeting invite for distribution to the full group.	Joe Aragon Regine Miller
Tania Carlone to send Regine Miller worksheet on difficult conversations for distribution to the full group.	Tania Carlone Regine Miller

Modification and/or approval of agenda and May 2019 Meeting Summary.

There were no modifications to the agenda which was adopted as final.

There were no changes to the May Meeting summary. The summary was adopted as final and is to be posted on website.

Presentations, Discussions and Business

2019 Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning Project request for consensus and letter of support.

Rick Hopson presented the Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thinning (PCT) project Proposed Action and stated he is seeking consensus for a letter of support. Rick reviewed the [Proposed Action](#) stating the purpose of the project is to thin trees across 11,354 acres on the Amador Ranger District over five to ten years to meet objectives for young plantations as specified in the Eldorado National Forest Plan, as amended by the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment.

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Rick stated that the issues brought up during the May 15, 2019 General Meeting related to the introduction of prescribed fire and how to increase horizontal and vertical heterogeneity were addressed within the Planning Work through a series of group and one on one discussions. Tania stated that there was a consensus recommendation by the Planning WG to bring the project to the full general meeting.

Discussion

- Ben Solvesky expressed concern about the ability to use prescribed fire as management tool in the future from the lopping and scattering of slash, and limiting the ability to create horizontal and vertical heterogeneity on the landscape.
- Katherine Evatt echoed Ben's concerns, adding concern about remaining tree density. She went on to suggest that heterogeneity be incorporated in the Proposed Action.
- Both Ben and Katherine stated they have continuing concerns about the project, but can stand aside.
- Rich Farrington stated concern that lop and scatter will limit progress toward conducting prescribed fire in the next five to ten years due to added fuel loads.
- Steve Brink was concerned that lop and scatter will increase fuel loads and preclude future management options once complete. He suggested that winch assist or tethering could save expense compared to hand treatment.
- Michael Pickard suggested that, if the USFS were to change lop and scatter to pile burning, they would address many of the group's concerns. Marc Young acknowledged this but replied that pile burning would require significant additional resources.
- Tim Tate asked if the USFS is confident that it can treat the project area with the current budget, and if the project will expire. Rick Hopson replied that the USFS has some but not all funds secured for treatment due to fire settlement funds being retained by Washington. Marc Young replied that NEPA does not expire but there is the possibility that the USFS would have to conduct additional analysis if conditions change.
- Steve Wilensky stated that there are different ways to implement lop and scatter some of which do not contribute ladder fuels. Steve added that Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS), the Upper Mokelumne River Authority (UMRWA) and the USFS are working toward securing grant funds to help implement the scope of work.
- Rick Hopson stated that the USFS would like to keep the option to lop and scatter in the Proposed Action to allow flexibility, and acknowledged that staff has expressed concern that lop and scatter could contribute fuel loads. The Proposed Action does not specify which treatments will be used where, but instead allows for all of the management actions to be utilized. Rick added that mechanical treatment will be deployed where slope and archaeological resource surveys allow. The USFS will try to contain lop and scatter in the decision. He went on that, as the action currently stands, it allows for the USFS to hand pile the entire project area. Rick explained that the USFS cannot include hand piling and exclude lop and scatter treatments in the Proposed Action without going back to the table and revising the document. Rick stated that tethering/winch assist was not included in the Proposed Action because slopes are not steep where mechanical treatment is needed, however, the USFS could potentially include this treatment option in the future. Rick stated that the USFS needs to begin the ground work soon while, at the same time, work toward a long term planning approach. To that end, Rick

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suggested ACCG review the Dinkey Collaborative long-term reforestation strategy plan as a potential example for how to do so. Rick stated that there is a crew ready to begin work this summer on roughly a couple hundred acres. This could be a pilot project area that the ACCG could visit for a field trip and to help continue discussion about implementation concerns. Rick suggested conducting a field trip to look at the on the ground conditions, including lop and scatter implementation and heterogeneity. Marc offered to provide lop and scatter contract specifications to interested members.

- Ben suggested conducting a demonstration of the tethered masticator and also conducting a cost analysis of mastication versus hand treatment and piling.
- Steve recapped the discussion stating that the ACCG members agree that thinning needs to be conducted within the project area, there have been good faith discussions to address member concerns and that the USFS is open to trying to implement the suggested options.

Tania asked if there is a USFS commitment to continue the discussion and to host a field trip to view completed work as a basis for the discussion. If there is USFS commitment, she asked if the ACCG can approve the letter of support for the proposed action. Rick confirmed USFS commitment.

Tania suggested the ACCG form an ad hoc group to draft the letter of support. Steve Wilensky, Katherine Evatt, and Rich Farrington volunteered to serve on the ad hoc group. Regine Miller will draft the letter, the ad hoc committee will review and edit, then Regine will distribute to the entire ACCG for input then finalize.

The ACCG reached consensus for a letter of support based on the creation of the ad hoc committee and aforementioned process.

Three Meadows Project Restoration Design Scoping request for consensus and letter of support.

The Eldorado NF, together with Gwen Starrett, submitted a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant application for Three Meadows Project Restoration in February 2019. They are now seeking consensus for a letter of support for the [scoping document](#).

Restoration will be implemented within three small, degraded, high elevation meadows all of which are within watersheds affected by the 2004 Power Fire: Tyler Meadow, Upper Onion Valley Meadow, and High Onion Meadow. Within the context of the Planning Work Group, the project scoping document was revised to address ACCG member concerns including improving the hydrologic design by elevating the channel bed with log weirs and constructing riffles, potentially fencing seeps previously damaged by livestock, removing small conifers up to 10 inches at base in the meadow boundary and footprints, and monitoring the effectiveness of restoration. There was discussion about the possibility of using the removed conifers as cattle exclusion fencing, log weirs and wind rows for deer cover to avoid lop and scatter. The group unanimously reached consensus for a letter of support.

Prioritize Engagement Strategy Recommended Actions.

Due to the possibility of Tania's potential shortened contract, she asked the ACCG to prioritize the Recommend Actions listed in the [Collaborative Engagement Strategy](#). Members were each given six sticker dots to distribute next to the Recommended Actions posted on the meeting room walls that they believed were the most important to focus on in the immediate term.

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Results indicated updating the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), including the work group structure, was a low priority most likely due to the fact that the work is already underway. Dots were roughly evenly distributed among the other Recommended Actions indicating that the group believes it is a priority to complete all of the Recommended Actions.

ACCG revised project development and approval process.

Tania shared that Planning WG has continued to discuss the project development and approval process, and that the Planning WG desired an initial conversation with full ACCG to ensure high level buy in and make refinements. Tania went on to explain the ACCG [Project Development & Approval Process flow chart](#) which included collecting information, contacting the Planning WG, engaging with the Planning WG, presenting to the General Meeting, and seeking ACCG support. Tania referred members to the Planning WG review box in the event that there are persistent issues with a project. She explained that Planning WG will initiate the conflict resolution process, as described in the ACCG MOA, and work toward resolution. If the issues cannot be resolved and consensus achieved, individual ACCG members may support or oppose any project or aspects of a project.

Discussion

- Ray Cablayan stated that if a project does not achieve Planning WG consensus, the entire ACCG group should be made aware so that the project proponent can seek individual letters of support from members. If Planning WG does not recommend consensus, the project should still go to the Administrative WG then to the full agenda.
- Katherine Evatt stated that the process needs to allow for members bringing project concepts as opposed to fully formed projects. This will permit members to be part of the project development and avoid issues as was done for the Hemlock project. Katherine went on to state that no one is forced to participate in the conflict resolution process if their project does not achieve consensus and that a given proponent can take their project and walk.
- Joe Aragon expressed concern that the conflict resolution process is elaborate and requires considerable effort. Joe stated that he believes it the process is geared for USFS and BLM projects, not for those driven by community groups.
- Michael Pickard added that the group needs to consider partner organizations who will bring projects to the ACCG, especially once the CFLR is over. He suggested that if the approval process is too complicated, the ACCG will risk losing members and their projects altogether.

Tania reminded the group that the ACCG approval process may be expedited if a project is developed within the “zones of agreement.” She stated that time is the most significant constraining factor in trying to reach mutual agreement that you can live with as indicated by the Arnold Avery Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities (SWOT) analysis.

Mutual gains negotiation training module.

Tania presented a mutual gains training module and began by reviewing habits of merely effective negotiators which included: viewing negotiations as zero-sum, neglecting the other side’s problem, focusing on substance to the exclusion of process and relationship issues, letting positions drive out interests, and settling for merely acceptable agreements. Tania suggested ACCG members shift from their positions to looking at their deeper interests, moving from what one *says* to what they want, to what they *really* want/need. Tania discussed how to explore mutually beneficial options to create value and durability, and how to invent solutions without committing through trying to understand each

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other's interests, brainstorming possible options and committing to learn. She reminded the group that to acknowledge others concerns doesn't mean that one necessarily agrees with their concerns but instead creates a feeling of being heard. Tania explained the Groan Zone figure which captures divergent and convergent thinking in the group decision making process, and stated that time is the principal factor in the process. Next, Tania discussed what is meant by mutual gains negotiation. She stated that in multi-stakeholder collaboration there are many interests to satisfy, complex relationships and organizational dynamics. Members need to develop a space to discuss objective criteria, conduct joint fact finding and take a mutual gains approach to negotiation. This includes preparing to suggest mutually beneficial options, creating value, distributing value, and following through. She explained negotiators should separate people from the problem, focus on interests not positions, invent options for mutual gain, and insist on using objective criteria.

Tania listed questions one should ask themselves when conducting mutual gains negotiation including:

- What if?
- What's plan b?
- What is most important to you?
What makes that fair?
- What might go wrong?

Tania provided a negotiation style worksheet and also recommended the book, "Difficult Conversations" (Stone, Patton, Heen). Tania will send Regine a worksheet on conversations for distribution to the group.

Discussion:

- Gerald Schwartz shared that it is important to consider what one wants versus what they need during negotiations.
- Katherine Evatt added that members need to understand their own interests and why, so that they can work to a common solution.
- Steve Wilensky emphasized that interest-based negotiations is an art form and, if members commit to it, it may improve ACCG functions.
- Ray Cablayan stated that there is high value in interest-based negotiations, especially when parties dig in and take positions.

Tania stated the need for ACCG members to commit to learning and skilled negotiation. She suggested that the more the ACCG practice this craft, the more effective it will become.

UPDATES

Admin Work Group Update

Tania stated that the Administrative WG is continuing work to update the MOA and expects to bring it to the full ACCG in July. She went on to share that the Administrative WG has agreed to meet twice per month to move MOA and the other Recommended Actions forward and that she will set up a meeting.

Rick shared that the National CFLR coordinator and/or her assistant will present to the ACCG by livestream in July to discuss CFLR topics of ACCG's choosing. He discussed potential topics and sought member input. Potential topics included:

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- Program best practices: what is the CFLR program intent and what is the USFS' legal authority under CFLR?
- Monitoring requirement: what is required to achieve the 5-year post-CFLR requirement, are there other groups who have secured funding for post-CFLR monitoring, what are the mechanisms and funding sources that have been utilized, and what tools have been used to monitor and evaluate socio-economic impacts?
- Challenges and creative solutions: how to proceed when ACCG does not reach consensus and how have other groups addressed this issue, what have other groups done to address and work through specific management practices or issues that have divided the group, such as the use of herbicides, how is local defined, how are other groups factoring climate change into their forest planning efforts, what are some of the most common pitfalls of other groups, and how are other groups planning for life beyond CFLR program?

Tania stated that she and Rick will provide the CFLR National Coordinator with the questions in advance, and conduct a pre-meeting call.

Rick closed by sharing that the ACCG – Consensus Building Institute contract under SOFAR expires August 15, 2019. The Eldorado NF is exploring options to continue a contractual relationship to avoid a lapse in facilitation and conflict resolution services including extending the existing contract or establishing a new one. In the meanwhile, the Eldorado NF has modified an existing agreement with CHIPS for administration, facilitation and conflict resolution wherein CHIPS would subcontract to CBI for facilitation and conflict resolution.

Planning Work Group Update

Calaveras Ranger District

Joe Aragon shared that the Planning WG conducted the Arnold Avery SWOT in which the group developed key questions to discuss. He referred members to review the May 22, 2019 Planning WG Summary for the specific questions and discussion details. Key issues included that prevented the group from reaching consensus were:

- Timeframes set by Forest Service are not often conducive to collaboration, which takes time, especially among diverse groups.
- Treatment intensity
- Canopy cover reduction
- Differing interpretations of the Forest Plan

Tania asked members to email her if they have questions or concerns related to the Arnold Avery SWOT then she can reserve time for additional discussion at a future meeting.

Joe Aragon went on to share that the Stanislaus NF ID Team Lead met with Planning WG to discuss the Moving Towards Resiliency within the Mokelumne to Kings River (MOTOR M2K) project. There will be the first of a series of engagement meetings held on July 11 from 1p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Stanislaus Supervisor's Office in Sonora where the ID Team will provide a presentation on the project then break into groups with stakeholders for discussion. A comprehensive briefing paper and official engagement meeting invitation is expected to be available next week. Additionally, a field trip to Stanislaus Experimental Forest will be held July 22 to view thinning treatment options to increase forest resilience.

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Joe stated that the USFS understands that the agency is trying to accomplish, what are, unprecedented goals and have examined past landscape scale projects with an eye toward good and bad practices. The Stanislaus NF acknowledges there is a stakeholder concern on the short timeframe and asks for stakeholders to fully engage using a collaborative approach to help meet the time frame. Joe encouraged members to attend the July 11 meeting and to express how they wish to engage as the USFS is willing to engage on multiple levels.

- Ben Solvesky asked to confirm if this is a self-imposed timeline. Joe replied that the timeline was set by the USFS.
- Steve Wilensky expressed concern stating that stakeholders cannot provide ideas and respond with input up front without sufficient time to understand the complexity of the project.

Tania stated that she is in touch with other facilitators for Dinkey Collaborative and Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions to determine how the three collaboratives wish to engage with the Stanislaus NF.

Amador Ranger District

Rick Hopson reminded the group of the June 26 Scottiago field trip from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rick thanked Ben Solvesky for preparing the field trip notice and helping to inform the USFS of the topics that are of interest to cover.

Strategic Landscape Assessment Work Group (SLAWG)

Michael stated that the SLAWG is continuing to work toward its short term goal of creating a mapping tool that can be made available to all of the ACCG to identify strategies for landscape scale project development. The work group has ideas for how to assemble and display the mapping information, and is now working to collect the data. Michael went on to state that the SLAWG is waiting for the Stanislaus NF's Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) analysis to potentially incorporate into the mapping tool. Michael added that the technology tool presented at the Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement (SCALE) workshop by the Burney Hat Creek Community Forest and Watershed Group is of interest and has potential application to the SLAWG mapping tool.

Monitoring Work Group Update (Starrett)

Gwen explained that the ecological indicator report was last completed in 2015. The report is intended to evaluate progress in four areas: fire regime, watershed condition, fish and wildlife habitat, and invasive species. The Monitoring WG plans to work on the report until September.

The Monitoring WG will conduct its next meeting July 10 at 8 a.m. at Lumber Yard for a Power Fire monitoring field tour with Alissa Fogg and Helen Loffland-Bombay are leading the tour. Limited photo monitoring will be conducted at the low density plots during the course of the tour. [NOTE: This field trip was subsequently postponed on July 8, 2019].

Roundtable

Joe Aragon: the USFS is conscientiously evolving, its budgets are shrinking and status quo from the past doesn't meet current or future needs.

Jay Francis: SPI is trying to catch up on its fuel breaks following a rainy season. Fuel breaks have begun to be implemented at Lily Gap and Blue Mountain Road and that SPI is trying to tie into USFS work. Biomass is being sent to Ampine.

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Rick Hopson: the biomass piles on Highway 88 are being chipped and the work has tied in with SPI. The chips are being sent to Wheelabrator plant in Anderson.

Megan Layhee: Further discussion about the SLAWG draft proposal will be held during the June 26th Planning WG meeting.

Gwen Starrett: plans to get out on Upper Onion meadow to cut small conifers and is continuing to look for volunteers to assist.

Michelle Workman: introduced herself as the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) new Watershed Recreation Program Manager. She shared that she is a fisheries biologist by training and is looking forward to working with the ACCG. Michelle stated that 17,750 salmon were counted in fall 2018 constituting a banner year. EBMUD is working with Foothill Conservancy to move salmon upstream of both dams.

Katherine Evatt: The Foothill Conservancy is hearing from PG&E that Mokelumne River flows will be back under the utility's control by early July. The Foothill Conservancy's annual raft trips are set for July 14 and 20 with trip information on their website soon.

Ray Cablayan: The Calaveras Ranger District's burning plans have been postponed due to weather. The burn scheduled for end of May is not likely to occur and Ray believes the District is done burning for 2019.

Steve Wilensky: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) ruled that PG&E hydropower power purchase agreements (PPA) are under their purview but the utility's bankruptcy judge ruled the PPA's are not. This poses a potential issue for other types of PPA's including the planned Wilseyville forest bioenergy power plant's PPA. Steve hopes to be able to resolve the issue legislatively. CHIPS has a Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Timber Regulation Forest Restoration Fund grant for development of a Native American forest restoration and prescribed fire crew. CHIPS is currently meeting with interested tribes to the north and south to determine where it will deploy another crew.

Michael Pickard: SNC's Forest Health Grant using Propositions 68 and 1 funds will be available soon. SNC expects to accept pre-applications until the end of July with full applications due around Oct 1.

John Heissenbuttel: The Amador FSC is on the Amador County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda for June 25th to suggest the Board consider adopting an ordinance requiring homeowners to follow the fuel reduction standards set by CAL FIRE similar to what was recently approved in El Dorado County.

Rich Farrington: is looking forward to Planning WG Scottiago field trip. The two agencies he works (Amador Water Agency and Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority) with are trying to make forests more resilience. Rich is disappointed that there is not a fire scientist in attendance on the field trip.

Monte Kawahara: The Lily Gap project should be complete within the next 30 days. BLM established a variance to allow timber operators to continue to work beyond the BLM's fire exemption deadline. With regard to the South Fork Mokelumne River project, mastication and hand work in the Sandy Gulch unit and Cemetery unit is complete or nearly complete.

Monte introduced the BLM State Forester to the group and shared that BLM's Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) funding opportunity is soon available to assist with partner agreements. Monte went on to explain that the National Directive 3372 states BLM will leverage GNA more in the future and that it is a priority for the BLM. There is \$100K in funding available Statewide for the program. The BLM's strategy is to dedicate funds to the groups who have the agreements at the end of the year. Steve Wilensky added that in Lake County the USFS and BLM have combined lands to create a national monument which the agencies co-manage using mingled funds to be able to get more work done on the ground.

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Steve suggested that GNA could allow for the two agencies to come together and could provide seed money to create a community forest of BLM lands.

Tania Carlone: Reminded the group that the July 17 meeting will be at the Amador County BOS meeting chambers, then adjourned the meeting.

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Katherine Evatt	Foothill Conservancy
Gerald Schwartz	East Bay Municipal Utilities District
John Heissenbuttel	Cal Am, Amador FSC
Michael Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Megan Layhee	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Liz Gregg	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Rick Hopson	Amador Ranger District
Sue Holper	ACCG Member
Steve Wilensky	Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions
Tania Carlone	Consensus Building Institute
Monte Kawahara	Bureau of Land Management (arrived in
Linda Diesem	Calaveras landowner
Ray Cablayan	Calaveras Ranger District (Stanislaus NF)
Jay Francis	Sierra Pacific Industries
Marc Young	USFS El Dorado NF, Amador Ranger District
Chuck Loffland	USFS El Dorado NF, Amador Ranger District
Gwen Starrett	Amador Resident
Michelle Workman	East Bay Municipal Utility District
Ben Slovesky	Sierra Forest Legacy
Steve Brink	California Forestry Association
Rich Farrington	UMRWA
Susan McMorris	Blue Mountain Community Renewal Council
Terry Woodrow	Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Amador FSC
Joe Aragon	USFS Stanislaus NF, Calaveras Ranger District
Tim Tate	Sierra Pacific Industries