

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, July 17, 2019, Jackson, CA

Meeting Brief

- USFS Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) staff presented information on the CFLR Program, including CFLRP intent, authorities, requirements, and lessons learned from the other CFLR projects across the US. CFLRP staff encouraged ACCG members to utilize the [CFLRP Resource Library](#) and reach out to the CFLRP team for assistance if needed.
- USFS staff gave an overview of the vegetation management project, Moving Towards Resiliency within the Mokelumne to King River (MOTOR M2K), that would cover Stanislaus and Sierra National Forests. The ACCG discussed how it would like to participate with the MOTOR M2K project. The ACCG agreed to actively engage the project and have the Planning WG lead those discussions.
- USFS modified an existing agreement with CHIPS that will enable CHIPS to subcontract with CBI to ensure continued facilitation services while USFS and CBI continue to pursue an amendment with the existing CBI contract.

Action Items

Actions	Responsible Parties
CFLRP staff to share upcoming CFLRP webinar information and other resources for CBI to share with the full ACCG	Lindsay Buchanan
CBI to include MOTOR M2K discussion in next Planning WG meeting agenda	Tania Carlone
USFS to send upcoming MOTOR M2K materials to CBI / CHIPS to share with the full ACCG	Michael Jow
CBI to work with Joe Sherlock to coordinate the Designation by Prescription presentation at the next General Meeting	Regine Miller

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

There were minor modifications to the agenda (i.e., presenters) before being adopted as final.

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

Presentations, Discussions and Business

CFLR National Coordinator

Lindsay Buchanan, USFS Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) Coordinator, and Jessica Robertson, Integrated Restoration Coordinator, presented information on the CFLR Program, including CFLRP intent, authorities, requirements, and lessons learned from the other CFLR projects across the US ([Link to the CFLRP presentation slides](#)). The presentation was designed in response to several [CFLRP questions and issues](#) the ACCG developed prior to the meeting. Lindsay and Jessica emphasized that each individual project has its own unique set of ecological, social, and economic context and factors; however, there are opportunities for common learning across the 23 CFLRP sites. Both speakers encouraged ACCG members to utilize the [CFLRP Resource Library](#). Key takeaways included:

- **CFLRP intent and project structures.** Under the CFLR Act, the purpose of the CFLRP includes encouraging collaborative, science-based restoration, supporting “triple bottom line” sustainability, and leveraging local, national, and private resources. Funds must be used for

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ecological restoration treatments that are consistent with the proposal and strategy; and identified through the collaborative process. However, “collaboration” and how to evaluate treatments’ consistency with the proposal and strategy are not defined in detail to allow for individual projects to define what structure (e.g., quorum, committees, and multi-level organizations) and processes (e.g., make recommendations, endorsements, etc.) best work for them.

- **Collaboration.** Lindsay and Jessica shared insights to help bolster collaboration, including a decision-making process example similar to [ACCG’s draft process for seeking ACCG consensus support](#). When conflict impedes collaboration, other groups have sought additional support (e.g., neutral, third party facilitation and trusted outside experts) and/or modified the group’s structure (e.g., Washington CFLR evolved to more stakeholder-based with multi-level organizations). Groups have sustained momentum using strategies like new media/outreach groups, memos and other materials to orient newcomers during transitions, and celebrating milestones and holding social events.
- **Planning and Monitoring.** In 2018, CFLRP staff worked with practitioners to develop a list of planning themes to help collaboratives think through their project needs (e.g., continue collaboration, expand prescribed fire, how to adjust scale and integration depending on changing funding and capacity, and monitoring). The CFLR Act requires that each project must use a multi-party monitoring, evaluation, and accountability process to assess ecological, social, and economic impacts. Projects must also conduct no less than 15 years of monitoring after project implementation commences. Effective monitoring plans involve local, multi-parties tiered toward the five CFLRP national indicators (economic impacts, ecological restoration, wildfire risk, leveraged funds, and collaboration). Lindsay and Jessica shared resources in response to ACCG members’ interest in [factoring in climate change into planning](#) and assessing socio-economic impacts ([Quick Guide \(University of Oregon\)](#) and [National Forest Foundation webinar](#)).
- **Looking Forward.** In the near term, the annual reports and 10-year reports (for 2010 CFLRP projects) are due. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized the CFLRP through 2023 and increased the authority to appropriate up to \$80 million annually to the CFLRP. Projects that have already received their 10-year funding can apply for a one-time (<10 year) extension waiver. 2010 CFLRP projects are eligible to apply for the extension waiver (ACCG is a 2012 CFLRP project), and USFS expects the additional appropriated funds enable the Secretary to select new CFLRP projects for 2020 ([Link to CFLRP 2019 Request for Proposals information](#)). USFS is hosting several webinars for CFLRP interested applicants on July 19, August 1, and September 5.

Discussion

- Jessica stated that one of the reasons why the CFLRP Reauthorization was successful was due to the great work accomplished thus far.
- An ACCG member said the group has considered conducting surveys to better understand socio-economic impacts in the local community, but that effort has not made much progress. Lindsay acknowledged a couple challenges, including the Paper Reduction Act requirements. There is a multi-year process to approve surveys. CFLRP staff attempted to develop a survey template; however the survey was not approved. Surveys are usually done on a project-by-project basis. Collaboratives like the ACCG are not subject to the same federal requirements for surveys.

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- In response to a clarifying question about the CFLRP legislation requirements, Lindsay and Jessica reiterated the CFLR Act mentions the Secretary's authorities and how funds must be used consistent with the proposal and strategy, but there is gray area in the language to allow for the wide range in local issues and needs. An ACCG member observed that the CFLRP relies on the collaboratives to do the problem-solving because the statute is not very prescriptive.
- While each project has its own unique factors and issues; projects share many of the same struggles. Lindsay and Jessica encouraged the ACCG to reach out to them for insight and advice. They also can help connect the ACCG with other groups experiencing similar challenges. ACCG members expressed appreciation that the CFLRP offers so many resources, connections, and "strike team" to consult for help.
- The group reflected that the presentation did a very good job to answer the ACCG's questions. They found it very helpful to see how other collaboratives approached decision-making and reaching consensus.

Next Steps

Lindsay and Jessica will share the meeting information for the upcoming CFLRP webinars; CBI will distribute it to the full ACCG list. CBI will post the CFLRP presentation to the website, which has many of the links to resources Lindsay and Jessica shared.

Options and Consensus on ACCG's Preferred Approach to Collaboration for MOTOR M2K

Michael Jow, Co-ID Team leader for the large landscape scale project - Moving Towards Resiliency within the Mokelumne to King River (MOTOR M2K), gave an overview of the project ([Link to project brief, updated July 2019](#)). The purpose for this agenda item was for the ACCG to discuss options and agree on a preferred approach for collaborating on MOTOR M2K project.

MOTOR M2K covers a two million-acre planning area within the Stanislaus and Sierra National Forests. Michael reviewed the preliminary purpose and need for the project; Tania Carlone then presented the timeline to issue a Final Decision ([Link to presentation, starting on page 3](#)). Key takeaways included:

- **Project focus.** The primary focus of the project is to increase the pace and scale of vegetation management to improve the landscape's resiliency to wildfire and tree mortality associated with drought and insects. The project will support treatment activities over the next 10-15+ years and provide management adaptability and flexibility in the face of uncertainty and rapidly changing landscape conditions.
- **Previous ACCG engagement.** The Planning WG received an initial presentation at its May meeting. Facilitators supporting the ACCG, the Yosemite-Stanislaus Solutions (YSS), and Dinkey Collaborative met in early July with USFS and agreed to go to their respective collaboratives to discuss how each group wants to engage with the MOTOR M2K. USFS also hosted a public meeting on July 11 (the first of a series of tribal/stakeholder/public engagement opportunities) to share information on the project and receive input on the development for the proposed action. Jason Kuiken, Stanislaus NF Supervisor, explained that USFS purposefully has not developed the proposed action yet; USFS wants to develop that in collaboration with the public, collaboratives, and other stakeholders.
- **ACCG engagement options.** The Admin Work Group developed initial options for MOTOR M2K engagement for the ACCG to consider:

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- USFS briefings only – USFS staff will present at ACCG meetings. ACCG members can participate in the MOTOR M2K project as individuals.
- USFS briefings + Ad Hoc – the ACCG could form an ad hoc committee that would directly engage with the project. The ACCG would need to consider whether the ad hoc committee would try to reach consensus on recommendations or serve solely as a conduit for information; engage with both USFS and the other two collaboratives; what would be the acceptable representation on the ad hoc; and can the ad hoc meet on an as-needed basis.

Discussion

- Several participants shared concerns that individuals, particularly from NGOs, lack the staff and time to participate in a new committee. Others expressed reservations about a subset of the ACCG adequately representing or conveying all ACCG viewpoints. The group considered having the Planning WG lead engagement activities. A few individuals were concerned that MOTOR M2K discussions would consume too much of the Planning WG's meeting time, leaving no time to discuss other ACCG priorities. Others acknowledged these concerns; however, felt that meaningfully managing against wildfire on the landscape should be a high priority and warrants ACCG involvement. An ACCG member added this may provide an opportunity to encourage more active participation by other ACCG members who typically do not attend the Planning WG meetings.
- An ACCG member expressed disappointment that the Eldorado National Forest was not part of the project area, as managing the full watershed is important.
- The group also considered other groups, like the SLAWG or to rely on the other collaboratives on in the project area for input, to engage in the project. However, the group decided the project discussions does not align well with the other committees' role. Participants stated that the other collaboratives also appear to face similar capacity challenges (e.g., YSS meets less frequently than the ACCG), and the collaboratives may have different management priorities for their regions.
- Several ACCG members shared concerns and frustrations with the planning effort, stating the timeline was too aggressive to allow for the collaboratives to provide meaningful input. Jason stated the USFS is considering extending the comment period to begin in September rather than August. The USFS' challenge is that extending the process puts capacity strains on partners; USFS is trying to balance everyone's capacity needs with the landscape's management needs.
- An ACCG member asked what are the ACCG's engagement options once USFS finalizes the project. Jason explained the USFS wants to collaboratively develop the project ruleset. Afterwards, the USFS still wants input on implementation processes (e.g., how to prioritize where work occurs).
- An ACCG member said the MOTOR M2K timeline does not align with the ACCG discussions, as the ACCG is still working on identifying clear zones of agreement. Michael Jow said that ACCG discussions and decisions, like zones of agreement, can still influence the MOTOR M2K project even if not directly related to the project. Tania mentioned that the ACCG will prioritize the zones of agreement discussion in the upcoming Planning WG and General Meetings.

Next Steps

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The ACCG agreed the ACCG should actively engage with the MOTOR M2K with the Planning WG leading those discussions. Given that, the group recommended postponing the meadows field trip originally scheduled for the next Planning WG meeting to give more time for the MOTOR M2K discussion. An ACCG member emphasized that field trips are still important to the ACCG.

The USFS MOTOR M2K team is summarizing the comments received at the July 11 meeting and plans to hold a field trip on July 22 to the Stanislaus Experimental Forest. The next public meeting will be on either August 8 or 12 (*post-meeting note: USFS will hold the next public meeting on August 12*). ACCG members recommended USFS send out background materials (both for the field trip and future public meetings).

UPDATES

Admin Work Group Update

Rick Hopson shared that the Eldorado NF has approved modifying an existing agreement with Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) for administration, facilitation and conflict resolution, enabling CHIPS to subcontract with the Consensus Building Institute (CBI) for facilitation and conflict resolution. This will provide uninterrupted facilitation services through August while USFS continues to pursue a contract extension with the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution Udall Foundation for CBI's services.

Planning Work Group Update

Calaveras Ranger District

Ray Cablayan shared that USFS is working with Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMWRA) and CHIPS on potential grant opportunities in particular areas like Bailey (previously slated for mastication, but factors like the Rim Fire delayed work). No implementation activities have occurred for Arnold Avery beyond burning piles. Jason added that USFS is not using CFLR funds for Arnold Avery project due to lack of ACCG consensus.

Amador Ranger District

Rick Hopson presented a quick overview of the recent Scottiagio Field Trip as part of the June Planning Work Group meeting. The field trip focused on two commercial thinning sites in spotted owl areas for participants to consider how to mechanically increase forest complexity and spotted owl habitat quality in uniform stands. Many participants indicated they substantially learned from the field trip; Rick indicated he hopes the Planning Work Group can capture many of these major takeaways.

Strategic Landscape Assessment Work Group (SLAWG)

Michael Pickard confirmed that the Planning Work Group supported the SLAWG's proposal to develop a project mapper in the near term and continue discussions on how to develop a landscape-scale assessment in the long term. The group plans to present a pilot map at the next Planning Work Group meeting to discuss how to present project information that will be useful for ACCG members and partners. The group is still gathering information on existing resources and how to approach conducting a landscape-scale assessment. The group also plans to coordinate with the Monitoring Work Group. Katherine encouraged the SLAWG to contact the Fall River RCD for its assessment work with 34 North.

Monitoring Work Group Update

The Monitoring WG did not meet since the last General Meeting. Robin Wall, USFS Eldorado NF, stated the group plans to discuss development of the ACCG ecological monitoring report at its next meeting.

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Roundtable Updates

Monte Kawahara: For the South Fork Mokelumne River project, BLM completed 140 acres of mastication and hand work; BLM wants to connect these treated areas with CAL FIRE areas, creating a fuel break across Mokelumne up to Highway 26. BLM continues to implement the programmatic EA (which did not come with funding, but did expedite some of the bureaucratic processing); near-term progress may be limited depending on the fire season. Monte introduced the new Assistant Field Manager, Josh Sjostrom; BLM also plans to hire a new archaeologist.

Ray Cablayan: Highlands Lakes was recently cleared; the campgrounds are not opened yet. Wildlife crews in Hemlock are clearing the area in order for the contractor to access the site.

Jason Kuiken: Scott Tangenberg leaves August 18 and will be starting a new permanent position as the Forest Supervisor for the Cleveland National Forest in San Diego. USFS continues to conduct its POD assessment and plans to have the prioritization done by the end of the fiscal year. The assessment will play a major role in the MOTOR M2K timeline. USFS is also looking at its workforce planning to address how the USFS can accomplish its vegetation management goals using its internal resources while also leveraging external resources (e.g., increasing contractors' capacity).

Joe Sherlock: Joe will make a presentation at the next General Meeting on Designation by Prescription. Tania/Regine Miller will follow up with Joe to confirm additional speaker(s) for this presentation.

Rich Farrington: UMWRA assigned an ad hoc committee to work with USFS on the Power Fire project. UMWRA Board will take a field trip to look at the Stanislaus NF on July 26.

Jay Francis: SPI continues its operations on harvest lands and fuel breaks. SPI is on target with its timber loads (getting about 50-55 loads per day for the entire district). The cooler spring has been helpful.

John Heissenbittel: John suggested a future field trip to Big Trees State Park for lessons learned on prescribed fire.

Katherine Evatt: The Foothill Conservancy continues its work with salmon restoration, exploring how to get Chinook salmon back up into the upper Mokelumne (collaborative project with state, federal, and local agencies and other fish groups). The Conservancy's raft trips have been very successful, taking about 100 people on the raft trips. The Conservancy is conducting interviews for the Watershed Conservation Associate Position (part-time) and plans to hire a part-time Executive Director.

David Griffith: The Alpine Biomass Collaborative expects its scoping study (on how to utilize excess biomass from the Mokelumne) will be complete by December or January. He added that the State's Forest Management Task Force has been discussing how to devolve responsibilities from the State task force to the regional and local governments and Tribes. He emphasized that ACCG members should encourage entities (e.g., county supervisors, fire safety councils, and resource conservation districts) from the Amador and Calaveras counties to more actively engage in these conversations now, which may cultivate more beneficial funding opportunities in the future.

Chuck Loffland: The Foster Meadow Project (currently working through permitting) hopes to move forward into implementation in the fall (if it is not too wet).

Megan Layhee: Liz Gregg is no longer working for CSERC and, therefore, will no longer attend ACCG meetings.

Michael Pickard: SNC's Forest Health Grant using Propositions 68 and 1 funds is accepting pre-applications until the end of July with full applications due around Oct 1. The SNC Board meets September 4th in Sacramento, but will later have forest tour. SNC plans to work with CHIPS and other potential partners like BLM to coordinate speakers and tour stops. Michael will share logistics with the ACCG for those who want to meet the SNC Board for the field trip portion.

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Rick Hopson: One positive aspect of the Scottiago tour was to have a non-USFS group (Sierra Forest Legacy) take a lead role in the tour. USFS Marc Young was recently part of a chipping and biomass news story; Rick can share the link when that is available. Other work underway included Highway 88 and Omo Ranch Road. Scoping for the Power Fire Pre-Commercial Thin project has closed, but the final document has not been signed yet; USFS is working through Tribal Consultation. No hazard tree sales for Amador occurred; Scottiago project had hazard tree timber sales. Amador County is removing hazardous trees along Bear River Road.

Gwen Starrett: The environmental analysis for Three Meadows has started. Part of the analysis will include river surveys for nine weeks. Scoping for Three Meadows ends July 26th. Gwen is still removing conifers in the area and continues to try to expand awareness and participation.

Tania Carlone: Regine (CHIPS) typically brings the ACCG MOU, but Regine is out of the office. Interested parties that wish to sign the MOU should contact Tania.

Closing

Next General Meeting: August 21 meeting will be at Sutter Creek.

Meeting Participants

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Ben	Solvesky	Sierra Forest Legacy
Chuck	Loffland	USFS - ENF, Amador Ranger District
David	Griffith	Alpine Biomass Collaborative
Gerald	Schwartz	East Bay Municipal Utility District
Gwen	Starrett	Amador Resident
Jason	Kuiken	USFS - Stanislaus NF
Jay	Francis	Sierra Pacific Industries
Jill	Micheau	Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions
Joe	Sherlock	USFS
John	Heissenbuttel	Cal Am, Amador FSC
Josh	Sjostrom	Bureau of Land Management
Katherine	Evatt	Foothill Conservancy
Laurence	Crabtree	USFS
Megan	Layhee	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
Michael	Jow	USFS - Stanislaus NF
Michael	Pickard	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Monte	Kawahara	Bureau of Land Management
Ray	Cablayan	USFS - Stanislaus NF, Calaveras Ranger District
Rich	Farrington	Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

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Rick	Hopson	USFS - ENF, Amador Ranger District
Robin	Wall	USFS - ENF, Amador Ranger District
Sue	Holper	ACCG
Tom	Griffing	
Tony	Valdes	Foothill Conservancy
Tania	Carlone	Consensus Building Institute
Stephanie	Horii	Consensus Building Institute