

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, January 27, 2021, On-line Meeting

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) discussed key takeaways from the prescribed fire panel which occurred at the January 20th general meeting. Following in-depth discussion, the WG formed a prescribed fire ad hoc committee.
- The WG identified possible panelists and articulated the primary objectives for an herbicide panel discussion to occur at the March general meeting.
- Megan Layhee reported on the outcomes from the project mapping tools workshops [[Access Here](#)] held in December 2020 and informed the WG that the SLAWG has completed work on the tools for the Planning WG to implement in project planning activities and has developed a SLAWG webpage which houses the tools [[Access Here](#)].
- The Monitoring WG requested Planning WG members provide key questions to the Monitoring WG as they re-evaluate indicators for monitoring.
- The Planning WG made a consensus recommendation for the inclusion of the community and economic benefits checklist in the updated ACCG Project Submission Form and conveyed the document to the full ACCG for consideration at the February general meeting.

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate with interested participants to schedule the first meeting of the prescribed fire ad hoc committee.	Megan Layhee
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reach out to prospective herbicide use in forest management panelists to gauge interest and availability.	Megan Layhee
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reach out to a lead scientist in Boulder, Colorado researching wind-blown fires in California for a possible future presentation.	Rich Farrington
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send key questions for which the WG would like to see monitoring information to Becky Estes (becky.estes@usda.gov).	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check monitoring database to clarify if there is a community and economic benefits field included.	Helen Loffland
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place on general meeting agenda the updated project submission form with community and economic checklist for full ACCG consideration.	Megan Layhee

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Summary

Agenda Review and May Meeting Summary Approval

The Planning Work Group (WG) met via Zoom video-conference. The WG confirmed the agenda and October meeting summary without revision.

General Meeting Speaker Series

January 20th General Meeting Presentation Debrief: The WG discussed the prescribed fire panel focused on the barriers and solutions for applying prescribed fire on the landscape. The panelists included: Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE (retired); Jesse Plummer, Amador Ranger District (RD); Chris Dow, Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI); and Susie Kocher, UC Cooperative Extension. The focus of WG discussions related to general meeting speakers is to explore key concepts that are applicable to the ACCG. WG members shared the following takeaways and questions:

- Panelists represented different perspectives on common themes which unified the panel overall.
- There needs to be a willingness to accept some tree mortality from prescribed fire as a part of the process which some noted is more desirable than the number of trees killed by high intensity wildfire. The awareness that an estimated 8 billion board feet killed in 2020 wildfires may help cultivate broader acceptance of some tree mortality from prescribed fire.
- There is broad support for the use of prescribed fire but some significant challenges such as: 1) preparing the landscape for the application of prescribed fire; 2) limited staff availability; 3) necessary equipment being drawn away to fires in southern California; 4) short burn windows.
- There are a lot of non-federal private lands, what can the ACCG do to tackle those lands? The liability concerns for private property owners seem significant. One ACCG member offered that legislative discussions are occurring related to liability and some progress is being made although no outcome clear or imminent.
- The primary questions for the ACCG is what can the group do now to get prescribed fire on the ground?
- What might be some “low hanging fruit” that could lead to success and increase the community’s comfort with the use of prescribed fire? What might such a project look like? There was some discussion that beyond the low hanging fruit, it’s important to use all the tools in the toolbox in concert with prescribed fire. The role of herbicides and goat grazing are examples of complements to prescribed fire to increase the pace and scale of forest treatments.
- Within the policy arena, communicating with Boards of Supervisors to incorporate planning for prescribed fire in the counties’ general plans might be an outreach strategy the ACCG would like to consider. It is important to show the benefits of prescribed burning to the broader public and this may offer an accessible venue.

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- Might it be useful to form a prescribed fire subcommittee to serve as a standing committee to focus on the topic and bring more visibility to the issue so that it is not forgotten.
- This may be a good opportunity to bring practitioners together to practice the pyro-silviculture concept.
- How to give the ACCG more visibility with the broader public. There may be an opportunity to influence public perception through press releases, public workshops and other venues for engagement. The group acknowledged that community education is essential
- Working group members agreed that National Forest lands provide the greatest opportunity for prescribed burning. A next step to move forward prescribed fire in the ACCG landscape is to coordinate with the Amador and Calaveras Ranger Districts to identify a goal and figure out a timeframe for realistic prescribed fire acres in the respective RDs.
- In the meantime, it may be helpful to continue to engage some speakers or experts to go more deeply into understanding how to achieve successful application of prescribed fire on private lands and how to overcome liability concerns.

The Planning Work Group decided to form a prescribed fire ad hoc committee that would meet on a regular basis. The following people voiced interest in participating in the subcommittee:

1. John Buckley
2. Greg Suba
3. Rich Farrington
4. Kellin Brown
5. Caitlyn Rich
6. Megan Layhee
7. Shane Dante
8. Gwen Starrett
9. Rick Hopson
10. Jesse Plummer
11. Robin Wall

Next steps:

- Megan Layee will coordinate with interested participants to schedule the first meeting of the prescribed fire ad hoc committee.

The group proceeded to plan for the upcoming herbicide panel scheduled for the March general meeting.

Herbicide Use Panel Presentation Planning
Proposed Date: March general meeting
Suggested duration: 90-minutes

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Objectives:

- Gain a clearer understanding of the range of perspectives on the use of herbicides in forest management
- Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of herbicide use; where and when herbicides are used and for what purposes
- Safety standards for herbicide use to protect drinking water supply

Prospective Speakers: The WG recommended no more than 3-4 speakers for the panel.

List of Possible Panelists identified in by Planning Work Group Members:

1. **John Buckley, CSERC**
2. **Craig Ostergaard (private lands); back up to Craig--Scott Oneto**(Weed science for Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Amador)
3. **Maria Benech (public lands)**, Rim Fire Coordinator, Stanislaus National Forest
4. **Andrea Williams, CNPS, Director of Plant Science** (*Greg Suba reached out after meeting and she is not available)

Related Potential Future Presentations:

- a. Herbicide alternatives: **Dan Macon** (UCCE in Placer Co. use of goats and sheep for veg management).
- b. Monitoring (indirect effect): **Alissa Fogg**, Central Sierra Program Leader, Point Blue; **Helen Loffland**, meadow species specialist, The Institute for Bird Populations

Resources:

- Greg Suba suggested a resource: California Native Plants Society (CNPS) policy articulating why herbicides are used, including a hierarchy of acceptability and when it is not considered acceptable from CNPS' perspective (could be a good starting point for the Planning WG's consideration after the herbicide panel).

Next steps:

- Megan Layhee will reach out to prospective herbicide use in forest management panelists to gauge interest and availability.
- An herbicide alternatives presentation will occur after the herbicide presentation in March.
- Rich Farrington will reach out to a lead scientist in Boulder, Colorado researching wind-blown fires in California for a possible future presentation (May 2021).

Mapping Tools Development & Next Steps

Mapping Tools Development & Next Steps

Megan Layhee gave an update on the prioritization tool development process, specifying that the Strategic Landscape Assessment Working Group (SLAWG) convened three e-workshops late last year. Megan noted that the e-workshops were recorded and can be found on the ACCG website under the *videos* tab [[Access Here](#)]. She also noted that she has been developing a

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SLAWG webpage on the ACCG website, which is where the mapping tool will be hosted. She reported that the SLAWG has reached consensus on the mapping tool products and has successfully achieved its goals. The SLAWG will continue to meet on an as-needed basis and as directed by the Planning WG but is now officially handing off the mapping tools to the WG for its use. Megan will continue to participate in the Planning WG and will facilitate the application of the mapping tools in the ACCG's project development efforts.

Regarding the application of the tool, Megan anticipates working with the Planning WG to explore how the tools can be used for project planning. She asked how the WG envisions utilizing these tools in the future.

Planning WG Discussion/Input

- Planning WG members expressed appreciation for Megan's work and reiterated that the tools provide a project inventory comprised of factual information received from agencies. The question with that information is how long will it be effective. The tools also include decisions that SLAWG made regarding values at risk. High risk areas are based on data as well as some subjective decisions made by the SLAWG. There are other additional sources of information. The Stanislaus modeling effort, etc. There is collective agreement among the SLAWG that there is an opportunity to continue to build upon these tools and incorporate new information as it becomes available.
- WG members confirmed that it is within the Planning WG's purview to have these discussions about how to apply the tools. A starting point may be to explore: 1) what the tools tell us today; how the tools can be used to identify priority projects; 3) where the effort goes from here.
- The WG acknowledged that the ACCG is not operating in a vacuum. To the south on the Stanislaus National Forest, the SERAL project is being developed. It will be important to identify if there are tools being used in that project that could be integrated into the ACCG's tools. Other tools and information being developed such as PODs could also be incorporated into the ACCG tools.
- There was some discussion about how the tool could be used to help the ACCG get projects ready for upcoming grant opportunities and what information the tools could provide in the immediate term to help the ACCG pursue grants. In this regard, the WG noted an important nexus between the Funding Coordination WG and the Planning WG.
- WG members noted that even though the ACCG has developed these tools which provide an immediate value for the SCCG, it will be important for ACCG member agencies to help inform project development efforts that help answer key questions, such as: Are there some glaring gaps where the ACCG can begin to develop projects?
- The WG also discussed a nexus between the Funding Coordination WG .
- Since the Planning WG just formed a Prescribed Fire ad hoc, these tools could be employed to assist that group in moving prescribed fire projects forward.

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Next Steps:

- In the coming month, Megan intends to make modifications to the tools based on e-workshop input, and complete SLAWG webpage [[Access Here](#)].

Project Planning & Monitoring Discussion

Monitoring Work Group Re-Evaluation of Indicators for Monitoring: Chuck Loffland informed the Planning WG that the Monitoring WG is in the process of re-evaluating monitoring questions and methods based on current and changing conditions. He asked the Planning WG to identify key questions for which the WG would like to see monitoring information and to send them to Becky Estes. He also noted that it would be important to think about the ACCG landscape as a whole, not only what is required by the CFLRP. There was some discussion about the importance of ensuring that monitoring activities collect information and inform the ACCG's triple bottom line, including community and economic benefits. Helen Loffland offered that the ACCG has all monitoring questions in a database and she can check to see if there is a community and economic benefits field in the database. WG members asked about what may occur in the case of competing priorities that may be identified. Chuck Loffland explained that activities are often prioritized based on funding and staff availability. Gwen Starrett noted that the ACCG has a monitoring strategy that articulates for areas of inquiry which include: 1) ecological effectiveness; 2) socio-economic effectiveness; 3) implementation; 4) collaborative questions. She mentioned that most of the focus has been within the first two areas. Rick Hopson noted that there is a statutory requirement for a monitoring report tied to CFLR. In terms of how to monitor local social and economic benefits, WG members suggested "harvesting" information from existing sources, such as contracts.

Community & Economic Benefits Checklist: The Community and Economic Benefits Ad Hoc Committee of the Planning spent much of the past 10 months developing a community and economic benefits checklist for inclusion in the ACCG Project Submission Form. The checklist was shared with the full ACCG last fall. At that time, John Heissenbuttal commented on the draft which initiated a conflict resolution process which included two Ad hoc committee members, Rich Farrington and Shane Dante as well and John Heissenbuttal and Randy Hanvelt. The group met twice and successfully agreed on changes to the checklist represented in the document shared with the Planning WG today [[Access Here](#)]. The Planning WG agreed by consensus to move the checklist forward to the full ACCG for consideration and approval. The Planning WG reiterated that the full project development package is a living and learning document that is intended to change overtime. This recommendation would update the existing project submission form to include a community and economic benefits checklist.

Next Steps:

- Planning WG send key questions for which the WG would like to see monitoring information to Becky Estes (becky.estes@usda.gov).
- Helen Loffland check monitoring database to clarify if there is a community and economic benefits field included.

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- The full ACCG will consider the Planning WG recommended inclusion of the community and economic benefits checklist in the ACCG Project Submission Forum at the February general meeting.

Next Steps

- The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on Wednesday, February 24, 2021. The meeting will take place on-line via Zoom.

Meeting Participants

#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
1	Tania Carlone (facilitator)	Consensus Building Institute (CBI)		3
2	Kellin Brown	USFS- Calaveras		3
3	Shane Dante	Foothill Conservancy		3
4	Rich Farrington	UMRWA		3
5	Randy Hanvelt	Associated California Loggers		3
6	Megan Layhee	CHIPS		3
7	Robin Wall	USFS- Amador		3
8	Regine Miller	CHIPS		3
9	Greg Suba	Sierra Forest Legacy		2.5
10	John Buckley	CSERC		3
11	Sara Husby	CSERC		3
12	Caitlyn Rich	CSERC		3
13	Ray Cablayan	USFS Calaveras RD		3
14	Rick Hopson	USFS Amador RD		3
15	Helen Loffland	The Institute for Bird Populations		3
16	Gwen Starrett			3
17	Chuck Loffland	USFS Amador RD		1
18	Terry Woodrow	Alpine County		3
19	Craig Christensen	CHIPS		3