**Prescribed Fire Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Minutes**

**3/22/21**

***Participants***

Rich Farrington - UMRWA

Kellin Brown – USFS, Calaveras Ranger District

John Buckley – CSERC

Sara Husby – CSERC

Megan Layhee – CHIPS

Katie Budreski - USFS

Shane Dante – Foothill Conservancy

John Heissenbuttel – Cal Am, AFSC, Heissenbuttel Natural Resources Consulting

Rick Hopson – USFS, Amador Ranger District

Jesse Plummer – USFS, Amador Ranger District

Caitlyn Rich – CSERC

Ray Cablayan – USFS, Calaveras Ranger District

Greg Suba – SFL

***Constraints to the application of prescribed fire that the Forest Service identified***

Amador District

* Personnel and staffing are the number one issue
* Due to so many staffing vacancies, difficult to implement a large, prescribed burn with current organizational capacity until some key positions are filled.

CARB or air districts have generally not held up projects for air quality reasons

* The FS faces competition for resources
  + Increasing fall season demands on personnel to be in SoCal
  + Emergency response is a higher response priority
* A lot more wind events that are affecting NorCal and SoCal at the same time
* We can work on the lack of fuel breaks as a backup plan to prescribed burning
* A lot of the issues are complimentary and interconnected
* Pyrosilviculture is good term in creating a good environment amongst internal staff.
* New FS supervisor has tasked the line officers, timber staff, and fuels staff to increase pace and scale and to do the work on putting together a strategy on how we can do that (Forest Resilience Summit)
* Additional constraints by the Regional office can sometimes block burn projects
* It’s important to be thinking about the other tools that we have
* Create an environment to do the work in a safe manner
  + Drone assessment and implementation
* Steven Acts Funds (possible tool)
  + Pass through funds that come through the FS that goes to private land owners for fuels reduction work
* ACCG Collaborative needs to seriously think what their role needs to be in this topic
  + We spend a lot of time talking and not always getting a lot done
  + How can we be a group that others want to invest in?

Calaveras District

* Preparing the burn plans, having the resources, etc. are not necessarily the constraints but can be at times
* Lack of resources (staffing) is key (as for the Amador District) and a lack of staffing capacity may continue to be a challenge
* Calaveras is in a different zone then the Eldorado and has different targets, but the region is constantly asking for us to produce, and the demand is growing yearly
* General preparedness level across the region, and that has to do with the ability to respond to wildfire in specific seasons.
  + Region has control over our resources, especially in the spring and fall
  + In the winter it is not as big of a deal, but we lose a lot of work force in winter
* Regional approval for burning, started in February, now asked to submit a document weekly asking for regional approval where we are wanting to burn and what we think our resource commitment will be.
  + No denial yet, but could in the future
  + Drought could be a factor in the decision in the future
* Lack of development of upcoming fuels personnel on the District.
  + Calaveras has about half the fire/fuels staff as we used to have
* This group could use our influence and circles to help educate the public on letting the FS do broadcast burns. There often is a lot of miss information out there.
* The District often lacks sufficient equipment and funding for burn projects
* Competition for resources as stated previously is a key challenge.
* Windows for burning can be very limited

Group discussion and comments

* It’s great to hear about all of the challenges and begin discussing how we can help -- very effective in sharing information
* Many groups and agencies have been working for years on expanding public support for good fires.
* The Resilience Fire Summit is internal at this time, but it won’t be in the future
* Can we delineate the landscape? (PODS)
* ACCG needs to consider and address how can we be part of the solution
* What are projects ready to fund that we can apply for funding (Patrick Wright-state).
* Are we maximizing opportunities when conditions are much safer? Should we do more spring/winter burning. Pile burning?
* ACCG may be able to assist with public information and education? (shared vision in the group) Vision statement (rick) would help as a good check in are we going in the direction we agreed on that we wanted to go.

**Next meeting: April 26th at 2:00 p.m.**