

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, April 17, 2019, Sutter Creek, CA

Meeting Brief

- The Stanislaus National Forest made an initial presentation introducing the Potential wildland fire Operation Delineations (PODs) concept and landscape assessment prioritization process and requested comments from the ACCG.
- The Ad hoc Road Restoration Committee reported that they are coordinating with Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to make a presentation to the SNC's Board of Directors regarding the importance of road restoration activities in forest landscapes with the goal of urging the SNC to reconsider their policy which excludes such activities from receiving grant funding.
- Tania Carlone gave an update on the development of the Collaborative Engagement Strategy and informed the ACCG that she would be seeking comments at the May general meeting.
- The ACCG supported CHIPS to submit a pre-application to the Landscape Conservation Catalyst Grant Fund on behalf of the ACCG for administrative support and implementation activities associated with the ACCG's strategic plan and Collaborative Engagement Strategy.
- The ACCG formed by consensus a Strategic Landscape Assessment Subgroup which is a subcommittee of the Planning Work Group.
- The meadows climate vulnerability workshop will take place on May 9th from 10am-3pm.

Action Items

| Actions | Responsible Parties |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ACCG members provide written comments to the Stanislaus National Forest regarding the Potential wildland fire Operational Delineations (PODS) and prioritization process using the comment form by May 17, 2019 and email to Beck Johnson and Carol Ewell . | All |
| Write a one-page description and create a doodle poll for distribution to the full group to recruit members to the newly formed Strategic Landscape Assessment Subgroup and to set an inaugural meeting before the next ACCG general meeting. | Michael Pickard Regine Miller |
| Distribute to the full the agenda and associated meeting materials for the meadows' climate vulnerability workshop in Sutter Creek on May 9. | Regine Miller Shana Gross |

Summary

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

There were no changes to the March general meeting summary. The summary was adopted as final and to be posted on website.

Presentations, Discussions and Business

[Stanislaus National Forest Potential wildland fire Operational Delineations \(PODS\) and prioritization process.](#)

Jason Kuiken, Forest Supervisor, Stanislaus National Forest (STF), introduced the presentation stating that over the last year, the STF has conducted its Large Landscape Scale Analysis which assesses the entire Stanislaus NF and Sierra NF (SNF) and.

The STF has several decisions using Categorical Exemptions of 3,000 acres or less but Jason stated the USFS needs to use the large landscape scale analysis and process if they are to treat lands on a landscape scale and to reverse adverse trends. The STF set out to determine how the landscape should

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look and function, especially with regard to insect and disease, what criteria will determine the next places to treat, and what criteria are missing from the analysis. Jason stated that this is a dynamic prioritization process that will establish a 5-year plan for the STF. He went on to state that the large landscape scale analysis and PODs are related processes but not directly connected. The purpose of the presentation was to outline for ACCG members the draft prioritization process and receive feedback.

Beck Johnson, Prescribed Fire and Fuels Specialist, continued the presentation. She explained that the STF aims to use an integrated geospatial process to determine priorities for project areas, to meet the Region's ecological and fire and fuels management goals, and the goals of the STF 2005 Stewardship and Fire Assessment. Beck explained that the current process the STF uses to identify priority projects needs to be renewed and replicable. Carol Ewell added that there is a national strategy for risk assessment which is currently being followed by the Region. The STF has now developed their own risk assessment and prioritization process which is an integrated geospatial process which melds multiple GIS layers to identify and prioritize areas across the landscape. The process incorporates geospatial data for Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs), risk factors as well as operational considerations to help identify and prioritize large scale projects on or near the STF. This analysis differs from those in the past primarily because it includes geospatial data, but also in that it is based upon published science, is intended to be replicable, and open to the public.

Beck and Carol described the prioritization process components including the HVRA categories which included: human lives and homes, wildlife habitat, heritage/archaeological sites, power, water and communication infrastructure, and recreation/administrative infrastructure.

Members asked several questions regarding HVRAs including:

- Does wildlife habitat include habitat other than terrestrial?
- Why are timber and water not included as standalone categories?
- Are the HVRAs listed in prioritized order?
- Were roads included in the analysis as infrastructure?
- Does the analysis account for past projects or only future ones?

Beck and Carol went on to present and discuss the risk factors included in the analysis as well as the operational considerations. Risk factors included were: wildfire behavior, erosion hazard, and insects/disease. Operational considerations included in the analysis were: timber locations, land ownership, tree mortality areas, cooperator treatments, STF treatments, planned treatments, HUC6/POD containers, and maintenance treatments. Beck explained that the analysis separates treatments into work that has already occurred or is planned to occur.

Steve Wilensky asked how fire history is accounted for in the analysis. Carol stated that it is not its own factor but is instead incorporated in the analysis as part of the vegetation layer. Other members asked if treatment costs and revenue were included as operational considerations. This led to a discussion about how to account for timber in the analysis. Considerations included: How does one determine which timber locations may be considered viable products? How do we pay for the project using timber if timber cannot be treated as a standalone priority then is one only analyzing timber that falls within the analysis' HVRAs, operational considerations or risks? Jason Kuiken answered that the analysis does not necessarily exclude timber as its own priority, but it is a weighted factor against other factors. Recognizing strong interest in this topic, the STF encouraged ACCG members to provide written comments on this issue and to send to STF.

The discussion shifted focus to the scale of the modelling. Carol stated that the analysis uses project planning areas of 30,000-40,000 acres. Pat McGreevy expressed concern that the scale is artificial, and

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that instead the STF should conduct the modelling at a watershed or sub-watershed scale. Members encouraged the STF to leverage ACCG partner efforts to increase capacity to analyze treatments and planning to which Jason concurred that the STF is trying to do so but that it needs to change the way it's evaluating prioritization and working with collaboratives. Timber and water are important priorities.

Beck then described the assessment process to date which included identifying the parameters to account for community and forest concerns, utilizing national, regional and zone priorities, determining which geospatial datasets accurately reflect the HVRAs and risk factors, analyze the data and weigh its importance, utilize landscape scale units including HUC-6 subwatersheds or PODs, tally intersecting values across the landscape and assign a priority identifier, then consolidate landscape scale areas with similar priority identifiers into a larger project area.

STF staff presented their draft concept map which represents six of the HVRAs, operational conditions and risk melded together.

Tony Valdes asked if the analysis uses 300-acre wildlife PACs and, if so, why not use 100-acre? The STF wildlife biologist is expected to utilize 100-acre PACs and that the polygons were derived by the wildlife biologist using nests and the surrounding vegetation to establish a 5-acre center within the larger PAC.

Steve Wilesky stated that the map and analysis should include areas along HWY 26 and as far north as HWY 88. He expressed concern that the Calaveras RD appears to be overlooked in the analysis. Carol and Scott Tangenberg responded that the area is generally less dense in resources and includes significant private and BLM lands. Given this, the analysis may not include all of the resources. Jason stated that the STF needs to find a way to incorporate data for resources on adjacent lands, including irreplaceable resources, but that the analysis is approaching the maximum statistical number of criteria for a bivariate analysis. The question then becomes, if the STF adds new criteria, what ones do they remove? Members discussed that it is important that the analysis be expanded to include high value resources on neighboring lands to ensure their protection as well as to include private forest lands and ranches and BLM lands so as not to ignore management in adjacent lands that could ultimately help to protect USFS lands. Mark responded that the STF is trying to address this and that he is working with SPI to collect fuel break and treatment data and is also taking into account geospatial data from CalFire.

Carol went on to discuss the Wildfire Risk and Burn Probability sharing that the analysis is based on modelling from 2018 using landscape conditions from 2017 and 2014 and that fire modelling has not been perfected but it accounts for slope and aspect. David Griffith asked how the maps compare to the CalFire FRAP maps? The STF said they would look into that and stated that the STF wants to use the maps to help designate which areas to treat first, recognizing they cannot treat all lands at once.

The Erosion Hazard Rating Model analyzed what happens if there was no vegetation on the landscape and how it aligns, or not, with the fire risk. This process helps to evaluate the potential for soil loss and water quality concerns. Mark is working with NRCS to expand the STF's analysis beyond the USFS lands. Members suggested that the analysis consider the Rocky Mountain Research Station's erosion analysis for Mokelumne River Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis and also UMRWA's previous analysis.

Insect and disease risks were modelled before the drought. However, the availability of LiDAR data for Stanislaus and Calaveras counties is expected to be processed in the next year then incorporated into the analysis. This will improve the data but also complicates the analysis because not all counties have LiDAR.

The STF staff discussed scaling the analysis using HUC 6 sub-watersheds or breaking up the landscape into smaller PODs which are delineated using maps and subject matter experts. The STF shared that they

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could establish a plan for a given POD that accounts for treatment criteria, and has a pre-suppression plan in place for anywhere on the landscape where a fire begins which could assist the USFS to manage fire.

The STF finished by displaying its Draft Concept Map which represented six of the geospatial layers together using PODs as the unit of scale. The STF invited ACCG members' additional feedback using the comment form (see link in Action Items summary on page 1). USFS will review and consider comments and suggestions, then review successive drafts.

Ad hoc Road Restoration Committee discussion with Angela Avery of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

John Heissenbuttel stated that on March 28, Angela Avery of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) held a forum for discussion during which he took the opportunity to discuss road maintenance. Angela confirmed it will require a SNC board decision to extend funding to roads. The SNC Board views road restoration as costly and wants to ensure as much money as possible is spent on forest restoration. Angela offered for the committee to give a presentation to the SNC board on the issue. John is working with Angela to set a date for the presentation. Angela suggested the Committee meet with SNC staff in Auburn prior to a presentation to the Board so that staff can advise the Board on the issue.

Update on the Engagement Strategy. [ACCG 4-17-19 Presentation.pptx](#)

Tania shared that she completed member interviews in mid-February, processed the data in March, drafted an Engagement Strategy in April which was then reviewed and discussed by the Administrative WG at an April 12 workshop. Tania has revised the draft based upon the Admin WG's feedback and asks for the full memberships to discuss at the May general meeting. Within the Engagement Strategy, Tania compares the Strategic Plan to the Engagement Strategy demonstrating consistency and helping to lay a foundation for implementation of the Strategic Plan through the Engagement Strategy.

Consider Calaveras Healthy Impact Production Solutions' (CHIPS) potential application to The Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund grant program on behalf of the ACCG.

Regine Miller proposed CHIPS preparing a possible grant pre-application on behalf of the ACCG to the Catalyst Fund to help build collaborative capacity and sustain administration. Grant request is approximately \$25K with a 1:1 match requirement and a two-year term. There was a brief discussion about the need for ACCG members to count their paid and volunteer time as direct and indirect match, respectively, if the grant is awarded. SNC, Bureau of Land Management, United States Forest Service, and Alpine Biomass Collaborative offered to be listed a partner organizations on the pre-application. There were no objections to CHIPS submitting a pre-app.

UPDATES

Admin Work Group Update

Tania gave an update on the April 12 Admin WG workshop focused on the draft Collaborative Engagement Strategy. Members shared that the level of workshop participation was high and they encourage all ACCG members to participate in at least one working group. Rick shared that the Admin WG is working to arrange for the Washington Office CLFR Coordinator, Lindsey Buchanan, to present in person to ACCG. Admin WG is generating additional topics for Lindsey to discuss with ACCG.

Planning Work Group Update

- **Calaveras Ranger District (Aragon).** The Planning Work Group held their March meeting at Calaveras RD. The WG will be conducting a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for

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the Arnold Avery project at their next meeting set for April 27 at the Amador RD from 9am-12pm. Joe intends to follow up with EBMUD regarding the Arnold Avery project.

- **Amador Ranger District (Hopson).** The Amador Ranger District reported that Pre-commercial Thinning within the Power Fire footprint was introduced at the March meeting and expects to continue discussions at April 27 meeting. Rick also met with Sierra Forest Legacy and Foothill Conservancy to address some possible changes to the Proposed Action. Rick advised that the Scottiagio Forest Health and Fuels Reduction Decision Memos are signed and posted on the ACCG website.
- Tania mentioned that the Planning WG will refine the ACCG project development and approval process and will distribute it to the full ACCG for review and discussion upon completion.
- Michael Pickard reminded the group that the Strategic Plan Goal 3 was to complete more work on the ground and included three objectives: conduct a landscape assessment, establish a process to develop and support projects, and redefine the workgroups to achieve objectives. In November 2018, the ACCG discussed completing a landscape assessment. A viable first step is to create a mapping tool that could evaluate projects completed and those that are planned to focus on an all lands approach. This will ultimately lead to creation of a pipeline of projects that have been developed collaboratively and that are ready to proceed. Admin WG workshop determined the best way to do this is to create a subcommittee of the Planning WG that will create an ongoing map of projects and interface with other landscape planning efforts such as the STF's large landscape analysis. Michael asked for volunteers to help establish and begin the subcommittee. Michael stated he will write a one-pager and create a doodle poll for Regine to distribute to the full group and encourage members to attend the inaugural meeting with ideas on how to begin the process. Tania suggested the subcommittee develop a proposal for the full ACCG's consideration that outlines the purpose and scope of the subcommittee. The group supported the creation of this subcommittee. Joe Aragon, Jill, Megan, Steve, BLM were interested in the initial meeting.

Monitoring Work Group Update

Michael shared that the work group held a lengthy discussion on 5-year post-CFLR fund monitoring status. The work group does not know the specific monitoring requirements per CFLR regulations. It is possible they could use LiDAR or other types of remote sensing.

Workshop on Prioritizing Meadow Restoration. Regine provided an update on behalf on Shana Gross. There will be May 9th workshop in Sutter Creek from 10am-3pm based on feedback from the folks who had expressed interest in the meadows' climate vulnerability workshop. Shana will send Regine the agenda for distribution with the full ACCG. Shana will also send out the draft decision framework and data to folks by May 3rd in order to prep for the meeting.

Roundtable

Pat McGreevy: Fuels reduction work on BLM ground on the South Fork of the Mokelumne River Watershed Restoration project could begin as soon as next week. 1,500 acres are planned for treatment. The CalFire grant applications were generally unsuccessful; in general Amador and Calaveras Counties did not compete for funding. The Cal Am team applied for 15 grants for a total of roughly \$7MM. Of these, only one was awarded to the Calaveras Foothill FSC for \$80K. Pat does not know why Cal Am projects were not funded. He offered that the Cal Am team might try to better emphasize fire prevention and fuels reduction projects under the CalFire grant programs.

John Heissenbuttel: John wants to meet with CalFire to determine how the grant funding was distributed and why. The Amador FSC meets following the ACCG and will begin discussions to develop a

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paper for use by Amador County Board of Supervisors to require fuels reduction work on all private parcels in the County.

Michael Pickard: SNC expects to release its forest health grant guidelines after their June board meeting. The grant program is expected to be similar to the 2018 Proposition 68 grant program. SNC is currently in its Strategic Lands Conservation Program (Proposition 68) to fund the purchase of conservation easements.

Deb Phillips: The Greater Valley Conservation Corps is conducting a fuels reduction project in River Pines together with Amador Fire Protection District. Work must be completed by June 30th. They are looking to support more projects in Amador County and are also currently active in Tuolumne County. The Corps is looking employees for their work in Tuolumne County.

Ray Cablayan: The Calaveras RD is trying to begin prescription burning in the Irish-Omega area.

Steve Wilensky: CHIPS is undergoing great changes with its new Executive Director and Field Operations Manager. The organization received the 2018 Best of Tahoe Award which has resulted in additional work for Tahoe crew. The Tahoe crew has used wood resulting from its invasive species and meadows project as a heat source for elders in Washoe Hung A Le Te community. Nearly all of CHIPS employees have completed S212 training with Red Card training forthcoming. CHIPS expects to have at least 15 employees with Red Cards available for year round work. This past year, CHIPS kept 25 of its 42 staff members working year-round because of the organization's ability to work on an all lands basis due to training.

Monte Kawahara: The BLM's wildlife biologist is getting ready to conduct bird surveys on South Fork Mokelumne River Watershed Restoration project. Lily Gap project is starting back up and expected to be completed this year. Calaveras County as a whole within the Butte Fire mitigation area is completed with cutting of 700 to 800 trees. Treatment of lands outside of Butte Fire footprint is currently being held up but BLM is planning to use programmatic NEPA to complete the Salt Springs roadside work. BLM is currently working to get lands and right of way documents to the Counties. Monte thanked Katherine Evatt for finding the FERC documentation in pdf form and sending it to the County.

Scott Tangenberg: The Over-Snow Vehicle (OSV) draft decision was signed by Jason Kuiken last month with the objection period extending into May. Scott will begin a temporary promotion as acting forest supervisor in Washington State beginning May 12 and will be gone for the summer.

Annie Dean: Jessica Morse has been appointed as the State's Deputy Secretary of Forest Resources Management at the Natural Resources Agency and will report to Wade Crowfoot. Ms. Morse previously engaged with Alpine County residents and walked project sites. Annie is looking forward to continuing a relationship with Jessica to help get resources directed to the region.

Michael Barton: He received positive feedback on CHIPS field crew's work in Alpine County.

David Griffith: The BLM produced a map with past, present and future maps fairly quickly for the Alpine Biomass Collaborative and encouraged that ACCG to move forward expeditiously to develop a landscape scale project map. David is willing to send John Heissenbuttel the defensible fuels reduction space resolution that passed in Alpine County. David noted that CalFire representatives are missing from ACCG and believes it is worth reaching out to Battalion Chief to invite their participation.

Rick Hopson: The Amador Ranger District is continuing work on HWY 88, pile burning when they can. The District is now treating some units in Power Fire unit including light burns on south facing slope areas near homes in young plantations. The District may hold a field trip to one of these sites in future. There's a June 26 field trip planned with Malcom North and others to the Scottiagio project area to

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determine how to undertake the silvicultural prescription that moves the stand toward a GTR-220 condition. The NFWF grant proposals are currently under review and will be awarded this summer.

Meeting Participants

| Name | Affiliation |
|-------------------------|---|
| Tony Valdes | Foothill Conservancy |
| Gerald Schwartz | East Bay Municipal Utilities District |
| Kent Lambert | East Bay Municipal Utilities District |
| Jay Francis | Sierra Pacific Industries |
| Pat McGreevey | Cal AM |
| John Heissenbuttel | Cal Am, Amador FSC |
| Michael Pickard | Sierra Nevada Conservancy |
| John Tangenberg | Sierra Nevada Conservancy |
| Michael Barton | Alpine Biomass Collaborative |
| Jeff Blewett | California 4WD Association |
| Megan Layhee | Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center |
| Liz Gregg | Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center |
| Joe Aragon | Calaveras Ranger District (Stanislaus NF), CFLR Coordinator |
| Kendal Young | Calaveras and Amador Ranger Districts |
| Annie Dean | Alpine Biomass Collaborative |
| Terry Woodrow | Calaveras Fire Safe Council, Alpine County |
| David Griffith | Alpine Biomass Collaborative |
| Rick Hopson | Amador Ranger District |
| Sue Holper | ACCG Member |
| Steve Wilensky | Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions |
| Tania Carlone | Consensus Building Institute |
| Jason Kuiken | Stanislaus National Forest |
| Monte Kawahara | Bureau of Land Management |
| Mark | Stanislaus National Forest |
| Deb Phillips | Greater Valley Conservation Corps |
| Carol Ewell | Stanislaus National Forest |
| Marissa Vossmer | Bureau of Land Management |
| Linda Diesen | |
| Jill Micheau | Citizen |
| Ray Cablayan | Calaveras Ranger District (Stanislaus NF) |
| Sue Pappalardo | USFS |
| Elizabeth Meyer-Shields | Bureau of Land Management |
| Scott Tangenberg | Stanislaus National Forest |
| Tracy Ellen | |