

# Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, February 26, 2020, Amador Ranger District, Pioneer, CA

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

## Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) made progress refining the draft 2020 General Meeting Speaker Schedule and agreed to discuss at the March WG meeting plans for an herbicide and herbicide alternatives panel scheduled for July.
- The Planning WG socio-economic ad hoc group reported their progress drafting guidance on how to incorporate socio-economic benefits into the project development process.
- The Planning WG provided direction to the facilitator about how to organize comments received on the Forest Treatment guidance tool.
- John Buckley shared with the Planning WG the process Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions went through to initiate a large landscape project to serve as a successor “Bridge Project” to the MOTOR M2K project.
- The Planning WG suggested revisions to a draft letter intended to give Barnie Gyant, Regional Deputy Forester, about ACCG’s progress initiating a large landscape project that would serve as a successor project to MOTOR M2K within the ACCG boundary.
- The Planning WG began to identify next steps and needed resources to develop large landscape project activities within the ACCG boundary.

## Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
follow up with Dr. Paul Ullrich, UCD Regional and Climate Change Group, regarding his availability to present at the April 15 <sup>th</sup> General Meeting. If not available in April, inquire about his availability for the August 19 <sup>th</sup> or September 16 <sup>th</sup> meetings.	Rich Farrington
Reach out to potential prescribed fire panelists for future ACCG General Meeting presentation.	Tania Carlone
Report back progress on socio-economic ad hoc group guidance document.	Shane Dante Katherine Evatt Rich Farrington Steve Wilensky
Prepare Forest Treatment Guidance Document comment spreadsheet and summary.	Tania Carlone
Revise follow up letter to Barnie Gyant for full ACCG review.	Tania Carlone
Invite Megan Layhee to participate in future Planning WG meetings to participate in large landscape project discussions.	Tania Carlone

## Summary

### 2020 General Meeting Speaker Schedule

The Planning WG (WG) discussed the General Meeting speaker schedule for upcoming presentations through June. See table below for specific WG input. At the March meeting, the

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Planning WG will focus on refining the herbicide/alternatives to herbicide panel currently scheduled for July.

Meeting Date	Presenter(s)	Topic	WG Input
3/18	Steve Wilensky Karen Quidachay	Lessons learned from project implementation in the field: contracting methods, vendors, and outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Any lessons learned related to <b>stewardship contracts</b>: Have they been used? Can they be used outside of federal lands? Are there other ways stewardship contracts can be used as a tool moving forward?</li> <li>2) How can <b>CEQA/NEPA be streamlined and expedited</b>, particularly on National Forest lands when the Forest Service needs to coordinate with another entity to complete CEQA? How can this be done in an efficient manner?</li> <li>3) WG members are interested in organizing <b>field trips to some of the sites to extend the conversation about lessons learned</b>. In particular, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sites previously discussed.</li> </ol>
4/15	Laura Hierholzer	Applying a conditions-based NEPA Approach	<p>The WG concluded that if there is not any additional information or specific project examples/case studies where condition-based NEPA has been used, it may not be worth moving forward with this presentation at this time, particularly given the level of controversy surrounding this approach. The WG would be interested in learning about case examples when they become available in the future.</p> <p>Rich Farrington will follow up with Dr. Paul Ullrich, UCD Regional and Climate Change Group regarding his availability to present at the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting instead of Laura Hierholzer. If not available in April, Rich will discuss his availability for the August 19<sup>th</sup> or September 16<sup>th</sup> meetings.</p>
5/20	See WG Input	Prescribed Fire Panel: How to advance use of prescribed fire & solutions for overcoming barriers to its use	<p>The WG refined the proposed presenters for CBI to contact (see below) and indicated that 90 minutes was an ideal amount of time for a panel of this size and diversity.</p> <p>Possible Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ John Buckley, CSERC (intro)</li> <li>➤ Sid Beckman, National Wild Turkey Foundation (practitioner)</li> </ul>

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Meeting Date	Presenter(s)	Topic	WG Input
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Doug Carson, air pollution control district (local- lives in Amador)</li><li>➤ Ken Pimlott, former director of Cal fire and county supervisor</li><li>➤ UCCE workshop (collaborative burns) Susie Kocher/Lenya Quinn-Davidson (specifically about overcoming barriers to use of prescribed fire.)—perception liability for prescribed fire on private lands</li></ul>

## Project Development & Approval Process

- **Socio-economic ad hoc working group update:** The ad hoc group is currently drafting a document capturing what the work group discussed at its meeting on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The intent for the document is to provide concise guidance that draws upon Katherine Evatt's initial work. The ad hoc group will report progress to the Planning WG in March.
- **Forest Treatment Guidance Document Comments:** The Planning WG began its conversation about the project development process by highlighting how this discussion provides the ACCG with an opportunity to decide how the group wants to work together into the future. One participant offered a perspective that if people can let go of strongly held positions in a way that prioritizes collaboration, it could have a transformational effect on the ACCG.

The facilitator then sought guidance on how the Planning WG would like the comments organized to aid their ongoing refinement of the project development and endorsement process. The WG directed the facilitator to:

- Create a spreadsheet that includes all comments received with date of receipt, attribution (unless the commenter expressly asked not to be identified, particularly because it is important to understand if the commenter is an MOA signatory and to be able to engage the commenter to address concerns), categories by topic or theme, and a column allowing notations for how a comment has been addressed.
- Prepare a narrative summary of comments.

## Large Landscape Project Initiation

- **Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) Update:** John Buckley shared with the Planning WG the process YSS went through to initiate a large landscape project to serve as a successor to MOTOR M2K. John explained that the YSS Leadership Team convened internal discussions with targeted outreach to other YSS members. The Leadership Team then identified three different geographic areas and ultimately selected a project area

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(North 108 Project) comprising approximately 65,000 acres of national forest lands, and 25,000 of all lands treatments. The Leadership Team brought it to the full YSS and got consensus support. YSS then took it to Jason Kuiken, Stanislaus National Forest Forest Supervisor. Based on input from the Forest Supervisor, YSS expanded the project to encompass a total of 140,000 acres (110,000 on national forest lands). The projects three key strategies are:

- Prescribed under-burning
- GTR 220 and 237 applied forest thinning
- Ecological restoration, meadows, road treatments

YSS's goal is to help with funding in coordination with the Forest Service to get the work done. YSS refers to this as the Bridge Project, meaning that it serves as a bridge from where the YSS project area is now to where the Forest Service would like to be. YSS is considering recommending a condition-based experiment within the project area to serve as a test example that could provide lessons learned for the condition-based approach.

The Planning Work Group asked if they would be able to apply PODs (Potential Operational Delineations) to the Bridge Project. It was John's understanding that PODs could be applied.

- **Discuss ACCG Follow-up Letter to Bernie Gyant:** The Planning WG suggested the following revisions to the draft letter that would serve as an update to the Region about ACCG's progress to initiate large landscape project activities.
  - Avoid using the word "controversy," consider replacing it with "agreement."
  - Spell out the acronym for SLAWG (Strategic Landscape Assessment Working Group).
  - Expand the concept of a strategic fuel break to include treatments in priority areas surrounded by strategic fuel breaks.
  - Request the Forest Service to commit specialists, including GIS staff to participate in Planning WG meetings to develop projects.
- **Identify Next Steps to Initiate Large Landscape Project Activities**
  - Consider beginning with vision, shared goals and objectives.
  - Rich Farrington shared proposed mutual benefit goals for forest restoration projects that could be used as a starting point to move the conversation forward.
    1. Projects should support the Triple Bottom Line of the "ACCG Principles & Policies to Guide Operations," adopted August 18, 2010, including sustainable Economic and Community benefits in addition to Environmental benefits.

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2. Projects need to meet the ACCG Strategic Plan Goal of Getting More Work Done on the Ground.”
  3. Overcome obstacles to increasing Pace & Scale of Forest Restoration identified by the Administration Work Group Ad hoc in November 2019, including the lack of sustainable funding and complex NEPA.
  4. Restoration projects must adapt to climate change, particularly the increasing threat of mega fires and drought mortality. GTR 220 and GTR 237 recommend creating forest heterogeneity to provide ecological flexibility to withstand environmental stresses.
  5. Projects should be designed to reestablish the natural fire regime, where possible.
  6. Thinning and heterogeneity of fuel breaks helps to protect communities and forest resources.
- Resources to move discussions forward
    - Invite Megan Layhee to participate in Planning WG meetings in her role to develop the mapping tools under the Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant award to work towards compiling data in one place.
    - Ensure that Forest Service specialists are consistently engaged in the discussions.
    - Use existing maps to help visualize project options.
    - Some members of the Planning WG are interested in using PODs which is being pursued in the Stanislaus National Forest but the Eldorado National Forest is not currently using the PODs methodology as a planning tool. Therefore, the WG discussed how to establish a methodology that is consistent across the ACCG boundary. Many WG members agreed that this could be accomplished by having Forest Service specialists in the room who hold much of this information in their heads.

## Future Meetings

The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on Wednesday, March 25, 2020. The meeting was originally scheduled to take place at the Calaveras Ranger District. However, as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, the next Planning WG meeting will take place on-line via Zoom.

## Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation	Miles	Hours
Rich Farrington	UMRWA	15	4
John Buckley	CSERC	100	6.5
Shane Dante	Foothill Conservancy	0 (joined by phone)	3
Greg Suba	Sierra Forest Legacy	130	6
Alaina Osimowicz	USFS	25	4

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Name	Affiliation	Miles	Hours
Robin Wall	USFS	0	4
Dawn Coultrap	USFS	25	4
Chuck Loffland	USFS	0	4
Ben Solvesky	NRCS	30	4
Terry Woodrow	Alpine County	80	6.5
Tania Carlone	CBI	192	9

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