

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, April 22, 2020, On-line Meeting

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) suggested inviting Scott Stephens and Malcolm North to present to the ACCG about climate change effects on fire behavior.
- The Amador Ranger District (RD) and Calaveras RD gave project updates to the WG. The WG discussed the opportunity to collaborate with UMWRA and the Forest Service to identify projects that could potentially receive stimulus funding through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.
- Megan Layhee gave an update on the development of the ACCG project mapping and project prioritization tools and described next steps. The WG discussed ideas for additional sources of data for the SLAWG to consider as they develop the data library for the mapping tool and concepts for how to approach the prioritization tool.
- The Planning WG Socio-Economic Ad Hoc Group updated the WG on their discussions and reported that they will present a recommendation on how to incorporate community and economic benefits into the ACCG project development and review process at the 5/27/20 Planning WG meeting.
- The WG shared perspectives on ways to revise the Forest Treatment Guidance document.

Action Items

| Actions | Point Person(s) |
|---|--|
| Contact Scott Stephens and Malcolm North regarding their interest and availability to present at an ACCG General Meeting. | Rich Farrington (copy Tania Carlone and Regine Miller on communications) |
| Contact Amador Fire Safe Council Coordinator about posting the High County Community Wildfire Protection Plan on their website. | John Heissenbuttel |
| Send Megan Layhee attributes/values/criteria project prioritization table sample. | Matt Hilden |
| Contact Megan, Tania, and Stephanie Horii if interested in being included on the SLAWG email distribution list | All |
| At May WG, present recommendation on socio-economic ad hoc group guidance. | Shane Dante Katherine Evatt Rich Farrington Steve Wilensky |
| Incorporate WG suggestions into the Forest Treatment Guidance document for further discussion at the 5/27/20 Planning WG meeting. | Tania Carlone |

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Summary

Agenda Review and February Meeting Summary Approval

The Planning WG (WG) met via Zoom video-conference. There weren't any adjustments to the agenda. The WG finalized the March 25, 2020 meeting summary without revision.

2020 General Meeting Speaker Schedule

The Planning WG (WG) discussed the value of inviting a fire scientist to present to the full ACCG in June or July to learn about climate change effects on fire behavior and the increasing risk of uncharacteristic, megafires. The Planning WG recommended inviting Scott Stephens to present about the problem and Malcolm North to speak about management implications. Planning WG members cited the GTR-220 section on climate change (page 9) as well as GTR-237 as background reading materials that could help inform and focus the discussion. The WG further suggested that the proposed presentation on the WARMF model be removed from the General Meeting speaker schedule. Rich Farrington volunteered to do the initial outreach to Scott Stephens and Malcolm North regarding their interest and availability to present to the ACCG.

Forest Service Updates

- **Amador Ranger District:** The Amador Ranger District (RD) informed that WG that the 3 Meadows Project Decision Memo has been finalized. Survey work for the Upper Cole project is being conducted for 401 and 404 permits. Project implementation is anticipated to begin in the fall.
- **Calaveras Ranger District:** The Calaveras RD reported to the WG that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) awarded the Forest Service (FS) funding for the Arnold Avery project. The FS is in the process of creating maps for each of the units. A WG member asked why there is need for outside funding for Arnold Avery implementation, suggesting that it will be a significant challenge if the FS isn't able to fund implementation on its lands. The RD explained that the project could cost \$3-5 million and the FS doesn't have that level of funding available and is always seeking alternative forms of funding for projects. The Calaveras RD informed the WG that the Hemlock project is wrapping up and that they are working with UMRWA on another Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) for the Black Springs project. Since there isn't a lot of project work in the pipeline, the RD suggested that future field trips could focus on planning within the Cornerstone footprint. Field trip locations could also be informed by the development of the project mapping tools. Finally, the RD gave an update on the status of NEPA for Mattley Meadow which they anticipate will have a decision by June.
- **Identifying projects for possible stimulus funding:** The WG discussed the possibility of the SNC receiving stimulus funding. This could provide the impetus to identify projects that could be implemented in the near term. Rich Farrington suggested that UMRWA would like to coordinate with the FS to identify possible projects. The WG requested for this topic to be placed on the May Planning WG meeting agenda.

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Mapping Tool Development Update & Next Steps

- **Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) Grant:** Megan Layhee, project consultant, reiterated the goals of the RFFCP grant to develop a project mapper to display completed, in progress and NEPA/CEQA- ready fuels reduction project, in addition to developing a prioritization tool with more in-depth work flows using criteria that will help the ACCG strategize regarding where future projects should occur. Megan explained that she is currently collecting and inputting data. She described the process for developing the tool-- The SLAWG will meet the first Tuesday of every month to work through the technical components of the tool. The SLAWG, through Megan, will report back to the Planning WG to receive feedback and input and the same will occur at a higher level at the ACCG General Meetings. At the 5/5/20 SLAWG meeting, the group intends to define data attributes and discuss preliminary thoughts on how to develop models. At the 5/27/20 Planning WG meeting, Megan will present the preliminary mapping tool. WG members suggested that information from the High Country Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) prepared by the Amador Fire Safe Council would provide a good source of information for the mapping tool. John Heissenbittel suggested that CWPPs are useful information sources and he offered to contact the coordinator at the Fire Safe Council to make sure the High County Plan is available on their website. There was also some discussion about the availability of LiDAR information. Dawn Coultrap explained that they are still processing LiDAR vegetation data including canopy cover, height, etc. She suggested checking in with Mark Schug, GIS Coordinator on the Stanislaus National Forest (NF). Matt Hilden requested that once the basic layout is completed for the project mapper, he would like to help ground-truth the map. Dawn Coultrap explained that the Stanislaus NF is working with the Rocky Mountain Research Center on a wildfire prioritization mapping tool as a way to prioritize treatments on the landscape. The WG asked how this effort could interface with the ACCG's work. The Stanislaus NF is still in the process of determining values at risk as a part of the prioritization framework with identified criteria that could be used as a shared stewardship tool. Identifying priorities at risk is where collaboratives can help since prioritization adds subjective values. The WG discussed that when prioritizing risk, it needs to be a collaborative, social process. Matt Hilden will send a sample table with criteria to Megan.

Next Steps:

- ACCG members contact Megan with any data
- Megan aims to prepare a preliminary draft of the project mapper for the May Planning WG meeting to receive input from the WG.
- She will make a presentation to the full ACCG at the June General Meeting and seek input from the full group.

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- The SLAWG with Megan will convene a mapping workshop in the summer to engage a broader group of stakeholders, similar to what occurred at the December 2019 mapping workshop.

Project Development & Approval Process

- **Socio-economic ad hoc working group update:** The ad hoc group continues to have internal discussions about how to effectively incorporate community and economic components to add value instead of creating another layer in the process in the project development process. The ad hoc will bring a recommendation to the WG in May.
- **Forest Treatment Guidance Document Comments:** CBI gave an overview of the comment summary that accompanies the raw comment spreadsheet presented to the Planning WG in March which catalogs written comments received on the Forest Treatment Guidance Document. The WG suggested that these materials be used for informational purposes. They emphasized the importance of focusing on where there is the greatest level of agreement and cautioned against going back and rehashing the language. The WG offered perspectives for further discussion on the Guidance document, including:
 - Remove the word controversy, particularly in the naming of the different categories to set a more positive, welcoming tone.
 - Some have suggested that the language on the document is too FS centric. Consider including equivalent language over time that doesn't exclusively use FS terminology. The WG discussed how it could be difficult to change the language at this time since much of the prior project discussion has been FS-centric. As projects outside of NF lands are developed that would provide an opportunity to change/expand/revise the language in the document accordingly.
 - Consider revisiting the introduction and generalizing language where possible and/or adding language that acknowledges "a priority focus to consider treatments on FS lands."
 - Acknowledge that the ACCG has focused on NF lands in the Cornerstone project area and that one of the intended purposes of the tool is to have more constructive dialogue with the FS.
 - Indicate that there is a desire and need to engage in projects on other lands but the ACCG hasn't gotten there yet.
 - Consider a "preamble" articulating broad agreement about what the ACCG is attempting to accomplish/aspire to rather than debating the document itself since we know that there will be continuing controversies.

Future Meetings

The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on Wednesday, May 27, 2020. The meeting will take place on-line via Zoom.

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Meeting Participants

| Name | Affiliation | Miles (N/A-videoconference) | Hours |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Tania Carlone (facilitator) | Consensus Building Institute (CBI) | | 3 |
| Dawn Coultrap | USFS- Calaveras | | 3 |
| Shane Dante | Foothill Conservancy | | 3 |
| Rich Farrington | UMRWA | | 3 |
| Randy Hanvelt | | | 3 |
| John Heissenbuttel | Cal-am Team | | 3 |
| Megan Layhee | GIS Consultant (RFFCP) | | 3 |
| Chuck Loffland | USFS- Amador | | 3 |
| Ben Solvesky | NRCS | | 3 |
| Greg Suba | Sierra Forest Legacy | | 3 |