

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

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

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) debriefed the presentation by Dr. Malcolm North as the speaker for the July ACCG general meeting and discussed ways that the ACCG could apply learnings.
- The Amador Ranger District (RD) and Calaveras RD gave project and staffing updates to the WG. The WG expressed interest in having a field trip in the Cabbage project area on the Calaveras RD in the future to learn more about how DxP has been applied there.
- Megan Layhee, project consultant, gave an update on the ACCG's draft Fuels Reduction Project Mapper and Prioritization Framework. The Planning WG confirmed project mapper revisions. The SLAWG will begin high level discussions of the prioritization tool at their August 6th meeting.
- The Socio-economic ad hoc reported back to the Planning WG the ad hoc's review and discussion of [Sierra Institute's Socio-economic Monitoring Report](#) and its relevance to the WG's efforts to incorporate community and economic benefits into the project development process.

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Follow up with Dr. LeRoy Westerling to confirm October general meeting date and the title of his presentation.	Rich Farrington
UMRWA and Amador RD coordinate on possible use of NFWF erosion control grant for road work associated with the 3 Meadows project.	Rich Farrington Gwen Starrett Chuck Loffland
Follow up regarding the status of Mattley Meadow for pre-implementation monitoring.	Carinna Robertson Monitoring WG
Provide local contractor contacts to Tania Carlone and Regine Miller for outreach and engagement activities.	Randy Hanvelt
Follow up with Steve Wilensky and Karen Quidachay regarding including local contractors in their September general meeting presentation on contracting and mechanisms lessons learned.	Tania Carlone
Reach out to Jason Ko, Shared Stewardship Coordinator with the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, to possibly make a presentation to the ACCG about FS partnership and contracting mechanisms.	Carinna Robertson

Summary

Agenda Review and May Meeting Summary Approval

The Planning WG (WG) met via Zoom video-conference. There weren't any adjustments to the agenda or the June meeting summary which will be finalized and posted to the ACCG website.

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2020 General Meeting Speaker Schedule

Debrief Learnings from [Dr. Malcolm North presentation](#). Dr. Malcolm North, USFS PSW Research and UC Davis, presented at the ACCG General Meeting on July 15, 2020. The WG debriefed the presentation drawing upon the takeaways from the presentation and how it could apply to the work of the ACCG. One WG member re-stated the problem noting that climate change is here and old growth trees are being lost. Two-thirds of Sierra Forests will not be treated and in order to get to a desired condition, it will be important to adopt the concept of “pyrosilviculture” by integrating the work of fire specialists with that of silviculturalists, realizing that only about 20% of the forest can be thinned using conventional means and that about half of the landscape needs to be treated with fire. The WG contemplated how the ACCG could take Dr. North’s work and apply it. The WG members noted the following.

- **Strategic Landscape Work Group (SLAWG) Mapping Tool.** Dr. North’s principles are important to incorporate into the mapping tool, especially as it relates to the development of the prioritization framework. Specifically, for scaling up, looking at firesheds (HUC12), incorporating strategic anchors, using LiDAR to identify where the tall trees are located, identifying suitable habitat for tall trees. Megan Layhee noted that it will be important to incorporate these principles presented by Dr. North directly into the current work of the SLAWG.
- **Supporting Pyrosilviculture.** Addressing how to better integrate and more closely coordinate between fire and silvicultural specialists, noting that Dr. North encouraged the broader application of fire to treat the landscape. Carinna Robertson with the Calaveras Ranger District (RD) noted that the Forest Service (FS) is already moving towards greater integration of specialists. Kellin Brown, Calaveras RD also notes that the FS is burning more than in the past. However, getting the public comfortable with prescribed fire is an important hurdle to overcome.
- **Engaging outside of our Comfort Zones.** Suggesting that how forests have been managed in the past has not been working and that bold leadership is necessary to move away from a piecemeal approach to forest treatments and to be open to trying new approaches. WG members noted that there are a lot of restrictions in owl areas and that canopy cover is a sticking point that needs to be looked at.
- **Importance of Re-entry Program.** In order to create fire adaptive forests, it will be important to create a re-entry program. In response, Megan Layhee noted that the project mapping tool intends to illustrate maintenance intervals and to show when treatments occurred and indicate when re-entry is needed. The mapping tool will also show places that haven’t been treated.

WG members agreed that the mapping and prioritization tools will be helpful in applying many of the tenets presented by Dr. North and that a next step would be to consider developing a landscape restoration strategy, similar to the Dinkey collaborative’s [strategy](#).

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Speaker Schedule Update: Dr. Scott Stephens will present at the August 19th general meeting on forest restoration over the last 20 years on the Blodgett Forest.

Forest Service Updates

- **Amador Ranger District:** Gwen Starrett informed the working group that the 3 Meadows project has gotten its 401/404 permits. The Planning Grant will be completed in August. Small conifers are being removed from the project area. There was a set back where no bids were submitted for project implementation. That Amador Ranger District is optimistic that with changes to the package, they will receive bids. A contractor sent a critique on the bid, noting that: 1) there wasn't enough lead time; 2) outreach to local contractors needs improvement; 3) the \$4million insurance requirement was prohibitive. Rich noted that the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) has a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) erosion control grant and it may be possible to use that of that grant for road work associated with 3 Meadows. UMRWA and the Amador RD will follow-up to coordinate.
- **Calaveras Ranger District:** The Calaveras RD reported that 14,000 Hemlock project area with 6 sub-project areas is coming together and locking into contracts and moving towards completion. Pumpkin is complete. A contract was awarded for Thompson meadow but the contractor requested an extension and the work is yet to be completed. Gwen Starrett requested that the Monitoring WG be informed when the project is complete so they can work on post-implementation monitoring. Carinna noted that she does follow up with Becky Estes periodically informing them of Thompson project status. Carinna will also inquire about the status the Mattley Meadow project to inform the pre-implementation monitoring activities of the Monitoring WG. Logging and mastication are occurring at Cabbage and the timber contract for Black Springs should be completed by the first quarter of next year. Mastication and hand thinning are occurring in Black Springs and mastication has begun in the Fore project area. Cabbage constitutes the first application of DxP on the District which ties in nicely with UC Merced monitoring. The WG expressed interest in conducting a future field trip to the Cabbage project area. However, WG members agreed that it is premature to organize any field trips at this time given the Covid-19 situation.

Mapping Tool Development & Next Steps

- **Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) Grant:** Megan Layhee, project consultant, gave a brief update on the progress developing ACCG's draft [Fuels Reduction Project Mapper](#) and initial progress on the developments of a prioritization tool. Megan requested feedback from the WG on the updates to the mapping tool. She gave an overview of the visible data attributes the SLAWG has agreed to include on the mapper. They decided to show treatments done within the past 15 years. However, the date will not be lost for treatments completed prior to 15 years—they just won't be shown on

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the map. Megan also noted that the SLAWG is attempting to keep the data aligned with the FACs database. The visible attributes include: Treatment, treatment outcome, activity/status, maintenance intervals, maintenance status. Megan highlighted that *maintenance status* illustrates where projects have occurred and those areas that require re-entry. At this point, the goal is to come to consensus on the data attributes with the understanding that the tool will be refined on an ongoing basis. She informed that WG that at the August 6th SLAWG meeting, they will start talking about what High Value Assets should be included in the prioritization tool. Planning WG members expressed appreciation for Megan's work. The Planning WG confirmed the project mapper revisions.

Project Development & Approval Process

- **Project Submission Forum Revision:** The Socio-economic Ad hoc WG met to discuss how the [Sierra Institute's Socio-economic monitoring report](#) may inform the inclusion of community and economic benefits in the Project Submission Form. The ad hoc group proposed that the definition of "local" used in the report should be consistently applied. The WG expressed support for keeping the definition of local in the project submission form consistent with the work that has been done prior and which is documented in the monitoring report. Regarding the report's discussion of "rebuilding workforce capacity," the WG discussed the importance of conducting outreach to local contractors and to invite them to participate in ACCG discussions. Randy Hanvelt said he had some contractor contacts he would send to Tania Carlone for outreach purposes. The Planning WG also discussed how Karen Quidachay and Steve Wilensky's presentation on lessons learned from local contracting scheduled to occur at the September general meeting would benefit from including local contractor voices. The WG also wanted to better understand how mechanisms such as Good Neighbor Authority and "Best Value Contracting" could be employed to expand local contracting opportunities, as is identified in the report. Carinna Robertson also offered to reach out to Jason Ko, Shared Stewardship Coordinator with the Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region to help inform the ACCG about ways that partners/other agencies can work with the FS through the use of different agreement options (i.e. MSA's, Good Neighbor, Challenge Cost Share, etc.).
- The WG reviewed the revised Project Submission Form which incorporated comments from the June WG meeting related to the inclusion of the community and economic benefits checklist. The WG confirmed the revisions and expressed that they would like to receive ACCG input on the draft checklist at the August general meeting.
- Next Steps refining the Project Development Process suite of documents: John Buckley expressed a preference for finalizing the package of documents and allowing project proponents to use it. Other WG members confirmed this approach. Another WG member wanted to ensure that the ACCG integrates learnings from the best available research and science into the suite of tools, particularly the Forest Treatment Guidance document. Another WG member suggested reaching out to a few likely project proponents and get their targeted feedback on the tools.

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Next Steps

- The WG agreed that Shane would led the Planning WG update at the general meeting and that Gwen would take the lead on the Monitoring WG update.
- The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on Wednesday, August 26, 2020. The meeting will take place on-line via Zoom.

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-videoconference)	Hours
Tania Carlone (facilitator)	Consensus Building Institute (CBI)		3
Carinna Robertson	USFS- Calaveras		3
Kellin Brown	USFS- Calaveras		
Shane Dante	Foothill Conservancy		3
Rich Farrington	UMRWA		3
Randy Hanvelt			3
Megan Layhee	GIS Consultant (RFFCP)		3
Robin Wall	USFS- Amador		3
Gwen Starrett			3
Greg Suba	Sierra Forest Legacy		3
John Buckley	CSERC		2
Sara Husby	CSERC		3