# Meeting Brief

* Karen Quidachay and Pat Farrell of Landmark Environmental, LCC/Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA), gave a presentation about contract procurement, project implementation, and lessons learned, followed by a presentation by Steve Wilensky of Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS), discussing the organization’s history, current efforts and challenges.
* ACCG Work Group and members provided updates of their activities.

# Action Items

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| **Actions** | **Responsible Parties** |
| Provide list of revised MOA Signatories on future general meeting agendas. | Megan Layhee |
| Ensure final versions of meeting summaries are posted to the website. | Megan Layhee |
| Discuss at next Admin WG whether there is value to maintain an ACCG Past Participant list on the website for continuity. | Admin WG |

# Summary

## Modification and/or approval of agenda and October 2020 Meeting Summary.

## The group had no suggested changes or questions to the October 21st general meeting summary which was adopted as final and will be posted on the website.

## There were no changes to the agenda.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Presentation and Discussion:** [Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority: Procurement & Implementation Lessons Learned, presentation by](https://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/03-UMRWA_Landmark-Procurement-Lessons-Learned-ACCG_PPT_20201111.pptx) Karen Quidachay & Pat Farrell

Karen Quidachay with Landmark Environmental, LCC, introduced herself as the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA) Program Director for the Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) between UMRWA and the U.S. Forest Service. Before she continued her presentation, she wanted to note that she was thrilled that Megan Layhee will continue to be working in the watershed [as the new ACCG Administrator] and had the opportunity to work with her.

She went on to provide background information on UMRWA, including that they are a Joint Powers Authority that originally formed in 2000 to address water quality, water supply and natural resources. Around 2008, they became the Integrated Regional Water Management Group. She went on to describe the UMRWA board, which is comprised of nine members (eight individuals) currently supported by an Executive Officer, Richard Sykes, and Administrative Officer, Rob Alcott. The Board is represented by three counties (Calaveras, Amador, and Alpine), five water districts (Calaveras County Water District, Calaveras Public Utilities District, East Bay MUD, Amador Water Agency, and Jackson Valley Irrigation District).

When the MSA began, in May of 2016, and that the MSA outlines the general roles of UMRWA and the U.S. Forest Service (FS). UMRWA maintains the planning, management and financial capabilities, and has done a lot of work exploring funding opportunities and applying for grant funding which is ongoing. She also clarified that the Supplemental Project Agreements (SPAs) are required for individual projects under the MSA, and that the SPAs outline the specifications about the roles, responsibilities and commitment of UMRWA and the FS for project implementation, which requires staff time.

Karen noted that UMRWA can act as a lead CEQA agency (since it’s a Joint Powers Authority) and has done that for a number of projects, including for a number of other entities including Plumas Corp and CHIPS. UMRWA also provides qualified personnel and contractors to implement what was agreed upon in the SPA. The grant agreement commits UMRWA to a project under the MSA, and that the SPA ensures a project commitment from the FS. UMRWA assigns representatives to coordinate with the FS and manage contracts.

Karen described the Hemlock Project Areas as depicted on the presentation map and reminded the audience that the ACCG was very involved in the planning and design of the Hemlock Project. She reported that many of the stewardship components of the project, including the mastication and hand treatments have been completed. She also mentioned a project not shown on the map on the Amador Ranger District (RD) under a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant to implement culvert improvement projects, that also is under the MSA.

Karen described three fuels treatment projects that UMRWA has applied for through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), all on the Calaveras RD, cleared through the Hemlock Environmental Assessment (EA). Funding for the Pumpkin Hollow project was received in 2017 and completed on December 31, 2019, where 927.5 acres of mastication, hand thinning of small trees, road maintenance and mechanical thinning was completed on time. Cabbage Patch/Fore project was applied for and received funding in 2018, had originally applied for a grant for 314 acres but ended up having some funding left over because bids came in lower than anticipated, so they were able to go into the Fore project area, covered by the Hemlock EA, and actually completed 467.2 acres of hand thinning and mastication. Karen noted that she is currently writing up the final report for that project, which will be completed Dec. 31, 2020, on time and with more acreage treated than originally agreed to in the grant. The Black Springs (and West Calaveras Thin) project was applied for and received funding for in 2019, and originally proposed to treat a minimum of 900 acres and, like Cabbage Patch, had funding left over from bids coming in lower than anticipated, so fuels reduction work was able to be implemented in the West Calaveras Thin area. After project completion, there was remaining funding so there is still one more year of project implementation.

Karen introduced Pat Ferrell. Pat worked for 28 years for the Eldorado National Forest (NF) as the Timber Management Officer and Contracting Officer. UMRWA utilizes Pat’s skills for both areas of expertise and relies on her contracting and procurement experience. Pat went on to discuss contract procurement and detail on how UMRWA procures and manages projects, and also talked about lessons learned.

Pat noted that the first step in the process after receiving funding is preparing and soliciting Request for Proposals (RFPs). She said that the RFPs are patterned after Amador RD templates and base the project specifications outlined in the RFPs on the SPAs. She also mentioned that they have compiled a lengthy list of about 60 contractors through this RFP solicitation process over the years, sourced from FS bidders list, ACCG list, and licensed timber operator list. UMRWA sends the RFPs to prospective bidders that are capable of the work outlined in the RFPs. She mentioned that UMRWA also holds a pre-bid meeting in order to answer questions and discuss project specifics. UMRWA then provides a 30-day bidding period and then scores the bidders based on evaluation criteria outlined in RFP, including technical approach, bidder costs, experience and references, and 5% local advantage for contracts within Amador, Alpine and Calaveras counties. She went on to talk about the contractor selection committee which is comprised of UMRWA and FS. The selection committee reviews the contractors’ scoring and RFP response and then the committee recommends an award to the contractor that is best qualified based on price and non-price criteria. The UMRWA Board makes the decision at the Board Meeting authorizing UMRWA to enter into a General Services Agreement (essentially contract) with the selected contractor. UMRWA administers the contract with help from the FS which they oversee UMRWA.

Pat then described UMRWA’s General Services Agreement with the selected contractor in more detail. The agreement includes general contracting provisions and specific provisions based on FS contracts, agreements and specifications based on the SPA, which originate from other FS contracts. She reiterated that UMRWA’s role is oversight and administration of the contract and grant agreements. The FS role is ensuring that UMRWA is meeting the terms of the MSA with the FS. Pat described the specific components of the General Services Agreement including a scope of work and project map, insurance requirements and certifications, and payment terms and procedures. She noted the general requirements under the agreement including general provisions related to changes, workmanship, and termination. She enumerated the specifications of operations outlined in the General Services Agreement which primarily come from the SPA, including for protection of resources (stream protection, erosion control), and follow FS specific fire precaution restrictions and cleaning of equipment to reduce the spread of noxious weeds. Finally, she discussed the contractor’s RFP response and how that becomes a binding part of the contract.

Pat then gave an overview of the lessons learned for achieving successful outcomes. She underscored the importance of ensuring full collaboration with the FS. Pat emphasized that UMRWA wants responsive and effective support from the FS staff responsible for stewardship management. She noted that UMRWA has superb support from the Calaveras RD staff, particularly Carinna Robertson and Matt Hilden, and that they’ve built up a lot of trust through their collaboration. She went on to say that UMRWA learned the hard way about taking on marginal timber removal projects, and has realized that mastication and hand thinning is their forte. UMRWA did not receive any bids (running the solicitation twice) for a marginal timber removal project even though UMRWA was willing to pay a contractor to do the work. Since it was marginal for the FS, it was then marginal for UMRWA. Ended up taking some of that project and doing mastication of the understory and surface fuel removal work instead. Pat went on to mention that UMRWA although meets very frequently with the FS. They meet annually to discuss “lessons learned.” Pat emphasized the essential importance of honoring the fundamental roles of partners. UMRWA works under the SPA, but that the contractor works for UMRWA under the General Services Agreement. The contractors do not work for the FS. So, UMRWA maintains clearly defined and documented roles and delegations of authorities to ensure this clarity. She mentioned that they have developed an authority delegation spreadsheet for timber removal projects which is useful in defining who has authority for what so that on-the-ground work happens smoothly. Pat further noted that partners should be involved in the project layout and SPA specifications. With the Black Springs project, UMRWA did the project layout following the NEPA document (Hemlock EA) and then worked closely with Carinna Robertson on SPA specifications to ensure that everything the FS wants is in those specifications to get that in the contract. The Partner (UMRWA in this case) should have suitably experienced staff familiar with types of projects and specifications, and UMRWA is fortunate that Landmark has Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs), engineering staff, GIS staff, timber specialists, and several staff that have worked for the FS for decades. She also mentioned the importance of having authority for changes, modifications, and for resolving disputes. She went on to say that it is important for the Partner to have qualified inspectors.

UMRWA does not usually do pre-implementation surveys, but the FS often does the surveys (like for spotted owls to see if the Limited Operating Periods, LOPS). She emphasized that the FS need to accept the work, and that while UMRWA does the day-to-day inspections, the FS conducts an on the ground review of the units to ensure the work is approved and that the work meets project objectives and requirements. UMRWA has been getting a quick turnaround on FS approvals, which allows UMRWA to pay the contractor in a timely way. Pat emphasized that the SPA needs to be complete, and if activities are not in the SPA they do not appear in UMRWA’s contracts.

Tania noted that over the last several months the General Meetings have hosted academics and scientists from UC Merced, UC Berkeley, UC Davis and others to discuss forest management, climate change impacts, and other topics. The presentations are moving toward the “how,” and this UMRWA presentation provides information on the contracting vehicles being used and how they can be used to increase pace and scale.

* John Heissenbuttel: John said that it was a good presentation by Karen and Pat. John mentioned that he is affiliated with Amador Fire Safe Council and the CalAM Forestry Team, and between those two groups they administer several different grants and put out a lot of RFPs. They’ve found in recent years that there is good and growing competition for mastication work, but the hand treatment work responses seem to be dwindling. He asked if the presenters were having a similar experience?
* Pat concurred that they have a lot of good responses to mastication RFPs, and they’ve done a number of hand work RFPs and will typically get 3 or so responses. However, of those contractors, none are local to the three counties, some are Northern CA and OR, but Pat said she doesn’t see that as a growing field.
* John Quidachay, Landmark Environmental Field Operations Manager, contributed that even the hand-thinning contractors are moving away from those activities because they see the writing-on-the-wall that it’s not a great treatment in general and can increase ground fuels if the trees are just left on the ground.
* John Heissenbuttel: John followed up on John Q.’s comment and said that most of their hand work projects are for ingress and egress along road ways for hand-thinning and chipping and those contractors seem to be decreasing.
* Katherine Evatt: Katherine said it was a great presentation, and is curious whether UMRWA used the FS’s local benefit factors in scoring proposals and in UMRWA’s contracting process. Katherine said it was something that she looked into when the ACCG was first exploring MSAs and that she worked with stewardship coordinators from around the country to come up with lists of local benefit factors. Katherine noted that one of the reasons the ACCG moved toward MSAs was to use whatever tools were available to get more work to local people. Katherine asked that UMRWA comment on whether or not they use local benefit factors, and if not why that’s the case.
	+ Pat Farrell responded to Katherine’s questions by enumerating UMWRA’s contractor selection criteria: 1) technical approach, 2) costs, 3) experience and references, 4) the 5%-point benefit to local contractors.
	+ Karen also mentioned that the NFWF grant project hires local contractors as well.
	+ John Quidachay added that the Pumpkin Hollow contractor, sub-contracted most of the work to a local contractor.
* John Buckley: John suggested that hand thinning that drops fuel on the ground does not tend to reduce fire risk. However, it really depends on how the prescription is designed and implemented as to whether it is cost effective or an effective treatment to reduce fire fuel. John further observed that in the past, the FS developed projects with public engagement using appropriated FS funds for their programs of work. Now it appears the FS approves projects where another entity, like UMRWA, finds the funds and implements the work. He expressed that he’s trying to understand if this is actually the situation where the FS appears to be relying on UMRWA, ACCG or others do the work.
	+ Karen explained that its UMRWA’s intention to increase pace and scale, and since the FS is short staffed, the idea is that UMRWA does the work so it frees up the FS to do other projects. Supplementing FS staff to free them up to do other projects within their program of work.
	+ Carinna Robertson added that the FS are short staffed and the FS doesn’t have the capacity to administer grants, so with UMRWA and other Partners helping, especially in the Hemlock area, the FS has been able to focus on the timber component. Carinna says that given the realities of limited staff capacity, it’s advantageous to enter into stewardship agreement and SPAs with UMRWA.
	+ Ray Cablayan affirmed that the FS has become more reliant on partners. He further clarified that the Regional Office has directed the FS to find ways to get things done through Partners because of FS capacity issues. Most of staff on the Stanislaus NF for ID team work is focused on 108 corridor and YSS. So, there is limited capacity on the Calaveras RD. Randy Moore and others on the regional forester team have indicated that the FS needs to find different ways to get things done. Ray mentioned that this relationship with UMRWA has been one of the more successful partnerships on the district, because UMRWA has been very successful at acquiring funds.

**Presentation and Discussion:** Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS): History, current efforts, and challenges, presentation by Steve Wilensky

Steve Wilensky mentioned that CHIPS last week began its 17th year of involvement in forest matters, and has learned a few lessons along the way. CHIPS has been involved in finding tools for forest, meadow, watershed, fire safe and cultural site restoration and stewardship. He went on to say that CHIPS began when there were not a lot of doors open and that before the ACCG and the partnerships it cultivated, a lot of work did not occur. Steve noted that it was a little alarming to hear the hand-thinning conversation that occurred during the last presentation discussion, because that is what CHIPS mainly does. He suggested that CHIPS has more work than people to do it. So, a lot of CHIPS’ efforts are to prepare a workforce that is willing to do physically strenuous work.

CHIPS was formed in 2004, and received a National Forest Foundation grant in 2005 to conduct door-to-door chipping work through fire safe council contracts in addition to some private contracts. He added that CHIPS initially received a $500K through the USDA to procure equipment and vehicles.

Steve reflected on the ACCG’s success in receiving Community Forest Landscape Restoration Act (CFLRA) funding and how that was the real breakthrough for local contracting and for CHIPS ability to grow. As a result of the CFLR, there were enough bids and assurance of enough contracts. Over time with the use of MSAs and SPAs, CHIPS was able to build relationships and do work in the Tahoe Basin, Eldorado, Stanislaus, and Humboldt-Toiyabe NFs. CFLRA ignited so many opportunities. Through the formation of the ACCG and collaborations, entities like UMRWA, the Cal-Am team, and CHIPS, and others have brought in contract proposal work in the millions of dollars, have accomplished a surprising uptick in bid activity, and minimized disputes.

CHIPS mostly employs native tribal people from the Maidu, Washoe, Miwok and Mono communities. CHIPS’ contract in Yosemite National Park occurred after three years of discussion which included descendants of the Paiute. He noted the National Park Service have begun implementing cultural site protection, meadow restoration, and other restoration. When the Creek Fire approached Mariposa Grove, CHIPS and members of the Paiute community, in particular, did work around Wawona as well as duff removal and raking. The Creek Fire then turned away from the grove. At that time, CHIPS was also doing a lot of work in adjacent areas in Sierra NF. CHIPS was pleased to be part of that effort to protect the groves.

Steve expressed how meaningful it is for tribal people to go back to their sacred grounds and do restoration work. He also mentioned the Washoe’s work in the Tahoe Basin which was once historical tribal lands, including Meeks Meadow restoration. They also won an award for their work there. It’s hard to operate heavy equipment in sensitive areas and areas with steep slopes, which CHIPS and its crews do. There is role for, and also consequences for not going into those places. It’s CHIPS’ goal to use this work to be the basis for returning traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and native approaches to these landscapes.

Steve mentioned that the Butte Fire provided an opportunity to do something innovative, referring to the Self-Determination Act (1937). He explained that CHIPS and BLM partnered on this effort. The federal agency (BLM in this case) acquires funds and transfers funds to a trust with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The funds then go to the federally recognized tribes that can do the work themselves implement or sub-contract it out. The Governor proclaimed last year that it is a priority to hire native people to do this work (in addition to language in the 2018 Farm Bill). Steve asserted that there is a tribal work force available but it is not utilized to an optimum. There is high unemployment in tribal communities and traditional tribal lands that have burned. He suggested that funds could be brought in to do post-fire work with the 1937 Act, and that the tribal workforce is available for such efforts. Steve said it was particularly jarring to present the idea to FEMA and CAL OES. Equipment was available and a tribal work force was trained and ready, but there wasn’t funding available to deploy them near the Camp Fire area. Steve said that these are big challenges for the Sierras. It is essential to ensure that relief funds are spent at home. Steve added that the result of efforts on the Camp Fire, Caltrans are looking for ways to utilize the 1937 Act to employ tribal communities.

CHIPS has been involved in forming a group called the Inter-Tribal Stewardship Workforce Initiative (ISWI), which includes tribal councils, staff from the Governor’s office, and Sierra Institute. The purpose of the initiative is to upgrade and have certifications that tribal workforces can complete with scholarships for skills training. Steve thanked the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for funding training programs for certifications, and new groups in other parts of the Sierras are getting involved in the model and work is spreading.

Steve went on to discuss challenges that CHIPS faces:

* Hard to get money to attend trainings and gain certifications.
* Procuring equipment. Mentioned the government surplus opportunities for tribes, but has not been successful to date.
* Need for long term contracts and partnerships.
* Having downstream water users participate in stewardship of their watershed is needed. Steve mentioned that UMRWA is pioneering and has stepped up to get watershed work done, with MSAs. Steve says that he challenges the water people on the call to move to that.
* Transportation and licenses - more than half of the people CHIPS hires don’t have a driver’s licenses, and many young Native Americans in the Sierra have already been in the criminal justice system, and have a hard time getting back on their feet.
* Addictions and work force health are interrelated issues.
* Public financing during an economic down turn –Steve wondered even with current increased capacity, will it sustain through an economic downturn and what can be done to help mitigate future challenges?
* Field leadership for large crews is hard to come by.
* COVID – CHIPS had to isolate work forces because of COVID, and had a 50% loss in revenues not only from COVID, but also smoke, fires and forest closures. Optimistic that CHIPS will get through this and hope that everyone will be meeting in person this time next year.
* Katherine Evatt thanked Steve and Regine for what CHIPS has done. Katherine also wanted to point out that she is happy to see large landscape restoration being implemented by UMRWA, which was part of its original founding purpose. When UMRWA’s first Joint Powers agreement was written it included watershed restoration and principles of watershed community investment, and then the organization wandered off and did other things for a while. Katherine was happy to see UMRWA return to part of its original function, because UMRWA was actually the first Joint Powers Authority in CA to pledge to invest in watershed restoration.
* Linda Wadleigh (Amador RD) mentioned that she met Karen and Pat earlier this week via Zoom, and Linda also thanked Steve for his presentation, and she went on to say that she learned so much about CHIPS. Certainly, CHIPS has made a large impact on the Amador RD. She also mentioned that she had a meeting in October with district staff and did an after-action review about working with CHIPS, and wants to talk with Regine and Steve about that. She learned so much about CHIPS and applauds the organization’s work.
* Rich Farrington asked if a biomass project is built would that help with CHIPS revenue and job stability, and for Pat and Carinna, same kind of thing on biomass, is there a way to fund this from UMRWA’s end, increasing pace and scale and increasing biomass through excess grant revenues?
* Steve mentioned that in an economic downturn the question is what are the factors to keep local communities going and agency funding is only part of the answer. He mentioned that local biomass projects have to happen. CHIPS sold the entitlements to a company that intends to build and has funding capacity.
* Pat mentioned that the problem is that biomass market is not in the locale. In the 1990s, biomass could be removed because there was a close place to take it. Transportation costs are prohibitive. Stands that are being masticated, probably would lend themselves to biomass removal instead of mastication, but cost per acres higher to chip and transport than to masticate.
	+ Steve said that one of the most important aspects of getting money into rural counties is to get outside participation. Combo of business (nonprofit or private) and water agencies. He also mentioned that a 25-mile radius is the max distance for cost effectiveness of biomass facility. CHIPS facility in Wilseyville is in a good spot.
* Carinna mentioned that she could speak to Rich’s question, reflecting on the Hemlock project area and what they’ve been able to do with UMRWA. Making it mandatory in FS timber contracts to chip and haul timber down the road. It creates smaller piles to burn and it’s costly, but we are willing to go down that road.
* John H. thinks that what’s lost is the original concept behind stewardship contracting which was to tack stewardship to a real timber sale, where the FS makes money and local FS unit can subside that money to haul chips and thinning of non-commercial stuff.
* Richard Sykes had a question for Carinna – to make biomass facilities cost effective, is the FS able to create tenure agreement for a biomass facility? To provide material? Help investors to invest.
	+ Carinna – doesn’t know but she can look into it.
	+ Pat – stewardship authority would permit it, but it takes the will of the agency to enter into it. Similar things done it in Intermountain West, with varying degrees of success.
	+ Linda Wadleigh – participating in Southwest US, entered into stewardship contracts 10-year, 4 forest initiative, company would be able to build mills and find biomass, provide material over the long term. There’s potential for that.
	+ Marc Young-those opportunities exist but they require commitment from agency.
	+ Steve has had discussions at FS regional level, some progress but no finality, Sierra Institute is involved.

## UPDATES

## Administrative Work Group Update

Regine Miller reported that the Administrative Work Group discussed the upcoming presentations, speakers and panels for the beginning of 2021. Also, suggested Planning Work Group discuss internally potential speakers for herbicide panel (for March 2021 General Meeting), so CBI and CHIPS can coordinate. The work group also reviewed and discussed an MOA Signatory Welcome Letter which was distributed. The letter is intended to welcome signatories and remind them reminding of roles and responsibilities as specified in the MOA. As additional folks sign on to the MOA, a welcome letter will be sent to them. The work group discussed an interest a symposium, in lieu of field trips, for a general meeting in 2021, to focus on power fire or hemlock projects where project proponents and Monitoring Work Group can share information and the ACCG can have a broad discussion. Finally, did discuss briefly the Communication and Engagement Plan, expect to review and revise that plan in December and transmit it to the full group for review and input in January. Now that CHIPS has increased its capacity with the ACCG through hiring Megan to increase capacity for facilitation. The Admin Work Group is preparing options for ongoing facilitation support that will come before the full ACCG in February. It’s the final year of CFLR funding, making the discussion timely.

* John H. suggested that the Participants list on the Members page of the ACCG website needs review.
	+ Regine mentioned that Megan revised the MOA signatory list on the website, but that the other participants list was something that was already up on the webpage and kept to illustrate those entities that have been involved in the past for context and continuity.

**Planning Work Group Update**

Megan Layhee gave an update on the SLAWG. She mentioned the upcoming e-workshops, the first on Nov. 19th. This workshop and the second workshop on Dec. 3rd are intended to provide participants with a broad understanding of the GIS tools developed by Megan and the SLAWG, and to engage and provide feedback. The SLAWG is not going to be meeting in December but did meet in the beginning of November to discuss the final step of in the development of the GIS tool. The plan is for Megan to present the tools to the Planning WG at their January meeting and then present at the General Meeting in February.

* Regine encouraged meeting participants to reach out and get people to participate in the e-workshops. At the Dec 2019 workshop there was participation from folks that don’t usually participate at ACCG meetings, and they provided some great insights.

Tania followed up with the Planning Work Group update. The work group received an update from Megan in October about the GIS tools, and also did a usual debrief about the past speakers and the take-aways and how those learnings could be applied on the ground in the ACCG landscape. Dr. Westerling’s discussion was the end of a series of complementary speakers. The work group thought the prescribed fire panel will be a logical and good next step to talk about the “how” as informed by the “why” that the ACCG got from the academic presentations over the last few months. The work group also discussed the small field trip to Hemlock area that occurred on Sept. 22. Rich Farrington took photos during the field trip and made a visual presentation to share that it is in agenda packet. Tania encouraged participants to follow up with field trip participants if they have any questions. The work group also heard about project updates. The Funding Coordination Work Group requested the Planning Work Group to transmit any project ideas to Funding Coordination Work Group so they can attempt to seek funding. Planning Work Group said the mapping tools will help identify priority projects, but in the meantime, for the Funding Coordination Work Group to look closely at a the ACCG project ideas prepared by Michael Pickard for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) in case of stimulus funding availability. The Mattley Meadow project was referred to the Funding Coordination Working Group as a possible candidate to seek funding. Other news is that the work group anticipates the Cole Creek project on Amador RD will come to the work group for discussion in the upcoming months. The work group will not be meeting until January.

**Monitoring Work Group Update**

Robin mentioned that the last Monitoring Work Group meeting was on Nov. 12. The work group is completing a list of needs and recommendations for the ACCG website to submit to Admin WG by December 1. Also, National CFLR monitoring strategy is being finalized, and will be available for review in December or January and the work group will bring to ACCG for full discussion. The work group was planning to have a field trip to the Power Fire area this past summer, but it was postponed. Hopefully, there will an opportunity to have a field workshop in 2021. The work group meets next on December 9.

* Rich Farrington asked if Monitoring Work Group has assembled a summary of jobs and community and economic benefits.
	+ Robin mentioned not to her knowledge, and invited Rich to attend the December Monitoring WG meeting. She mentioned that the National CFLR monitoring strategy has a large socio-economic component which has been built for new CFLR projects but could be used as a reference to inform the ACCG’s efforts.
* Tania mentioned that a small ad hoc group continues discussion of a community and economic benefits check list intended for inclusion in the project submission form. The Ad-hoc group included, Rich Farrington, Randy Hanvelt, Shane Dante and John Heissenbuttel. They had productive discussions. One of those discussion topics was how to monitor community and economic benefits.

**Funding Coordination Work Group Update**

Regine Miller reported that the group had their second meeting last week, and started to look at SNC list as potential projects. Eager to see priority project list from SLAWG and find projects with high level of ACCG support. Looked at SNC list and possibility of finding funding for Mattley Meadow project. The work group is interested in finding funding for that project because it already has support from ACCG as part of Cornerstone. The work group also looked at planning projects and potential implementation projects. For instance, on the Amador RD, the Lost Forest and Foster Firs projects present opportunities for aspen restoration. Chuck Loffland mentioned possible need for prescribed fire and/or biomass removal following Scottiago project implementation - projects where NEPA is completed and additional work is needed. Also, Richard Sykes updated the ACCG on and UMRWA concept proposal to the SNC for both Eldorado and Stanislaus NFs and potentially BLM lands in Upper Mokelumne River Watershed. The work group discussed the need for a liaison between Funding Coordination WG and Planning WG, and Carinna Robertson volunteered to fill that role. Next meeting is December 8, 3-4 pm. At that meeting Michael will provide an update on potential legislative budget changes, and the work group will review the SNC updated list and revisit grant opportunities. Entities represented at the work group so far are both forests, CHIPS, UMRWA, SNC, and Landmark Environmental. The working group welcomes other groups to participate.

* Carinna mentioned that the work group is a very productive group, very positive and she encouraged others to participate.
* Steve asked whether one of the ideas is to bring in groups that were already raising funds. He asked what groups are missing?
	+ Regine hopes to reach out to RCDs and Fire Safe Councils and mentioned the working group would love to have the CalAM team’s involvement because of the work they are doing and the group’s expertise. Important to have BLM participation as well to help identify what their needs are and how the ACCG can support those needs where the agency has limited capacity to achieve on its own.
* Rich said that he is aware that CFLR funds are expiring and state declined to fund cap and trade fuel reduction projects this year, so this raised a lot of questions about relying on grants. Group needs to explore more ways to reduce fire hazard with other funding sources.
* Tania indicated that those were some of the reasons why the work group formed, as identified in the Collaborative Engagement Strategy in 2019.

**Roundtable**

Steve Wilensky: Noted that over a century ago apples were planted in Yosemite Valley, they are rare apple trees some from Thomas Jefferson’s orchard, and are still alive in Curry Village parking lot and meadow near Mirror Lake. Folks from Paiute and Maidu communities with the Yosemite Foundation raised funds to do orchard and meadow restoration. Challenged by snow and other operational issues but the work is occurring right under Half Dome. Without the public around it is quite an experience.

Randy Hanvelt: TUCARE Summit that took place included a video of the virtual ACCG tour. It is now available online. At the summit Greg Norton from RCRC presented an interesting proposal and commitment to make some pretty serious investments. It’s worth listening to and may energize you that there is hope for progress.

Carinna Robertson: Arnold/Avery began on the ground work. The contractor started mastication behind logging museum, and the next contractor will begin work this month. The work affects the Rim Trail. Information on websites and posted road signs describing trail closure. Carinna is excited to share photos with the ACCG depicting the work.

John Heissenbuttel: CalAM forestry and Amador FSC updates. On the Calaveras side, within the next week the CalAM team will be completing a mastication and thinning project on Calaveras County Water District land above Avery. CHIPS is the fiscal agent. Unique project in that FS provided a grant for mastication work and the commercial thinning paid for the logging and put some money in water district pocket and will fund fuel reduction projects on other district lands. On the Amador side, next Monday will start mastication on Mitchell Mine fuel break project and hopefully finish this winter. In December will begin Tiger Creek fuel break on BLM land which was funded by SNC.

Linda Wadleigh: Mentioned personnel changes coming, Paul Leuisch will be moving to another forest and Jesse Plumber will become acting behind him. The position will be filled next spring. Thrilled by the moisture, 6-10 inches at Kirkwood. Also, Miranda Gonzales, District Archeologist is moving to North Carolina. Advertising a detailer behind her and filling that position. As far as work going on, Foster Meadows work is completed for the year. Chuck Loffland was out there two days ago collecting willows for replanting. Christmas trees are on sale, go to www.rec.gov, sold 2,700 permits in a day and serves a purpose to remove smaller trees. Roads are starting to close, MET trail is gated. If you need access let us know. Linda finishes up at Amador RD in December and Rick will be back in January. Linda is impressed by the ACCG and has appreciated being able to observe and work with the group during her time on the Amador.

Regine Miller (CHIPS): Hired Megan Layhee recently and thrilled to add her to the staff. Among responsibilities, Megan will be taking over administrative responsibilities for the ACCG. Disrupted and truncated year for CHIPS and work force. For SPA agreements but also with other grants. Washoe is not working due to COVID outbreak in their community. Yosemite crew is working, and assisted with Big Sandy Rancheria crew working with them. Crew from Chico Mechoopda tribe helping in Yosemite and on Eldorado NF. Expanding CHIPS model to other entities. The West Arnold Thin project about to wrap up. Also, have a couple planning grants in South Fork Mokelumne from SNC which will wrap up in 2021 and a small grant from PG&E working with CalAM Team will wrap up in a month.

Richard Sykes: Approval from UMRWA Board to sign onto ACCG MOA. Board also approved entering into DWR grant agreement for $500K to support West Point reliability water district project, and had a kick-off meeting for DAC study through IRWM funded through DWR which is a joint effort with T-Stan IRWM.

Rich Farrington: Raised a question with the board, briefing on Yuba Water agency work to do fuels reduction, but the funding through a forest restoration bond. We are scheduling a discussion in January about how a forest resilience bond could work.

Robin Wall: Drafted Cornerstone annual report for 2020 in review by forest management, and thanks for the help. She congratulates CHIPS on the work the organization does for the community.

Samuel Masquelier: GVCC corps members are working on shaded fuel breaks right outside of Sonora. Background on the work he does for GVCC. He is the site supervisor, providing work force opportunities to young adults in forestry and fuels reduction and recycling projects. He was hired about 3 months ago.

Shane: Foothill Conservancy is hosting its 30th anniversary event virtually on December 3 at 7 pm. For information, refer to foothillconservancy.org.

Thurman: Sierra Corp Forestry Fellow will be ending in Dec 11th, but staying on with CHIPS.

The next General Meeting will take place on January 20th from 9-noon.

# Meeting Participants

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| **Name** | **Affiliation** | **Time Committed to Meeting** |
| John Heissenbuttel | Cal Am, Amador FSC | 3.0 |
| Michael Pickard | Sierra Nevada Conservancy | 3.0 |
| Steve Wilensky | Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions | 3.0 |
| Karen Quidachay | Landmark Environmental  | 3.0 |
| Regine Miller | Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions | 3.0 |
| Pat Farrell | Landmark Environmental | 3.0 |
| Rich Farrington | Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority | 3.0 |
| Greg Suba | Sierra Forest Legacy | 3.0 |
| John Buckley | Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center | 3.0 |
| Gerald Schwartz | East Bay Municipal Utility District | 3.0 |
| Megan Layhee | Consultant to Landmark Environmental and UMRWA, Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions | 3.0 |
| Shane Dante | Foothill Conservancy | 3.0 |
| Sue Holper | ACCG Member | 3.0 |
| Carinna Robertson | Calaveras Ranger District | 3.0 |
| Thurman Roberts | Sierra Nevada Alliance, Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions | 3.0 |
| Sara Husby | Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center | 3.0 |
| Randy Hanvelt | Association of California Loggers | 3.0 |
| Caitlynn Rich | Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center | 3.0 |
| Robin Wall | Amador Ranger District | 3.0 |
| Katherine Evatt | Foothill Conservancy | 3.0 |
| Tania Carlone | Consensus Building Institute | 3.0 |
| Ben Solvesky | Natural Resources Conservation Service | 3.0 |
| Kellin Brown | Calaveras Ranger District | 3.0 |
| Ray Cablayan | Calaveras Ranger District | 3.0 |
| Richard Sykes | Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority | 3.0 |
| Marc Young | Amador Ranger District | 3.0 |
| Linda Deisem | ? | 3.0 |
| Linda Wadleigh | Amador Ranger District | 3.0 |
| Samuel Masquelier | Greater Valley Conservation Corp | 3.0 |