

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, October 28, 2020, On-line Meeting

Prepared by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI)

Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) discussed key takeaways from the Dr. LeRoy Westerling presentation and continued planning for the prescribed fire panel scheduled for the January general meeting.
- The WG received a follow-up presentation about the Hemlock Project Area field trip which took place on September 22, 2020.
- Megan Layhee, project consultant, gave an update on the status of the mapping prioritization tool. Next steps in the process are to continue refining the prioritization tool and instructional manual, create an initial project priority list, and hold e-workshops on how to use and maintain the tool.
- The Amador Ranger District (RD) and Calaveras RD gave project updates to the WG. The Amador RD noted that the Cole Creek project will come to the Planning WG in the coming months for discussion.

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Share prescribed fire planning information with Admin WG to use for outreach and planning with prospective panel members.	Tania Carlone
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with Amador and Calaveras Districts to discuss programs of work.• Review the SNC project list and spatially reference, identifying where projects overlap with priority areas on the tool	Megan Layhee

Summary

Agenda Review and May Meeting Summary Approval

The Planning Work Group (WG) met via Zoom video-conference. The WG confirmed the agenda and September meeting summary without revision.

2020 General Meeting Speaker Series & Field Trip Debrief

October 21st General Meeting Presentation Debrief [[Access Presentation](#)]: The WG discussed Dr. LeRoy Westerling's (Professor of Management of Complex Systems, UC Merced) presentation, "Forest Fire Research and Simulations for the Fifth Climate Assessment." The focus of WG discussions related to general meeting speakers is to explore key concepts that are applicable to the ACCG. Dr. Westerling's presentation was the last in a 2020 series focused on various dimensions of climate change, wildfire, and the implications for forest management. WG members discussed how the series of presentations have been very helpful, particularly as the information relates to the ACCG's current effort to develop project mapping and

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prioritization tools to increase the pace and scale of forest treatments. They discussed how the work of the ACCG is now to figure out “how” to achieve heterogeneous forest structure patterns that achieve forest health and fire resiliency. They highlighted the importance of understanding the patterns and density that are consistent with the best available science. One WG member noted that we understand the “why.” The “how” of actually applying this knowledge may be an important focus for upcoming presentations and discussions. The SERAL project on the Stanislaus may provide some insights about how to proceed. Another WG member posed, can the timber industry make enough money taking out trees the way scientists tell us it should occur and what are the policy implications for forest planning? WG members noted that there is broad agreement that we need to reduce forest density. The bigger issue is how do we get there? WG members underscored that five of the six largest fires on record have burned in 2020. Many of the acres burned this year have been in oak woodlands, vineyards, and residential areas at lower elevations not just in conifer forests. Modeling out for the 30-year period from Dr. Westerling’s work showed that the Northern Sierra Nevada modeled higher fire risk than the Southern and Central Sierra Nevada. One of the conclusions from that information may be that fire defense resources will be further stretched going forward. WG members highlighted other important takeaways from Dr. Westerling’s presentation, including:

- After 2050, the coldest year will be hotter than the hottest year prior to 2000.
- The size of fires will be far greater in the future.
- Forest thinning will help preserve owls which was consistent with Dr. Malcolm North’s presentation to the ACCG in July.
- It is important to think about the worst-case scenarios as it could happen, and may even be likely.

WG members agreed that Dr. Westerling’s presentation wrapped up a good sequence of presentations starting with Dr. Paul Ullrich’s presentation [[Access Here](#)] in June.

WG members agreed that further discussions are needed to define what fire resiliency looks like and how can we get there given the urgency of the situation.

Prescribed Fire Panel Preparation: The WG discussed the objectives, format and possible questions to guide the prescribed fire panel scheduled for the January general meeting. WG members made the following suggestions which the Admin WG will use to move forward discussions with proposed panel members. As discussed in the presentation debrief, WG members emphasized the importance of discussing the “how” of applying prescribed fire not the why, as there is already broad agreement about its value as a tool.

Prescribed fire panel planning
Proposed Date: January general meeting
Suggested duration: 90-minutes
Objectives:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The benefits of using prescribed fire to increase pace and scale of forest treatment consistent with the ACCG's triple bottom line• Identification of obstacles to the use of prescribed fire within the ACCG landscape• Possible solutions to overcome those barriers
<p>Prospective Speakers: The WG recommended no more than 4 speakers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kellin Brown/Jesse Plumber (USFS fire staff from the Calaveras and Amador Ranger Districts for a local perspective)2. Ken Pimlott (state perspective), former director of Cal Fire and county supervisor3. Craig Ostergaard (private land perspective, Sierra Pacific Industries)4. Susie Kocher (if not available Leyna Quinn-Davidson), collaborative burns overcoming barriers for prescribed fire on private lands
<p>Possible Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are the barriers that keep us from applying a higher level of prescribed fire across the landscape (including in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)?2. What are examples of solutions or opportunities to overcome barriers or hurdles to the broader use of prescribed?3. How do you prepare and conduct prescribed fire?4. What environmental planning is required (NEPA, etc.)?
<p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each panel member will be given 3-5 minutes to introduce themselves and their specific work related to prescribed fire (do not need to use slides for their intros, but may use no more than 3 slides, if they wish).• Introductions will be followed by a moderated discussion among panelists and Q&A with ACCG members.
<p>Preparation:</p> <p>The facilitation team will schedule a prep session with confirmed panelists to discuss questions and to coordinate responses.</p>
<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southern Sierra Prescribed Fire Council [Access Link Here]• Fire MOU [Access Link Here]

Next steps

- Facilitator share prescribed fire planning one-pager (see table above) with Admin WG to use for outreach and planning with prospective panel members.

Field Trip Debrief: As a result of Covid-19, the WG piloted a "virtual field trip," where a small group went into the Hemlock Project Area, documented the experience, and reported back to the Planning WG. Field trip participants included: Carinna Robertson, Ben Solvesky, Rich

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Farrington, and Randy Hanvelt. As a follow up to the September Planning WG meeting, Rich Farrington made a presentation [[Access Here—once posted to website](#)] to the WG.

Mapping Tools Development & Next Steps

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) Grant: Megan Layhee, project consultant, gave an update on the prioritization tool, specifying that the Strategic Landscape Assessment Working Group (SLAWG) has not yet completed the prioritization process. However, the SLAWG came to agreement on priority areas using GTR 315. The mapping inventory has been created and the next steps are to determine priority locations. She noted that the draft work flows under development can help further narrow down priority areas. Megan also noted that one of the grant deliverables is to create an initial project list. She noted that the SLAWG's next meeting is scheduled for November 5th, where they will work to come to agreement about possible priority locations. She noted that e-workshops will occur before the end of the year. They will be on three different days and are comprised of a 2-part series. Part 1 will focus on the process and Part 2 will be a how-to workshop on use and maintenance of the mapping tool. She asked the WG for thoughts and ideas and specifically asked if the effort was on the right track.

- **Planning WG Discussion/Input**

Planning WG members expressed their appreciation for Megan's work and confirmed that the effort is on track. WG members indicated that the ACCG now has to figure out how it would like to apply the tool.

- Regarding the initial project list, the WG suggested that Megan look at the project list that was submitted to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Now that the tool has been developed, WG members felt it would be important for the SNC project list to be spatially-referenced and to identify which of those projects overlap with high priority areas using the tool.
- WG members indicated that it would be helpful for Megan to follow up with each ranger district about their respective programs of work. Ray Cablayan clarified that after the Hemlock Project Area work is complete, there is no active planning on the Calaveras Ranger District for the ACCG landscape.
- Carinna Robertson noted that Baley Ridge is a prime area for treatment, noting that there are a lot of owl PACS that limit the extent and types of treatments permitted. John Buckley clarified that surrounding areas have been heavily clear cut, making the PACs in that area much more appropriate and that even within PACs, treatments can occur.
- Another WG member suggested that if the priority is protecting communities, we may want to look at priority areas near communities and infrastructure.
- Another key point raised by WG members was that Stanislaus is working on a PODs analysis and that it may be helpful for the Calaveras Ranger District to use PODs in concert with the ACCG mapping tool. WG members also suggested that it may be helpful for the ACCG to receive a presentation on the status of the PODs effort.

Next steps

- Megan meet with Amador and Calaveras Districts to discuss project pipeline

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- Review the SNC project list and spatially reference, identifying where projects overlap with priority areas on the tool
- E-workshops in late fall
- Final mapping tool presentation to ACCG in January

Project Planning Discussion

Discussion of Monitoring Topics for Possible General Meeting Presentations: The Monitoring WG forwarded topics to the Admin and Planning WGs to gauge interest for possible future presentation topics including: variable density stand/plantation work in the Power Fire project area, amphibian survey in Power Fire, Stanislaus and Eldorado NF climate trend assessments. The WG voiced interest in the Power Fire project area and the climate assessments. The WG also voiced interest in a Power Fire field trip next spring, if possible.

Funding Coordination Work Group Request: The recently initiated Funding Coordination WG asked the Planning WG for a list of non-controversial projects that they could begin seeking funding for. Overall, the WG felt that the request was a little premature since project activities need to be identified using the mapping tool. The WG suggested that the Funding Coordination WG start with a discussion of the SNC project list discussed earlier in the meeting. However, the WG did identify the Mattley Meadows project on the Calaveras Ranger District as a possible good candidate for immediate funding.

Amador & Calaveras Ranger District Updates: The Amador is still in pre-planning for the Cole Creek project and will likely bring it to the Planning WG for discussion in early 2021. There is not yet an ID Team but Marc Young will be the lead. The Amador is also developing their FY2021 program of work and will share with the ACCG in the coming months. The Calaveras Ranger District is continuing work at Black Springs and the bids for Arnold Avery closed today.

Other Announcements: Randy Hanvelt announced the TuCARE Natural Resources Summit is set for October 30th and is available virtually. Mike Albrecht will moderate the meeting which includes Greg Norton from Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), Jason Kuiken of the Stanislaus National Forest, Jessica Morse Deputy Secretary for Forest Resource Management at California Natural Resources Agency, and Jim Hubbard Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Next Steps

- The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on Wednesday, January 27, 2021. The meeting will take place on-line via Zoom. There will not be Planning WG meetings in November and December.

Meeting Participants

#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
1	Tania Carlone (facilitator)	Consensus Building Institute (CBI)		3
2	Carinna Robertson	USFS- Calaveras		3
3	Kellin Brown	USFS- Calaveras		3

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#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
4	Shane Dante	Foothill Conservancy		3
5	Rich Farrington	UMRWA		3
6	Randy Hanvelt	Associated California Loggers		3
7	Megan Layhee	GIS Consultant (RFFCP)		3
8	Robin Wall	USFS- Amador		3
9	Steve Brink	California Forestry Association		3
10	Greg Suba	Sierra Forest Legacy		3
11	John Buckley	CSERC		3
12	Sara Husby	CSERC		3
13	Caitlyn	CSERC		3
14	Sandy Anderson	Central Sierra Economic Development District		3
15	Emily Graham	Mother Lode Job Training		3
16	Lisa Edwards	Mother Lode Job Training		3
17	Ray Cablayan	USFS Calaveras RD		3