

# Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, February 24, 2021, On-line Meeting

Prepared by Megan Layhee, CHIPS ([meganl.chips@gmail.com](mailto:meganl.chips@gmail.com))

## Meeting Brief

- The Planning Work Group (WG) confirmed the objectives and agreed on the three confirmed panelists for an herbicide panel at the March general meeting. The WG also identified possible panelists for an herbicide alternatives panel discussion to occur at the April general meeting.
- The WG discussed key takeaways from Megan Layhee presentation on the SLAWG Tools that occurred at the February 17<sup>th</sup> general meeting and her presentation that she provided during the WG meeting about the WG's/ACCG's future role in project planning and implementation. Following in-depth discussion, the WG agreed that the Planning WG should take an increased role and have more active involvement in project planning and implementation, as well as helping to secure grants (what the group called "Option C"). A standing item on the WG agenda will be added in order to continue this discussion regarding how to get to "Option C".
- The WG discussed the take-aways from the inaugural Prescribed Fire ad hoc meeting and agreed that the ad hoc will meet 1-2 more times to see if the group should continue or whether to bring these conversations back within the WG meetings.
- The WG heard about Amador Ranger District project updates.
- The WG also confirmed Dr. Coen as speaker at the May 19<sup>th</sup> general meeting.
- Next WG meeting is Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 9am-12pm.

## Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
• Reach out to prospective herbicide alternatives panelists to gauge interest and availability.	Megan Layhee
• Reach out to environmental groups to see if they have any other herbicide alternative panelists recommendations.	Megan Layhee
• Reach out to Stacey Clark to invite her to sit in on the March Herbicide Panel discussion.	Megan Layhee
• Add standing item to Planning WG meeting agendas to continue to discuss WG future roles in project planning and implementation.	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 January meeting summary without revision.

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## General Meeting Speaker Series

**March Herbicide Panel Further Discussion:** Confirmed panelists include John Buckley, Maria Benech and Scott Oneto. There was discussion on whether there was a Science/Research perspective still needed on the panel to replace Andrea Williams' slot. There was agreement that a fourth panelist was not necessary, that there is seldom a uniform perspective from the research community because of different formulations. Furthermore, it was discussed that three panelists will allow more time to cover the full range of discussion to meet the panel objectives. John Buckley confirmed that Maria Benech is FS and will represent that perspective, also many years' experience as a practitioner and can offer that perspective as well.

The WG also confirmed existing objectives of gaining clear understanding of range of perspectives regarding benefits and drawbacks of herbicide use; where and when used and for what purposes; as well as safety standards.

The WG also agreed to invite Stacey Clark to the March Panel as a participant in discussion with a FS Regional and Ecologist perspective.

### Next steps:

- Megan Layhee will reach out to Stacey Clark to invite her to the March General Meeting.
- Tania Carlone and Megan Layhee will have a pre-panel meeting with the three confirmed panelists to go over panel format and logistics.

**April Herbicide Alternatives Panel Discussion:** The group proceeded to plan for the upcoming herbicide alternatives panel scheduled for the April general meeting. Rick Hopson noted an important objective for herbicide discussions are to educate everybody enough so we can gain consensus. He underlined the importance of ACCG members having a similar knowledge base in order to have more constructive discussions on what can be a controversial topic.

<b>Herbicide Alternatives Panel Presentation Planning</b>
<b>Proposed Date:</b> April general meeting
<b>Suggested duration:</b> 90-minutes
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define and discuss alternatives to herbicides.</li><li>• Conditions where alternatives to herbicides would apply.</li><li>• Discussion on some of the shortcomings of herbicide alternatives.</li></ul>
<b>Prospective Speakers:</b> The WG recommended no more than 3-4 speakers for the panel. <b>List of Possible Panelists identified in by Planning Work Group Members:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dan Macon</b> (UCCE in Placer Co. use of goats and sheep for veg management)</li><li>• <b>Sean Kriletich</b> (Agricultural Consultant and Producer/Owner of Paloma Pollinators)</li></ul>

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- **Gary Fiddler and Phil McDonald** (co-authored GTR-231, GTR paper: [https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw\\_gtr231/](https://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr231/))
- **Joe Sherlock** (USFS R5, Regional Silviculturist)

## **Related Confirmed/Potential Future Presentations:**

- **Dr. Janice Coen**, “Weather, Fire Behavior and Trends in the Central Sierra.” Confirmed for May 19<sup>th</sup> general meeting.

## **Next steps:**

- Megan Layhee will reach out to prospective herbicide alternatives panelists to gauge interest and availability.
- Megan Layhee will reach out to Greg Suba and other environmental groups about suggested herbicide alternative panelists.

**SLAWG Mapping Tools February Presentation & PWG Discussion:** Megan presented several slides to the WG to discuss the future direction of the WG in terms of project development, post CFLR funding. She framed her presentation with the following points and questions for further discussion among the group. The points were:

1. How does the PWG see getting more work done on the ground post CFLR funding?
2. Is it up to the PWG to develop projects or just individual stakeholders or both?
3. How can the SLAWG tools aid the PWG in their planning efforts?
4. If PWG is going to develop projects:
  - Need to articulate shared needs and goals.
  - Ensure land agencies are at the table
  - Identify and differentiate roles
  - Identify strategic locations, treatment types, etc.
  - Utilize SLAWG tools related to fuels reduction projects
  - Work closely with other working groups.

After addressing these questions and topics, Megan ultimately asked the group to begin discussion and answer the question of how might the WG like to proceed.

John B. articulated three options for the WG including:

- A. Status Quo—ACCG as an entity doesn’t control lands; dialogue is opportunity to support FS projects and other members’ projects who seek support
- B. planning and implementation of projects using tools; step up into a new role in of planning projects
- C. In between. Acknowledge existing land jurisdictions such as FS. Take an increased role and more active involvement in engaging with members where it is most beneficial for them to implement projects. Not a planner and implementer but more involved as well as help securing grants.

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Rich noted that Option C is consistent with the experience UMRWA has had with Hemlock which allowed us to partner with CRD and to apply for grants. As a model, it worked well. CRD seemed to be supportive. Why don't we identify an area using tools and try to accelerate projects in a big planning area (FS)? UMRWA is working on planning grant application to help get NEPA completed. Regarding other mechanisms that could aid in project planning is the Good Neighbor Authority. Rich suggested that maybe Rick Hopson could bring more information about that to a future meeting.

Rick suggested that he thinks the WG is already moving into Option C, in the sense of a more active and supportive role. He mentioned CHIPS, UMRWA, and others, and to potentially build and grow off of that model. ACCG is not a 501(c)(3), so the ACCG would need to rely on individual members and stakeholders. Also suggested that there is a need to articulate the tools that are out there including, tribal partners, good neighbor authority, and MSA with UMRWA, CHIPS, Amador RCD- the sky's the limit with number of agreements. Rick then posed the question of what does the ACCG want to do and how involved does the collaborative want to be? That we need to find a new way of doing our work and the SLAWG tool is a good way of doing that. And now big do we want to go?

George Dondero (CHIPS Board Member) posed several questions to the WG. The first was asking what is CHIPS' potential role in this broader discussion? Where are the existing planning resources? Where's the capacity? He wondered about how the ACCG might put together a five-year program. He mentioned that it seems like there are other funding sources out there. He also mentioned that he was glad to hear from Rick that there a lot of opportunity with Tribes. He also asked for clarification from Rick regarding what he meant when he said there was a lot of shifting within the FS.

Rick characterized what he said by expressing: 1) leading from behind and learning how to collaborate, 2) trying to scale up—smaller projects aren't getting us there. How do we address that problem more effectively? 3) 10 years of work on Cornerstone is done, and now, we're shifting to post CFLR to figure out how land management agencies will work together.

John H. appreciated John Buckley's offering of Options A, B, C. He offered his perspective that option A has been ACCG's sweet spot. Options B+C are more challenging when ACCG gets involved.

John B. added that everyone would agree that the ACCG is not that good at being quick and decisive reaching agreement. The questions become what is our capacity and what are we positioned to do? WE can utilize CHIPSs and UMRWA while we get a higher level of involvement on the USFS Amador RD. The ID Team planning on the Stanislaus NF may not allow for large project planning efforts to occur on the Calaveras RD so if there's going to be a big project, it would likely occur on the Amador.

Rich Farrington said he liked the A, B & C options and expressed that we are either in C or we're heading towards B. He said he thought we need to agree we are moving away from A. He said

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that he thought the C role is most appropriate. In terms of next steps, he suggested that we should identify an analysis area. Would want to include Amador and Calaveras. I think the role of the PWG is to identify a large area of analysis, apply the SLAWG tools. I've also been a big proponent of putting together a five-year plan.

In terms of ACCG capacity, Megan expressed that the ACCG is voluntary. We already meet monthly and can use our existing meetings productively.

Rick mentioned that the we are starting to talk about large scale projects and we are in a good place to bring larger projects to the table. The answer about working with ACCG on a large scale project is yes.

John Buckley added that he wasn't suggesting Calaveras RD should be excluded, he just knows that they have limited capacity. The project is most likely to be effective if the initial focus is on one RD and then ARD could work with the CRD on possible complementary treatments.

George added that we need to shift gears. And that he supports John B.'s suggestion and Megan's suggestion to use these meetings more effectively. It would be helpful to have continuing outside facilitation support. The Funding Coordination can continue to seek funds.

Rich added that his answer to capacity is money. Best infusion could come from the state. How about Good Neighbor Authority? Rich suggested that Rick might be the best person to help us figure this out.

Jesse Plummer asked the WG whether we need planning or implementation. He added that he sees a bigger need for implementation, and that the ARD has a big backlog of projects—additional fuels reduction on Panther and Scottiago.

Megan summarized that she heard a resounding yes on option C and that everyone agrees that we need to shift gears quickly. She suggested placing a standing item on the WG agenda where we have 45-60 minutes to continue the conversation regarding how to get to option C.

### **Next Steps:**

- Possible later WG discussion about Good Neighbor Authority
- Add standing item to Planning WG meeting agendas to continue to discuss WG future roles in project planning and implementation.

### **Prescribed Fire Ad Hoc**

**Prescribed Fire ad hoc Inaugural Meeting Update:** Rich noted that on Monday February 22, the inaugural online meeting took place. There was a discussion on the purpose of the ad hoc group, which is to increase pace and scale and how to engage the public to remove some barriers. Rich's idea is for the ad hoc to draft a policy position paper, and that it could be less than a page describing the role of fire, providing necessary education.

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Rick noted an interest in pyrosilviculture concept vis-à-vis a presentation that was given to ACCG last fall. He said it would also be good to talk through some barriers to the use of prescribed fire.

John B. noted that there is an option of holding the Prescribed Fire ad hoc discussions within the Planning WG meeting setting.

**Next Steps for Prescribed Fire ad hoc:** The group agreed it would be helpful for the ad hoc to meet separately for 1-2 more times to let it play out a bit.

## Project Planning Discussion

**Amador Ranger District Project Updates:** Rick Hopson shared leadership intent for large scale projects. Next vegetation management project they intend to bring to ACCG will be Upper Cole.

Rich asked about the status of JJ&A Group's work on the NFWF grant on the Power Fire Area. Rick Hopson described the concept was to have an outside consultant help the FS address Fuels in the Power Fire Areas with a focus on prioritizing projects in the nexus area. The report should be coming out soon. JJ&A sent data that was incorporated into the SLAWG tools. LiDAR information should be coming soon.

## Next Steps

- Megan will reach out to prospective herbicide alternative panelists and network with Greg Suba and other environmental groups about suggested herbicide alternative panelists.
- Megan will create standing item on WG meeting agendas to discuss how the WG will move toward "Option C".
- The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The meeting will take place on-line via Zoom.

## Meeting Participants

#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
1	George Dondero	CHIPS-Board Member		3
2	Jesse Plummer	USFS Amador RD		3
3	John Buckley	CSERC		3
4	John Heissenbuttal	Cal Am, Amador Fire Safe Council		3
5	March Young	USFS Amador RD		3
6	Megan Layhee	CHIPS		3

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#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A- online)	Hours
7	Randy Hanvelt	Associated California Loggers		3
8	Rich Farrington	UMRWA		3
9	Rick Hopson	USFS Amador RD		3
10	Robin Wall	USFS Amador RD		3
11	Sandy Anderson			3
12	Sara Husby	CSERC		3
13	Shane Dante	Foothill Conservancy		3
14	Tania Carlone (facilitator)	Consensus Building Institute (CBI)		3