

II. Proposed Forest Treatments Guidance Document

PREAMBLE

The intent of the project development process is to foster constructive dialogue and partnerships among ACCG members to get more work done on the ground and to do so in a manner consistent with the ACCG's [mission](#) and [Principles and Policies to Guide Operations](#). The Principles and Policies are designed to assist the ACCG achieve triple bottom-line environmental, community, and economic benefits. The process further strives to overcome obstacles (such as, lack of funding and limited capacity for NEPA/CEQA, among others) in order to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. As one of the integral components of the ACCG's project development process, the Forest Treatment Guidance document's intention is to support forest restoration activities within the ACCG project boundary that strive to achieve the following goals:

- Adapt to **Climate Change**, particularly the increasing threat of **Mega Fires and Drought Mortality** consistent with GTR 220 & GTR 237 which recommend **creating forest heterogeneity** to provide ecological flexibility to withstand environmental stresses.
- Reestablish the **natural fire regime** where possible.
- Maintain and **create fuel breaks** through **forest thinning and prescribed fire** to help **protect communities** and forest resources.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this guidance document is to help project proponents anticipate the level of ACCG engagement that may be needed for specific proposed forest management project activities that seek ACCG support and involvement. Understanding the potential level of engagement needed to achieve broad agreement among the ACCG can offer guidance to project proponents in preparing a strategy, timeline, and approach to promote ACCG consensus in as realistic and expedient a manner as possible. This document also outlines the protocols and procedures associated with each category.

Project proponents are encouraged to read the entire document and cross-reference interrelated project activities in each category. This document is one component of the [ACCG project development package](#) . This is a living document that may be updated periodically, as warranted.

Categories and Protocols at a Glance

<p>Category 1: Mutually Agreeable: Project activities are broadly considered agreeable by the ACCG and follow an expedited process.</p>
<p>Category 2: Mostly Agreeable: Project activities may require moderate time (i.e., a few months) for ACCG discussion/ engagement to reach agreement.</p>
<p>Category 3: Lacking Consistent Agreement: Project activities are likely to require extensive ACCG engagement and time (months to years) in order to design a project agreeable to the diverse interests that make up the ACCG membership.</p>

See below table for a more detailed description of the categories, protocols, and detailed project activities. The table further suggests considerations for project proponents and outlines procedures for each project category.

<p>Category 1: Description: These project actions are broadly supported. For projects that clearly fall into this category, project proponents follow an expedited protocol to seek ACCG support.</p>		
<p>Protocol: Expedited Process immediately routed to ACCG General Meetings</p>		
Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-routing roads and trails around meadows 2. Road and drainage maintenance and repairs to improve water quality and to provide for fire-fighting access 3. Meadow restoration that does not include removal of legacy/large trees, controversial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect at least 2-3 weeks from submission of the project form to receive a signed letter of support from the ACCG. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the Project Support Submission Form and send to the ACCG Administrator at least 10 days before the ACCG General meeting (which occur every third Wednesday of the month except in December).

<p>restoration practices such as pond and plug, and special status species</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Aspen restoration that includes logging trees less than 30" dbh 5. Maintenance and minor improvements to existing developed facilities 6. Prescribed fire with agency approved burn plan 7. Hazard tree (trees that impact public health and safety) removal from roadsides and developed sites, when consistent with the PSW Region 5 Hazard Tree Marking Guidelines (2012) 8. Herbicide use to treat non-native plants, as a temporary treatment, and not as a long-term and/or large-scale maintenance strategy 9. Removing conifers less than 16-20" dbh outside of PACs and den buffers 10. Road reconstruction 11. Road decommissioning 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The ACCG Administrator will place Category 1 projects on a general meeting consent calendar. for ACCG consensus approval. 3. If ACCG determines that any given project doesn't clearly fall into this category, it would be referred to the Planning WG for review (as described in Category 2 below).
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Category 2:

Description: These project activities require some discussion.

Protocol: Discussion initiated at the Planning Work Group whose recommendations are sent to the full ACCG for concurrence.

Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commercial or non-commercial thinning in plantations or green stands when consistent with forest plan and General Technical Report (GTR) 220 and GTR 237 which would result in a fire and disease resilient condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect a minimum 1-3 months of engagement with ACCG. • Consider site conditions and resources at risk, especially 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ten days prior to Planning meeting, provide relevant project materials to Planning WG lead(s). 2. Present project at Planning meeting.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Logging trees 16 to 20" dbh in key habitat areas like PACS or den buffers 3. Logging trees 20 to 30" dbh especially in HRCAs and fisher den buffers 4. Aspen restoration that includes logging trees greater than 30" dbh (even if legacy trees are retained) 5. Herbicide use near water sources and other sensitive habitats and species 6. Herbicide use for creating or maintaining large fuel breaks 7. Salvage logging along roadsides, in strategic fuel breaks, and/or to protect property. 8. Reforestation projects 	<p>when determining the removal of larger trees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project activities strive to maintain existing and future high-quality habitat values. • For herbicide projects, consider buffer width and impacts to wildlife. • These project actions should promote GTR 220 and 237. • Reforestation projects should incorporate fire, horizontal and spatial heterogeneity or climate change adaptation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Conduct any follow up activities to address Planning WG concerns or information requests. 4. If concerns persist, the Planning WG will initiate the conflict resolution process, as described in the ACCG MOA. 5. Regardless of the outcomes of deliberations, once the Planning WG makes a recommendation on the project, the WG will refer to the Admin WG to be placed on the ACCG general meeting agenda. 6. Individual members may provide support or opposition for any project or aspects of a project.
<p>Category 3: Description: These project activities are likely to require significant discussion. However, ACCG could ultimately achieve support through a negotiated process. Because these actions are more sensitive, the ACCG anticipates needing considerable time to thoroughly discuss, deepen understanding, and find approaches that could achieve consensus support.</p>		
<p>Protocol: Project concepts initiated with the Planning Work Group early in the project development process. Small group meetings/calls occur between regularly scheduled Planning Work Group meetings to generate options and for issues resolution. The Planning Work Group gives regular updates to the full ACCG at General meetings throughout the project development process. Ultimately, Planning Work Group recommendations are sent to the full ACCG for concurrence.</p>		
Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permanent new road construction (adding new miles to the road system) 2. Tree cutting and removal in inventoried roadless areas 3. Logging trees 20" dbh or greater in PACS 4. Logging trees 30" dbh or greater for "forest health" (e.g., red fir dwarf mistletoe, etc.) 5. Reducing canopy cover in high quality spotted owl habitat to lower canopy cover class 6. Reducing canopy cover to less than 50% in spotted owl HRCAs 7. Multiple Categorical Exclusions (CEs) for logging used in a concentrated area over a short duration which could cause cumulative effects 8. Salvage logging outside of roadsides and fuel breaks especially where sensitive wildlife may be affected 9. Aspen restoration that includes logging legacy trees 10. Herbicide use for plantation establishment 11. Herbicide use for creating or maintaining large fuel breaks over the long-term 12. Rare plant habitat used as a staging area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect many months to over a year engagement with the ACCG. • Project size and other project effects could affect the level of controversy. • The move from more directive forest plans to descriptive ones could increase the level of controversy. • Certain CE categories such as 36 CFR 220.6 (e) (6), Timber Stand and Wildlife Habitat Improvement. This exclusion category does not have an acreage limit. If large-scale logging projects that include controversial activities were implemented under such a category, the level of controversy would be high. • If projects do not engage stakeholders collaboratively and early in the project development process, the controversy is likely to be high. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ten days prior to Planning meeting, provide relevant project materials to Planning WG lead(s). 2. Present project concepts at Planning WG meeting. 3. Conduct any follow up activities to address Planning WG concerns or information requests. 4. If concerns persist, the Planning WG will initiate the conflict resolution process, as described in the ACCG MOA. 5. Regardless of the outcome of deliberations, once the Planning WG makes a recommendation on the project, the WG will convey to the Admin WG to be placed on the ACCG general meeting agenda. 6. Individual members may provide support or opposition for any project or aspects of a project.
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