

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

Meeting Brief

- Presentation by UMRWA on their Forest Projects Plan and their application to CAL FIRE’s Forest Health Program for Phase 1 planning and implementation work on the Amador and Calaveras RD. Consensus was reached to submit an ACCG Letter of Support for UMRWA’s application to CAL FIRE.
- ACCG Work Groups and meeting participants provided updates of their activities.

Action Items

Actions	Responsible Parties
Make the April 21st general meeting summary as final and add to the website.	Layhee
Remove “removal” and replace with “renewal” on moa list	Layhee
Follow up with Jason and Mike about stewardship advisor program presentation to ACCG at June 16 th general meeting.	Layhee
Add discussion item to June Admin WG meeting agenda about when meetings will be in-person again.	Layhee
Reschedule Dr. Coen’s presentation to a future general meeting date.	Layhee
ACCG approved a Letter of Support for UMRWA for their Forest Projects Plan application to CAL FIRE Forest Health Program. Administrator will sign the letter and send it to UMRWA. Prior to sending the ACCG Letter of Support to UMRWA for their Forest Projects Plan Phase 1 to CAL FIRE Forest Health Program, the word “appropriate” will be added to further define and describe the nature of the “permitting and environmental documentation”.	Layhee

Summary

Modification and/or approval of agenda and November 2020 Meeting Summary.

There was a suggested correction to the name of the MOA signatory from “removal” to “renewal”, otherwise no other suggested changes to this month’s agenda.

There we no suggested changes to the April 21st, 2021 General Meeting summary.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

UMRWA’s Forest Projects Plan & Seeking ACCG Letter of Support for CAL FIRE Application

Overview

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

Rickard Sykes introduced the project and the request for an ACCG LOS, and thanked the Planning WG for their input on both phase 1 and 2 of the project, and also emphasized that the Planning WG did in fact provide a consensus recommendation for submitting an ACCG letter of support for UMRWA's CAL FIRE application.

Rob Alcott, UMRWA's Administrative Officer, gave an overview of the purpose and need of the project, background on UMRWA and the goals of the Forest Projects Plan including reducing risk of catastrophic wildfires, prioritizing locations of forest health projects, preparing NEPA/CEQA-ready fuels treatment projects, preparing for grant opportunities, and to continue to help maintain and build local economic capacity.

The presentation went on to describe that the Forest Projects Plan is a landscape level NEPA/CEQA planning project with a minimum of 10,000 acres. There is a Phase 1 and Phase 2 component to this project: 1) phase 1, which is projects that can be implemented as soon as possible and mutually agreeable, and 2) phase 2, which would be primarily mutually agreeable treatments with some mostly agreeable treatment types.

John Heissenbuttal asked UMRWA staff for clarity about the map shown in the ppt slide that it includes non-FS lands. Megan Layhee (subcontractor for UMRWA), clarified that this is not the project area map that is included in the grant application. It was noted that after the presentation Megan would bring up the planning and implementation maps associated with the grant application.

Rob went on to describe the treatment types included under phase 1 of the project including: mastication, hand thinning of small trees, fuel breaks and thinning treatments that don't substantially alter habitats as defined in Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, aspen restoration, meadow restoration and prescribed fire. These treatments will be primarily on the Amador RD, and noted that the Calaveras RD is primarily focused on Phase 2. For Phase 2, fuels treatments will be modeled after the Prather-Medusa NEPA EA, aim to cover a large landscape, and to include a facilitated scope development.

The presentation then went over NEPA and CEQA compliance. FS would be the NEPA lead and UMRWA would be the CEQA lead. It was suggested that NEPA is expected to be completed under CE/Decision Memo for the Amador RD.

Greg Suba asked UMRWA if it was essential to define the type of NEPA/CEQA used in the project in the ACCG letter of support, and he also asked UMRWA what is stated in UMRWA's CAL FIRE application in terms of the type of NEPA/CEQA proposed. He added that it is difficult to give support to a CE, for example, without the CE being developed yet for phase 1.

- Richard Sykes responded to Greg by saying that UMRWA will use the *appropriate* NEPA and CEQA process, and don't know the type yet, and committed to working with the ACCG regularly as the NEPA and CEQA are developed.

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

- Rick Hopson also added that he agreed with Greg, and admitted the FS has not made a decision about the type of NEPA that will be used, and the reality is that FS will have to scope this formally with the public and make the decision later about the NEPA type.
- UMRWA and USFS agreed to include language in the letter “appropriate NEPA and CEQA will be conducted”.
- Greg followed up and asked what the CAL FIRE application says about NEPA and CEQA, and voiced his concern about UMRWA being pre-decisional. He further asked for a revision to the draft LOS to add “... and appropriate permitting and environmental documentation...”
- Karen Quidachay responded that she thought that the application did not ask for that information specifically, but that she was going to check. Richard Sykes added that UMRWA would be fine to add that clarifying language to the ACCG LOS.
- Chuck Loffland also highlighted that this is different than how other projects have been planned and developed in the past, in that UMRWA and the FS are asking for support to develop the planning and the environmental documentation.
- Rob Alcott also added that the ACCG LOS is for the CAL FIRE application, not support for the project itself.

Schedule and Timing

Planning phase 1, UMRWA aims to complete NEPA/CEQA on 5-10,00 acres within 6 months – 1 year with funding. For Phase 2, completion is expected to take 2-3 years and UMRWA expects to provide regular updates to the ACCG Planning WG and to seek full support from the ACCG for the projects and NEPA/CEQA.

Budget

UMRWA has committed \$50,000 towards the plan plus the costs to prepare grant applications. UMRWA also submitted an application to SNC for \$200,000 and will be recommended to be awarded at the June 2021 SNC Board Meeting. UMRWA also submitted a grant application to CDFW for \$472,000 under Prop 1 funding. UMRWA is also applying to the CAL FIRE Forest Health Program for \$5M. UMRWA anticipates additional funding committed over time from the FS. UMRWA anticipates substantial support from the FS for archeological and biological surveys as well as forestry and fuels management.

UMRWA finished their presentation with giving an overview of what they need from the ACCG, including the LOS for the CAL FIRE application.

CSERC added that they support the planning effort, but that they think it might take more than 6 months to complete planning efforts under phase 1.

Signatory Call out to vote on submitting an ACCG Letter of Support for UMRWA’s Forest Projects Plan Phase 1 application to CAL FIRE Forest Health Program

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

The following revised MOA signatories supported the ACCG LOS: BLM, Calaveras RD, Amador RD, UMRWA, Sue Holper, SNC, SFL, Heissenbuttal Natural Resource Consulting, EBMUD, CSERC, CHIPS, Calaveras Foothills FSC, ACL, and Institute for Bird Populations.

The following revised MOA signatories abstained: Foothill Conservancy

UPDATES

Administrative Work Group Update

Megan Layhee provide the Admin WG update. She noted that group met on May 10th. The group reviewed upcoming general meeting speakers and topics. The group also reviewed and discussed the draft press release for Dr. Coen's May presentation (that had to be postponed due to a medical emergency) and also discussed the ACCG media contacts list. Megan also noted that she will bring some bring some process-related recommendations to the Admin WG at their June meeting about how to make the press release process more effective into the future. The group also discussed the future facilitation and administrative needs for the ACCG, and that it was decided to provide a survey to the full ACCG to get an understanding of individual ACCG participants needs for future facilitation and administration to inform the Admin WG. The Admin WG also heard about WG updates, which Megan noted would be described momentarily.

Planning Work Group Update

Megan Layhee gave the Planning WG update. The group met last on April 28th. The group had a 60-min presentation and discussion on the Good Neighbor Authority, with guest speakers Jason Ko (R5 Shared Stewardship Coordinator) who gave an overview presentation on GNA and how that compares to other agreements. Travis Thane (USFS ENF, District Fire Management Officer) and Tom Tinsley (CAL FIRE, Unit Forester) discussed the first GNA signed in CA in 2016, the ENF-CAL FIRE El Dorado/Amador Unit Hwy 50 GNA, including an overview of the partnership and lessons learned. There was a discussion on whether GNA would be a good match for UMRWA and the FS. FS needs to formally asks the agency lawyers to direct the FS on how to proceed with a GNA with a JPA (with county agencies involved, like UMRWA). Richard Sykes (UMRWA) and Jason Ko will connect after the meeting to start this GNA inquiry process. The group also had a presentation and discussion with UMRWA on their Forest Projects Plan. Subsequently, ACCG MOA signatories present at the meeting made a consensus recommendation to the full ACCG for a letter of support for UMRWA's CAL FIRE CCI Forest Health Grant application for the Forest Projects Plan, specifically for Phase 1 planning and implementation work. The group also continued briefly discussing large landscape projects and ACCG's potential role in increasing

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

pace and scale. The group also received an update on the Rx Fire Ad Hoc group and an update from the meeting facilitator about upcoming general meeting speakers and topics.

Monitoring Work Group Update

Chuck Loffland gave the Monitoring WG update. At their May meeting, the Monitoring WG discussed UMRWA's CAL FIRE application and how it applies to monitoring, talked about the importance of incorporating monitoring components into all grant applications. The MWG also continued their discussion on monitoring strategy questions. Had a presentation on the POSTCRPT tool, which allows the user to analyze the likelihood of natural regeneration is post fire, and could be a good tool for the ACCG and plan to bring it to the Planning WG or full group in September, which will be timelier with fire season. MWG also talked about CHIPS Arnold-Avery monitoring effort. The MWG also touched on the different monitoring efforts. Also, the Power Fire Field Symposium on their upcoming agenda topic.

Megan Layhee discussed CHIPS's Arnold-Avery HFR and FB Maintenance Project Monitoring Plan. She noted that CHIPS worked closely with the Monitoring WG to develop this plan, utilizing the monitoring strategy to define the plan's questions and indicators. This monitoring effort includes ecological effectiveness, implementation, socio-economic and collaboration-related monitoring questions. She also gave a brief background on the project, treatments and extent of the project. Megan also described the monitoring timeline and schedule, and the units to be investigated. She noted that there was a modification to which treatment types would monitor using CSE plots, which now only includes FS units, not private units. She referred the meeting participants to review the monitoring plan and provide CHIPS with any feedback, which was included in the general meeting materials packet.

John Heissenbuttal noted that this was an ambitious monitoring effort.

Funding Coordination Work Group Update

Regine Miller gave the Funding WG update. The group met last week, and discussed the CAL FIRE Fire Prevention and Forest Health programs funding opportunities, and also discussed who was drafting applications and to coordinate among other entities to make them as competitive as possible, including UMRWA's Forest Projects Plan to the CAL FIRE Forest Health program for Forest Projects Plan. Also, was noted that Sierra Business Council and Phoenix Energy is preparing an application to CAL FIRE Forest Healthy Program for Capital Infrastructure for Wilseyville and proposed to UMRWA and Phoenix Energy for LOS for one another. Also discussed, was that CCWD is preparing a CAL FIRE Fire Prevention program for fuels reduction in and around West Point and Wilseyville on their lands to protect critical infrastructure. Was also noted that Amador RCD has a proposal for fuels reduction for the Jackson Creek Watershed, and the group talked about potential synergies. Talked about SNC funding that will

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

be available in July, and talked about the planning and implementation needs from ACCG participants. It was noted that UMRWA may apply for additional funds depending on their proposals that they recently submitted. Also discussed value in the FS subcontracting out NEPA work to contractors. Also, that UMRWA may be thinking about a monitoring project. Chuck Loffland went through potential projects that could benefit from SNC funding on the Amador RD – hazard tree removal from January 2021 wind storm, panther fb, Moke-bear and Oski-bear project, coordination between UMRWA and ARD to id specific projects areas and status, but there does look to be needs for funding on that district. Carinna Robertson shared that staff capacity is a real issue on the Calaveras RD, and also that there is considerable blow down in vicinity of Spicer Reservoir. Also talked about the Mattley Meadow project, that it is part of cornerstone and supported by ACCG, and that that project is still in need of funding. ACCG participants heard from Megan about outreaching to ACCG folks for any and all spatial data to incorporate into SLAWG Tools. Next meeting June 8, where the group will discuss future SNC funding.

Roundtable

Megan Fiske – said that she is the new Watershed Conservation & Land Use Advocate with Foothill Conservancy. She has a degree in wildlife biology, and she also noted that she used to work with the ACCG in the past when she was with CSERC, and is familiar with the collaborative. Megan will send informational material about an upcoming Foothill Conservancy clean up volunteer opportunity in Pine Grove to the ACCG Administrator. Megan's contact info: megan@foothillconservancy.org

Carinna Robertson – District will have a soft opening before Memorial Day, not sure if it will be a booth or the office. Arnold-Avery contracts starting. Also noted that the FS is getting positive feedback from homeowners, general public and the Arnold Rim Trail Association. Also noted that there are three awarded timber sales in the Hemlock Project Area that will be starting soon, including along 7N09. Also noted that two timber sales are still needing to be awarded, including Black Springs and Fore (?). Fire season update: having D and EV days already, also noted that a 2-acre fire broke out near Avery.

Kellin Brown – Noted that burning and fuels projects for the year are completed. The focus now is on opening roads and getting ready for fire season.

Rick Hopson – CHIPS crews out there working on district. Scottiago timber sales cable logging units going on. Second Decision Memo, FB work in layout stage currently, maybe a field trip later in the year. Panther sale is going on, including salvage logging from winter wind event. Noted that Jesse Plummer is off on detail, and is also in the process of getting a drone license to do aerial burning ignition.

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

Chuck Loffland – emphasized the blow down and the fact that there is a lot of debris on roads. He noted that he was down in the Three Meadow project area and the Foster Meadow project area, and that they wintered well. Added that they are getting field crews on and organized. Noted that there have already been two fires on the district this year, cautioned folks about cool weather and the potential increase in campfires.

John Heissenbuttal – Amador FSC submitted a CAL FIRE Fire Prevention grant for Pine Acres FB maintenance, noted that it was critical FB from stopping the Butte Fire from moving into Amador County. Received supplemental money for Mitchell Mine grant, to do study plots for FB maintenance treatment efficacy (e.g., grazing, mastication, traditional and non-traditional herbicides). Submitted a grant to SNC for enhancing Tiger Creek FB and hand work to tie together mastication units.

Liz Meyer-Shields – Leanna Weisberg new Forester, getting a sale set up in SF Moke area, and crews are out there doing recon and inventory, and getting ready to do NEPA update. Also, BLM brought on national salvage forestry team out of Sacramento, and engaging them in training. Chuck Jenkins' last day of detail is this week, and hoping for an announcement on new Fields Manager, more information coming soon. Also noted that BLM is going into fire restrictions this Friday, and that BLM staff will reach out to folks about variances. One fire already down in Mariposa that came onto BLM and a couple other fires near BLM lands.

Gerald Schwartz (chat) - This is the driest in EBMUD's 90 year history.....so again we are asking to take Bureau water through our Freeport project. My rain dances are not working out very well. :)

Michael Pickard – Michael noted that tomorrow the Governor will announce the May revise, and that they now know that CA has a \$75 billion surplus. Also noted that the Governor has not increased funding toward fire prevention grants, as far as SNC knows, but tomorrow SNC will find out more detail about the new budget. Michael also added that SNC will be receiving a large budget award to distribute grants, and SNC will have access to it on July 1. Thinking it will be around \$50M. Also, noted that the \$20M early action funding has been spent on applications that came in by April 30.

CHIPS – Regine Miller mentioned that CHIPS' work has started early this year, through WCB and SPA agreement with FS CHIPS' crews are working on Amador RD. Noted that fuels reduction work is occurring on private lands in vicinity of Oakhurst (Mariposa Crew) in partnership Big Sandy Rancheria Mono Tribe and Yosemite-Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council. CHIPS is also working currently with Calaveras RD to have crews start work under STF agreements. Megan Layhee has been working on CAL FIRE project. CHIPS partnering with Cal Am team and Amador FSC to get bids out for work on BLM lands and private lands connecting FBs on Amador and Calaveras County- RFP is currently being solicited and believed to be due Friday. CHIPS is continuing to conduct workforce training and development through funding from SNC with tribal partners, including basic 40 firefighter training and working with BIA to get

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

crews certified for firefighting on federal lands for CHIPS' crews to prescribed and cultural burning with federal partners and agreements. Also had a challenge this year, getting chainsaw training completed has been difficult, since trainers are already out fighting fires. Steve Wilensky is doing tribal outreach to see in tribal entities to participate in ISWI grant. Working with Cal Am team on a couple of planning grants be completed in 2021 and 2022. Megan added that contracts are being developed and finalized for the CHIPS CAL FIRE Arnold-Avery project. Thurman added that Steve's work down in Yosemite including fire wood dispersion on a hazard fuel reduction project.

Rich Farrington – Question for Regine Miller about the location of the Tiger Creek reservoir project – clarification was that it's at the power house just below Pioneer- tiger creek afterbay on Mokelumne. Added a bit more introduction to Rob Alcott, and that Rob is UMRWA's Administrative Officer and formerly the Executive Officer, and still works for UMRWA part time tracking grants and finances. Rich also noted that the UMRWA Board met last week, where they are steering the Forest Projects Plan, and also approved MOU with Blue Forest Finance Group for funding and financing options for further Mokelumne watershed and forest health projects, and whether or not a bond could be issued and justified for fuel and fire reduction forest health projects. Also noted that the UMRWA is a little frustrated with funding opportunities pace, so the Board approved and gave executive officer authority to apply for grants as needed. The UMRWA Board approved additional acreage to the Black Springs project, and also noted that the board also reviews bills in the legislature that can be helpful in meeting their mission- including currently 4 bills that board is looking at and if there is majority of support, they would help enhance ability to do fuels reduction work.

The next General Meeting will take place on June 16th via Zoom from 9-noon.

Meeting Participants

Count	Name	Affiliation	Time Committed to Meeting
1	Caitlynn Rich	CSERC	2.5
2	Carinna Robertson	Calaveras Ranger District	2.5
3	Chuck Loffland	Amador Ranger District	2.5
4	Gerald Schwartz	EBMUD	2.5
5	Greg Suba	SFL	2.5
6	John Heissenbittal	Heissenbittal Natural Resource Consulting	2.5
7	Karen Quidachay	Landmark Environmental/UMRWA	1
8	Kellin Brown	Calaveras Ranger District	2.5
9	Linda Diesem	Private citizen	2.5
10	Liz Meyer-Shields	BLM	2.5
11	Megan Fiske	Foothill Conservancy	2.5
12	Megan Layhee	CHIPS	2.5

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes, May 19th, 2021, by Zoom

13	Michael Pickard	SNC	2.5
14	Randy Hanvelt	ACL	2.5
15	Regine Miller	CHIPS	2.5
16	Rich Farrington	UMRWA	2.5
17	Richard Sykes	UMRWA	1
18	Rick Hopson	Amador Ranger District	2.5
19	Rob Alcott	UMRWA	1
20	Sara Husby	CSERC	2.5
21	Sue Holper	Private landowner	2.5
22	Tania Carlone	CBI	2.5
23	Terry Woodrow	Alpine County BOS/ Calaveras Foothills FSC Signatory	2.5
24	Thurman Roberts	CHIPS	2.5