

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, August 25, 2021, On-line Meeting

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Meeting Brief

- Briefly discussed upcoming general meeting and Planning Work Group guest speakers, and meeting format.
- Debrief on August 18th general meeting presentation by Dr. Malcolm North and the ACCG Pyrosilviculture Shared Vision Statement.
- Continued discussion on large landscape projects, including performing a mapping exercise to review ACCG SLAWG tools, R5 existing PODs delineation (SERAL priority PODs), and STF LIDAR products.
- Participant project-related updates and other updates.
- Next WG meeting is Wednesday, September 22nd, 9am-12pm.

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Take Planning WG recommendation to have a virtual-only October general meeting to the Admin WG.	Layhee
Post final July meeting summary to website.	Layhee
No September meeting due to Caldor Fire.	Pyrosilviculture Ad Hoc
Follow up with FS on regional PODs GIS data.	Layhee
Continue to take photo documentation in the field to validate LIDAR data.	Layhee
Follow up with Rick Hopson about PODs.	Marc Young
Provide information on a FS policy document pertaining to managed wildfire at an upcoming Planning WG meeting.	Amador RD

Summary

Agenda Review and May Meeting Summary Approval

The Planning Work Group (WG) met via Zoom video-conference. The WG confirmed the agenda and July 2021 meeting summary without revision.

Upcoming speakers and presentations

Dr. Robert York presentation at the October 20th general meeting – Will present mainly on pyrosilviculture, but touch on the topics he was planning to address as part of the herbicide alternatives panel presentation. Also, it was proposed by the group to have a virtual-only October general meeting and to bring this recommendation to the Admin WG. This recommendation is mainly because:

1. A couple of Planning WG members have experienced first-hand hybrid meeting technical difficulties at the Amador County building BOS chambers recently. Since this is

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the ACCG's best meeting location option for a hybrid meeting format, building technology-related issues are a bit concerning when our speaker and many meeting participants will be joining virtually in October.

2. ACCG October general meeting speaker, Dr. Robert York, will be joining virtually. Meeting location technology issues will impact our speaker's ability to present effectively.
3. The COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly.

Land Tender presentation at the September 22nd Planning WG meeting – can give outcomes on number of acres needed, budget; is it going to help us get work on the ground; but very expensive.

August General Meeting Debrief on Dr. Malcolm North's presentation & ACCG Pyrosilviculture Shared Vision Statement

Greg Suba suggested that after we get out of fire season, and once we are back to designing projects, that the group have a conversation about the concepts from these papers. Also suggested that the group needs to bring to the land managers and ecologists to this conversation for designing projects with Pyrosilviculture.

Marc Young provided some thoughts on the shared vision statement, including that this is not entirely a new concept, and that the Placerville and Amador RDs are incorporating these ideas already. Marc added that these efforts get complicated quickly in terms of managed wildfire, but as far as silviculture prescriptions we can continue to build on that with what the silviculturists are already doing. On the Eldorado, right now the big question is how much green are we going to have left to manage? And will be a big driver of how we apply forest resilience management on the landscape. And there will be a big reset here soon

Kellin Brown stressed where the FS is at in terms of limitations. But did note that the Calaveras RD did a managed wildfire in July 2021, the Henry Fire. The fire was a natural ignition (with 4 lightning starts over the last 4 years) and with an initial fire management goal of letting the fire burn out. It was intended to be an 800-acre managed fire, but turned into 1,200 acres. The challenges faced were touch terrain, acquiring aviation support and resources. But now the position on managed wildfire for 2021 came out from the FS. Right now, it's tough to manage any fire, particularly because of lack of resources, which then overshadows the effort to do managed wildfires. Added that he doesn't know the solution. Also added that staff are not able to show the managed wildfire as an accomplishment in FACTS.

Randy Hanvelt suggested that the ACCG needs to focus on getting work done on the ground; not sure if the lack of resources is the main problem.

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Marc Young wanted to also make a comment about Dr. North's et al. paper about going back into burned areas that are in lower/moderate severity burned areas and doing prescribed burn, and he agrees with that. He added that they are doing that on the ENF. He added that thinking about a "forest resiliency strategy" the ENF could be doing more maintenance, but the ENF has treated the areas they can, but those need re-treatments. The resilience strategy, partly is going back into areas that are already covered by NEPA and get back in and retreat, but the fact is that is expensive— if we had the funding, we could do more maintenance (and those are costly).

Greg Suba posted the question after the thinning and logging; would the maintenance have made a difference (thinking in terms of the Caldor Fire)? He added that we won't know the answer to the question, and that we need to get ready to analyze the landscape post-fire and develop and turn the pyrosilviculture concepts into on-the-ground maintenance/follow-up Rx fire treatments once land managers have the appropriate resources to do it (funding, trained staff, equipment, etc.). Followed up with a question to the FS staff present asking for an update on the Caldor Fire.

- Marc suggested that there was a lot of high severity burn during the period when the fire growth was high, and that he is not optimistic. The fire has moderated since, but he is hoping there is some more low intensity fire in there. But it looks like the center of the Caldor fire burned pretty hot. And yes, the fire burned into the Brown Rock Project area (not sure about intensity, but yes it burned through there), a large section of General Sherman Project area. Right now, the Scottiigo Project area, including Gold Note Ridge and Big Mountain Ridge has held. If those areas hold; half would be in fire and half would be out.

Rich added that he took away the fact that the ACCG follows up with the fire fuels specialist in addition to silviculturists and ecologists. Also, added that he heard that there is a need to remove dead trees from burned areas. Rich followed up asking if there is a plan for the Caldor Fire to remove dead trees? He also added that he heard Dr. North propose a Rx fire training center (couple proposals in legislature, but not gone anywhere), Rich thinks that's a need. He also added that funding is another big issue. Rich also asked about the push-pull concept of NPS in terms of weather. He also added the need for a better model for addressing gaps between treated units – example of what's happening in the Caldor Fire; anchors, assets and revenue – need to get into conversations with FS about how to define them, if they are already defined. Also, if there is a way to make NEPA more efficient, and that he recalls Scottiigo NEPA took 4 years - he asked if Category 6 has an acreage limitation.

- Marc Young – no acreage limitation for Category 6; ENF has applied it for some larger areas and other timber stand improvement (in Power Fire) and fuels reduction.
- Greg added that his understanding of the push-pull concept is allowing already ignited fire to smolder when conditions are favorable (winds, fuels) over a period of time (would require a large burn window) and it would be an option during non-fire season.

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Greg also mentioned that NEPA is important, that we're stuck, and it's not NEPA, instead it's our inability to do first-entry followed by Rx fire as maintenance tool. Once the NEPA is done, we need the will and resources to do it.

- Kellin – important to note the ideology differences between the NP and FS, in terms of the push-pull concept. Noted that the NP has planes committed to the park all fire season, but the FS generally doesn't have aerial resources all fire season and the FS cannot rely on air support all fire season long. STF has been Level 5 for most of summer, which means no resources. That's an issue for managing wildfires. Unique fire management program.
- Rich - Longer-term permits for burning – is this a state or local entity? Greg said there is a mountain of work going on right now, and referenced the Fire MOU group calls (call every month) where these issues are addressed, and yes, it's a CARB thing. In terms of who to follow up with? Statewide Rx fire Strategy (draft out this fall) – Patrick Wright.
- Rich says spring burning needs to be the focus, although it's not as clean, but it's less likely to get out of control.
 - Kellin – don't focus on underburning on district, trying to catch up on pile burning; some units are not available in spring (higher elevation units) and some of those units are under contract currently and because they are not released
 - Marc - Jesse is trying to use all burn windows he can, and happy with the successes in spring; there is no local restrictions on spring burning that he is aware of
 - Yes, there are thousands of acres that are available for Rx burn (either under a burn plan, or in NEPA), but doesn't mean they are prepped; changes in leadership can set districts back as well.
 - Greg added that NEPA isn't the problem.
 - Kellin said that NEPA is old, especially if it hasn't been treated in 20 years.
 - Marc – thousands of acres under NEPA for Rx burning- availability of resources (air quality is not always the biggest issue), the on-the-ground conditions plus the availability of resources is the issue.

Mapping exercise

The Planning WG participants heard an overview presentation by Megan Layhee on the objective and sequence of steps in the meeting mapping exercise. Please refer to the meeting supplemental material 06 to review the presentation slides: <https://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/06-ACCG-Planning-WG-Mapping-Exercise.pdf>

Next steps:

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- FS needs to sit down with the ACCG to look at the PODs delineations before we use them. Ask fire managers and FS do these PODs make sense? Should they be modified, combined etc.?
- Marc will follow up with Rick Hopson about the modifications to the PODs layers.
- Megan Layhee more ground truthing of field visits of to verify LIDAR fuel ladder data and follow up with FS about PODs.

Other Action Items – FS Policies outlining managed wildfire

FS staff mentioned that there is a document with language pertaining to policies for managed wildfire on national forest lands. FS will present on this document at the August Planning WG meeting.

Next steps:

- Rick Hopson will provide information on a FS policy document and the language included pertaining to managed wildfire at an upcoming Planning WG meeting.

Meeting Participant Updates, Project Updates & Other Meeting Updates

Sara Husby asked next steps for Pyrosilviculture ad hoc committee.

- Rich – need to meet separately and continue to be an ad hoc group
- Kellin – FS will try to meet, but Kellin and Ray are going to be available
- Based on the discussion, the group will postpone meeting and not meet in September.

Bud – asked about Rx Fire training McClellan (CAL FIRE Lone training center in Amador); interagency Rx fire training center by FS/NPS/BLM? In Florida (scholarships); training at UC Berkeley Blodgett and Susie Kocher; Columbia College has added several courses for Rx Fire; UCCE is in the process in hiring a Fuels Management Specialist – trains trainers in fuels management; BLM has just hired a Fuels Manager for Motherlode Field Office; 2 prescribed burn associations through Cal PBA Tuol-Cal and Eldorado-Amador for private landowners to burn on private lands.

Randy – PBA in Tuolumne-Calaveras was just formed, important to keep that in mind; TUCARE is having a tour and summit on October 7-8th Ken Pimlott is coming Randy Moore and State folks have been invited. Touring fuel breaks on SPI lands.

Marc – Forest Closure on ENF goes through September 30 (there is an exemption process – for partners to at least request approval for that). Unknown availability for ARD to participate in the ACCG, and district is continually impacted by Caldor Fire.

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Upcoming General Meeting and Planning WG Meeting Presenters

Herbicide Alternatives Panel Presentation Planning
Date: July 21, 2021 general meeting (Reschedule with Dr. York)
Suggested duration: 90-minutes
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define and discuss alternatives to herbicides.• Conditions where alternatives to herbicides would apply.• Discussion on some of the shortcomings of herbicide alternatives.• Can project objectives be adjusted to avoid the proposed use of herbicide treatments?
Prospective Speakers: The WG recommended no more than 3-4 speakers for the panel.
List of Possible Panelists identified in by Planning Work Group Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Robert York, UCCE Specialist, UCB-CNR Research Stations Advisor, Adjunct Associate Professor of Forestry (Note: Dr. York was confirmed after the May 26th Planning WG meeting.)

Next Steps

- The next Planning Work Group meeting will be on Wednesday, September 22nd, 2021. The meeting will take place on-line via Zoom.

Meeting Participants

#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
1	Bud Hoekstra	Private landowner	--	3.0
2	Greg Suba	SFL	--	3.0
3	Kellin Brown	STF, Calaveras RD	--	2.5
4	Megan Layhee	ACCG Administrator (facilitator)	--	3.0
5	Randy Hanvelt	ENF	--	3.0
6	Rich Farrington	UMRWA	--	3.0
7	Marc Young	ENF, Amador RD	--	3.0
8	Sara Husby	CSERC	--	3.0