

# Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, 03/23/2022, Zoom Meeting, [megan.layhee1@gmail.com](mailto:megan.layhee1@gmail.com)

## Meeting Brief

- Presentation and discussion on Forest Projects Plan Phase 1.
- Planning WG discussion on upcoming general meeting topics.
- Discussion on work group's action items and addition of ACCG's 2022 priorities assigned to the work group.

## Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Post February meeting summary as final to the ACCG website.	Layhee
Send any additional feedback you have on UMRWA's Forest Projects Plan to the UMRWA team ( <a href="mailto:kareng@innercite.com">kareng@innercite.com</a> ).	All
Follow up with Dr. Kane's lab about ENF LiDAR derived products.	Layhee, Farrington
May 18 <sup>th</sup> general meeting topic potential speaker outreach – SERAL and Forest Resilience Strategy	John Buckley Layhee
Send ACCG meeting invitation to special Planning WG meeting for April 5 <sup>th</sup> at 1pm	Layhee

## Agenda Review and May Meeting Summary Approval

The Planning Work Group (WG) met via Zoom video-conference. The WG confirmed the agenda and February 2022 work group meeting summary without revision.

## UMRWA Forest Projects Plan

Richard Sykes, Karen Quidachay, Megan Layhee and others from the URMWA-Amador District FPP Phase 1 team gave a brief presentation and subsequent discussion with the Planning Work Group on the proposed project area, treatment activities and proposed action.

Link to UMRWA's ppt slides: <https://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/03-draft-UMRWA-FPP-ppt-PWG-03.23.2022.pptx>

UMRWA's goal of presentation and discussion:

- Review and discuss major input/feedback received to-date from the ACCG.
- Discuss the scale of Phase 1.
- Discuss potential framework for treatment area prioritization.
- Get any additional input on Phase 1 from the ACCG prior to scoping.
- Discuss next steps.

## Discussion

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John Buckley – reminded the group that the original goal of phase 1 was to do 10K+ acres of hand thinning and prescribed burning to protect communities in the highest priority areas, in order to create the least amount of controversy to get a successful project done. The scale currently (101K), and the way aspen restoration treatments are proposed, is controversial. Here are the main issues: (1) to focus on eastern portion removing 10” dbh or less will not stop fires in the higher elevation areas and a waste of resources when there is a need in the western elevations, (2) 101K acres in a CE or EA will create controversy, and (3) should considering going back to the original goal of 10K+ acres if the goal is a CE or EA.

- Chuck Loffland – trying to propose the mutually agreeable tools (e.g., mastication and hand thinning of ladder fuels, prescribed burning) for the toolbox where appropriate and where they are needed. Also, the FS ID team will review the project boundary and develop design criteria for the project. Also, highlighted the fact that there is a shift in the agency to pace and scale with the Forest Resilience Strategy and the need to have as many tools in the toolbox through phase 1 will help aid in getting more work done soon.
- Richard Sykes – the team will address the scale issue that John has raised, and also understand John’s comment that we should focus on the highest priority areas in phase 1 and scale down the project.
  - John Buckley responded that with SERAL, one of the first issues was having accurate treatment and land ownership boundary lines completed and additional surveys completed prior to implementation – so the amount of pre-implementation work that has to be done is enormous for a 100K+ acre project is a lot. John added that he thought Phase 2 was the time when the FPP team was going to propose, which would need an EIS. He also added that the current proposal for aspen restoration to include removal of large live trees is controversial.
- Regine Miller – what is the appropriate scale for a CE?
  - John Buckley – once you propose more acreage for treatments that require additional surveys and considerations (e.g., mastication, removal of large trees for aspen restoration) that is what creates controversy when using a CE or EA. Also added that you have a smaller, more defined project area with focus on 10K acres of hand thinning and 10K acres of prescribed burning.
  - Regine followed onto that comment – what about incorporating an additional 10K acres of mechanical fuels reduction?
    - John it’s not the number of acres, but identifying the highest priority areas to protect communities and infrastructure.

Carinna asked what CE category? Or multiple CEs? Carinna also added that Phase 2 needs to begin very soon, because a budget window is coming soon.

- Wildlife habitat improvement activities - does not have an acreage limitation.

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Jesse sees that what is included in this 101K acres proposed project iteration is what he would like to see included for work that he wants to get done in the next 3-5 years.

- John Buckley reiterated that the entire 101K acres is not priority acres to treat in phase 1 (which is supposed to be expedited planning to implement work in the next 3-5 years). And that the broader, more complex treatment design for the entire district should be a part of phase 2 with an EIS. He emphasized that the team should identify the highest priority areas now and identify those for phase 1, which are those areas that would most protect communities and infrastructure.
- Chuck added that we are all in agreement that the 101K acres will not be treated, but that maximum coverage would allow the FS to identify the priority area later for treatment. But now the question is the comfort level of scale and whether the prioritization of the landscape should happen now or later.
- Rich Farrington asked that John clarify whether it's the treatments or the scale.
  - John doesn't think there should be an acreage limit for prescribed burning. But if the habitat is altered by hand thinning or mechanical fuels reduction at a large scale that will create controversy. What should be done is to propose in phase 1 what is going to occur in the next 3-5 years.
- Carinna reminded the group of the original goal of the phased approach of the FPP and that being phase 1 was meant to propose
  - Chuck responded that the goal for the Amador District what treatments are mutually agreeable to the group and can be done with the least impact to other resources.

Regine asked which other groups should FPP reach out – John Buckley mentioned the Nature Conservancy, SFL, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, John Muir Project, but the list is bigger than that. John added that these groups will voice concerns during the public scoping period.

Pat Ferrell added that there are probably areas where removing biomass with a commercial timber operation would be very effective, but for phase 1 mechanical fuels reduction is more effective fuels treatments over hand thinning alone.

- Rich added that changing mechanical fuels reduction to some other term we could use. Richard Sykes added that the team will wait to see the comments that come out of scoping to decide on terminology.

Rich asked if the objective of aspen restoration is different, and if so, would it be more appropriate in a different project?

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- Richard responded by saying that this treatment activity fits in the CE category we want to use. And that he would like to leave in this treatment activity type in phase 1.
- Chuck added that the aspen stand treatments are not mutually exclusive, they will provide not only increasing habitat/ecosystem function, but also potential FBs and fire protection.

Chuck asked John to clarify whether the scale of phase 1 should be defined in a more of a temporal sense, then a numerical number.

- John added that the scale for phase 1 should be what can get done in the next 3-5 years, but if you do a really large project under a CE, it's not the intention of a CE so that will create controversy.

Carinna added that pushing the timber removal in this CE category may create controversy.

Regine and Richard discussed the need to touch base with the Planning WG one more time before scoping (April 15<sup>th</sup>)

John – added several other points that weren't discussed today (e.g., Caldor Fire footprint, inventoried roadless areas, proposed wilderness) may be a mute point once the scale of the project is reduced. But that theses are additional

Carinna – Phase 2

### **Next steps:**

- UMRWA-Amador District FPP team will revise and narrow the scale of the phase 1 proposed treatment area based on feedback received from the Planning Work Group.
- Planning WG will have a special meeting on April 5<sup>th</sup> at 1pm to review the next iteration of phase 1.

### **General Meeting Topics & Work Group Ongoing Action Item List**

TEK Panel - Rich gave an update on the April general meeting TEK panel. He is working close with Thurman Roberts (CHIPS) on this.

SERAL project - John Buckley will reach out to Katie Wilkinson (STF) and Patrick Koepele (TRT) to see if they would like to come present and participate in a discussion about the STF SERAL project and lessons learned for either the May or June general meeting.

Forest Resilience Strategy – Megan will reach out the Chuck and Carinna about a Forest Resilience Strategy presentation/discussion for either May or June general meeting.

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The group discussed the ongoing work group action list that will be maintained in the monthly meeting agendas, and also the addition of the assigned action items from ACCG's 2022 priority list. Also the group discussed the need to follow up with Dr. Kane's lab to acquire the LiDAR derived products the lab has generated for the ENF.

### Meeting Participants

#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
1	Megan Layhee	ACCG Administrator (facilitator)	--	3.0
2	Caitlyn Rich	CSERC	--	3.0
3	Terry Woodrow	CFSC, Alpine County BOS	--	2.0
4	John Buckley	CSERC	--	3.0
5	Jesse Fowler		--	2.0
6	Carinna Robertson	USFS, Calaveras RD	--	3.0
7	Meredith Sierra	FC	--	3.0
8	Chuck Loffland	USFS, Amador RD	--	2.0
9	Jesse Plummer	USFS, Amador RD	--	2.0
10	Rich Farrington	UMRWA Board	--	2.0
11	Richard Sykes	UMRWA	--	2.0
12	Karen Quidachay	UMRWA/Landmark Environmental	--	2.0
13	Regine Miller	UMRWA/Landmark Environmental	--	2.0
14	Pat Ferrell	UMRWA/Landmark Environmental	--	2.0
15	James Thornock	USFS, Amador RD	--	2.0
16	Nancy Nordensten	USFS, ENF	--	0.5
17	Michael Pickard	SNC	--	1.5
18	Chuck Beckman	EBMUD	--	3.0