

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Special Planning Work Group Meeting Summary, 04/05/2022, Zoom Meeting,
megan.layhee1@gmail.com

Meeting Brief

- Follow up discussion on the revised scope and scale of UMRWA-Amador Districts' Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Phase 1.

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Send any additional feedback you have on UMRWA's Forest Projects Plan to the UMRWA team (kareng@innercite.com) in the next week.	All
Continue to provide Planning WG with update on UMRWA's FPP Phase 1 and Phase 2 development.	UMRWA (ongoing)

UMRWA Forest Projects Plan

Richard Sykes, Karen Quidachay, Megan Layhee and others from the URMWA-Amador District FPP Phase 1 team (Regine Miller, Chuck Loffland, Jesse Plummer, Pat Ferrell) gave a presentation and had a discussion with the Planning Work Group on the project.

UMRWA's goal of presentation and discussion:

- Engage the ACCG, specifically the Planning Work Group, in UMRWA's Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Phase 1 with the ultimate goal of achieving consensus support.
- Solicit ACCG Planning Work Group input on the FPP Phase 1 as efficiently as possible, with particular emphasis on scope and scale.
- Determine method for gaining continued input from the Planning Work Group as Phase 1 develops.

Sue Britting – asked whether the areas proposed for treatments that will require Archaeological surveys are to follow existing SHPO process. Also, ask clarifying question whether the 25K acres part of decision memo.

- Are allowed to conduct some Arch surveys before implementation in a phase approach.
- Either a decision or an EA, but that won't be determined after scoping.

John H. – why has the project been trimmed from 100K to 25K acres? Also asked about is there a spec for spacing for the hand thinning and mechanical fuels reduction treatments?

- Richard Sykes said that the team wants to get things done quickly in the next 3-5 years. The larger project area (101K+) will be included in phase 2. The team heard

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feedback that the scale for a CE or EA is not appropriate, and that phase 1 should only include what can get done in the next 3-5 years.

- Pat Ferrell responded that the team is not worried about spacing and the goal is to remove all ladder fuels with 10" dbh or less.
- Chuck Loffland agreed with Pat that we are not worried about spacing that we are removing everything under the dbh limit.

John Buckley added to the discussion that he had commented at the last Planning WG meeting that the 101K acres was much higher than what was appropriate for a CE or EA. Phase 2 is the phase to include the large landscape and propose additional treatment types. He added that there is no controversy in cutting up to 12" dbh trees in aspen stands, but why wouldn't aspen restoration just be proposed in Phase 2, essentially why treat the same stands – hand treatments in phase 1 and larger trees in phase 2? Is the 25K acres the total project area?

- The group then reviewed the map and acreage summary table for the various treatment types.

John H. asked why the Tiger Creek area not covered for prescribed burning?

- Jesse responded that some of that area is covered under other NEPA decisions.

Rich Farrington asked about the areas not proposed for treatments in the Power Fire footprint.

- These areas are covered under other NEPA decisions.

John Buckley asked a few questions:

- (1) Why is prescribed fire not included across the proposed project area? In an effort to adhere to the pyrosilviculture vision shared by the ACCG with the goal to do the least controversial treatments;
- (2) He also pointed out the hand thinning areas along the SF Moke River at the southern end of the project area, and why we are proposing such a large area of hand thinning that may not even get completed in the next 3-5 years and why not just include this in phase 2.

- Jesse responded what do I need across the landscape? And that depends on your objective. He added that what we are trying to get out of this project was large-landscape fuels reduction opportunities.
- John responded with how much to squeeze into phase 1 and what to leave for phase 2.
- Chuck Loffland also had asked for a consolidated block of treatments for this iteration of phase 1, and that he expects that not every piece will get touched in the next 3-5 years and be able to prioritize in the timeframe. So, the need to have as much area to do the

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right work on the right piece of ground. And that all of this area will also be included in phase 2 with more intensive treatments (e.g., the hand thinning area in phase 1). He also added that the USFS Forest Resilience program is that to “keep fire on the landscape”.

Rich reminded the group the ACCG developed a pyrosilviculture shared vision statement, and asked why isn't the entire phase 1 proposed project area proposed to have prescribed burning as a treatment option, why only 25% of the proposed project area?

- Richard added that in phase 2, the entire project area will be covered for prescribed fire treatments. However, phase 1 is to only include what we think we can get done in the next 3-5 years. And that the team is not foregoing the pyrosilviculture vision, it just will happen in phase 2 not phase 1.
- Rich Farrington wasn't clear why the 3-5 years is the time limit for phase 1 for prescribed fire treatments, in particular.
- John Buckley added that how much treatment is essential to include phase 1, compared to a more comprehensive, cost-effective treatments in phase 2? Only what is feasible and realistic in the next few years, the less likely phase 1 will get slowed. Is there a really
- Sue thinks there is the possibility to do an environmental analysis, and that she has less concern about doing multiple treatments in a given area over numerous phases, and that that a project of this scale can be done in a speedier, and possibly more streamlined, she is more concerned with modeling the SERAL project. Added that she wants to hear a detailed explanation about why this scale fits a CE category, or even as an EA, and thinks that controllable and known effects could be estimated, and the project was trimmed in a way that getting to a finding of no significant impact is possible, without lengthy analysis.
 - Jesse added that these were treatments that the ACCG identified as mutually agreeable.
 - Chuck added that is that the bigger question is the scale of phase 1. The treatments are mutually agreeable but at what scale?
 - Pat Ferrell added that there are approximately 25K acres of prescribed burning planned on the district, so this is not the only opportunity to conduct prescribed burning.
 - Rich asked why can't prescribed burning we proposed for the entire project area and proposing it for all of the proposed treatment?
 - Jesse added that he doesn't want to propose prescribed burning in areas he doesn't think it would happen in the next 3-5 years.

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Craig Thomas (SFL) brought up the 770K acre prescribed burning process on the Sierra NF. He asked: (1) why not propose a separate Rx fire NEPA document? (2) can a larger proportion of this project be implemented with prescribed fire?

- Jesse added that the last iteration of the project proposed larger blocks of prescribed fire units in the more open canopy areas where it's more feasible to implement.
- Craig proposed including prescribed burning treatments in wilderness and roadless areas.
- And also, the importance of building partnership and capacity to implement larger scale of prescribed fire.
- John Buckley followed up with the question is – where are we at for phase 1? The iteration shown today is a thoughtful attempt at listening, and is still unclear how speedy 25K acres planning can be, and support for phase 1 as is for scoping. Also added that if there is 20K acres of backlog burning and adding an additional 6K is a challenge to implement that in the next 3-5 years.

Jesse asked Karen whether we need CE coverage for prescribed burning if the FS is the one implementing or seeking funding to perform prescribed funding – the team will follow up on this. Further deliberation is that the team would prefer CE coverage for prescribed burning

Rich responded to John's comment whether the group has relative consensus on the phase 1 iteration into scoping, yes, but he would like to see more prescribed burning across the proposed project area.

Richard asked for a clear sense from the group on their support or no-support for the project.

- The Planning WG report-out: Generally supportive of the scale of the project and relatively low risk/adverse effects associated with the proposed treatments. There was an appreciation for addressing the input from the various meetings, and that the scale of the project was modified according to the feedback received. Moving into the scoping phase of the project is the appropriate next step, and everyone will wait to see the comments received during scoping.

Next steps:

- Planning Work Group meeting participants will send any additional feedback to UMRWA on the FPP Phase 1.

Updates/Next Steps

- The next Planning Work Group meeting will be April 27th via Zoom.

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Meeting Participants

#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
1	Megan Layhee	ACCG Administrator (facilitator)	--	1.5
2	Caitlyn Rich	CSERC	--	1.5
3	Marie Davis	Placer County Water Agency	--	1.5
4	Meredith Sierra	FC	--	1.5
5	Chuck Loffland	USFS, Amador RD	--	1.5
6	Jesse Plummer	USFS, Amador RD	--	1.5
7	Rich Farrington	UMRWA Board	--	1.5
8	Richard Sykes	UMRWA	--	1.5
9	Karen Quidachay	UMRWA/Landmark Environmental	--	1.5
10	Regine Miller	UMRWA/Landmark Environmental	--	1.5
11	Pat Ferrell	UMRWA/Landmark Environmental	--	1.5
12	James Thornock	USFS, Amador RD	--	1.0
13	Amanda Watson	Amador FSC	--	1.0
14	Sue Britting	SFL	--	1.5
15	Craig Thomas	SFL private citizen	--	1.5
16	John Buckley	CSERC	--	1.5
17	John Heissenbuttal	Cal Am Team	--	1.5