

Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes March 16th, 2022, meeting in-person and via Zoom

Meeting Brief

- Meeting facilitator: Michael Pickard
- Richard Sykes gave an update on UMRWA-Amador District's Forest Projects Plan (FPP).
- Ben Jacobs (CA State Parks Burn Boss) gave a presentation on Big Trees SP prescribed burn program.
- ACCG Work Groups and meeting participants provided updates on their activities.

Action Items

Actions	Responsible Parties
Remove "DRAFT" watermark from last month's meeting summary and post to the ACCG website.	Megan Layhee
Continue moving forward with flying positions for ACCG Administrator/Facilitation services once UMRWA receives the SNC grant award and the agreement is signed.	Admin Work Group
Revisit process for determining Revised MOA Signatory status based on meeting participation and discuss next steps.	Admin Work Group
Add additional priority item to 2022 Priority List concerning C&E Plan	Admin Work Group
Continue outreach on TEK panel for possibly the April or May 2022 general meeting.	Rich Farrington Thurman Roberts Layhee
Post Ben Jacob's slides to ACCG website.	Layhee
Work to see if the Big Trees SP would accept ACCG volunteers to help prep large conifers in the park prior to burns.	Ben Jacobs Layhee
Possible Field Tour to visit McKays FB and Big Trees SP prescribed burn units	Carrina Robertson Ben Jacobs Layhee
Possibly get ACCG to sign a support letter for AB 267	Farrington

Summary

Modification and/or approval of agenda and last month's meeting summary.

Michael Pickard reviewed the meeting agenda with participants. There were no suggested modifications to the agenda. There were no suggested modifications to the February general meeting minutes. Megan will take the draft watermark off this meeting's agenda and the February meeting summary and post to the ACCG website.

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PRESENTATIONS & DISCUSSIONS

Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Update

Presenter: Richard Sykes

Link to presentation slides: <https://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/04-UMRWA-FPP-ppt-GM-03.16.2022.pptx>

Presentation highlights:

- Provide an update to the ACCG on UMRWA's Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Phase 1 with the ultimate goal of achieving consensus support.
- Review proposed treatment area maps, propose treatment activity acreages. Note that based on feedback and input from ACCG Planning Work Group (which is functioning as the Technical Advisory Committee), the team is in the process of refining the proposed project area scale.
- Identify any concerns from the ACCG general membership at this time and confirm approach to address concerns and ensure continued communication with ACCG as Phase 1 develops.
- Review the project schedule and next steps. The FPP team will be providing regular updates to the ACCG, and hope to gain consensus support in September 2022.
- Team encouraged ACCG to participate on Planning WG meetings to engage with the FPP team.

FPP Update Discussion

John H. – observation on the purpose and need is that the ACCG is about the triple bottom line and the p&n statement is not focused enough on people. Appreciated the fact that WUI protection is an important goal of this project, but that this goal of community protection is incorporated in the p&n. A second question John had was about how were MFR treatments were identified on the landscape.

- The team explained that slopes, distance to roads and location of adequate Arch survey coverage were the driving factors in identifying where they are proposing MFR.
- A follow up question by Michael Pickard is whether Arch surveys are required for hand thinning treatments – the response by FS NEPA coordinator, Nancy Nordensten was that “it depends”. Ground disturbing activities that can impact an Arch site is what Arch staff are most concerned about, and the Arch staff is generally ok with identifying hand thinning as not a ground disturbing activity.
- Richard Sykes added that URMWA has funding to perform additional needed Arch surveys, especially in the WUI areas.

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- Nancy also added that additional information will be provided by a wider group of FS Specialists not on the FPP id team for scoping, including design criteria that will include resource protection measures.
- Michael followed up with the importance of state-listed species mitigation measures be incorporated right now into the project analysis.

Rich Farrington asked for UMRWA to clarify a bullet statement in the p&n about the intent of reducing ladder fuels.

- Richard clarified that it was an error and that yes, the purpose is to reduce ladder fuels.
- Rich added that the purpose is to reduce mega-wildfires, and the language in the p&n slide doesn't really emphasize it.
 - Richard emphasized that we will not be editing the ppt slides, but make sure the team checks that the purpose and need statement is on target.

Richard asked the meeting participants to communicate whether the team is on track, and Regine asked the participants to engage in the Planning Work Group at the March 23 meeting, to provide the FPP team with feedback, input and concerns, especially prior to scoping.

Michael asked about the schedule of the UMRWA-FS MSA and that it will expire in 2026, and how will that impact FPP. Richard followed up that that conversation will be happening

Big Trees State Park Prescribed Burning Program

Presenter: Ben Jacobs, CA State Parks Burn Boss

Link to presentation slides: <https://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ACCG-Meeting.pptx>

Discussion

How do you assess when you are ready to burn?

- S-K Park Fuel Moisture Sampling Program – focusing on 1,000-hr and live fuels which gave a good picture of seasonality and drought conditions. Stations are located throughout the park. But CA Big Trees doesn't have the capacity, looking at the 10-hr fuels with fuel sticks, CAL FIRE has taken some fuel samples for the SP. Fuels moisture values inform fuels conditions and whether they are within their prescription for their burn plan. They also monitoring long and short-term forecasts and neighboring fire activity, will inform when they will burn. Save the Redwoods and UC Davis have established fuel loading monitoring plots, but Ben has not seen that data yet. He assumes the fuel loading is high in the park. They do not manipulate fuels before Rx

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burning, with the exception of the giant sequoias (and larger sugar pines), including light raking and removing 1,000-hr fuels.

Will the park ever allow mechanical (mastication) as an option?

- Concern the impact to fuel bed and soil, but the park is looking at them as tools in the toolbox, not at a landscape scale but on a case-by-case basis. Not ecological sound approach for how they are trying to manage the park.

Opportunity (burn days) to burn is less now, are there enough burnable days to sustain the program?

- The park is looking to expand the burn window to times of year that traditionally didn't burn in – dry winters and spring.
- Fire Ecologists are directing park staff now to try and burn whenever they can, meet objectives, and still not have a high risk of escape.

Observation - State has an interest in workforce development for fire as a management tool. But there are an enormous number of hurdles to establishing training and administering these third-party burn crews. And also, the differences in certifying crews for various state and federal agencies.

- State Parks experience this same issues. Training is internal, some employees go and have additional training elsewhere. There is not a really clean crosswalk between state and federal agencies and no mechanism. This has been brought to the attention of the state at the Sacramento level.

Does conducting prescribed burning on stands with high fuel loading damage the soil conditions?

- That is part of the challenge, and burning during slightly wetter conditions, would help with that issue. It's a multi-management process: first entry under wetter conditions, second entry (within 10 years) depending on fire return interval and burn again at a higher intensity, and then continue with 3rd and 4th burn entries.

Burning in sub-optimal windows – isn't it still doing some good (removing some of the fuel loading)?

- It's situational – burning too cool in areas that have been previously burned (2nd entry burn) is not really achieving much.

Can you give an example of a typical objective for a prescribed fire project? Certain percentage of fuels burned? Acreage burned?

- For restoration burn – reduce dead and down fuels in all size classes by 60-80% that is first entry burn. 40-60% for a subsequent entry burn.

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- Also, limit larger live tree mortality (> 18" dbh by no more than 10-15%) is another common burn objective.
- Also, induce mortality in live trees < 8" dbh up to 20-30%.
- Objectives need to be realistic and measurable.

When a prescribed burn occurs, if ACCG can show support and can help provide community endorsement for these burns. And also, where ACCG can help implement pre-prescribed burning volunteer work to prep the large, old-growth trees.

- Will be hiring a Forester at the park and Ben is in support of removal of mid growth removal of trees in old growth stands.
- Welcome the help from volunteers for prepping large sugar pines and ponderosas pre-burns. Ben will work with Megan to coordinate this.

Spring burning may be where we need to start looking at.

- Conditions are so unprecedented that even Ben is learning as he goes. If the South Grove unit was fully prepped, yes. In the past, it was not ecologically appropriate to burn in March, but now Fire Ecologists are directing the park to burn when they can. One drawback to spring burning is that sometimes burns will take months to put out without precipitation (require babysitting through drier summer months).

Action Items

- ACCG members and participants interested in learning more or providing feedback on the FPP project were encouraged to attend the March Planning Work Group meeting. Materials and Zoom meeting info will be sent out by Megan this Friday.
- Admin WG will incorporate C&E Plan into the 2022 Priority List.
- Admin WG will move forward with flying positions for Administration and facilitation services.
- Ben Jacobs will work with Megan to coordinate possible volunteer opportunities for ACCG members to help prep old growth trees to prescribed burning projects.

UPDATES

Administrative Work Group Update

Megan Layhee gave the Admin WG update. The Admin WG met virtually last on March 7th. They confirmed the March general meeting agenda, discussed future general meeting format and the current covid situation, discussed the ACCG's priority list and responsible parties, and the ACCG Administration and Facilitation scope of work (job description) document. Megan went through the assigned responsible parties for each of the priority categories, refer to the meeting item:

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- Michael added that the idea would be that each assigned responsible party would provide routine updates to the full ACCG on their priorities.
- Regine asked if there are any priorities in the C&E Plan that should be added to the list. This will be added to the Admin WG action items.
- Megan will reach out to the responsible parties on the ACCG 2022 priority list to ensure they understand their responsibilities.
- Admin WG will also need to continue discussions on finding a new Administrator and facilitator once UMRWA receives the grant award from SNC (anticipated to be early April 2022).

Planning Work Group Update

Megan Layhee gave the Planning WG update. The Planning WG met Feb. 23rd. The group heard from the UMRWA-Amador FPP Team on FPP phase 1 and discussed participant concerns and feedback. The group is meeting on March 23rd via Zoom, where the Planning Work Group will get a presentation by UMRWA on the Forest Projects Plan and have time for discussion with the group. Megan encouraged participants to attend the meeting to network with the FPP team and to provide any additional feedback to the team then.

Monitoring Work Group Update

Chuck Loffland was not able to attend the general meeting, so Megan gave a brief update on the portion of the Monitoring WG meeting that she attended back on March 9th, 2022. The Monitoring WG continued their discussions and planning for the 2022 Monitoring Symposium which at this point is planned to be 1 day of virtual presentations on the various monitoring projects, day 2 will be a field tour of the monitoring work in the Power Fire footprint, and then in coordination with SOFAR, the work group is planning a 3rd day (in fall 2022) of an field tour in the Caldor Fire footprint. The work group meets next on April 13th, 2022.

Funding Coordination Work Group Update

Michael Pickard gave the Funding Coordination WG did not meet in March.

Roundtable

Amy Champ – Amy asked how do community members in the Consumnes watershed understand how to better interface with federal land managers (BLM) that are doing work on

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the landscape in the Consumnes watershed and also interface with the FFP is through public scoping. Refer Amy to engage with the BLM (Liz), Amador FSC and RCDs.

John Heissenbuttel – 3 grants: (1) PGE grant to develop a FB between Jackson and Sutter Creek; (2) Cal Fire grant to create community FBs; and (3) SNC grant to implement Amador Stewardship Plan on BLM lands throughout Amador County.

Liz Meyer-Shields – Cal Am Team also has a grant in to implement the Bummerville project. New infrastructure bill includes funding for fuels reduction bill. So BLM will be hiring additional fuels techs in the office, and also exploring expanding resource team capabilities.

Richard Sykes – UMRWA update: 2 DWR grants including a drought DAC water conservation activity by AWA and Foothill Conservancy, and IRWM grant program for CPUD. Number of forest health grants: (1) SNC grant for FPP continued planning, (2) SNC grant for hazard tree removal, (3) CAL FIRE grant for fuels reduction work on the Amador RD; and (4) CalOES grant for fuels reduction work on water agency lands and county and state right of ways.

Meredith Sierra – releasing newsletter this week which will have updates there.

Ray Cablayan – lot of money coming in for hiring in the Forest Service

Carinna Robertson - Arnold-Avery RFP just out through Mule Deer; Hemlock all timber sales are under contract but no logs will be moved out; McKays CE env. Review of 1100 acres, about 900 acres in PAC or HCRA, so once draft CE is written Carinna will bring this to the ACCG. Pockets of dead standing timber, fuels reduction, and hazard trees along the road will probably be the proposed activities.

- Rich asked if there is an opportunity to do a combo field trip for McKays and Big Trees State Park? Carinna said that would be doable.

Rich Farrington – investigate the extension of SB 901 (which is set to expire 2022). AB 267 passed assembly last summer, and got in the senate but the author has dropped it. Seems the environmental objections may be partly why the author dropped it. Rich is looking if there is an opportunity for an amendment to move this forward, because it helps reduce amount of paperwork and costs. Southern CA chaparral lands seems to be the area of most controversy. Rich is working with the Sierra Forest Legacy.

- John Buckley shared that SFL is working to understand if there is support for AB 267 from environmental organizations. Suggest that the ACCG draft a letter to specific legislatures to show support for extension for specific implementation projects like fuels reduction on forested lands.
- Rich thinks a letter would be really important, but if the author has dropped the bill, not sure how that will work. Need to know who to send letters to...

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Tom Hoppy – Yosemite Clean Energy is a biofuels company (wood to natural gas) under permitting in Oroville and sight selected in Tuolumne County.

Regine Miller – CAL OES grant included fuels reduction on water agencies lands, county road easements and Cal Trans Road easements. UMRWA also was awarded a WCB grant to conduct aspen assessment and prioritization.

Meeting Participants

Count	Name	Affiliation	Time Committed to Meeting
1	Megan Layhee	ACCG Administrator (co-Meeting Facilitator) – in-person	3.0
2	Richard Sykes	UMRWA	3.0
3	Michael Pickard	SNC (Meeting Facilitator) – in-person	3.0
4	Nancy Nordensten	ENF	1.0
5	Carinna Robertson	USFS STF, Calaveras RD– in-person	3.0
6	Ray Cablayan	USFS STF, Calaveras RD– in-person	3.0
7	Meredith Sierra	FC	3.0
8	Chuck Beckman	EBMUD– in-person	3.0
9	John Heissenbuttal	Cal Am Team	3.0
10	Rich Farrington	UMRWA Board– in-person	3.0
11	Megan Fiske	FC	2.0
12	Caitlyn Rich	CSERC	3.0
13	Linda Diesem	Private citizen	3.0
14	Pat Ferrell	UMRWA, Landmark Environmental	1.0
15	Terry Woodrow	Alpine County, CFSC	3.0
16	Amy Champ	Running for BOS Amador County	3.0
17	Karen Quidachay	UMRWA, Landmark Environmental	1.0
18	Pat McGreevy	Cal Am Team	1.5
19	Liz Meyer-Shields	BLM Motherlode Field Office	3.0
20	Sue Holper	ACCG member	3.0
21	Marcie Powers	CA Big Trees Association	2.0
22	Bob Broderick	Landmark Environmental– in-person	3.0
23	Regine Miller	UMRWA, Landmark Environmental– in-person	3.0
24	Ben Jacobs	CA State Parks, Burn Boss (Guest speaker)	1.5
25	Benjamin Cossel	USFS	1.0
26	Tom Hoppy	Yosemite Clean Energy – in-person	3.0
27	John Buckley	CSERC	2.5