

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Notes May 18th, 2022, meeting in-person at Amador County Building and via Zoom

Meeting Brief

- Meeting facilitator: Chuck Loffland
- Richard Sykes gave a brief update on Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Phase 1 & 2.
- Presentation and discussion on the ENF Forest Resilience Strategy with Jeff Marsolais (Forest Supervisor) and Randy Striplin (Resources Staff Officer).
- Group Discussed and approved two items: (1) sending a thank you letter to T. Roberts for his guest facilitation of the April general meeting TEK panel; and (2) having Rich Farrington provide a brief verbal update on the ACCG at the May 2022 SCALE meeting.
- 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
Follow up on 2019 ENF LiDAR	ENF
Sign and send thank you letter to Thurman Roberts for his guest facilitation of the April TEK Panel	Layhee
Attend SCALE meeting in May and give brief ACCG report out at the meeting	Farrington
Review ACCG C&E Plan and bring ideas to Admin WG meeting.	Pickard

Summary

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

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

Presentations & Discussions

Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Update

Presenter: Richard Sykes, Karen Quidachay

Update highlights:

- Phase 1 went into public scoping starting April 15, and the full ACCG received an email notice about the scoping.

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- Received 3 comment letters including CSERC, FC and Rich Farrington.
- Key scoping comments/questions (will be engaging with Planning WG on these comments, and also continue to engage with full ACCG):
 - Concern over volume of proposed hand treatments—instead consider holding off on treating those areas until Phase 2 when biomass removal could occur, or add chipping and biomass removal in Phase 1 for these areas. FPP team anticipates that the hand thinning component will be pretty minimal due to additional Arch survey funding.
 - Limit this DM to ten years - team anticipates the mechanical treatments to be done within that timeframe.
 - Prioritize Arch surveys for areas that are also proposed for prescribed burning treatments.
 - Provide a clear definition of aspen stands.
 - Consider conducting a “Phase 1” approach on Calaveras Ranger District – UMRWA will have that discussion with STF staff soon.
- Next steps:
 - Putting together an issues analysis and summarize and respond to each public comment. Will discuss the draft issues analysis with the ACCG Planning WG.
 - Issues analysis will inform the FS on which NEPA path to take (e.g., CE, EA).
 - Team will come back to the ACCG later in the year for formal support of the project.
 - Granted CAL FIRE FH funds (expect executed grant agreement in July 2022).
 - UMRWA and FS is starting up FPP Phase 2 –TAC is being assembled.

Eldorado NF Forest Resilience Strategy

Presenters: Jeff Marsolais (ENF Forest Supervisor) and Randy Striplin (Resources Staff Officer)

- Link to recording of presentation: <https://youtu.be/SesEjxSbvg>
- Link to presentation slides: <https://acconsensus.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ForACCGMay2022.pptx>

Presentation framing: How do we ramp up forest health treatments at a scale commensurable to the problem?

The strategy is going to be a high-level guiding document for planning and implementation, but individual projects will be where the specifics come into the play (e.g., landscape planning modeling).

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Strategy vision: through collaboration with partners, adjacent landowners, and the science community, resilience is established and maintained across all ecosystems on the Eldorado National Forests and surrounding lands.

Strategy components:

- Resilience Blocks and Potential Operational Delineations
- Implementation Plans
- Risk-Based Management
- Staffing and Equipment
- Partnerships
- Large-scale Disturbances
- Plus, a living appendix—learn along the way and adapt

Strategy

- Implementing Existing NEPA
- Identification of next priority projects
- NEPA Planning
- Implementing New Decisions

See [presentation recording](#) and [slides](#) for more specifics.

Eldorado NF Forest Resilience Strategy Q&A

Richard Sykes – what is the timeline for getting this to partners to review? Specifically, want to be sure FPP is in line with the Strategy.

- Jeff responded that the forest does not want to slow down projects that are already underway, but instead will anchor to these projects and build off those to make larger landscape plans. He added that he envisions the concept will be finalized this summer and will be looking to use already conducted modeling to identify “priority PODs”.
- Randy also responded that projects moving ahead, like Phase 1, will be later tied into the Strategy.
- Richard added that he sees that it’s key to plan projects that are in line with the Strategy and that direction would be helpful to partners, and reinforces and strengthens grant funding applications.
 - Jeff added that in the TCSI landscape, they have done the modeling, and the hope is to do a similar modeling framework for each POD within the entire forest (sometime this summer). Then ENF can bring those “priority PODs” to the ACCG.
 - Chuck Loffland also added that the district staff has been working on the strategy and that the areas identified in FPP Phase 1 will be in line with what comes out of the Strategy.

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- Randy also added that the framework will provide guidance and the modeling data will be available.
- What is the modeled data that will be available later this summer? Does it include fire modeling?
 - Randy responded that the LANDIS model - fires/veg dynamics, and also

Colleen Shade – How do you envision using Stewardship Agreement FR projects opportunities in this Strategy?

- Jeff – when ENF starts making POD-scale plans, there are natural linkages between landscape value components, and entering into shared stewardship agreements where other partners are taking on the primary role of planning/implementation.

Michael Pickard – is this modeling exercise only going to be able to be completed in areas with LiDAR? And what is the ENF 2019 LiDAR extent?

- Randy – several LiDAR efforts over the past few years on the ENF, including the 2019 ENF fly over, and will get back to ACCG. Randy added that LiDAR is not essential for using the TSCI framework. But there has been a lot of effort in getting remote sensing data for those areas lacking LiDAR.
- Jeff – the LANDIS modeling outputs are key for the TSCI framework, but is not available yet for the entire ENF boundary.
- Chuck – said the Becky would be the best person to ask

John Buckley – is helpful for the ACCG to understand the draft strategy, also brought up the “Forest for the Future” USFS Regional document that came out in 2004. Meaning it’s not a brand-new concept, and the challenge is that the FS is good at policy and process planning, but between the Caldor Fire salvage and reforestation planning/implementation: (1) with other urgent priorities does the FS have capacity to step back and do high-level Strategy, or (2) can you just assess “priority PODs” near communities first?

- Jeff responded that: (1) in terms of FS capacity, they are moving in the right direction and hiring a lot of new staff, (2) doesn’t see this process as a linear process where the FS has to stop what they are doing to start the Strategy, and (3) that the Strategy is not novel (referring to the “Forest for the Future” document), but the science and research is novel (referring to the TSCI framework), that at a POD-scale identify which PODs would require a lot of treatments to adjust predicted fire intensity and locate PODs that are close to resilience, which helps when making planning decisions. Operating at a scale where priority-making decisions will be detailed and focused.
- Randy added that scientific consensus has been building since that 2004 document and before.

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Rich Farrington – (1) is there federal funding available for the FPP Phase 1? (2) asked the FS to think about how to measure our progress in this and reviewed the 10 Pillars including 70+ individual metrics, but that the focus needs to be on reducing catastrophic wildfire risk and recommended conducting a root cause analysis on the wildfire threat and a simpler way of tracking progress, and (3) where is the U of Washington derived LiDAR ENF 2019 products.

- Jeff responded (1) expanded regular propitiations until the war in Ukraine, but Congress is very focused on the issue of forest health and climate change, and the ENF will be in the queue for the infrastructure bill and encouraged ACCG to work with the district in partnership to “tee this up” and get aligned on the cost of accomplishing this.
- Chuck recommended that Rich send along his comments about objectives to Randy.

Discussion to send ACCG “Thank you” letter

Megan will sign and send the letter to Thurman.

Discussion on SCALE meeting ACCG update

Rich Farrington will provide the ACCG update at the May 2022 SCALE meeting. Megan canvassed the meeting participants to help develop the ACCG update for Rich to read off.

Michael also reminded the group that SCALE may have funding in the future (used to) there may be funding. For the update: (1) CFLR funding is wrapped up, (2) self-facilitating now, (3) continue to look for funding for administrative needs, (4) continuing to support all project-leading partners including UMRWA with the FPP.

Chuck – highlight that the group is in a transitional phase, and then list those priority topics.

Regine – also share the current scope of work is underway and the planning and implementation funding that has been achieved since the last SCALE meeting.

Meredith – mentioned the SCALE meeting to the Monitoring WG, the g: (1) Monitoring Symposium, (2) long-term monitoring funding opportunities and how to address socio-economic monitoring in forest health projects.

Michael – asked Rich and Meredith to provide an update to the ACCG at the June 2022 meeting.

John H. – said that he used to be the backup SCALE meeting rep. Added that the 2-day format is too long, but that it is useful for statewide collaborations to come together to share information.

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UPDATES

Administrative Work Group Update

Megan Layhee gave the Admin WG update. The Admin WG met virtually last on 5/9 via Zoom. Approved May general meeting packet, discussed some upcoming projects that need to come before the Planning WG and full group, including McKays. Continued conversations on finding a new Administrator. Also discussed providing support letters for projects in general, not just for a specific funding agency, and make a more efficient process. Next month work group will review the revised MOA signatory and conduct outreach to folks.

- Michael – asked how many have read the C&E Plan, do we use the plan?
 - Regine – it's a fresh document and the intention was to reevaluate who engages with the ACCG to get back to that triple-bottom line approach. Some participants felt like there were entities that don't participate, that they want to engage with. Regine suggested that the Admin WG take a look at it.
 - John H. – don't have the capacity to implement the plan.
 - Regine – it's a heavy lift, and find funding to have Administrator lead that implementation
 - Chuck – probably time to reevaluate the plan

Michael will reevaluate the C&E Plan and bring it to the Admin WG.

Planning Work Group Update

Megan Layhee gave the Planning WG update. The Planning WG met last on April 27th. Discussed upcoming general meeting including the June 15th general meeting, and Dr. Malcolm North for the July 20th general meeting. This month's work group meeting will include the (1) McKay's Strategic FB and (2) discussion with FPP Phase 1 team.

Monitoring Work Group Update

Chuck Loffland gave the Monitoring WG update. The work group met last on and mainly discussed the Monitoring Symposium: July 14 (virtual day 1) and July 15 (field trip is day 2) (30 participants + presenters). Need to sign up soon for the field trip. Also talked about the socio-economic ask: (1) consolidate the info they do have and create a 1-pager for the full ACCG.

Funding Coordination Work Group Update

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Michael Pickard gave the FCWG update. Met last Tuesday via Microsoft Teams. Participants discussed what their plans are the upcoming Forest Health rounds of funding and worked through issues and strategies for moving forward with applying for project funding.

- SNC FR funding this summer
- CAL FIRE funding – hopefully this fall, but not confirmed as of yet

Roundtable

Rich F. – focused on funding, including the \$5 million CAL FIRE grant, but when you figure \$2K per acre for a project, that's \$50 million for a 25K acre project, like FPP Phase 1. Even though Congress seems to be behind this, one of the Senators asked Chief Moore there is a debate whether forest thinning actually reduces wildfires or actually increases wildfires, and hope that the FS can help folks understand

Michael P. - new SNC funding round this summer, also June board meeting will ratify a new set of FH grant guidelines, and couple of big projects funding at the June Board meeting including Amador FSC-BLM and Calaveras RCD-BLM projects, and also funding part of 1st phase FB implementation of the SERAL project. Opening up grant program for concept proposals and close in mid-July and full applications will be due in fall, most likely later Sept., and most likely funded in March 2023. Also, it appears SB 901 (CEQA exemptions) is getting an extension (not clear if it's one year or multi-year).

Carinna Robertson – presenting McKay's Strategic FB to Planning WG this month. For Mattley Meadow Restoration have a signed SPA, waiting for grant funds and will start in fall. Mule Deer and CHIPS have contractors out on the Arnold-Avery Project and created some great fuelbreaks around the communities. Hoping to get a Good Neighbor Agreement signed with Calaveras County, waiting for the BOS approval. Two SPAs (1) hazard tree removal along county roads, and (2) McKay's Strategic FB project. Lots of folks reaching out to ask how to engage and help with getting work done, and has been directing them to the FPP and getting NEPA done.

John H. – AFSC will get going on the Stewardship Project after getting funding from SNC to conduct mastication on BLM anchor parcel. Also expects to secure CAL FIRE Fire Prevention grant to do community FBs starting with River Pines. Bummerville project also received funding on the calaveras county side. Amador County fairgrounds there will be a program called Smoke Chasers, agencies, organizations and businesses.

CSERC – Tatiana Altman is the new CSERC Conservation Director, and Manny Eicholz, CSERC new Ecologist and CSERC's new ACCG rep from this point forward.

Richard S. – FPP Phase 1 team RFPs Arch surveys; Phase 2 exploring overall management approach; earlier in the week signed SNC RFFCP grant award assist with FPP and ACCG Administration for 2 years.

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Meredith S. – FC is shifting it focus to upcoming fundraisers including John Silva (retired Sherriff) is going to be doing a Mokelumne River source to sea fundraiser.

Chuck L. – busy getting ready for field season; June 6th is the office return date for the FS staff; Amador district office is under construction; brief Forest Supervisor with Jeff with UMRWA and FPP; Rick Hopson will be back next month as District Ranger and Chuck will return to Wildlife Biologist roll.

Next meeting is June 15th 9-12 via Zoom and in person at the Calaveras Ranger District Office.

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	Ray Cablayan	USFS STF, Calaveras RD	2.0
4	Meredith Sierra	Foothill Conservancy	3.0
5	John Heissenbuttal	Cal Am Team	3.0
6	Rich Farrington	UMRWA Board	3.0
7	Liz Meyer-Shields	BLM Motherlode Field Office	3.0
8	Sue Holper	ACCG member	3.0
9	Marie Davis	PCWA	1.0
10	Regine Miller	UMRWA, Landmark Environmental	3.0
11	John Buckley	CSERC	2.0
12	Chuck Beckman	EBMUD	2.5
13	Randy Striplin	ENF – guest presenter	3.0
14	Jeff Marsolais	ENF – guest presenter	3.0
15	Colleen Shade	Cardno (in person)	3.0
16	Katie Ross-Smith	Cardno (in person)	3.0
17	Paul Prescott	CA Big Trees Association	1.0
18	Carinna Robertson	STF CRD (in person)	3.0
19	Michael Pickard	SNC (in person)	3.0
20	Chuck Loffland	ENF ARD (Guest Facilitator, in person)	3.0
21	Chris Swann	Private citizen	3.0
22	Manny Eicholz	CSERC	3.0
23	Tatiana Altman	CSERC	3.0