ACCG Shared Vision on TEK and Tribal Engagement

October 5, 2022

INTRODUCTION

Native people have Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) about natural environments that is needed to protect and restore forest ecosystems in the Sierra Nevada. TEK has evolved over millennia from observations and direct contact with the environment passed down through lessons and skills from generation to generation. It is science based. TEK provides for environmental sustainability and responsible stewardship of natural resources.

Scientists are turning to the knowledge of native people for a deeper understanding of the natural world, including the role of purposeful fires in tending forests. TEK can and should inform decision making along with scientific inquiry. TEK is held only by native people, and the results cannot be replicated by exchanging letters or through common management practices. Therefore, tribal consultation is needed before, during, and after a project to learn and apply TEK from Native American tribes.

BACKGROUND

Presidential EO 13175 in 2000 directed *“…regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications, to strengthen the United States government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes,* *and to reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates upon Indian tribes…”*

ACTIONS

* ACCG is committed to building personal relationships and trust with tribal members to understand and use TEK in developing programs and projects.
* ACCG is committed to early consultation with tribes to acquire and apply TEK to forest restoration and protection project prescriptions, design criteria, and specifications that align with TEK to achieve mutually agreeable goals.
* ACCG will support efforts through letters, etc. to acquire funding for TEK tribal consultation, TEK training, planning or implementation projects.

REFERENCES

Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Federal Decision Making; Executive Office of the President, Memo to Departments and Agencies, 11/15/2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/111521-OSTP-CEQ-ITEK-Memo.pdf>

Good Fire; Clark, S.A., Williams, A., Hankins, D.L., 2/17/2021, <https://karuktribeclimatechangeprojects.files.wordpress.com/2022/06/karuk-prescribed-fire-rpt_2022_v2-1.pdf>