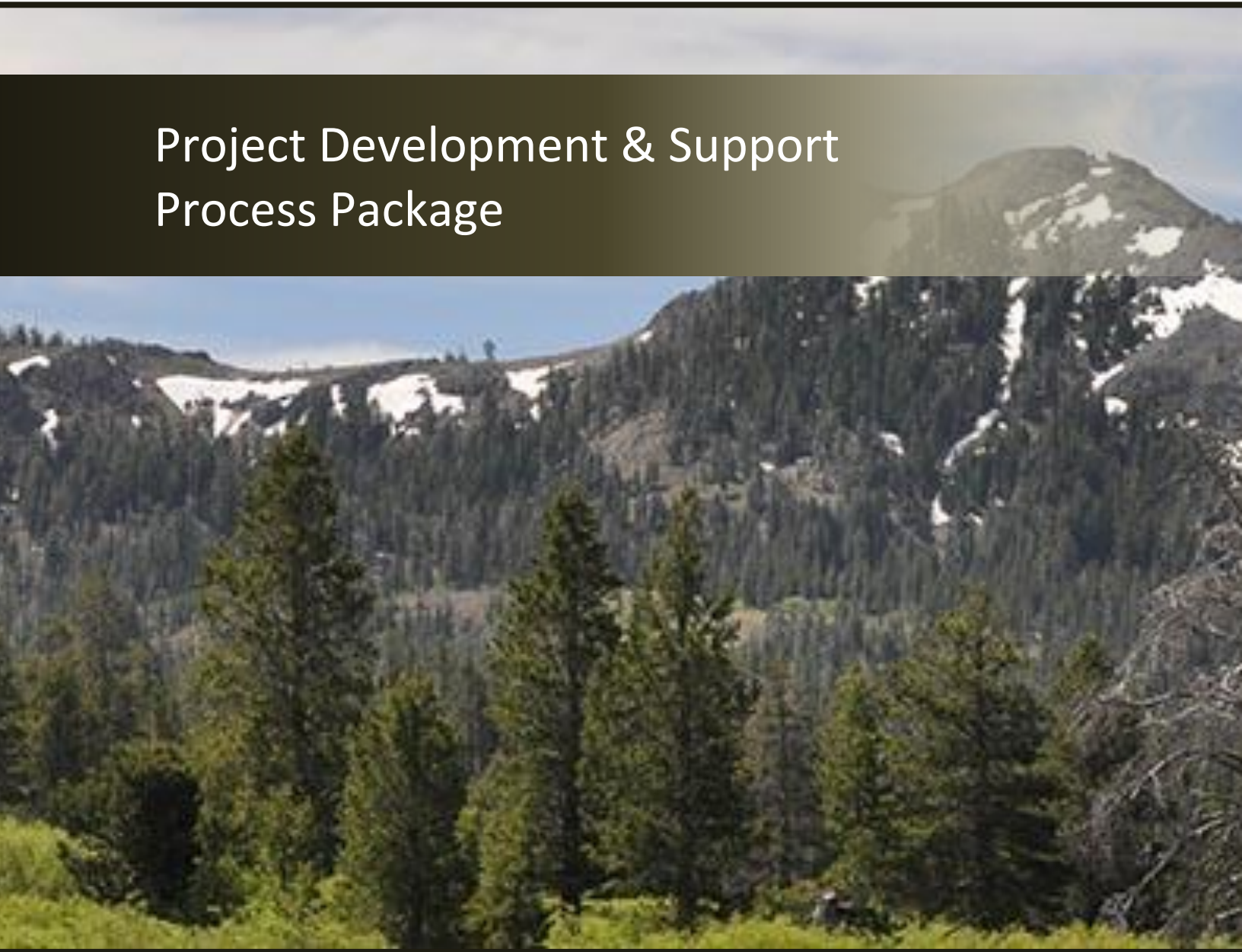


# Amador Calaveras Consensus Group

Environment • Community • Economy

## Project Development & Support Process Package



February 19, 2021

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# I. ACCG Project Development & Support Process Package

## Background

The [ACCG Strategic Plan \(2018\)](#) and [Collaborative Engagement Strategy \(2019\)](#) identified several objectives for the ACCG to identify and support public- and private-lands projects utilizing a process that results in the strategic pipeline of projects to realize an ***all-lands, landscape-scale vision and achieve the ACCG's triple bottom line*** mission for the environment, community, and economy.

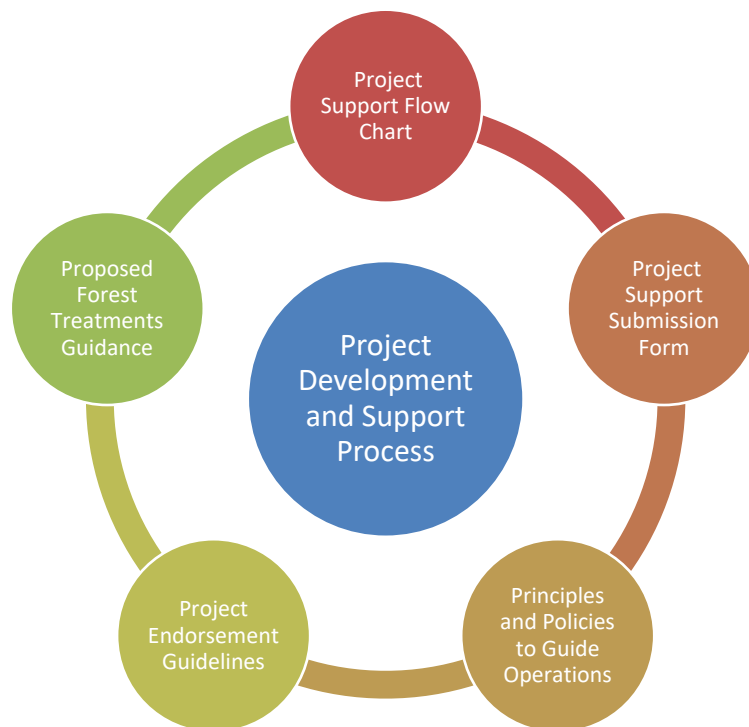
The ACCG developed the project development and support process to assist project planners seeking ACCG consensus support to engage the ACCG in a more meaningful and efficient manner. The project development process helps ensure project planners consider ACCG goals and principles (e.g., triple bottom line, increased pace and scale, etc.) and identify potential controversial issues (which may therefore warrant early ACCG engagement in the project design process).

## Document Purpose

This document compiles crucial resources into a single packet to help project planners understand and outline project development and timing when engaging the ACCG.

## Document Overview

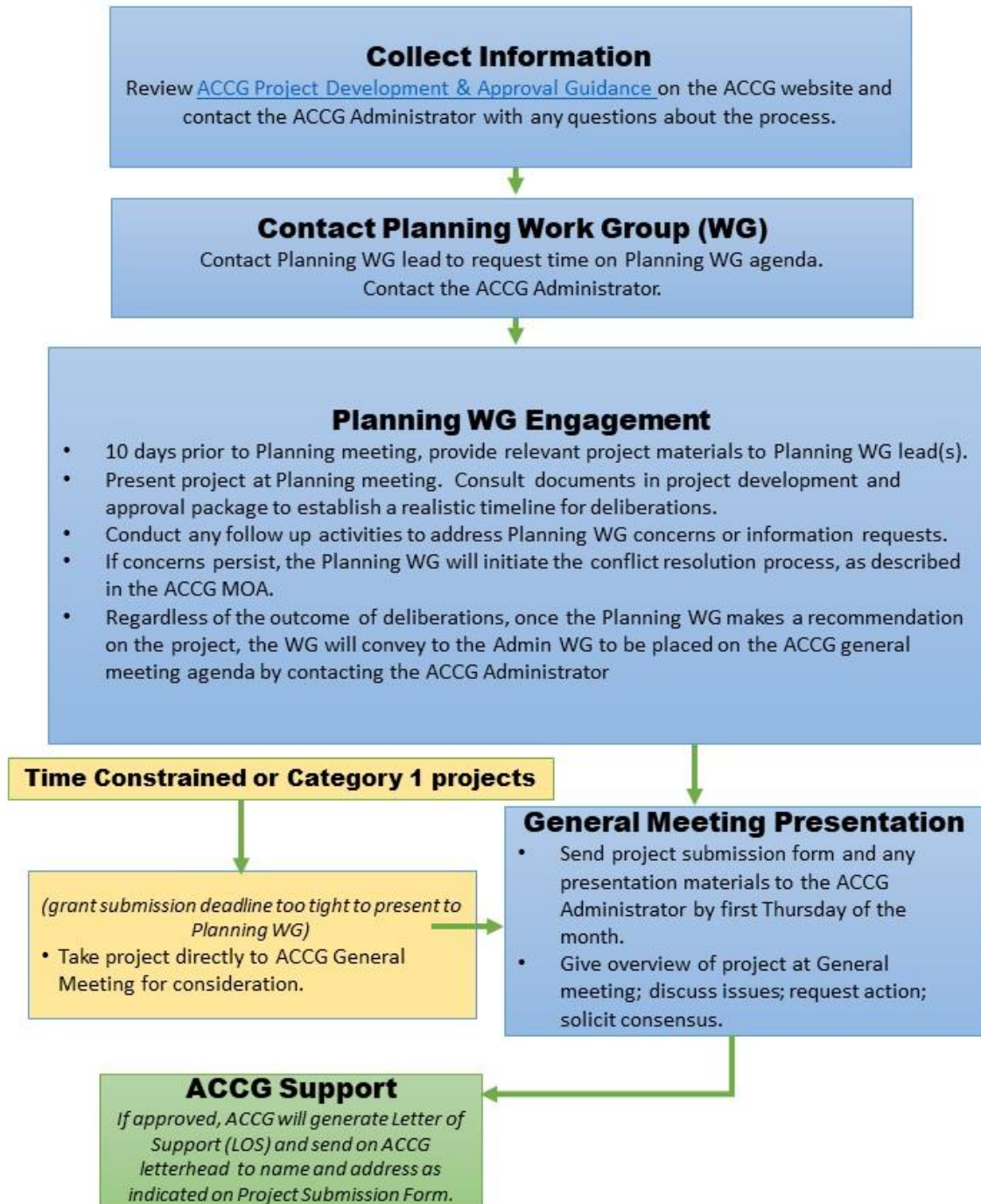
The project development components in this document packet are identified in the graphic to the right. These components are inter-related, and all should be utilized when developing a project that seeks ACCG consensus support.



## II. Project Development & Support Process | Flow Chart

### Project Development & Approval Process

Use this process to request support and/or engagement from ACCG:



### III. ACCG Request for Project Support | Submission Form

(Link to [download word version of the submission form](#))

**Instructions:** Complete this form when seeking project development engagement or support from the ACCG. Before completing this form, please review the ACCG Project Development & Support Process (see [flowchart](#)) and ACCG Project Endorsement Guidelines (see [guidelines](#)). Contact the ACCG Administrator with questions.

1. Submission Date:
2. Project Name:
3. Organization/Entity Requesting Support:
4. Project Proponent Contact (name, phone, and email address):
5. Committed Project Partners:
6. Grant Program (if applicable) or Prospective Funding Sources:
7. Name and address to whom the Letter of Support from the ACCG should be addressed:
8. Due Date for Letter of Support:
9. Project Budget Total Amount:
10. Project Dollar Amount Being Requested through Grant Program (if applicable):
11. Has this project been presented to the ACCG before? If so, describe prior engagement with the ACCG about this project.
12. Project Details
  - a) Describe the specific location of the project, the existing condition of the landscape, the project's purpose and need/ goals and objectives, the work that will be performed and the project acreage.
  - b) Describe the local Environmental benefits of your project. Please reference the ACCG *Principles and Policies* in your response (See [Principles and Policies document](#)).
  - c) Indicate with an X which of the following local Community and Economic benefits your project will provide ( See [Principles and Policies document](#)). The following checklist is intended to help ACCG members understand the community and economic benefits of individual projects and to provide opportunities for dialogue aimed at enhancing and

promoting such benefits, when possible. Please check all boxes that you believe apply to some extent.

- Provides local, sustainable jobs with fair compensation.*
- Supports and strengthens locally-owned businesses.*
- Includes bid preference for local contractors. Local refers to those areas within the ACCG planning area boundary which generally align with Amador and Calaveras counties and Alpine County. It also refers to those adjacent foothill counties of El Dorado and Tuolumne. Regional refers to the broader Sierra Nevada and foothills.*
- Supports local investment, purchasing and ownership of forest enterprises.*
- Includes job training and/or certification opportunities.*
- Provides local community education and engagement opportunities.*
- Reduces potential damage to life and property by promoting the creation and maintenance of fire-safe communities.*
- Protects critical infrastructure and uses such as water and power, roads, sewer, communications, etc.*
- Enhances or protects drinking water quality.*
- Enhances or protects healthy forest-based activities such as recreation, hunting, and fishing, etc.*
- Creates or expands uses or local markets for “underutilized” forest products (i.e., biomass, firewood, mushroom foraging, etc.).*
- Uses local and regional networks and markets to optimize local benefits (e.g., firewood sold locally in stores and distributed to those in need, Christmas trees, fiber board & wood-shaving facilities, etc.).*
- Includes community engagement and education in planning and implementation.*
- If cultural resources present, engages tribal representatives early and consistently from conceptual planning through implementation and monitoring to ensure respect and sensitivity to Native American cultural sites, practices, resources.*
- Protects historical or locally important sites.*
- Protects and/or enhances scenic beauty.*
- Incorporates cooperative partnerships that increase effectiveness and local competitiveness.*
- Includes an assessment of community and economic benefits.*

d) Use this space to further describe and quantify the Community and Economic benefits of your project or to provide more information to help others understand its benefits.

e) If your proposed project is primarily designed to achieve environmental goals, what are some ways your project has been adapted or could be adapted in the future to enhance Community and Economic benefits, if appropriate?

f) Describe any actions that would benefit from additional discussion with ACCG members about the project design, indicating the topic(s) in the following document (Forest

Treatment Guidance). Have you attempted to resolve any issues with ACCG members?  
What are some possible solutions you could employ to address ongoing issues?

13. Describe desired outcomes/future conditions that the project achieves/supports.
14. Describe the status of environmental documentation (NEPA/CEQA/other).
15. Attach project map and any other supporting documentation that would enhance the ACCG's understanding of the project.

## IV. ACCG Principles and Policies to Guide Operations

Accepted by ACCG 8/18/10

### Introduction

The Principles and Policies to Guide Operations detailed below are intended for the use of the ACCG in guiding projects the ACCG controls, manages, sponsors or is considering endorsing. The ACCG recognizes that not all of the principles and policies may be applicable or necessary on every project. Further, the ACCG recognizes that conforming with the principles and policies will require a balanced approach as projects will need to strike a balance between environmental, community and economic objectives. Entities seeking ACCG endorsement of projects should consider how their projects evaluate or integrate the principles and policies.

### Principles:

- Design and implement activities that protect and restore forest ecosystem resiliency, structures, processes and functions within local watersheds.
- Seek forest and watershed planning solutions that benefit all three components of our vision: the local environment, community and economy.
- Use adaptive management best practices supported by the most appropriate peer-reviewed, ecology-based science available.
- Plan forest activities using the most comprehensive and current assessment of local watersheds and forests and the communities and economies they support.

### Policies to Guide Operations:

#### *Natural Environments*

- Reduce the frequency and intensity of wildland fires that threaten life, property or important ecological resources.
- Protect watershed soil integrity and water quality and quantity.
- Promote the eradication of ecologically harmful invasive species.
- Identify, manage, and enhance wildlife and plant habitat and wildlife corridor connectivity.
- Plan and implement projects using a landscape perspective that recognizes their cumulative effects.
- Prioritize and strategically target projects and treatment areas using the best assessment and the most appropriate adaptive management techniques available.
- Reduce forest fuel loads to manageable, ecologically sustainable levels using site-appropriate methods: including but not limited to mechanical and/or prescribed burning methods.
- Establish and maintain monitoring and data collection activities that improve local knowledge of forest conditions from the stand to landscape and watershed levels.
- Promote the adaptation of management strategies and methods using the best available peer-reviewed science-based research.



### *Communities*

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect, being mindful of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Reduce the potential for damage to life and property by:
- Promoting the creation and maintenance of fire-safe communities through community-endorsed fuel hazard reduction projects in the forests' interface with local communities and the built environment.
- Promoting the use of defensible space and fire-resistant building materials and design.
- Respect and be sensitive to Native American cultural sites, practices and resources.
- Respect and be sensitive to historical sites.
- Include area stakeholders in project planning and implementation.
- Foster cooperative partnerships that maximize effectiveness and regional competitiveness of the local workforce and businesses.
- As appropriate, provide community education and involvement opportunities to local communities.
- Protect scenic beauty and locally important sites.
- Enhance or do no harm to other healthy forest-based activities.

### *Economies*

- Work to create local sustainable jobs with livable wages.
- Work to diversify the local economy with sustainable jobs and businesses.
- Implement and use adaptive management and sustainable practices in forest and watershed work.
- Practice continuous quality improvement in the work done to learn from it and improve future work.
- Mimic nature's circular process that recognizes "underutilized materials" as valuable feedstock for diverse sustainable, value-added products, services and infrastructure.
- Encourage local investment, purchasing and ownership of forest enterprises.
- Use regional networks and markets to optimize local benefits.

## V. ACCG Project Endorsement Guidelines

### Guidelines for Communicating ACCG Project Endorsement

If an entity wishes to use the ACCG collaborative's name for a grant application:

- Present the project to the ACCG following the Project Development & Approval Process (link to [flowchart](#)).
- If the ACCG members affirmatively support the project, the project has the endorsement of the ACCG.
- When a grant application describes a project as “within the ACCG landscape,” it is important to specify whether the project was put forth for the ACCG's consensus support.

### Sample Grant Language

If the project has been brought before the ACCG and received consensus support and the grant applicant chooses to include mention of ACCG in the grant application:

- The proposed project has been reviewed by and received consensus support from the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group.

If a project has not been brought before the ACCG and received consensus support and the grant applicant chooses to include mention of the ACCG in the grant application:

- The proposed project is within the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) project area. However, the proposed project has not been reviewed or received consensus support from the ACCG collaborative.

## VII. Proposed Forest Treatments Guidance Document

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this document is to help project proponents anticipate the level of potential controversy associated with proposed forest treatments. Understanding the potential level of controversy can help project proponents prepare a strategy, timeline, and approach to promote ACCG consensus in as realistic and expedient a manner as possible. The tool has also been designed to help the ACCG engage in constructive dialogue. This document also outlines the protocols and procedures associated with each category.

Project proponents are encouraged to read the entire document and cross-reference interrelated project activities in each category. This document is one component of the [ACCG Project Development & Support Process](#). This document is a living document that will be updated periodically, as warranted.

### Categories and Protocols at a Glance

<b>Category 1: <i>Non-Controversial</i></b> project activities are broadly considered non-controversial by the ACCG and follow an expedited process.
<b>Category 2: <i>Moderately Controversial</i></b> project activities may result in moderate controversy that could take up to a few months of ACCG engagement.
<b>Category 3: <i>Controversial</i></b> project activities are likely to result in significant controversy that could take several months to two years of ACCG engagement.

See below table for a more detailed description of the categories, protocols, and detailed project activities. The table further suggests considerations for project proponents and outlines procedures for each project category.

**Category 1: Non-Controversial**

**Description:** These project actions are broadly supported and are generally considered non-controversial. For projects that clearly fall into this category, project proponents follow an expedited protocol to seek ACCG support.

**Protocol:** Expedited Process immediately routed to ACCG General Meetings

Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-routing roads and trails around meadows</li> <li>2. Road and drainage maintenance and repairs to improve water quality and to provide for fire-fighting access</li> <li>3. Meadow restoration that does not include removal of legacy/large trees, controversial restoration practices such as pond and plug, and special status species</li> <li>4. Aspen restoration that includes logging trees less than 30" dbh</li> <li>5. Maintenance and minor improvements to existing developed facilities</li> <li>6. Prescribed fire with agency approved burn plan</li> <li>7. Hazard tree (trees that impact public health and safety) removal from roadsides and developed sites, when consistent with the PSW Region 5 Hazard Tree Marking Guidelines (2012)</li> <li>8. Herbicide use to treat non-native plants, as a temporary treatment, and not as a long-term and/or large-scale maintenance strategy</li> <li>9. Removing conifers less than 16-20" dbh outside of PACs and den buffers</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect at least 2-3 weeks from submission of the project form to receive a signed letter of support from the ACCG.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete the Project Support Submission Form and send to the ACCG Administrator at least 10 days before the ACCG General meeting (which occur every third Wednesday of the month except in December).</li> <li>2. The ACCG Administrator will place Category 1 projects on a general meeting consent calendar. for ACCG consensus approval.</li> <li>3. If ACCG determines that any given project doesn't clearly fall into this category, it would be referred to the Planning WG for review (as described in Category 2 below).</li> </ol>

10. Road reconstruction 11. Road decommissioning		
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**Category 2: Moderately Controversial**  
**Description:** These project activities require some discussion and may result in moderate controversy.

**Protocol:** Discussion initiated at the Planning Work Group whose recommendations are sent to the full ACCG for concurrence.

Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commercial or non-commercial thinning in plantations or green stands when consistent with forest plan and General Technical Report (GTR) 220 and GTR 237 which would result in a fire and disease resilient condition</li> <li>2. Logging trees 16 to 20” dbh in key habitat areas like PACS or den buffers</li> <li>3. Logging trees 20 to 30” dbh especially in HRCAs and fisher den buffers</li> <li>4. Aspen restoration that includes logging trees greater than 30” dbh (even if legacy trees are retained)</li> <li>5. Herbicide use near water sources and other sensitive habitats and species</li> <li>6. Herbicide use for creating or maintaining large fuel breaks</li> <li>7. Salvage logging along roadsides, in strategic fuel breaks, and/or to protect property.</li> <li>8. Reforestation projects</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect a minimum 1-3 months of engagement with ACCG.</li> <li>• Consider site conditions and resources at risk, especially when determining the removal of larger trees.</li> <li>• Project activities strive to maintain existing and future high-quality habitat values.</li> <li>• For herbicide projects, consider buffer width and impacts to wildlife.</li> <li>• These project actions should promote GTR 220 and 237.</li> <li>• Reforestation projects should incorporate fire, horizontal and spatial heterogeneity or climate change adaptation.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ten days prior to Planning meeting, provide relevant project materials to Planning WG lead(s).</li> <li>2. Present project at Planning meeting.</li> <li>3. Conduct any follow up activities to address Planning WG concerns or information requests.</li> <li>4. If concerns persist, the Planning WG will initiate the conflict resolution process, as described in the ACCG MOA.</li> <li>5. Regardless of the outcomes of deliberations, once the Planning WG makes a recommendation on the project, the WG will refer to the Admin WG to be placed on the ACCG general meeting agenda.</li> </ol>

6. Individual members may provide support or opposition for any project or aspects of a project.

**Category 3: *Controversial***

**Description:** These project activities are likely to result in significant controversy. However, ACCG could ultimately achieve support through a negotiated process. Because these actions are more sensitive, the ACCG anticipates needing considerable time to thoroughly discuss, deepen understanding, and find approaches that could achieve consensus support.

**Protocol:** Project concepts initiated with the Planning Work Group early in the project development process. Small group meetings/calls occur between regularly scheduled Planning Work Group meetings to generate options to resolve conflicts. The Planning Work Group gives regular updates to the full ACCG at General meetings throughout the project development process. Ultimately, Planning Work Group recommendations are sent to the full ACCG for concurrence.

Project Activities	Considerations	Procedures
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permanent new road construction (adding new miles to the road system)</li> <li>2. Tree cutting and removal in inventoried roadless areas</li> <li>3. Logging trees 20" dbh or greater in PACS</li> <li>4. Logging trees 30" dbh or greater for "forest health" (e.g., red fir dwarf mistletoe, etc.)</li> <li>5. Reducing canopy cover in high quality spotted owl habitat to lower canopy cover class</li> <li>6. Reducing canopy cover to less than 50% in spotted owl HRCAs</li> <li>7. Multiple Categorical Exclusions (CEs) for logging used in a concentrated area over a short duration which could cause cumulative effects</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect many months to over a year engagement with the ACCG.</li> <li>• Project size and other project effects could affect the level of controversy.</li> <li>• The move from more directive forest plans to descriptive ones could increase the level of controversy.</li> <li>• Certain CE categories such as 36 CFR 220.6 (e) (6), Timber Stand and Wildlife Habitat Improvement. This exclusion</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ten days prior to Planning meeting, provide relevant project materials to Planning WG lead(s).</li> <li>2. Present project concepts at Planning WG meeting.</li> <li>3. Conduct any follow up activities to address Planning WG concerns or information requests.</li> <li>4. If concerns persist, the Planning WG will initiate the conflict resolution process, as described in the ACCG MOA.</li> <li>5. Regardless of the outcome of deliberations, once the Planning WG makes a recommendation on</li> </ol>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. <b>Salvage logging outside of roadsides and fuel breaks especially where sensitive wildlife may be affected</b></li> <li>9. <b>Aspen restoration that includes logging legacy trees</b></li> <li>10. <b>Herbicide use for plantation establishment</b></li> <li>11. <b>Herbicide use for creating or maintaining large fuel breaks over the long-term</b></li> <li>12. <b>Rare plant habitat used as a staging area</b></li> </ul>	<p>category does not have an acreage limit. If large-scale logging projects that include controversial activities were implemented under such a category, the level of controversy would be high.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If projects do not engage stakeholders collaboratively and early in the project development process, the controversy is likely to be high.</li> </ul>	<p>the project, the WG will convey to the Admin WG to be placed on the ACCG general meeting agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Individual members may provide support or opposition for any project or aspects of a project.</li> </ul>
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