

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Brief Summary 01/18/2023, meeting via Zoom and in-person at the Amador County Building in Jackson

Meeting Brief

- Meeting facilitator: John Heissenbuttel
- Informational presentation: Good Neighbor Authority Agreements – USFS & Calaveras, Alpine and Amador Counties. Presenters: Jason Smith and Tad Mason (TSS Consultants)
- Informational presentation: Panther Fuels Reduction & Forest Health Project EA proposed changes to herbicide treatments and development of Supplemental Information Report (SIR). Presenter: Jesse Plummer (ENF, Amador RD)
- Consensus item -- 2023 ACCG general meetings format: Discussion on Admin work group poll and consensus on the hybrid meeting format for the remainder of the calendar year.
- Roundtable updates.
- Work group updates.

Action Items

Actions	Responsible Parties
Post final version of meeting agenda and last month’s meeting summary to the ACCG website.	Layhee
Continue discussions on the Panther Fuels Reduction & Forest Health Project EA proposed changes to herbicide treatments and development of Supplemental Information Report (SIR), and determine whether the work group will draft an ACCG LOS in support of the proposed changes to the EA to bring to the full membership at the next general meeting.	Planning work group
Finalize hybrid meeting locations and volunteer facilitator schedules for the 2013 calendar year.	Layhee
As part of the 2023 ACCG Priorities consensus item for the February general meeting, include a discussion about what non-Planning work group ACCG member priorities are, and keep this in mind for the Admin Work Groups upcoming discussions on updating ACCG’s 5-year Strategic Plan that is step to expire this calendar year.	All Admin work group
Follow up with Becky Estes about coming to ACCG general meeting to present on the Caldor Fire report.	Layhee

Summary

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

There were no suggested modifications to the agenda or last month’s meeting summary. Megan will post final versions of these documents on the website and remove the “DRAFT” watermark before doing so.

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Presentations & Discussions

Good Neighbor Authority Agreements – USFS & Calaveras, Alpine and Amador Counties.

Presenters: Jason Smith and Tad Mason (TSS Consultants)

Presentation materials:

- [03-23-GN-11051600-001 Master Calaveras County FSup Signed](#)
- [04-23-GN-11051600-002 Calaveras SPA FSup Signed](#)

Presentation and discussion highlights:

- TSS Consultants, in particular Jason Smith, are spearheading the three county GNA development process.
- Jason provided a status on the development of the three county-GNs: GNA is signed between the USFS and Calaveras County, the GNA with Amador County is waiting to be signed by R5, and Alpine County is still in development and would include the 3 NFs that intersect the county (Stanislaus NF, Eldorado NF and Humboldt-Toiyabe).
- GNAs last for 10 years and do not require the county to provide match.
- There was a clarification question about where the GNA work could be done, and for the county that would be on FS lands where there are county easements, like along county roads on FS lands.
- It was noted in the discussion that development of the GNAs, thinking in particular to the upcoming Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Phase 2, is a means to develop partnerships and gear up partners to help get the work accomplished.
- There was a question about oversight of implementation work done under a GNA, and the answer was yes, that just like any other FS stewardship agreement, the USFS would ultimately oversee and have to sign off on any work done on FS lands that was contracted out by the county through the GNA.
- There was a discussion about the similarity between a GNA and an MSA, and that yes, a GNA works just like an MSA, and that GNA SPAs are drafted/modified from already existing MSA SPAs.
- Can FS help to treat on non-FS lands? – not under a GNA, but under a Whitten Authority agreement type (from 2018 Farm Bill). Is there an example of that being used? Not sure. Maybe the Highway 108 FSC and STF are using it (Stevens funds?).

Action item:

- Jason and Tad will continue to provide ACCG with updates on the development of the Amador and Alpine GNAs.

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Panther Fuels Reduction & Forest Health Project EA proposed changes to herbicide treatments and development of Supplemental Information Report (SIR).

Presenter: Jesse Plummer (ENF, Amador RD)

Presentation materials:

- [05-Panther final EA 20171026](#)
- [06-PantherFuelBreakMaint](#)
- [Presentation to ACCG 011723 \(slides\)](#)

Presentation highlights:

- The proposed changes to the EA are an addition to areas eligible for herbicide, including:
 - Allow application of herbicide up to 500 ft from the centerline of major ridgeways.
 - Allow application of herbicide up to 150 feet from the center of selected roads
- Purpose of SIR – new information and changed conditions
 - New information: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (2021) Section 40806
 - Authorizes Fuel Breaks up to 1,000 feet wide
 - Explicitly authorizes use of herbicide
 - Indication of Leaders Intent
 - Changed conditions:
 - Recent History of Extreme Fire Behavior
 - Sustained Preparedness Level (PL-4 and PL-5)
 - FS Staffing Capacity
 - Planned/Desired Conditions do not match Current/Foreseeable Conditions
 - Market Conditions/Availability of Follow-Up Treatments
- ACCG is invited to make a recommendation on the proposed addition, and any feedback would be documented in the SIR. And if review of the NI or CC identifies a need for supplementation, a revised FONSI and DN will be drafted.

Discussion highlights:

- John B. reviewed the history and original development of the Panther project and highlighted the two areas of concern during the development of the project – including the concerns from FC and SFL about treatments being proposed that would affect CSO (that concern got resolved), and the other concern was around herbicide use. Rick Hopson had conversations with the various env. groups, but ended up coming up with an “aggressive” herbicide treatment that the environmental groups ended up standing aside and accepting the project as it was

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- written. But now, CSERC and others continued concerns is still centered around impacts of herbicides to native plants and human impacts, and this proposed changed to the project brings up several issues: (1) collaborative process is a matter of trust, (2) the new information available (bipartisan law) didn't change anything about what treatments can be done, (3) don't see changed circumstances since the completion of the decision back in 2017, and finally (4) if the FS is going to make a change and is reasonable, how will this effect future projects (FPP Phase 1, Phase 2) and how will ACCG have a sense of assurances for future record of decisions that what is agreed upon will be followed? Conclusion – don't think that there has been a major change, CSEREC will not object if the ACCG agrees to provide consensus, but think that ACCG needs to be consistent.
- Jesse added that he is not trying to damage trust but also address the issues on the ground.
 - John H. noted that this is process that this proposed changed is an example of adaptive management at work, and that ACCG has been
 - Regine – fostering opportunities to learn, and would there be an opportunity to monitor these treatments to help inform future projects.
 - Chuck – to address John B.'s concerns, the changed circumstance is that their realizing that the previously treated areas (by herbicide) don't need to be retreated, but rather use that treatment in another area, to reach the original objective, so it would be about the same amount of herbicide and could get closer to the objective, am would potentially get them to a place where they could use Rx fire and it wouldn't escape.
 - John B. – appreciate Chuck's comments, but don't see that as a good rationale for herbicide treatments, used as a pre-Rx fire treatment.

Next steps – Jesse will brief Brian and Karl about the conversation at today's meeting, and the Planning work group will continue their conversation.

Action item:

- Planning work group will continue their discussions on the proposed changes to herbicide treatments and development of Supplemental Information Report (SIR) at their January work group meeting to determine whether the work group will draft an ACCG LOS in support of the proposed changes to the EA to bring to the full membership at the next general meeting.

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2023 ACCG general meetings format

Presenters: Megan Layhee and Admin Work Group

Overview: Discussion on Admin work group poll, Admin work group recommendation, and consensus was reached on the work group recommendations (see below).

Admin Work Group Recommendations area as follows, which were read aloud during the meeting:

- **Format** – Based on poll results, work group recommends continuing with the hybrid meeting format.
- **Meeting breaks** – work group recommends including one 15-min break mid-meeting starting at the January meeting.
- **Breakout rooms** – the work group does not recommend breakout rooms account of the hybrid format, rather they recommend individuals who want to have follow up conversations after general meetings, to message directly to individual (not everyone) with the Zoom chat function to arrange a conversation, exchange phone numbers or set up an alternate meeting to discuss with smaller group. Breakout rooms will not be very feasible with the hybrid format, due to Conference room reservation length and need for Administrator to stay to keep breakout rooms open.
- **Work group updates and round table updates** – work group recommends moving round table updates ahead of work group updates on general meeting agendas topics list, in order to accommodate more time for roundtable updates/discussion. This also means that the work group is recommending that work group updates are 1-2 minutes long for each work group, and to refer anyone who wants to know more about the work groups to read the work group summary attached to the agenda packet.
- **Meeting length and date/time** – work group recommends letting the meeting content drive total meeting time (i.e., maintain the 9am-12pm general meeting time slot if agenda items require that amount of time, reduce the meeting time frame if there is less meeting topics).
- **Other general comments** – work group saw the general comments made in the last section of the poll, and if the commentor would like to, they can elaborate on their comment at the general meeting.

Action item:

- Megan will finalize hybrid meeting locations and volunteer facilitator schedules for the 2013 calendar year.

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- As part of the 2023 ACCG Priorities consensus item for the February general meeting, include a discussion about what non-Planning work group ACCG member priorities are, and keep this in mind for the Admin Work Groups upcoming discussions on updating ACCG's 5-year Strategic Plan that is step to expire this calendar year.

UPDATES

Roundtable

Collen Shade – working on letters to the TAG members for the FPP Phase 2.

Jim Suero (CBTSP) – transitioned from broadcast burning to pile burning and IDR in the park. Weather has put a damper on that, and hopefully start back up soon. Did North Grove Segment 7 burn went well and nothing got away, some little slop over and maintained in the park with CAL FIREs assistance, hoping to knock back the dogwood. Still planning on the South Grove burn and treat the perimeter further around the South Grove.

Brian Jobson – with Foothill conservancy. FS in the process of hiring a new Executive Director and advocacy staff.

Regine Miller – FPP Phase 1 working now on CEQA exemption and to approve that at their Board meeting this month. UMRWA is beginning to develop an implementation plan for FPP Phase 1 to use for grant applications. Existing CAL FIRE grant funds for the first step in implementation of FPP Phase 1. UMRWA's SNC grant app for Phase 2 planning was not funded, told it was a strong application but a sig financial ask. UMRWA is also working on their aspen assessment/restoration project funded by WCB, hopefully bring their monitoring and assessment protocol to the ACCG monitoring work group. However, UMRWA and FS did have an interview with SNC for a potential \$10 million.

John H. – Amador FSC has led 2 contracts over last month and half including creating a FB that surrounds River Pines (230 acres) and another for treating BLM parcels from Buckhorn Ridge down to Volcano up Rams Horn Grade and down Shake Ridge Road (200-300 acres). Amador RCD is going to be putting out a RFP for treatment (mastication and hand work) in Jackson Creek area.

Carinna – Pile burning in Arnold-Avery project area; as of yesterday. CHIPS and STF will be signing new Master Participating Agreement and ENF will work with CHIPS on their own agreement.

Jesse – 1200 of pile burning so far this winter, right now getting in roads, to find more piles to burn. Also working with UMRWA on prioritizing treatments for FPP Phase 1 and other areas in the Mokelumne, and kick. Also working on burn plans for understory and aerial ignition in the Cat Creek area.

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Question about road damage on the district from all of the storms – hard to assess at this point because of the snow, will keep at that. Carinna added that Canyon Rock Road was shut down because of a washout, but yes on their district there will

Chuck – will be starting first snow survey of the year next week. Looking at the Silver Lake sensor and we are at 120” depth right now, and for reference, last night we had 45” at last year’s first survey. So, this is going to be a big runoff year. Also touched on the SNC Landscape Pilot Program 2-hr interview that UMRWA and FS took part in, as potential candidates (of 4 candidates) for this \$10 million award.

Regine added that UMRWA, ACCG and FS are considered for this award out of 4 top candidates and the funds would be distributed over the next 5-10 years, and that it’s essentially a block grant program. The team should hear in February whether we are recommended for award.

Michael added that the pilot program developed by SNC is in response to the CA Wildfire and Resilience Task Force suggesting the need for building a block grant program, so SNC to a lead on developing a concept and SNC has buy in from CAL FIRE for this pilot. Hopefully it will be used a template to present to the Task Force to ultimately fund more of these block grant-type of program that partners are asking for and that Patrick Wright has been talking about for years. ACCG/UMRWA/FS is one of four finalists representing collaboratives across the SN region. Since its CAL FIRE money only, it would only be used for Forest Health guidelines, but idea in the future is to use other state funds to use the funds for all sorty of projects to move the landscape into a more resilient state. Other SNC news – the McKays FB project (Calaveras County) is being recommended for award, and next round of Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience will open in March/April for concept proposal to be due in June and full proposals due in late summer.

Tim Tate (SPI) – in the time of year when we are in between tasks. Haven’t begun planting yet, trees coming this weekend. Due to access and weather, not doing any fire salvage or logging at this time, probably resume in April. Made a quite a bit of progress on Caldor Fire beginning in Fall 2021, a huge task, spent all of 2022 and all logging resources from 3 districts that Tim oversee, not quite complete, probably at 80-85% through that operations and finish up this year. On Camino district part on Mosquito Fire will begin those salvage operation there this year. Caldor Fire wood is getting to the point whether conditions of timber will start falling apart in June-July. Will resume green operations on Martel and Sonora Districts this calendar year. ‘

Made a comment about John Buckley’s previous comment about the need to increase Rx fire treatments. Tim added that the reality is that what he is hearing is that there is a shortened burning windows, and new added layers of regulation to pull of these burn

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treatments, especially broadcast burns. This calls for more alternative treatments and the importance of

Megan – provided a few ACCG-related items including the need to finalize the ACCG 2023 Priority List at the next month’s general meeting, and also the need for the Admin work group to start reviewing and updating ACCG’s 5-year Strategic Plan.

Administrative Work Group Update

The meeting packet includes Admin Work Group action items from the previous two month’s work group meetings, so look there to learn more. Admin work group met last on January 9th via Zoom. The group approved this general meeting agenda and topics. Also, developed their recommendations for the 2023 general meeting format based on the poll results. The work group will prioritize discussions on updating ACCG’s 5-year Strategic Plan since it is set to expire this calendar year, and also the ACCG C&E Plan.

Planning Work Group Update

The Planning work group met last on November 23rd, and did not meet in December. Heard from Jesse and Brian on the proposed changes to the Panther Project herbicide treatments and development of SIR. Heard from the Phase 2 team, including about hosting the FPP Phase 2 Stakeholder meetings during a portion of quarterly Planning work group meetings. Also formed a Forest Plan Amendment Ad Hoc group to review and discuss potential FPAs associated with the FPP Phase 2 project. Next meeting is next Wednesday via Zoom.

Monitoring Work Group Update

Work group met last Wednesday and main topic was trying to rescheduled the Caldor Fire field tour in spring/early summer – depends on weather. May have to revisit the tour agenda based on road access, etc. Discussed Becky coming to a general meeting to present on the Caldor Fire post-fire restoration GTR report. Monitoring notes are not available yet for the January work group meeting, they will be included in next month’s meeting agenda.

- Megan will follow up with Becky about coming to provide a presentation.

Funding Coordination Work Group Update

- Did not meet in January 2023 or December 2022.

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Next meeting is Feb. 15th, 2023, hybrid in person at the Calaveras RD office and via Zoom.

Topics: ACCG 2023 Priority List, (maybe) meeting new ENF Forest Sup and Amador District Ranger.

Meeting Participants

Count	Name	Affiliation	Meeting Time
1	Megan Layhee	ACCG Administrator	2.5
2	Michael Pickard	SNC (in person)	2.5
3	John Heissenbuttel	Cal Am Team, Heissenbuttel Natural Resource Consulting (Volunteer Facilitator)	2.5
4	Jesse Plummer	ENF, Amador RD (in person)	2.5
5	Coleen Shade	Cardno, FPP Phase 2 team	2.5
6	Kelsey Retich	STF, Calaveras RD	2.5
7	Chuck Loffland	ENF, Amador RD (in person)	2.5
8	Linda Diesem	Private citizen	2.5
9	Carinna Robertson	STF, Calaveras RD (in person)	2.5
10	Gabby Sherman	STF, Calaveras RD (in person, new Silviculturist)	2.5
11	Matt Brown	ENF	2.5
12	Gerald Schwartz	EBMUD	2.5
13	Sue Holper	Private citizen	2.5
14	Jim Suero	CA State Parks	2.5
15	Regine Miller	FPP Phase 1/2 team member	2.5
16	Tim Tate	SPI (in person)	2.5
17	John Buckley	CSERC	2.5
18	Karl Goodwin	ENF, Amador RD	2.5
19	James Thornock	ENF, Amador RD	2.5
20	Stan Dodson	CSERC	2.5
21	Helen Loffland	IBP	2.0
22	Jan Bray	Cal Am Team	0.75
23	Jason Smith	TSS Consultants (guest presenter)	1.0
24	Tad Mason	TSS Consultants (guest presenter)	1.0
25	Brian Jobson	Foothill Conservancy	2.5
26	Craig Case	CHIPS	2.0
27	Ray Cablayan	STF, Calaveras RD	2.0