

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Brief Summary 02/15/2023, via Zoom and at the Calaveras RD Office

Meeting Brief

- Meeting facilitator: Chuck Loffland
- Informational project update: Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Phase 1 & 2
- Informational project update: Panther Fuels Reduction & Forest Health Project EA proposed changes to herbicide treatments and development of Supplemental Information Report (SIR).
- Consensus item -- 2023 ACCG Annual Priorities List
- 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
Post final 2023 priority list to website with revisions made during the meeting.	Layhee
Discuss updating ACCG 5-year Strategic Plan at the next general meeting.	All
Follow up with potential guest presenters for the general meeting 2023 calendar year – including biochar study, Golden State Natural Resources, Caldor Fire GTR-270 reports, etc.	Layhee
Share GSNR-FS MSA with ACCG.	Trott, 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.

Presentations & Discussions

Forest Projects Plan (FPP) Phase 1 and Phase 2 Update

Presenters: Richard Sykes

FPP Phase 1 - NEPA and CEQA complete and basically shovel ready. Team is currently working on a CAL FIRE \$5 million award and starting prep, and will do bids in spring depending on access, +2K acres. Work will start late summer 2023, depending on access. Team is currently working on drafting a \$7 million CAL FIRE Forest Health grant application to continue Phase 1 implementation. Team is developing an

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implementation work plan/sequencing plan. UMRWA, FS staff and ACCG Administrator were recently interviewed by SNC for a block grant for forest health/fuels reduction and possibly also rec and land conservancy. Should hear back in March/April and will keep you posted.

Phase 2 - UMRWA member funds and SNC planning grants have been funding the initial work for Phase 2. Team unsuccessful on a recent SNC planning grant back in Fall 2022. Near term activities include, first stakeholder meeting on Feb 22nd, first Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting is March 28th, getting materials together. Also, team is scheduling landscape scenario planning modeling presentations for the April and May general meetings. ENF and STF scheduled to have a leadership team meeting to discuss the project approach.

Couple questions about clarifying what grant programs the team are applying to currently with CAL FIRE and clarifying question about what the TAG is.

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

Presenters: Megan Layhee and Chuck Loffland

Discussion highlights:

Planning work group's recommendation: *The Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) will not be taking a position on changes being made to the Panther project implementation related to herbicide treatments.*

Based on internal discussions, FS staff has decided to, for the time being, not pursue any further with proposed changes to herbicides treatment under the EA and not going to go ahead with the SIR. Fuels staff would like to see this proposed herbicide treatment incorporated into FPP Phase 2. It was also noted that the SIR would have been its own investigative process.

Action item:

- The Planning work group is going to table the recommendation, until if the district staff come back with a proposed amendment or develop a new CE or other planning document to incorporate those changes.

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2023 ACCG Annual Priorities List

Group took five minutes during the meeting to review the priority list, and then discussed the draft 2023 ACCG Annual Priorities List. There were some modifications made during the meeting in track changes.

Action item:

- Megan will post the final Priority List to the website.

UPDATES

Roundtable

Craig Case – CHIPS trying to organize crews and projects for the 2023 field season. CHIPS was recently awarded blanket purchase agreement by the NF for 13 forests across CA. Big season for CHIPS.

Rich Farrington – UMRWA board is also looking at the JPA's mission state and added emphasis on watershed improvement and forest health/fuels reduction, due to being more active in this work in the watershed.

John Heissenbuttel - about a year ago SNC provided Cal-Am a grant to implement the Am-Co Stewardship Project, which is treating 9 different BLM parcels from Buckhorn Ridge up through Volcano and down Shake ridge Road to reduce fuels and serve as anchor points for fuel breaks on private lands. Currently have started mastication work and are using two different contractors, both local. The grant was written by Cal-Am Team and implemented by Amador County FSC. Last year also AFSC received grant to begin constructing community fuelbreaks, and first is the one that surrounds River Pines, and the biggest fuel component are the houses themselves, and the goal is to surround those with a fuelbreak. Lots of support from CAL FIRE for the program, so right now FSC is writing a CAL FIRE Fire Prevention grant (\$2 million) right now for 3 additional fuelbreaks – (1) Buckhorn BLM unit down to Volcano (Volcano Hills project), (2) upper rancheria Creek project which will connect BLM units in Shake ridge Road area , and (3) Ohio Hill Project in between Jackson and Sutter Creek (includes lands with the Mother Lode Land Trust).

Helen – working with UMRWA on aspen mapping and restoration project, hiring crews right now for this summer and will be working on the Stanislaus NF side. Sierra Meadows Partnership grant opportunity (<https://www.sierrameadows.org/>) for meadow restoration (planning and implementation, and tribal projects as well) - \$20 million available for the next few years. Helen is on the board. Applications due by Feb 22nd.

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Regine – for the UMRWA WCB project, plan on presenting assessment protocol and plan likely in April to Monitoring work group. Also wanted to share that in Sept., Headwaters Environmental was awarded a CAL FIRE grant through Business and Workforce Development Program, and wanted to put the word out that Regine and a team will be working with forest sector businesses or non-profit, local government, or tribal entity that works in that realm, to focus on helping them develop capacity to go after funding through CAL FIRE workforce program. If you do have contacts, reach out to Regine. The grant term is three years, and the scope includes triage, technical assistance, training, and setting up peer networks. A lot of the support that will be provided could be applicable to other grant programs (e.g., SNC).

Rosie – USFWS Private Lands Biologist, based out of Auburn. We have 30 biologists that do similar work do what she does (e.g., habitat restoration on private properties) across CA. Help private landowners and tribes on habitat restoration (not the regulatory side), support for projects. Rosie covers 17 counties cover Sierra foothills. Projects are all voluntary and can help fund including like the Sierra Meadows partnership grant program, they are potential match for that grant. Has a handout.

Gerald - EBMUD is the planning process to celebrate their 100th anniversary in May.

Gordon Long - Calaveras RCD has 5 current projects, only one is a currently active - Murthy's to Forest Meadows project. Two projects are in the process of getting RPFs out for CEQA - Moke Hills FR project and Fricot City Road Fuel Reduction project. Two SNC grants that will start up in next month (1) West Point and (2) Bummerville Project in BLM parcels. Putting in one proposal for CAL FIRE.

Michael - March 1st is annual WIP summit in Sacramento in person and at 1pm and online. On March 2nd will be quarterly board meeting and will be reviewing and most likely approving McKays FB project (by Calaveras OES). ACCG should go check it out one of these days. Will be having another round of grant round concept proposal sometime next month, and should end in June and full proposals due at the end of summer.

Gordon - Calaveras County RDC got a sub grant through CA Associations of RCDs to put bird nesting roosts in Tuolumne, Calaveras, and Amador Counties, including 140 structures. Amador Barn Owl Box Company (Fiddletown) will build them, and trail cameras and live-stream cameras on active nests. Helen added that they make bird and bat boxes.

Byron – new to the ACCG. Previously Headwaters Program Manager for TRT and Forest planner for YSS, landscape planning and implementation. Just started his own consulting company. Hoping to do landscape planning and implementation across the Sierra Nevada. Have background in grant writing, run contracts, write scope of work, GIS, modeling.

Chris - been in biomass energy for most of my career, working with Golden State Natural Resources which is a non-profit subsidiary of Rural County Representatives of CA. Quick

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summary of project – GSNR is looking to develop 2 large industrial wood pellet plants in Sierra and southern cascades. Purchased property in Tuolumne County at J59 and 108, there is shavings mill already there. Property in New Beaver, east of Burney, east of Redding. Together the 2 pellet plants would be sized to produce a max of 1 million metric tons of wood pellets a year, which would take roughly 1.8-2 million green tons of wood needed from forest and minor source from mill residuals (minor source). Will help support forest resilience efforts in the forest. Tuolumne County plant would be pulling from ENF, STF and Sierra NF and private lands - make pellets, ship to port (maybe Richmond, or Stockton as second place) via rail. Exported to Asia and possibly to UK and Europe to replace coal. Added that this process will still save carbon, produces more CO₂ per megawatt hour (wood than coal) - but not the whole story. This process would also reduce wildfire hazard, and increase forest resilience as well. Timeline - going through EIR now, hoping to start construction later this year, and hoping to start taking in biomass logs at beginning of 2024. Biomass logs - small stuff that doesn't get used by logging facilitators, "pulp logs". Also, logs salvaged from Caldor fire for trees that have passed the time-limit for use at the lumber mill. End of 2024 - beginning of 2025 will be operational and slowly ramp up to full production in a year or two. There is plenty of biomass, but the biggest challenge is contractors to gather wood, truck drivers, and workforce to run the plant. GSNR has a MSA with USFS R5 and is different than most, since GSNR is a non-profit it's an A-Z contract — FS develop and sign NEPA, FS then puts value on the products, and then GSNR would utilize the product. Wood pellets is easier than chips (size, moisture content, etc.) future could be not exporting but kept here.

- Carinna - can Chris Trott send MSA to ACCG.
- John H. – source is largely from FS lands? Chris – about 60% FS federal lands and the rest private lands. John added that the old plant up in Beaver went bust because they couldn't get the wood from the FS. Chris added that the working circle concept didn't work. This facility in Beaver will reach up north to southern Oregon and as far south as Quincy, and over into Klamath NF.
- Sue - is there no market for wood chips on this continent? Chris said yes for wood chips, there is, but not for wood pellets, wherever there are pulp mills (OR and WA) there is a market for wood chips, since all pulp mills are gone in CA there is no demand for it. The additional cost of making it into wood pellets. Other countries will pay higher mainly because they have mandates to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Rosie - used to work for FS in OR, and wondering if they're were uses in the US/CA, but too big of a cost to be converted. Asked if Chris could elaborate on the FS assigning a value to the wood product. Chris added that when the wood product is removed from the forest, a value has to be assigned to the wood product and appraised at a price. FS will assign minimal value to chips and a part of the appraisal. Rosie also asked if biochar an option? Chris said yes, a lot of grant money for biochar facilities. But Chris doesn't know any facilities that could absorb the amount of wood needed to create the biochar.

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- Carinna added that the FS staff cruises the timber for the logs and biomass and then puts a value on it.
- Gordon said that he writes NRCS contracts, and his question to Chris was how much logs is worthwhile to consider for a contract? Chris said it depends on location and other factors.
- John H. – recommended to bring in an expert about carbon credit policy in US and others countries, which is linked to why wood products are being shipped to other counties.

Carinna – For the McKays FB project, they are developing a 2nd SPA under GNA with the Calaveras County, and starting kick off for Hazard tree forest wide NEPA project (MIL 2-5 roads, and admin and rec sites) and might exclude SERAL. The project is in the SOPA, find it there. Also, mentioned the biochar sample plots which is begin led by the Soil Scientists, might be a good general meeting presentation.

Stan - CSERC has a new team member, Chelsea Lewandowski, who is the new Environmental Associate. On Thursday staff will getting wildlife cameras up for lower elevation fisher monitoring (5,000ft down to sea level technically). Also, CSERC has relocated into a new office.

Chuck - new district ranger starting next week, Linda Helm. New Forest Supervisor has already started, Joe Stout. Finalizing ENF forest-wide hazard tree EA, which will be a good tool for fire and bug-kill events, and once we have pellet market we can deal with fuel loading and hazards.

- Rosie - Need red card update/ Pack test. Brian Brown said that the training shop at the ENF supervisors office will have a training available for FS and federal personnel.

Rosie (in zoom chat) - With regard to trails I'm new to the area. But in Oregon trail work was funded by things like the: Recreation Trails Program (RTP). You could reach out to someone that might be able to present on that.

Craig (in zoom chat) – check out www.airburners.com for biochar production.

Administrative Work Group Update

Work group met last on February 6th via Zoom. Reviewed and approved this meeting agenda. Reviewed and approved the draft 2023 Priorities List that we saw earlier. Began discussing the update for the ACCG 5-tyear Strategic Plan. Will bring this as a discussion item for next month's general meeting to get input from the full group.

Planning Work Group Update

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Group met last on Jan. 25th via Zoom. They had an update on FPP Phase 2 by the core team, discussed FPP Phase 2 related topics including the partnership diagram and upcoming work group hosted Phase 2 Stakeholder meeting, discussed and developed recommendation for the Panther Project proposal to expand herbicide treatments, update on Forest Plan Amendments AD Hoc group, update on next steps of ACCG Shared Vision on Tribal Engagement, reviewed ACCG 2023 draft Priorities list, including additions from 11/16 general meeting, and discussed upcoming general meetings and topics.

Monitoring Work Group Update

Group talked more about Caldor Filed Tour, depends on weather. Becky ran through a rough draft presentation on GTR-270 application for Caldor Fire that she will give to this group soon. Also reviewed monitoring projects and consolidate to make more accessible, including showcasing GIS-related ACCG SLAWG products via the USFS ArcOnline.

Funding Coordination Work Group Update

Met yesterday. Had a short presentation by Robin Bellows, Forester CAL FIRE on their programs. Talked about funding opportunities available on SNC quarterly funding newsletter community, housing, etc. Would recommend if anyone wants access to the newsletter you can sign up.

Next meeting is March 15th, 2023, hybrid in person at the Amador County Building in Jackson and via Zoom.

Meeting Participants

Count	Name	Affiliation	Meeting Time
1	Megan Layhee	ACCG Administrator (in person)	2.0
2	Michael Pickard	SNC (in person)	2.0
3	John Heissenbuttel	Cal Am Team, Heissenbuttel Natural Resource Consulting	2.0
4	Byron Krempf	Krempf Consulting	2.0
5	Rich Farrington	UMRWA Board	2.0
6	Kelsey Retich	USFS, STF, Calaveras RD (in person)	2.0
7	Chuck Loffland	ENF, Amador RD (Volunteer Facilitator, in person)	2.0
8	Linda Diesem	Private citizen	2.0
9	Carinna Robertson	USFS, STF, Calaveras RD (in person)	2.0

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10	Chris Trott	CT Bioenergy, Goldens State Natural Resources (in person)	2.0
11	Marie Davis	Placer County Water Agency	2.0
12	Gerald Schwartz	EBMUD	2.0
13	Sue Holper	Private citizen	2.0
14	Terry Woodrow	Calaveras Foothills FSC, UMRWA Board, Alpine County BOS (in person)	2.0
15	Regine Miller	Headwaters Environmental, FPP Phase 1/2 team member	2.0
16	Helen Loffland	IBP	2.0
17	Gordon Long	Calaveras Co. RCD	2.0
18	Richard Sykes	UMRWA	2.0
19	Bud Hoekstra	Private citizen	2.0
20	Stan Dodson	CSERC (in person)	2.0
21	Helen Loffland	IBP	2.0
22	Brian Brown	USFS, ENF	2.0
23	Kimberley Peetree		2.0
24	Craig Case	CHIPS	2.0
25	Rosie Gonzales	USFWS Private Land Biologist	2.0
26	Waylon Coats	SNC	2.0