

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

Forest Plan Amendments (FPP Phase 2) Ad Hoc Meeting Summary, 1/9/2023

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Follow up with FS leadership to see when they will convene to determine the FPP Phase direction (e.g., one EIS vs. separate EISs for each forest; SERAL-like forest plan amendments; possibility for modifications/updates to SERAL forest plan amendments).	FS staff
Change meeting length to 2 hours instead of 1 hour from now on.	Layhee
Ad Hoc Next steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wait to hear from ENF and STF leadership on the direction of FPP Phase 2 (e.g., if modifications would be allowed for the Calaveras RD on CSO-related FPAs, whether or not there will be FPAs on Amador RD). Then, based on the leadership decisions;2. Ad Hoc will review SERAL CSO-related amendments and will work on coming up with proposed, agreeable revisions/updates to SERAL CSO-related FPAs; including, but not limited to the following <i>potential revisions based on today's discussion</i> (Note: these are preliminary ideas and need further discussion):<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. PAC retirement based on multi-year surveys (3 years? 5 years? -- TBD) of occupied vs. non-occupied status (not based on reproductive status, e.g., pairs or pairs with nests).b. Delineation of CSO territories based on topographic features (not arbitrarily circular).c. Updating dbh limits in PACs/refining definitions of where higher dbh limits are allowed to be treated in PACs.	All

Agenda Review, Ad Hoc Next Steps

The Ad Hoc group met via Zoom. The group confirmed the agenda and reviewed the charge of the group. The group also decided to extend future Ad Hoc meetings to two hours instead of just one hour. The group also determined that they will tentatively have their February Ad Hoc meeting on the condition that by then the FS leadership from both forests had convened and agreed upon the upon a direction forward for FPP Phase 2 (e.g., one EIS vs. separate EISs for each forest, SERAL-like forest plan amendments; possibility for modifications/updates to SERAL forest plan amendments). Most attendees agreed that it would be a best use of our times to wait to meeting until the FS leadership had time to meet and determine the Phase 2 direction.

FS District Wildlife Biologists Perspectives on CSO-related Forest Plan Amendments

Presenters: Kelsey Retich, Chuck Loffland

Presentation highlights:

- Kelsey: how current Forest Plan is structured, there is not enough being done to protect CSO from things like mega wildfires. From a biological perspective, some of the SERAL forest plan

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amendments should be evaluated and potentially revised for Phase 2, in order to best manage and protect for CSO. Recommend as a group going through each SERAL CSO-related FPA together to look at these specific things she has in mind. Some of the things needing more evaluation include, definitions of where higher dbh limits are allowable, more flexibility and case-by-case basis for certain scenarios, more specific language of goals and less prescriptive, and issue of retiring PACs, and extent of unoccupied/"old" PAC retirement.

- Chuck: agrees with treating in PACs of intermediate trees/surface-ladder fuels like their doing in Scottiago on a case-by-case basis, but some of the FPAs in SERAL, including cutting 40" and up dbh, 35+ dbh shade tolerant trees – don't see value for CSO in removing those, and recommends a more appropriate method of retiring PACs (e.g., occupancy, not whether reproductive pairs are present). Would recommend that the Phase 2 ID team define PAC retirement process, which would involve 3-5 years of survey work and to not drop PACs if there is no mating pair, only based on occupancy status.

Discussion highlights:

- Rich Farrington emphasized that FPP Phase 2 should be completed as quickly as possible with the least controversy. Moving ahead with forest plan amendments will be time consuming and controversial, so it's not the ideal path forward. But if amendments are to be made the specialists should come up with the least controversial CSO-related amendments possible.
- Carinna Robertson added that she sees a need for FPAs for the PACs, and are looking for proper management in PACs and how to apply the latest research to get there. Met with the lead wildlife biologists with SPI, and they have an extensive CSO monitoring program with data and techniques developed on where CSO lives and nests in their lands, which could be useful information for this process and help inform Phase 2 amendments. Also added that we need terminology for what management should happen in PACs when there's a nest. And that management of different habitat types should be considered (e.g., foraging habitat vs. nesting habitat). Later in the conversation Carinna also added that it's important to remember that FS staff hands are tied for a lot of topics/issues, since many of these are based on higher level decisions – but her ultimate goal is to find a better technique for managing the owls and their PACs.
- John Buckley highlighted that YSS had no interest in changing CSO policies, but STF leadership insisted on amendments for the SERAL project. So, SYI insisted on the least controversial interpretation of the 2019 strategy as possible and looked for opportunities to do aggressive treatments (i.e., 40" dbh limits) in very limited situations. Also added later in the conversation that the implications of mega wildfires to CSO habitats is tremendous, so to do nothing in PACs is worse for the owl than doing something in PACs, so we need to keep this balance in mind when moving forward with discussions on CSO-related FPAs for FPP Phase 2.
- Sue Britting reiterated SFL's concerns over retiring PACs if mating pairs are not present – because territorial singles are the next best opportunity for a new mate -- a PAC with a territorial single present should retain its PAC status. Sue raised another concern about the length of PAC occupancy surveys, 3 vs. 5 years, and suggested it would be good for this group to continue the discussion. Sue reiterated that SFL could get behind PAC retirement in FPP Phase 2 if it was based on occupancy over a given TBD period of survey years showing no occupancy, but would not get behind an amendment that states retirement is based on reproductive status data instead of occupancy data.

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Meeting Participants

#	Name	Affiliation	Miles (N/A-online)	Hours
1	Megan Layhee	ACCG Administrator (facilitator)	--	1.0
2	Rich Farrington	UMRWA Board	--	1.0
3	John Buckley	CSERC	--	1.0
4	Stan ...	CSERC	--	1.0
5	Chuck Loffland	ENF, Amador RD	--	1.0
6	Carinna Robertson	STF, Calaveras RD	--	1.0
7	Sue Britting	Sierra Forest Legacy	--	1.0
8	Brian Brown	ENF	--	1.0
9	Kelsey Retich	STF, Calaveras RD	--	1.0