

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

[FINAL] Brief Meeting Summary: Forest Plan Amendments (FPP Phase 2) Ad Hoc
8/14/2023, via Zoom

Lisa Lucke, ACCG Admin

Action Items

Actions	Point Person(s)
Though not contractual duty as ACCG Admin, Lisa agreed to facilitate the Ad Hoc, with help as needed (agenda and summary)	Lisa, Ad Hoc
Chuck will summarize the consensus points reached in the discussion, including support for retaining all PACs with any occupancy detected, the requirement of five years of surveys within a seven-year period for retirement consideration, and clarifying that the lack of any owl detection at the end of that period does not mean a territory is retired, but only that it is eligible for retirement or alternative management. Chuck agreed to try to complete this task by the end of the week.	Chuck
Lisa will add "PAC Retirement Recommendation and Survey Requirements update (John & Sue)" to the FPP Phase 2 Update portion of the PWG agenda for Wed., 8/23.	Lisa
John and Sue would initially present the recommendation on PAC retirement, 5 years of surveys, and survey timing. Chuck and Kelsey to provide additional input when items are discussed at Aug PWG mtg 8/23.	John, Sue, Chuck, Kelsey

Review Meeting Agenda and Last Meeting Summary

- Lisa, Chuck, Sue, and John discussed facilitation with Lisa and agreed that Lisa would take on the role. Lisa confirmed that she would also take responsibility for composing the agenda for future meetings (asking for assistance if needed).

FPP Phase 2 Update, PAC Retirement, Next Steps

- There was agreement that the Ad Hoc Committee still sees the need for more clarity about how the two Forests plan to handle any differences between the two Forests regarding potential Forest Plan Amendments for the Phase 2 project.
- On the topic of PAC Retirement, there continues to be full agreement within the committee that there should be five years of surveys (some combination of ARUs and traditional surveys) before any consideration of the retirement of a PAC. There is also agreement that any PAC with occupancy by a CA Spotted Owl or Northern Goshawk should be retained.
- While there was an acknowledgment that ARUs may not provide all the necessary information for spotted owl management, they can help show presence (all that is needed to verify occupancy). The question was debated whether to conduct five consecutive years of surveys or to allow for gaps in the survey sequence. There ended up being a consensus agreement to recommend in Phase 2 the requirement for five years of surveys within a seven-year period to determine the presence and to allow some flexibility in surveys to account for unforeseen circumstances.

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- Chuck was asked to write up a few sentences summarizing the consensus points reached in the discussion, including support for retaining all PACs with any occupancy detected, the requirement of five years of surveys within a seven-year period for retirement consideration, and clarifying that the lack of any owl detection at the end of that period does not mean a territory is retired, but only that it is eligible for retirement or alternative management. Chuck agreed to try to complete this task by the end of the week.
- All of the committee members felt the need to consider John Keane's important sharing about the pattern of CSO territory distribution across the landscape. There was an agreement to provide the wording in any recommendation for Phase 2 about the need for a geographic gap analysis before making any PAC retirement decision.
- A key question was considered as to the timing for when owl surveys should be completed. Is it before any record or decision or implementing the Phase 2 project? Chuck noted that due to the large landscape size and the scale of work needed to do so many surveys, it may not be feasible to complete the surveys before deciding on the project if ACCG is hurrying to initiate important treatments.
- The committee eventually came to consensus or expressed neutrality on the proposal that owl surveys in any portion of the Phase 2 project area should be completed before any contract awarded to potentially alter suitable owl habitat (thinning treatments, etc.) in that portion of the Phase 2 area. The agreed-upon consensus recommendation was to have required owl surveys completed before spelling out exactly where treatments would be done and what would be taken in a contract.
- An important issue was raised about meeting requirements for retaining suitable high-quality owl habitat. This ties to modeling how the project may affect the desired condition of the territory, specifically the retention of 40 to 60% of the territory in the highest quality habitat. The committee generally favored recommending in Phase 2 increased habitat protection (full retention for existing suitable habitat in CWHR 6, 5D, and 5N within a territory), with the goal that dealing with this important owl habitat retention matter soon could help ACCG to better reach consensus agreement on the overall Phase 2 project.
- Future items for the Committee and the Planning Work Group include in-depth discussions of modeling and whether Phase 2 should incorporate a circular owl territory versus less controversial alternative versions or different strategies.
- Chuck expressed concern about the lag in timber sale purchasers implementing projects and the questionable validity of survey data after years of delay. Sue suggested

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incorporating design criteria to ensure the timely sufficiency of owl surveys, and they agreed to create an appendix with agreed-upon recommendations for future projects.

- Chuck and Sue discuss capturing discussion points and creating an Appendix document for future reference.
- Wrapping up, the committee discussed the upcoming planning workgroup meeting and agreed that John and Sue would initially present the recommendation on PAC retirement, 5 years of surveys, and survey timing, with Chuck and Kelsey providing additional input when items are discussed.

The next Ad Hoc meeting is Monday, Sept 11 at 10 a.m.- 12 p.m. via Zoom.

Meeting Participants

Attendees	Affiliation
Lisa Lucke	ACCG Admin
Chuck Loffland	USFS
John Buckley	CSERC
Sue Britting	Sierra Forest Legacy
Kelsey Retich	USFS