

AMADOR CALAVERAS CONSENSUS GROUP (ACCG)

Communication & Engagement Plan

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Developed by the Consensus Building Institute, revised by the ACCG Admin Work Group

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I. Purpose and Overview

This Communication and Engagement (C&E) Plan (henceforth, Plan) provides information to guide the communication, outreach and engagement, and education activities of the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG). It identifies goals, principles, audiences, basic messages, communication objectives and strategies, education objectives and strategies, and annual evaluation and prioritization. This plan is meant to serve as a living document that will be updated, as warranted.

The Plan was first adopted by the ACCG in 2021, [Communication & Engagement Plan \(2021\)](#), to serve as a guide to meet the communication and outreach goals identified to assist in increasing pace and scale of land management projects that align with the ACCG's triple bottom line for environment, community, and economy (see Section III). This overarching goal of increasing pace and scale of projects is still a top priority for the ACCG as outlined in ACCG's current [5-Year Strategic Plan \(2023-2028\)](#) and [ACCG's Annual Priorities](#). However, the ACCG's current capacity to perform the actions outlined in the original Plan has changed. Therefore, this revised version of the Plan, developed by the ACCG Admin Work Group, is meant to reflect the current capacity of the ACCG and outline attainable communication and outreach-related goals for the ACCG to accomplish in a 5-year span (2024-2028). This plan is meant to be reviewed and updated accordingly, in 2028, following the 5-Year Strategic Plan update.

Unless otherwise noted, "ACCG" refers to all members, supporting staff (e.g., the ACCG Administrator/Coordinator), and work groups involved in the process. This means everyone has a role to play in implementing a given element or strategy. Certain elements and strategies will require further specification and development.

II. Background

The ACCG is a collaboration among diverse stakeholders formed in 2008 to promote fire-safe communities, healthy forests and watersheds, and sustainable local economies in Amador and Calaveras counties. ACCG members include individuals, nonprofit organizations, businesses, tribal interests, and local, state, and federal government entities. The ACCG serves as an information sharing and networking forum for members and others who are committed to an all-lands, landscape approach in pursuit of the group's triple bottom line mission.

III. Goals

The goals of this plan support the goals and objectives outlined in the ACCG [Strategic Plan \(2023-2028\)](#) and [Engagement Strategy \(2019\)](#) and the principles and policies described in the ACCG [Memorandum of Agreement \(2020 update\)](#). Communication, outreach and engagement, and education goals include the following:

1. **ACCG Participation.** Maintain, and also increase, broaden, and renew participation in the ACCG at all levels and thereby expand its capacity. Continue to be a forum for providing information on topics relevant to ACCG's mission.
2. **Public/Private Projects.** Support public- and private-lands projects.

3. **Local Partner.** Function as an active and welcome partner in local watershed management projects.
4. **Capacity Support to/from Partners.** Provide expertise, resources, and consensus to/from critical partners.
5. **Zones of Agreement.** Continue to follow the “Zones of Agreement” through the project development process to increase understanding of the many perspectives represented by the group, help guide project development to support meaningful and efficient ACCG engagement, and to use as a basis for ACCG project support and the advancement of partnerships.
6. **Consistent External Messaging.** Develop consistent public messages about the ACCG’s purpose and processes across the ACCG membership, which will build awareness and support for the collaborative's work.

Section VII. 2024-2028 Implementation describes potential strategies and methods for meeting these goals.

IV. ACCG Communication Principles

The ACCG’s communication will be guided by the following principles:

- A. External communication will be coordinated by the Administrative Work Group.
- B. ACCG spokespeople shall represent the decisions and positions agreed upon by the collaborative and not express their own or their organization’s opinion when representing the ACCG.
- C. The ACCG will not take public positions on issues not directly related to its mission.
- D. Requests from media for ACCG-related comments or appearances should be directed to the ACCG Administrator. As appropriate, the ACCG Administrator will consult with the Administrative Work Group and other ACCG members as needed.
- E. ACCG Administrator will refer the media to the appropriate members for inquiries related to member projects or actions.
- F. Only the ACCG Administrator may speak for the ACCG. Any member may speak about the ACCG.
- G. The ACCG administrator should develop and distribute ACCG media releases in coordination with the Administrative Work Group (or appropriate parties) using a standard media release form developed by this work group. They will be distributed to the members for comment before distribution (excluding generic meeting/event announcements or generic media announcements with previously agreed-upon language).
- H. The ACCG Administrator will report any media contacts and the results to the group at the next regular meeting, or by email distribution if timely reporting is prudent.
- I. ACCG members should give public credit to the ACCG for contributions to a member or joint project when discussing the project in public or with the media.
- J. ACCG members should notify the Administrative Work Group and ACCG Administrator if the news media is expected to attend an ACCG meeting.

V. Audiences

Primary audiences for ACCG communication efforts are focused on those located in and adjacent to (including Alpine, Tuolumne, and El Dorado counties), having jurisdiction over, or otherwise interested in Amador and Calaveras counties. Some of these may overlap (for example, a homeowner who is also a conservationist and recreational user). Primary audiences include but are not limited to:

- General public
- Homeowners and other residents, private landowners, and their associations
- Agriculture industry
- Conservation and environmental organizations and associations
- Recreational users, providers, organizations, and associations
- Community organizations and associations, including the underserved
- Workforce development organizations and forums
- Civil service programs
- Youth organizations and teaching forums
- Businesses and their associations
- Land conservancies
- Fire agencies and districts
- Water agencies
- Other utilities
- Forestry contractors, including vegetation management and forest products
- Tribal interests
- Public agencies and their boards (state, local, and federal)
- Regional associations
- Integrated Regional Water Management
- Professional associations
- Foundations
- Academic Institutions
- ACCG members and participants

VI. Communication Tools and Materials

Website

Maintained hub for ACCG information (e.g. meetings, reports, studies, plans, data, analysis, surveys, etc.) and other events/announcements related to local healthy and sustainable natural environments, communities and economies.

Email List

Maintained email list for interested persons to receive information about ACCG meetings and other announcements related to ACCG activities and goals.

VII. 2024-2028 Implementation

This section is intended to identify specific strategies that the ACCG members and work groups will consider pursuing through 2028. It does not commit members or work groups to specific tasks or preclude them from pursuing other strategies aligned with the ACCG goals.

Implementation of these strategies will be conducted in alignment with the [ACCG MOA](#), [Strategic Plan \(2023-2028\)](#), and the [Principles and Policies to Guide Operations](#).

Specific activities that support the implementation of the C&E Plan:

A. ACCG Members

As individuals:

- Engage and encourage others to participate in the ACCG
- Conduct briefings to specific audiences
Support outreach to stakeholders who have not been actively involved, particularly Tribes

As a group:

- Articulate approach and communicate progress on efforts to increase pace and scale
- Invite guest speakers to increase understanding of issues important to the ACCG; document information from guest presentations
- Invite other guests (experts, other collaboratives, community leaders, etc.) to particular meetings that may be of interest to those audiences
- Include work group updates as standard agenda items for monthly General Meetings

B. ACCG Administrator/Coordinator

- Serves as the primary point of contact for inquiries, announcements, updates, etc., related to the ACCG (e.g., point person for project proponents seeking to engage the ACCG for support on project development, or for media requests seeking more information and the point-of-contacts for a particular project)
- Distributes information and announcements to the ACCG mailing list and via the website
- Supports effective communication and networking among ACCG members and external parties through email listserv and website
- Coordinates development and submission of ACCG communications, such as press releases and Letters of Support to inside and outside organizations.

C. Work Groups

Administrative Work Group

- Help track and support implementation of the Engagement Strategy and Strategic Plan
- Include work group updates as standard agenda items for monthly meetings
- Develop and propose a process for tracking and documentation for reporting annual progress and accomplishments
- Work with the ACCG Administrator/Coordinator and other interested parties as appropriate to oversee development of captivating and engaging materials (existing members and potential new members may have media and communication professionals)

Planning Work Group

- Continue implementing the project development process
- Support documentation of key takeaways from information-sharing presentations (e.g., General Meeting guest speaker presentations) and field trips
- Host field trips

Monitoring Work Group

- Host science symposiums and field trips as needed/requested
- Provide volunteer opportunities through field monitoring work days