Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG)

General Meeting Summary 07/15/2026, via Zoom and in person

MEETING BRIEF

- Meeting facilitator: Michael Pickard
- Presentation by Kayla Dale, PIO, Amador Fire Protection District
- UMRWA-USFS PHASE I & MAC update
- SNC Landscape Selection Process
- Roundtable
- Work Group updates

ACTION ITEMS

Actions	Responsible Parties
Post agenda and last month's general meeting summary as final to the website.	Layhee
Share UMRWA Aspen Team's presentation slides on the ACCG website.	Layhee

MEETING OPENING/HOUSEKEEPING

Draft agenda and last month's meeting summary were approved. Administrator will post them to the ACCG website.

GUEST PRESENTATION

HOW TO BECOME A FIREWISE COMMUNITY

Presenter: Kayla Dale, PIO, Amador Fire Protection District

Find the presentation on the ACCG website here.

MAC UMRWA-USFS FPP Phase I & MAC update

Presenter: Richard Sykes (UMRWA)

UMRWA currently has about 5,000 acres under contract, with four commercial contractors active or just beginning work. The Washoe Tribe has already completed its small assignment, and Buena Vista Rancheria will begin theirs at the end of the month. Since the last ACCG meeting, UMRWA solicited bids for the Dogwood West (Dogwood 5–6) projects and will ask the board to approve two new 300-acre contracts. A local firm, Chrisman, is being recommended for one award—made possible by the board's recent increase in the local preference from 5% to 8%. Phase I funding totals roughly $30 million, about 10% of which comes from the Forest Resilience Bond developed with Blue Forest and its beneficiaries. A July 24th tour for current and prospective beneficiaries, hosted by Blue Forest and Omron with USFS participation, will highlight the program's progress. UMRWA expects the Forest Resilience Bond to remain a key funding source as Phase I concludes and the MAC phase begins prioritization. A CEQA notice of exemption is scheduled for UMRWA's October board meeting. Grant pursuit for MAC is expected to begin, with a goal of returning to work on the Calaveras side in late 2026 or early 2027.

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Presenter: Megan Layhee (UMRWA)

UMRWA has begun CEQA compliance for the MAC project following the U.S. Forest Service's April approval of the MAC records of decision for both the Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests. In parallel, UMRWA is developing the MAC Implementation Work Plan, which will identify roughly 20,000 acres of initial priority treatment areas within the MAC footprint, outline future maintenance needs—including FPPI areas—and define pre-implementation requirements such as layout, ground-truthing, resource surveys, and a funding strategy. UMRWA intends to bring this implementation plan to the full ACCG membership for support at the November General Meeting, with ongoing detailed discussions occurring monthly in the Planning Work Group. For CEQA, UMRWA plans to use the same exemption approach applied to FPP1, though the MAC exemption may require additional management actions to reduce short-term impacts to sensitive species, particularly California spotted owl. UMRWA, ACCG members, and the Forest Service are currently working together to refine this added CEQA language.

SNC LANDSCAPE GRANT SELECTION PROCESS

Presenter: Megan Layhee (UMRWA)

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy has launched a new Landscape Grant Program funded by the 2024 California Climate Bond, totaling about $45 million. SNC expects to award four to five grants ranging from $8–12 million each, focused on forest-resilience implementation such as fuels reduction, beneficial fire, maintenance, planning, and monitoring. About fifteen collaboratives—including ACCG—have advanced past Phase I and were notified they are now in Phase II. This process is not a typical grant application; ACCG has been asked **not** to submit additional materials unless SNC reaches out with clarifying questions during its internal evaluation of the collaborative's capacity, project history, and proposed work. If ACCG advances to Phase III, likely in September or October, we will work with SNC to develop a formal program of work. For now, there is no action required—this update is simply to inform members that ACCG has successfully progressed to Phase II.

ROUNDTABLE

Amanda Watson – The Amador RCD and Amador Fire Safe Council are completing the Volcano Hills Fuel Break, which links several Firewise communities and the town of Volcano, and will next support the Sutter Highlands community in developing a new fuel break. The RCD is also partnering with BLM on two strategic fuel breaks along the county's north and south boundaries, with a CAL FIRE grant submitted to cover adjacent private lands—extending work that began under the SNC-funded AMCO project. Additional SNC and timber-sale funding will support maintenance on previously treated BLM lands, with maintenance activities expected to begin in fall or early next spring. The Habitat Festival is on September 12th at the Kennedy Mine, hosted jointly by the Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne RCDs, featuring family-friendly activities tied to the Farms of Amador tour to showcase wildlife habitat on working lands.

Chris Shull - Chris expressed enthusiasm about the developing 20,000-acre MAC implementation plan and the momentum it brings for the ACCG. He noted that it is encouraging to see ACCG included among the 15 collaboratives advancing in the SNC process and he is hopeful this will translate into more on-the-ground work in the coming months and years.

Kaylee Dillashaw - Kaylee reported on ongoing work with BLM within the Butte Fire burn scar, noting that one project is nearly ready for implementation after securing environmental clearance. The Northwest Calaveras Fuels Reduction Project has been expanded in the Valley Springs–Burson area on private lands, and the San Andreas East fuel break is expected to be implemented within the next few months. Several additional projects are in development, with grant applications submitted to SNC and CAL FIRE to support future work. She added that many more BLM parcels in the burn scar will likely require treatment in the future, and ACCG support may be requested as those projects advance.

Richard Sykes - Richard shared that UMRWA's next board meeting is scheduled for next Friday and will include a MAC project update along with recommendations to award two Dogwood project contracts, including one to a local firm—a long-standing goal the agency is pleased to have achieved. Beyond that, the agenda is largely routine, covering a proposed update to UMRWA's conflict-of-interest code and the adoption of the upcoming fiscal year budget, which begins October 1st.

Sophia Kaufman - Sophia Kaufman shared that Motherlode Job Training and the Central Sierra Economic Development District are supporting local forestry businesses through technical assistance and subsidized wage placements to help reduce overhead and expand workforce capacity. They are currently assisting Arnold Forest Waste and Green Products, the winner of their biomass business competition, with business expansion efforts. She also noted a regional trend of counties eliminating economic development positions, including Calaveras County, prompting CSED to step in to fill gaps. In response to a request from former county staff, CSED is exploring the creation of Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) Zones across the five-county region—Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa—and will present this opportunity to their board on August 20th. Additional projects are underway but not yet ready for public discussion.

Sue Holper - Sue Holper noted that while she didn't have new updates to share, she wanted to formally introduce herself as an active member of the Calaveras Action Project. The group works to ensure county government and the planning department uphold their responsibilities to residents and the landscape, often advancing work that they hope county agencies will carry forward. She added that she occasionally reports ACCG discussions back to the Calaveras Action Project.

Carinna Robertson - The Forest Service has multiple timber and fuel-reduction projects currently underway. Two timber contracts—Wolfboro IRTC and the Thompson Hazard Tree Cell—are actively hauling logs along Highway 4 near the Cabbage maintenance station. Three additional projects are operating under the SPI agreement: the Standard project connecting to the SPI fuel break, the Winton Fuel Break on Forest Service lands where log decks are being prepared for contracting, and the larger Avery Fuel Break, which will include mastication, biomass removal, and log deck creation. Discussions with SPI are ongoing about subsidizing biomass hauling to a biomass facility. In support of MAC implementation, the Forest Service has issued two precursor contracts: one for cell prep (layout and cruising) funded through last-minute appropriated dollars, and another for updating land lines funded through the regional program. Staff are also conducting on-the-ground surveys, and additional funding is expected to help advance future timber operations.

Linda Helm - The Amador Ranger District continues to operate at roughly 35–40% below normal staffing capacity, with no wildlife biologist, archaeologist, law enforcement officer, recreation officer, range specialist, or timber staff, and are relying heavily on support from the Placerville District. Despite these constraints, crews removed more than 100 hazardous trees from recreation trails and are progressing on the Lake Margaret Bridge replacement. The district is losing four ACE seasonal employees on July 25th due to a nationwide funding issue, along with two temporary 1039 staff who have accepted jobs

elsewhere. Fire-related mastication work continues along Highway 88, and personnel are frequently dispatched to incidents such as the Elephant Fire. Limited siviculture capacity is being supplemented by staff assisting with Caldor Fire restoration work. The upcoming PG&E FERC relicensing process will further strain already overextended employees who are covering multiple roles. Staff maintain a positive attitude, yet burnout is a real concern given how thinly stretched the district is while striving to maintain forest health.

John Buckley – CSERC staff, like others in the region, are stretched far beyond capacity and juggling an overwhelming workload. Because they spend significant time in the forest, they are seeing both positive accomplishments and areas of concern on the ground—issues that Forest Service staff often don't have the bandwidth to observe directly. The challenge, they noted, is finding constructive ways to communicate what they're seeing: celebrating the many successes while also addressing problems that need attention.

Michael Pickard - The SNC Wildfire and Forest Resilience Grant Program is still accepting concept proposals through July 27th and any groups with project ideas should reach out before the deadline. The Amador Water Agency has already submitted theirs.

WORK GROUP UPDATES

The Admin Workgroup update was given by Char. The Admin Workgroup met on July 6th to review and approve the agenda for this meeting and continued planning for upcoming events. The group is organizing the socioeconomic panel scheduled for the August 19th ACCG General Meeting, with John Heisenbuttel serving as facilitator. They are also developing the September 16th field tour, refining a draft agenda that includes potential stops such as the BLM–PG&E Butte Fire settlement area, the Winton MAC project, Lilligap Phases I and II, the Bummerville plant, and the Blue Mountain biomass facility. Final decisions on tour logistics will be made at the September Admin Workgroup meeting.

The Planning Workgroup update was given by Megan. The Planning Work Group did not meet in June, and its next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 22nd from 9:00 a.m. to noon, with materials and the agenda to be sent out in advance. The upcoming meeting will begin preliminary and formal discussions on the SNC Block Grant, should ACCG advance to Phase III, and will include a brief UMRWA update on the MAC Implementation Plan scheduling and next steps. The group will also debrief on Kayla's presentation and review upcoming presentation topics for future ACCG meetings.

The Monitoring Workgroup update was given by Megan. The Monitoring Work Group met virtually on July 8th, where members received an overview from Megan Layhee, Becky Estes, and UMRWA monitoring coordinator Ty McCarthy on early draft versions of the MAC monitoring field implementation plan and funding plan. The group provided initial feedback, and next month will review the full MAC monitoring strategy, including implementation and effectiveness questions and associated indicators. Megan noted that the strategy is nearing completion thanks to SNC RFFCP funding that has enabled close collaboration with the ACCG Monitoring Work Group. Once finalized, the strategy will be brought to the full ACCG membership—ideally by the October general meeting, depending on progress over the next few months. The Monitoring Work Group will meet again on Wednesday, August 12th at 9 a.m. via Teams.

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MEETING CLOSE

Next general meeting: The next meeting is on August 19th, 2026, hybrid via Zoom and in-person at the Calaveras RD office in Hathaway Pines. John Heissenbuttel will facilitate.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Count	Name	Affiliation
1	Carinna Robertson	USFS, STF, Calaveras RD (in person)
2	Michael Pickard	SNC
3	Rose Day	MLJT
4	Stan Dodson	CSERC (in person)
5	Chuck Loffland	USFS retired (in person)
6	Kayla Dale	AFPD (in person)
7	Rich Farrington	AWA, UMRWA Board member
8	Linda Helm	USFS, ENF, Amador RD
9	Anne Calderwood	Beaver Integration Group
10	Chris Shull	Mason, Bruce, & Girard Inc.
11	Kaylee Dillashaw	CRCD
12	Char Sarkis	ACCG Administration (in person)
13	Sophia Kaufman	MLJT
14	Sue Holper	private citizen
15	Richard Sykes	UMRWA
16	Amanda Watson	ARCD
17	John Buckley	CSERC
18	Megan Layhee	UMRWA, ACCG Administration
19	Trina Walley	CRCD
20	Hannah Grabowski	SPI