

# COLUSA SUBREACH NEWS

Issue 2, April, 2006

## **PROJECTS WILL ADDRESS LANDOWNER QUESTIONS**

Colusa Subreach Planning (CSP) is a collaborative effort among landowners, other local interests and resources agencies. It will develop a practical conservation strategy for the twenty-one mile stretch of the Sacramento River, inside of the flood control levees, from Princeton to Colusa. The twenty-one member Advisory Workgroup met eleven times to identify the major questions and concerns of area landowners related to wildlife habitat conservation. They then chose planning and research projects to address those questions and help resolve potential conflicts. The Workgroup will also advise the planning of wildlife habitat restoration. Private properties will not be accessed without permission and private property rights will be respected. Colusa Subreach Planning is midway through a three-year term. It is funded by the California Bay-Delta Program, commonly known as CALFED.

## **HABITAT RESTORATION WILL BE PLANNED WITH NEIGHBORS**

Colusa Subreach Planning includes planning for eight sites that have been purchased for restoration of wildlife habitat. Neighboring land owners and any other interested persons will be asked to identify concerns and opportunities and preliminary plans will be reviewed with the neighbors. The results of the various planning and research projects will also be shared in order to help ensure that conflicts are avoided.

## **FLOOD CONTROL IS THE TOP CONCERN ALONG THE RIVER**

Along the Sacramento River, flood control is consistently the top concern raised by local residents. Accordingly, the Advisory Workgroup chose a series of key questions that will be answered through a hydraulic analysis study that features a state-of-the-art, two-dimensional hydraulic model of the entire Colusa Subreach. Local residents have questioned whether the river has as much flood carrying capacity as it had in the past. To answer this question, the hydraulic model will be used to analyze the existing capacity of the floodway and to compare that capacity to the original 1957 system design. Questions related to the effects of large woody debris on flood flows will also be evaluated. Additionally, the model will be utilized to determine the effects of potential wildlife habitat restoration projects on the flood control system to ensure that flood safety is not compromised.

The engineering firm of Ayres Associates has been retained to develop the hydraulic model and to prepare this important information for public review. The Advisory Workgroup chose Fran Borcalli, a well-known water engineer from

Sacramento, to provide independent peer review of this flood impact analysis. Mr. Borcalli endorsed the scope of work that Ayres Associates is following and he will review the final product of this work. The results of this new flood control analysis will be shared with local, state and federal agencies as well as the public as part of Colusa Subreach Planning.

## **PUBLIC RECREATION IS A CLEAR LOCAL PRIORITY**

Many residents of the Colusa-Glenn County area have indicated that they want to see improved public access to the public lands along the river. At the same time, some neighboring landowners are concerned about the effects of increased public access. In response, the Advisory Workgroup initiated two recreation planning projects. A new master plan will be developed for expansion of the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area. The Nature Conservancy will donate a 238-acre property to the State to more than triple the size of the existing Recreation Area. This new master plan will determine how this expansion area will be used and also how the existing park should be reconfigured to best fit the proposed new boat ramp location. Concurrently, the City of Colusa is planning the relocation of the boat ramp so that it can be used all year long. The second recreation project is a plan for improving public access to other public properties in Colusa Subreach. The Workgroup chose the firm of EDAW Inc. to work with local landowners and residents to develop these two plans.

A first public input meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 11 at the Colusa Industrial Properties meeting room in Colusa.

### **YOU ARE INVITED TO A PUBLIC INPUT MEETING ON RECREATION PLANS**

The first of three public input meetings on public recreation plans for the Colusa Subreach will be held on Thursday, May 11 at 7:00 p.m. at the Colusa Industrial Properties meeting room at 100 Sunrise Boulevard in Colusa.

The Meeting will focus on two planning topics.

- ***A master plan for expansion of the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area***
- ***A plan for improving access to public properties along the Sacramento River in the Princeton-to-Colusa area***

**Your ideas and comments are important to help make the most of these plans!**

## **LOCAL FISCAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS WILL BE DETERMINED**

The potential effects of additional public land ownership on the tax base and the effect of the conversion of farm land to wildlife habitat on the local economy are both frequently-stated concerns. To quantify these impacts, the Advisory Workgroup chose an analysis of the fiscal and economic effects of proposed wildlife habitat conservation projects. The firm of Economic Planning Systems (EPS) was chosen to prepare this study. EPS will coordinate with local government officials, the local agricultural community and local economic interests in this study. As with other CSP projects, the results will be shared with local officials and the public.

## **REGULATORY AND PEST SPECIES EFFECTS WILL BE INVESTIGATED**

Landowners in the Colusa Subreach have raised the question of how wildlife habitat restoration projects affect adjoining properties in terms of government regulations and pest species. The first concern relates to the possibility of increased government regulation related to endangered species, pesticides, water quality, etc. The second relates to the potential for the planting of natural vegetation to result in increased damage to neighboring crops by agricultural pest species such as insects, gophers, voles and deer. The Workgroup also chose EDAW Inc. to investigate these questions and develop a solid information base regarding these potential effects. EDAW will work with local farmers and agricultural experts as well as public agencies to clarify the nature of these effects. The project will also identify ways to avoid any such problems as part of future wildlife habitat restoration projects.

## **GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY AND LANDOWNER ASSURANCES ARE MOVING FORWARD**

The Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF) is moving to expand its "Good Neighbor Policy" to strengthen "Landowner Assurances" along the Sacramento River. The Good Neighbor Policy has been in process for several years but the urgency to complete this Policy was brought to the forefront by Colusa

County SRCAF representative Ben Carter in December. The SRCAF's existing project review and tracking process that has been in place since 2003 will be retained. New policy proposals include incidental take of protected species, a mitigation area, conflict resolution and a good neighbor fund to compensate for damages. A committee of the SRCAF Board developed the draft policy and proposed projects to implement these Landowner Assurances. The SRCAF has requested comments on the proposal from all interested persons.

Concern that all of the Good Neighbor Policy items are not yet implemented was an impetus for eight members of the CSP Advisory Workgroup to withdraw from the body. Some members are still involved on an informal basis and others are not. The individual option to choose to participate as part of the Workgroup was accepted and the CSP process has continued to move forward. Prior to these recent events, the principal questions and concerns of local landowners were identified by the entire Advisory Workgroup after much deliberation. Accordingly, the studies chosen by the Workgroup to respond to these questions have all been initiated as they were envisioned by the entire Advisory Workgroup.

## **Help us Improve our Mailing List**

This second CSP newsletter is being sent to landowners inside of and adjoining the levees in the Colusa Subreach, per county records, and to other interested individuals and organizations. If you know of someone else who should receive it or if there is a better address for you, please call the SRCAF at (530)-528-7435. **Thank you.**

## **QUESTIONS?**

Would you like to know more about Colusa Subreach Planning? Do you have ideas regarding the various planning and research projects? If so, please contact us:

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