



# **COLUSA SUBREACH NEWS**

Issue 3, March, 2007

### BIG IMPROVEMENTS ARE PLANNED FOR THE STATE RECREATION AREA

A Master Plan that establishes a new blueprint for Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area was endorsed by residents of the Colusa-Glenn County area at a public meeting in December. The Master Plan, which was prepared by EDAW Inc., incorporated many ideas that came from local area residents. These ideas were generated during three public input meetings held during 2006 as part of Colusa Subreach Planning (CSP).

The Master Plan builds upon the City of Colusa's proposal for a new boatramp located adjacent to the Sacramento River at the southeast corner of the park. It calls for a complete update of the 40-year old facility including relocation and expansion of the parking area near the new boatramp and the relocation of the campground outside of the levee to double the number of campsites and provide for full RV hookups. The Nature Conservancy has donated 238 acres of adjoining property to State Parks, which will feature 2 miles of multiuse trails, a seasonal camping area, a large meadow for special events and a beach for river access, all surrounded by restored native wildlife habitat.

Initial funding for the City's boat ramp relocation proposal was included in the Governor's proposed budget and the City hopes to begin design of the project in 2008. Funding for the remainder of the Recreation Area is not yet secured but the project may qualify for State Parks funding that will come from the recentlyapproved Proposition 84. At this point, local support for the Recreation Area expansion is key to securing State funding.

A second plan, the Recreation Access Plan for the Colusa Subreach, details appropriate access and site improvements to support compatible recreation use of other public lands along the river between Princeton and Colusa. Following the ideas of local residents and landowners the Plan recommends that additional public access not be provided until State agencies have the resources to better manage and maintain such areas. As a result, all but two of the public lands in the Colusa Subreach would continue to have only boat-in access from the river. The Recreation Access Plan also received a consensus endorsement from the people who attended the December 4th public meeting on the draft Plan. Both the Master Plan and the Recreation Access Plan are available for review at local libraries and on line.

## CSP Plans and Reports

Colusa Subreach Planning documents are available for review at the public libraries in Colusa, Princeton and Willows and online at <u>www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov</u>. Materials are also available from the CSP project manager, Gregg Werner at 530-897-6370 x216.or by email at <u>gwerner@tnc.org</u>.



New Campground and Boatramp Plan for Colusa –Sacramento River State Recreation Area

### HYDRAULIC MODELING REVIEWS FLOODWAY CAPACITY

Initial hydraulic modeling results indicate that existing flood flow levels on the Sacramento River near Colusa are below those projected as "Design Flows" in 1957. This positive note was a key finding of a Draft Initial Report that was released in early February. The Report describes the development of a state-of-the-art two dimensional hydraulic model for the Colusa Subreach by Ayres Associates as part of Colusa Subreach Planning. It also provides a detailed comparison of the flood elevations projected under existing conditions as compared to the 1957 Design Flows for the whole Subreach. The report uses colorful graphics to make complex technical data clear to nonengineers.

The model will be used to evaluate the existing capacity of the floodway between Princeton and Colusa and to design wildlife habitat restoration that meets flood control standards. Ayres will also use the model to evaluate the effects of large woody debris on flood flows. The scope of work for the modeling effort was directed by the Advisory Workgroup to address flood control as the most important concern of local residents in regard to wildlife habitat conservation. The Workgroup asked to have a hydraulic analysis that includes the entire 21 mile section of the river from Princeton to Colusa and evaluates the cumulative effects of all proposed wildlife habitat projects in the area. The Workgroup also directed that Ayres' modeling work be reviewed by a second expert and Fran Borcalli of Wood Rodgers Engineering was selected to perform peer review.

A public meeting is planned in the summer to share the final results of the hydraulic modeling. The Draft Initial Report has been shared with the Advisory Workgroup and local engineers and it is available for public review.

### LOCAL FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS ARE DETAILED

A relatively small effect is projected for additional public land ownership and conversion of land to wildlife habitat that is proposed in the Colusa Subreach. These effects are detailed in the Fiscal and Economic Impact Analysis for the Colusa Subreach that was prepared by Economic Planning Systems (EPS) with the assistance of Colusa County officials and agricultural interests. The Advisory Workgroup requested this analysis to clarify the fiscal and economic effects of proposed conservation projects. The detailed analysis projects that Colusa County will see a total annual decrease of about \$5,000 in property tax revenue, about .02% of the County's budget. The conversion of about 400 acres of land to wildlife habitat is projected to have a net effect of about \$245,000 on the combined Colusa and Glenn County economy, about.028% of the \$897,000,000 total. The report projects small changes in employment and local sales and also details new revenues and economic activity related to increased recreation opportunities.

The *Analysis* was reviewed by local agencies as well as the Advisory Workgroup. It is available for review online and at the local libraries.

### REGULATORY AND PEST EFFECTS ANALYSIS IS UNDERWAY

How will wildlife habitat restoration projects affect adjoining farmers in terms of government regulations and pest species? This was another of the principal "Landowner Questions" identified by the Advisory Workgroup. Researchers from EDAW Inc. are meeting with local farmers and agricultural advisors to help answer this question. The first concern is the possibility of increased government regulation related to endangered species, pesticides, water quality, etc. The second is the potential for the planting of natural vegetation to result in increased damage to neighboring crops by pest species such as insects, gophers, voles and deer.

EDAW is reviewing the application of state and federal regulations as well as wildlife and agriculture research to develop a solid information base for the project. Their research includes new studies that plot the abundance and distribution of specific small rodents and insects that can affect crops yields. The project will also identify ways to control such problems. Initial findings will be reviewed with interested local farm interests in late spring and will be available for public review in the summer. New ideas from the study will be incorporated into the design of wildlife habitat restoration projects in the Colusa Subreach.

#### SRCAF ADOPTS THE GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

The Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum Board of Directors adopted their longawaited Good Neighbor Policy on March 15. The Policy was fine-tuned by a committee of seven Board members that included three landowners and two County Supervisors, all from the Sacramento River corridor.

Highlights include:

- **Communications and Review** an extensive communications process is set to ensure that potential problems with wildlife habitat projects are addressed with neighboring landowners during project design.
- *Mitigation Area and Regulatory Assurances* – SRCAF is developing a Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement that can relieve landowners of Endangered Species Act limitations on their operations. SRCAF will also help local agencies to streamline their projects along the river and to promote mitigation banking.
- Conflict Resolution SRCAF will facilitate a conflict resolution process to bring neighbors together to help resolve disputes equitably.

The Good Neighbor Policy tries to maximize what SRCAF can do as a private nonprofit corporation. The Board noted that the Policy could not meet everyone's wishes due to existing state and federal laws, but they pledged to continue to work to facilitate communication and develop practical solutions to problems.

#### Questions and Comments about Colusa Subreach Planning?

Please contact us:

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