

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 long-awaited 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:

Burt Bundy, Manager
Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum,
(530) 528-7411 or bundy@water.ca.gov

Gregg Werner, Project Director
The Nature Conservancy
(530) 897-6370 x216 or gwerner@tnc.org