

# COLUSA SUBREACH NEWS

Issue 5, August, 2008

## COLUSA SUBREACH PLANNING SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED

Colusa Subreach Planning (CSP) was conceived in response to the request by local residents and government representatives to have public and comprehensive planning for wildlife habitat conservation in the Princeton to Colusa Subreach of the Sacramento River. Colusa and Glenn County stakeholders asked for a cumulative analysis of the potential effects of conservation programs on flooding, water supply, farming, recreation, and property rights. The Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum and The Nature Conservancy worked with Colusa County's appointed representatives to design a program responding to this request. Funding was obtained from the CALFED program and the CSP was initiated in 2004.

The planning process has concluded with the distribution of this final newsletter. The four-year program has met its key objectives:

- ◆ *Increase local landowner involvement in planning for wildlife habitat conservation.*
- ◆ *Conduct a transparent planning process open to all stakeholders that wish to participate.*
- ◆ *Develop new tools and information to help direct flood management and wildlife habitat conservation in the Subreach.*
- ◆ *Develop plans for wildlife habitat conservation and recreation use that are compatible with the important flood management, water supply, and agriculture functions along the river.*

Many landowners and other interested local residents from Colusa and Glenn counties took part in the various CSP meetings and activities. These activities included twenty-two meetings of the Advisory Workgroup, nine Subgroup meetings, three public information meetings and three public workshops.

## THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED

Colusa Subreach Planning accomplished its objectives because of the contributions of many people. A major debt of gratitude is owed to the members of the Advisory Workgroup who stayed involved over four years. These dedicated folks reviewed seemingly endless meeting agendas, meeting summaries, and draft reports. They provided essential direction to the planning process. Landowners in the Subreach, especially those with land adjoining proposed restoration tracts, also deserve special recognition for their time spent meeting with project staff and for the ideas that they contributed.

**On behalf of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum and The Nature Conservancy, "Thank you" to everyone who shared their time and opinions.**



**The Colusa Subreach includes important flood management, water supply, agriculture, recreation, and wildlife habitat uses**

## COLUSA SUBREACH STRATEGY

An important product of CSP was a Strategy that will help direct the future actions of state and federal agencies and conservation organizations within the Colusa Subreach. This Colusa Subreach Strategy is based on the concept that the floodway between Princeton and Colusa serves important flood management, water supply, agriculture, recreation, and wildlife habitat functions that all have great benefit to Colusa and Glenn Counties and the State of California.

The Subreach Strategy is composed of 37 recommendations organized into seven topics:

- Flood Management
- Recreation
- Management of Public Lands
- Wildlife Habitat on Private Land
- Regulatory Streamlining
- Acquisition for Habitat Conservation
- Restoration of Riparian Habitat

These recommendations were drawn from the public input received during CSP and the various planning and research projects that were a central part of the planning process. The Strategy was reviewed and approved by the Advisory Workgroup at their final meeting on June 6. The Strategy is contained in Chapter IX of the Colusa Subreach Planning Report and is also available on the CSP website.

## STREAMLINED ESA COMPLIANCE FOR LANDOWNERS IS NEAR

The Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF) is nearing completion of a Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement. The program provides certain regulatory assurances related to additional threatened and endangered species and elderberry plants on their property. For further information contact Beverley Anderson-Abbs or Josh Brown at SRCAF by calling (530) 528-7435.

## **MAJOR PLANNING AND RESEARCH PROJECTS COMPLETED**

The Advisory Workgroup initially focused on identifying the principal questions of landowners in the Princeton to Colusa area. Planning and research projects were then conducted to help answer these questions and resolve concerns. Key CSP projects were:

**Hydraulic Analysis** – A state-of-the-art hydraulic model was created for the entire Subreach to evaluate the flood management system and ensure that restoration projects do not increase flood risks. Questions related to floodway capacity as compared to the original design, and the effects of large woody debris and restoration projects were answered.

**Colusa State Recreation Area Master Plan** – A new development plan was prepared for the Recreation Area based on input received at local meetings and workshops. The State and the City of Colusa are moving forward to implement the initial elements of this plan

**Recreation Access Plan** – A plan for future improvement and access to public lands in the Colusa Subreach was prepared, also based on local public input. This plan will help guide future state agency actions.

**Fiscal and Economic Impacts** – The financial effect of public land acquisition and habitat restorations on local agencies and the local economy was determined with the assistance of local government officials.

**Pest and Regulatory Effects** – Concerns regarding animal pest and government regulation effects resulting from habitat restoration were analyzed and research was conducted to identify potential problems. New tools were identified to resolve problems as part of the design of habitat restoration.

**Wildlife Habitat Restoration Plans** – Eight sites, owned by the State or TNC, were identified for possible restoration to native riparian vegetation that would connect existing areas of remnant wildlife habitat. Plans were prepared for these restorations incorporating the results of the other planning and research projects as well as the input from neighbors.

**Colusa Subreach Environmental Evaluation** – A dual purpose report was prepared to provide a summary of the effects of the proposed wildlife habitat restoration projects in the Colusa Subreach and to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. Public review was concluded and the Department of Fish and Game is expected to certify the document soon.

**Colusa Subreach Planning Report** - The Report chronicles Colusa Subreach Planning and details the findings and recommendations of CSP. It includes the Colusa Subreach Strategy and an evaluation of the program.

All Colusa Subreach planning and research reports are public documents that are intended to be shared with all interested persons.

## **COLUSA RECREATION AREA PROJECTS MOVING FORWARD**

The City of Colusa and the State of California are moving forward to implement the Master Plan for the Colusa Sacramento River State Recreation Area on several fronts:

- **New Boatramp** – The City received state funding for the design of the new boatramp and is proceeding on the project. The new and improved boatramp will be located where it will not require expensive dredging so that it can be open for public use all year.
- **Ward Tract Restoration** – The Department of Water Resources is requesting bids for the restoration of 139 acres in the northern portion of the Recreation Area. This will replace habitat removed in the recent clearing of the Tisdale Bypass as well as accommodate future trails, camping and river access. Planting is anticipated in the spring of 2009.
- **New General Plan** – The Department of Parks and Recreation is preparing a General Plan for the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area. It will incorporate the Master Plan and set future management plans for the Area.

### **REPORTS AND INFORMATION**

Colusa Subreach Planning reports are available for review at the public libraries in Colusa, Princeton, and Willows. They are also available online at [www.sacramentoriver.org/SRCAF](http://www.sacramentoriver.org/SRCAF). Hard copies are available from the CSP project manager, Gregg Werner at 530-897-6370 x216 or [gwerner@tnc.org](mailto:gwerner@tnc.org)  
Available documents include:

- *Colusa Subreach Hydraulic Analysis Report*
- *Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area Master Plan*
- *Colusa Subreach Recreation Access Plan*
- *Fiscal and Economics Effects Analysis*
- *Restoration Tract Baseline Assessments*
- *Pest and Regulatory Effects Study*
- *Colusa Subreach Environmental Evaluation*
- *Colusa Subreach Planning Report*