

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – January 8, 2008

Acting Chair – Beverley Anderson-Abbs

Beverley Anderson-Abbs opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Don Anderson, Bruce Ross, Aric Lester, Adam Henderson, Joe Silveira, Lady Bug Doherty, Kent Smith, Rebekah Funes, Dan Efsseff, Gregg Werner, Scott Rice, Kelly Moroney, Scott Clemons, Ryan Luster, Bobie Hughes, Henry Lomeli, Josh Brown and Ellen Gentry.

Announcements

Lady Bug Doherty recommended the books: Reclamation 108, Battling the Inland Sea and The Tule Breakers to the group for history about land reclamation and levees in the Central Valley. She also discussed the name change of the State Reclamation Board to the State Central Valley Flood Protection Board, as a result of the need for flood control to protect urban areas and the current lack of land reclamation by the State of CA. Safety and levees are main concerns. Evidentiary hearings are now required if there is any controversy involved with a project. Building remains a county decision and counties may be required to share in flood costs. Stephen Bradley has been promoted to work on the State Plan of Flood Control. Dan Fua is the Acting Chief Engineer of the Central Valley Flood Protection Board. Legislative appointees, Lois Wolk and Darrell Steinberg, are non-voting.

The Sacramento River Preservation Trust is holding their 9th Annual Snow Goose Festival January 25-27. More information can be found at www.snowgoosefestival.org or on the SRCAF website. Contact www.sacriverttrust.org for more information.

Kelly Moroney reported on Todd and Foster Islands, in Tehama County. The two public land islands are proposed to be transferred from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Todd Island is connected to La BARRanca in the summer; Foster Island is a true island. Upon approval of the transfer, and as included in the Sacramento River Comprehensive Conservation Plan, the FWS would continue to provide wildlife-dependent recreation opportunities on the islands including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education and interpretation. Both islands are accessible by boat. The transfer is in the Federal Register and public comment period ends March 26, 2008.

Activity Reports

Scott Rice, URS, reported levee inspections are completed and contacting various districts has begun. Vegetation criteria used did not reflect Corps policy. An inspection done December 28th indicated rock work at Phelan Levee was done without appropriate permits. Rock was placed on the bench, on the water side of the private levee, even though the site does not meet criteria as a critical erosion site (see November and December TAC notes). Action is to be determined. Scott noted that two transcripts with good information are available on the Reclamation Board's website under Meeting Transcripts. The field action report is available at www.sacramentoriver.org.

Joe Silveira, USFWS, gave a presentation on the bank swallow (*Riparia riparia riparia*), a migratory, neotropical, CA threatened species. Joe discussed population trends from 1986-2007 and habitat trends along the Sacramento River from Red Bluff to Colusa (Reach 2 and 3, RM243-143). Over 70% of the California population breeds on the Sacramento River. In 1986 there were approximately 13,000 nesting pairs, while in 2007 only 8,000 were counted with 8 colonies containing 49% of the population. With large portions of a population in a small number of colonies a catastrophic loss due to something like summer high flow bank collapse could seriously effect the survival of the population. Eroding banks are high quality bank swallow habitat.

Accumulative bank stabilization on eroding banks went from 0mi. in 1935 to 48mi. in 2002; 48% of all outside bends between Red Bluff and Colusa. Analysis of 21 years of population data relative to bank armor and landscape features is being done by a graduate student at CSUC with the conservation partnerships of other groups and agencies.

Planned Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge management programs with Bank swallow related objectives were listed as follows: Riparian vegetation and habitat strategies – restore riparian and floodplain vegetation (grasslands); Floodplain and river processes strategies – restore floodplain topography and coordinate with stakeholder groups for best management practices regarding flood management projects; Threatened and Endangered species strategies – conduct annual bank swallow population monitoring and support cooperative

research; Migratory land bird strategies – coordinate with RHJV, PRBO and others to periodically monitor riparian focal species at restored and native areas.

SRCAF coordinated a meeting for agencies and stakeholders to discuss issues and potential strategies. It has been recognized that if bank stabilization projects move ahead project by project with no comprehensive plan, the bank swallow may not survive. DFG agreed to host a workshop to determine short term and long term actions, with opportunities to provide conservation along with landowners' needs and incentives. The first meeting is being organized for February.

Current Projects/Updates

Ryan Luster announced a one day presentation, 8:30-12:30, January 29, at the Holiday Inn Capitol Plaza, of the final results for the Sacramento River Ecological Flows Study. The Final Report, its appendices, and information on the final presentation location and agenda can all be found on the Study's website: <http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erp/sacriverecoflows.asp>.

Gregg Werner gave a Colusa Subreach update. In December the Reclamation Board unanimously approved DWR's proposal to do restoration at Ward property, which will provide mitigation for Tisdale Bypass sediment removal project. The restoration is integrated with campground, hiking paths and a master plan for state recreation. A public meeting was held November 15 to review the Sacramento River Flood Control System and the two dimensional Hydraulic Modeling of the potential restoration sites in the Colusa Sub-reach, as well as the Tisdale Bypass Sediment Removal Project and Habitat Restoration, and the Hydraulic Modeling of the Habitat Restoration at the Ward property. Copies of the hydraulic analysis draft are available and can be reviewed at a future TAC meeting. The environmental assessment for the seven restoration sites should be out in late February. A final landowner survey will be done the end of January. The Advisory Workgroup is scheduled to meet March 10 and another public informational meeting will be held in the spring.

Beverly Anderson-Abbs discussed the Woodson Bridge/Kopta Slough Flood Damage Reduction and Habitat Restoration Project. This project was initially funded by the US Army Corps of Engineers to remove unnecessary bank revetment that was causing downstream erosion and flooding problems in Tehama County. The USACE funding was removed in 2003 with the feasibility study partially complete. In light of mitigation needs now for flood protection, the feasibility study is being completed by DWR to determine the best alternative to relieve erosion pressure from Woodson Bridge and the State and County Parks. A public meeting is scheduled for January 24, 6:30-8:00PM, in Corning. Announcements will be sent with further details.

New Projects or Proposal Review

The Codora Unit Grant Proposal (Project Tracker #130) has been updated. The funding proposal to restore 273 acres of walnut orchard on the 399 acre Codora Unit is being submitted to River Parkways for Prop 50 funds. This unit is within the Beehive Bend Sub-reach where 1500 acres have previously been restored between RM170-166. The following timeline was given: July 2008-June 2009 – NEPA and CEQA compliance, fall 2009 – orchard removal, Spring 2010 – plant native vegetation, Dec. 2012 – project completion. Habitat restoration will be integrated with public access. The site does not abut private property or orchards and is buried within the refuge; USFWS is coordinating with State Parks to provide access to the refuge. Kelly Moroney added that landowner concerns have been satisfied regarding trespass across the levee. Public meetings will be held as required. It was determined that this project meets the principles and guidelines of the Handbook and will be taken to the SRCAF Board, January 17, for a letter of support. For more information on this project go to http://www.srcfprojectracker.org/ProjectTrak/ProjectTrack_Details.aspx?var1=130

Programmatic Safe Harbor/Voluntary Local Program

Josh Brown noted seven species will be covered. Information is being gathered on species habitat and management practices for baseline forms for surveys with cooperating owners. The program will go through CEQA. It will go before the SRCAF Board in March and information on a public meeting and public comment period will be sent. It is expected to be submitted to the federal register by June/July. Josh and Beverley attended a public meeting for the Rangeland Coalition SH/VLP looking at areas to be covered and identified areas to combine and work together. Another Rangeland meeting will be held the 22nd in Sacramento.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 5 (location to be determined).