

## **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting notes – March 1, 2011**

Chair: Tom McCubbins

Tom McCubbins opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Laura Westrup, Ryan Luster, Mark Dettling, Chrissy Howell, Michael Rogner, Henry Lomeli, Terry Roscoe, Peter Perrine, Matt Rogers, Jane Dolan, Rob Irwin and Ellen Gentry.

### **Announcements**

Peter Perrine, WCB Assistant Executive Director, introduced Terry Roscoe, the WCB Riparian Program Manager as of February 1. Terry took Scott Clemons' position. Tony Chappelle, WCB Program Manager, is in the process of transitioning some of the riparian projects to Terry.

### **Activity Reports**

TCRCD reported hiring a new employee who will oversee more involvement with wildfire issues. Sixty miles of shaded fuel breaks between the Shasta County line and the Paynes Creek area are being created.

### **New Projects or Proposal Review**

*Population Status of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo in the Sacramento Valley: Results of 2010 surveys* - Chrissy Howell, PRBO, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Western population (DPS) proposed for federal listing as state endangered in CA. There are three populations in CA, on the Sacramento, Kern and Colorado Rivers. Challenges are that cuckoos breed from late June into early August, are extremely elusive, and their natural history is not well known. Severe riparian habitat loss has a negative effect on the cuckoo, however cumulative restoration efforts restored include 1500+ha (hectares) between Red Bluff and Colusa.

Boat surveys were done in cooperation with USFWS, DFG, TNC and River Partners using call playback protocol. Eighteen individuals were detected at La Barranca, Ohm, Rio Vista, Pine Creek, Phelan Island, Llano Seco, Packer Island, DFG Site 21, Princeton East, Princeton South and Moulton Island. This breaks down to 11 sightings on USFWS property, 6 on DFG property, and one on private land. Detectability varies with date and is highest in July and occupancy varies with area (territory size).

Future research will continue to monitor the Sacramento River population, further cross-walk old cuckoo data with new protocol, use radio telemetry to determine territory sizes and study additional habitat selection cues (i.e., prey base, landscape scale cues, etc.). A final report is expected to be released in two weeks. For more information contact Chrissy at [chowell@prbo.org](mailto:chowell@prbo.org).

*Sacramento Ecological Flows Tool (EFT) 2* - Ryan Luster, TNC, gave an update for the Sacramento River and Delta. Potential water development projects on the horizon include: Sites off-stream storage reservoir (NODOS), raising Shasta Dam, BiOps & OCAP, and the Delta Vision and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). EFT adds to water operations planning by allowing comparison of effects on multiple ecological targets, enabling this comparison among alternative water management projects, allowing comparison of different management actions, provides a range of outputs from simple to complex for the above comparisons and developing ecological flow regime recommendations. The EFT vision: make it easy to expand the ecological considerations and science foundation used to evaluate water management alternatives for the Sacramento River.

Currently there are few ecosystem components (temperature, salinity, in-stream flows, salmon and temperature control points). With SacEFT, components include six species (Chinook salmon, Green sturgeon, Western pond turtle, Steelhead, Bank swallows and Cottonwoods) over 150+ river miles, biophysical "plug-in" for existing planning models and new physical models, and managed complexity. Effects on a given species can be evaluated simply with red, yellow, green indicators which convey negative, neutral or positive effects on the species resulting from various management parameters. Additional reports can be accessed to obtain finer detail. The reports generated by the software can be used to characterize target flows which can benefit species (i.e., increase cottonwood recruitment), as well as avoidance flows which can negatively affect a species. The Delta EFT is currently being developed and will include a different suite of indicator species.

For more information: on SacEFT software (version 2.0), go to [www.essa.com/tools/EFT/download.html](http://www.essa.com/tools/EFT/download.html); for the Sacramento River Ecological Flows Study, go to [www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erp/sacriverecoflows.asp](http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erp/sacriverecoflows.asp); or you can contact Ryan Luster at [rluster@tac.org](mailto:rluster@tac.org); (530) 897-6370, ext. 213.

### **Current Projects/Updates**

*Codora Unit Habitat Restoration and Public Use Project Restoration Project* - Ryan Luster, TNC, gave an update on the WCB funded project at Beehive Bend Subreach. The project will restore 274.5ac of habitat on the 399ac Codura unit, with 28.5ac of mixed riparian forest, 30ac of cottonwood forest, 208ac of valley oak savanna and 8ac of grassland. This will connect with 125ac of existing habitat. There will also be integration with public access, visible to the public on HWY 162. Upon completion there will be 1,628ac of contiguous riparian habitat between RM170-166. The project timeline includes July 2008-June 2009 NEPA and CEQA compliance, May 2010 WCB grant agreement signed, Spring 2011 orchard removal and planting native vegetation, and an expected date of project completion of in December 2013.

*Singh Property Restoration* - Ryan Luster, TNC, reviewed the project purpose: 1)Habitat restoration to restore natural topography and vegetation, remove human made berms, remove nonnative vegetation and restore native riparian communities, and 2) Outdoor recreation facility development by developing new outdoor recreational use opportunities (day-use), install trails connecting existing and proposed trails. The project environment is the Chico Landing Subreach. Details include restoring 36ac of habitat with 6.1ac mixed riparian forest, 5ac cottonwood forest, 18.9ac valley oak riparian forest, 3.3ac grassland, and 2.6ac of flow through meadow. Berms will also be removed per USACE design and the project will integrate with public access. The expected completion date is 2014. The application for Riparian Habitat Restoration on the Singh Unit of Bidwell-Sacramento State Park and the Addendum to the FEIR for the Bidwell-Sacramento State Park Habitat Restoration and Recreation Facilities development is available on the SRCAF website at: <http://www.sacramentoriver.org/SRCAF/index.php?id=bidwell>.

*Hamilton City Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration Project* - Ryan Luster, TNC, reported this project was in the President's FY12 budget for \$8M. Work will begin in January 2012, with the construction of a set-back levee, ecosystem restoration and preliminary environmental work. Currently there is 66%flooding from an 11yr event. The new levee will provide up to 75yr protection. The levee will be started from the south; the next federal appropriation will protect from the north.

Henry Lomeli, DFG, reminded the group that this project also proposed a barrier fence for construction to mitigate public trespass and wildlife depredation issues. The Department wrote a comment letter to USACE, March 16, 2009, noting the seven miles of proposed fencing has the potential to create a serious mortality zone for terrestrial wildlife along the Sacramento River during high water flow events, and requested redesign or reconsideration of the fencing component of this project.

This project will be placed on the upcoming, April, TAC Agenda.

### **Next Meeting Date and Location**

The next TAC meeting was scheduled for 9:30-12Noon, April 5, at Willows City Hall.