

## **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – May 6, 2008**

Chair – Ajay Singh

Chair Ajay Singh opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Aric Lester, Adam Henderson, Tom McCubbins, Dan Efsseff, Scott Rice, Lady Bug Doherty, Woody Elliott, Mark Young, Olen Zirkle, Jim Well, Henry Lomeli, Tracy McReynolds, Charles McClain, Tom Boullion, Janet Flanagan, Eduardo Olmedo, Kelly Moroney, Scott Clemons, John Merz, Greg Golet, Laura Westrup, Lynnel Pollock, Debbie North, Carol Barsotti, Bruce Ross, Don Anderson, Aimee Rutledge, Denise Reichenberg, Beverley Anderson-Abbs, Josh Brown, and Ellen Gentry.

### **Announcements**

Sacramento River Preservation Trust is hosting a series of hikes and floats. A float from Jelly's ferry to Bend in Tehama County is scheduled for Sunday, May 11 and one from Mill Creek to Woodson Bridge is scheduled for Saturday, May 17. Please check their calendar at: [www.sacrivertrust.org](http://www.sacrivertrust.org) for others events and dates.

A wide range of upcoming events, including raft guide training, auctions and swap meets, member outings, and river festivals are listed at [www.friendsoftheriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheriver.org)

The Watershed Celebration at the Sacramento River Discovery Center is scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 9AM-1PM. The Annual Float and Fly event at the SRDC (involving model airplanes) will be held with a special use permit in June. For details contact Eduardo Olmedo in Willows, 934-1250.

Kelly Moroney, USFWS, announced the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge Complex is celebrating International Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 10, 8-11AM.

Kelly Moroney noted that the Draft Sacramento, Delevan, Colusa, and Sutter National Wildlife Refuges Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), the 15 year management plan being developed for Sacramento, Delevan, Colusa, and Sutter refuges, will be available for public comment in late June or early July. Public meetings will be held in Willows, Colusa and Yuba City.

The third Safe Harbor (SH) Public Meeting is scheduled for May 23, 10AM-noon, at Yolo County Farm Bureau, 69 West Kentucky Ave., Woodland. The first two public meetings were held April 29 and 30 in Chico and Red Bluff.

The SRCAF Board Meeting/Annual BBQ is scheduled for June 12 at Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area. Notices will be sent.

John Merz suggested a review of the SRCAF principles and guidelines and a handout made available at each TAC meeting.

Following today's meeting at 2:00, Scott Rice, DWR/URS, will host a tour of RM182. The current URS consultant Field Engineer, Dan Nordstrom, as well as George Strand, landscape designer, will be on site. The focus will be on viewing the success of the plantings since implementation and the current and future monitoring and maintenance program.

### **Activity Reports**

Department of Water Resources – Scott Rice, DWR/URS, noted that assessments are still being evaluated for the bank swallow mitigation site for RM182. Completion is anticipated by the end of the year.

Information from the Forum and TAC has been factored into the final EA for the Sacramento River Bank Protection Program alternatives evaluation for repairs at RM 83.9 and 177.8. The report will be finalized this week and available on the website. The hydraulic analysis indicated no significant impacts on adjacent

structures. Construction of the RM177.8 repair plan is expected to begin in July, '08. RM83.9 work is anticipated during 2009.

The Local Levee Assistance Program provides funding for both the Local Levee Urgent Repair program (LLUR) and the Local Levee Evaluation program (LOLE). A Workshop is planned for May 14, 1:00 PM, at the Resources Building, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, in the Main Auditorium. Guidance for levee repairs is available on the DWR website at [www.dwr.water.ca.gov](http://www.dwr.water.ca.gov).

DWR is providing outreach on the non urban levee repair program, June 10 in Chico and June 12 in Fresno, to discuss the planned activities. This will include non urban levee evaluation program status and critical repairs changes. Invitations will be sent next week.

The strategic plan to implement the FloodSAFE program is also available on the website. Legislative requirements will be identified and the public will be informed parcel by parcel. Public outreach is not scheduled yet, but deadlines will be discussed in outreach mid-June.

*US Fish and Wildlife* - Kelly Moroney reported the release of the Draft Environmental Assessment Impact for the Afton Project near Butte City Bridge will be out in the next couple of weeks.

*Mendocino National Forest Service* - Eduardo Olmedo discussed a Red Bluff dredging project as part of the Annual Boat Drag races. The Environmental Review and secured permits are completed. More dredging is anticipated in the fall. A monitoring report for the USACE was submitted last week and is being reviewed. He also noted they are managing noxious weeds in the area, including removal of Tree of Heaven, and habitat restoration to include elderberry bushes. Pampas grass has been removed from the slough all the way to Antelope Blvd.

*River Partners* - Dan Efseaff reported the Eagle Scout project is kicking off. Del Rio recently received funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Wildlife Program to purchase native grass seed for the almond orchard area. Dan offered to do a presentation, recapping the La BARRANCA project, at the next TAC meeting.

*Central Valley Flood Protection Board* - Lady Bug Doherty gave an update on the Board's evidentiary hearing process and possible implications for 40 current encroachment permit applications. This month's agenda included requests for 14 permits. Applications must be complete.

### **Current Projects/Updates**

*M&T Pumps (RM 192L)* (Butte county) - Olen Zirkle, Ducks Unlimited, introduced Jim Well who will be replacing Olen. Olen summarized the history of the M&T Pumping Plant project and went over the studies being done to determine the preferred alternative for long term protection. The Fall 2006 short term solution included rock toe on the west bank and dredging of the gravel bar. The project took three weeks, during which time 85,000 yards were taken out of the gravel bar. Mitigation included 4 acres of riverine habitat, 7 acres of grassland and 20 acres of bank swallow habitat.

Physical modeling included baseline testing with a velocity distribution from 10,000 and 90,000cfs, bed elevation, spur dike configurations, modified spur dike configurations, and dredge channel options.

Next Steps include: complete CSU modeling runs, take samples of the point bar on the west bank to determine how stable it is, run a 2-D model to identify new pumping plant sites, meet with TNC to talk about restrictions on the Shaw property, and identify and prioritize alternatives for a fifth workshop in September.

Questions were raised about extending the pipe into the river, and using wells. Olen noted that with the existing pumping station the pipe can only be extended so far for maximum draw. Intake underneath the river was suggested, but Olen noted fish and siltation problems. A test well was dug which hit hardpan after 100ft. Raney collectors were also studied, but seemed economically unfeasible. Projected river meander indicates a move to the west.

The ongoing project will need a nine month time extension in order to complete data gathering and environmental documentation. It was determined that a letter will be requested from the SRCAF Board to support the time extension. Olen will be available at the SRCAF Board meeting in June.

Recovery of native understory vegetation at riparian forest restoration sites - (part of SRMAP project PT#127)- Charles McClain, CSUC Graduate Student, gave a presentation on the recovery of riparian forest understory. Over the past 150 years the forest extent has been reduced by 95%, from 500,000ac to 23,000ac. Restoration approaches have changed since the earlier attempts which involved Relay Floristic, the idea that if trees and shrubs are planted, the understory will colonize to an Initial Floristic approach in which understory is planted at the start of restoration. Typical understory species include: CA Pipevine, Clematis, CA Blackberry, Goldenrod, Mugwort, CA Grape, Poison Oak, and SB Sedge.

The results of the studies showed the Relay Floristic Approach; although native cover increased from 2001 to 2007 by 6%, it was still much lower than in remnant forests. Comparison of approaches showed the native understory cover was higher using an Initial Floristic approach, but with high variability among sites. The conclusions noted that with the Relay Floristic Approach the understory is slowly colonizing. With the Initial Floristic Approach success is seen most with CA Blackberry.

Other approaches may include: plant greater numbers of understory plants, sow native grasses between rows to exclude exotic species, increase site management to more than three years, remove shade-tolerant exotic species, and wait to plant shade-tolerant natives until after the overstory has reached 70% cover. Future research includes the survey of five more remnant sites for better comparison, determining if sites are moving toward remnant forest structure and composition, and determining landscape factors affecting the recovery of native understory.

DFG expressed an interest in the affects of fire – data before and after fires; however Charles avoided sites with fire, but would make a referral to someone who was familiar with those areas.

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

Knaggs Ranch (RM71-76) (Yolo County) – Sacramento Valley Conservancy is partnering with Yolo Land Trust and Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency for acquisition and permanent protection, funded by WCB. Sandy Morey, DFG and SRCAF Executive Committee Board member, requested the project go through TAC review for consistency with the Handbook, although this property lies just outside of the Conservation Area. The Sacramento Valley Conservancy open space vision does overlap.

The Elkhorn Basin/Knaggs Ranch contains 1700ac of riparian habitat and agricultural land between the Yolo Bypass and the Sacramento River. It provides an opportunity to secure property in permanent protection as habitat, agriculture, and open space, and prevent the possibility of riverfront urbanization in an area that is needed as open space for flood protection. The Phase I acquisition deadline is May 31. The Phase II acquisition deadline is July 31.

SAFCA is interested in protecting this area from flooding. They are negotiating a MOU with DWR for assessment funds and to use this as a pilot project for rural levee protection standard. Modeling, legal counsel, and engineering information will be forthcoming. The land is in the FEMA floodplain because of the status of levees; it will not be used as flood relief. Additional benefits include riparian habitat restoration, some potential riverside recreation and wildlife-friendly ag demonstrations.

The Yolo County General Plan Update includes planning for I-5, south of this property. Lynnel Pollock, SRCAF Public Interest Representative for Yolo County, expressed her support of the project. Lynnel also indicated that Marc Faye, SRCAF Landowner Representative for Yolo County, is also supportive, as are landowners in the area.

The TAC determined the project met with the principles and guidelines of the SRCAF Handbook, with the caveat that it does not fall within the Conservation Area, and would present it to the SRCAF Board for approval of a support letter.

Gaines Public Access Project – Denise Reichenberg, CA State Parks, discussed the Mitigated Negative Declaration on the immediate public use project. The 1948 construction of the Butte City Bridge removed

public access to the river at this location. River Partners donated the parcel to State Parks in 2007 to create river access. The objective now is to provide public river access to the west bank of the Sacramento River and re-establish riparian habitat. The area is surrounded by USFWS land and completion of an interagency agreement for public access to the parcel is needed. No formal visitation currently exists. Summary minimization and mitigation measures all were found to be of no impact, less than significant, or less than significant with mitigation.

The Draft Declaration is available on the SRCAF website homepage: [www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf](http://www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf). Questions or comments regarding the Immediate Public Use Project Mitigated Negative Declaration will be received between April 15, 2008 and May 16, 2008. It was recommended that the project be reviewed again at the June TAC meeting, after the end of the CEQA process.

*Lake CA Fish Screen* – This review will move to the June TAC agenda.

**Programmatic Safe Harbor/Voluntary Local Program**

The third Programmatic Safe Harbor Public Meeting is scheduled for May 23, 10:00AM-noon, at Yolo Farm Bureau, 69 West Kentucky Ave., Woodland. Josh will give an update on the SHA/VLP at the June TAC meeting.

**Next Meeting Date and Location**

The next TAC meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, June 3, at Willows City Hall. The SRCAF Board Meeting/Annual BBQ will be held June 12, at Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area, group campground.