

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – June 3, 2008

Chair – Ajay Singh

Chair Ajay Singh opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Aric Lester, Adam Henderson, Dan Efseaff, Lady Bug Doherty, Henry Lomeli, Kelly Moroney, Bruce Ross, Denise Reichenberg, Beverley Anderson-Abbs, Josh Brown, Basia Trout, Tricia Parker.

Announcements

The SRCAF Board Meeting/Annual BBQ is scheduled for June 12 at Woodson Bridge State Recreation Area. Guided boat tours of the Kopta slough project area will be available prior to the Board meeting.

SRCAF has received a Watershed Coordinator grant from the Department of Conservation to assist with outreach and coordination of the Woodson Bridge/Kopta Slough Flood Damage Reduction and Habitat Restoration Project.

SRCAF Handbook Principals and Guidelines and the review process of projects coming to the TAC were reviewed. A summary of the overall goal and principals of the 1086 program, SRCAF Board policy, and Project Tracker fact sheet was handed out. It was recommended that the guiding principles be summarized in a single slide and put up during project reviews. The six guiding principals will be added to the Project Tracker web-site. For future presentations, project proponents should go over how they met each Principle, if applicable to their project.

Tricia Bratcher announced that DFG received \$38,000 from the Anadromous Fish Screen Program (AFSP) for the planning and design of the Lake California Fish Screen project. They are looking for an additional \$28,000 for construction and installation.

Activity Reports

US Fish and Wildlife - Kelly Moroney asked for some changes to the notes from the May 6 TAC. He will contact Beverley about those changes and the corrected notes will be posted. Kelly announced the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for USFWS Sacramento, Delta, Colusa, and Sutter refuges (15 year management plan) has been delayed and public comment will not occur until later in the summer.

The final Environmental Assessment for the Afton Unit restoration project with responses to public comment is available on the USFWS web site and the SRCAF website (www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf).

USFWS began implementation of maintenance projects on the tri-party agreement which includes constructing fire breaks along the RD1004 levee and removing vegetation within 30 feet of the levee.

USFWS and DFG are preparing to conduct the annual bank swallow survey from Red Bluff to Colusa on June 10 and 11. This survey will also be used as training in survey techniques. Additional surveys are being planned by DWR for above Red Bluff for June 19. Feather River surveys will take place the week of June 16.

The NOAA fisheries Central Valley Salmon Recovery Plan Draft is out for agency comments and will be released for public comment later in the summer.

Tricia Parker provided updates on Sacramento River tributaries. The Battle Creek Hydrologic Power Restoration project has been approved and funded. One lawsuit concerning environmental permitting has been filed. The next meeting will be July 15. USFWS is working with the City of Chico and CSUC to determine the environmental permitting process for a proposed replacement of the Iron Canyon fish ladder on Big Chico

Creek. Cottonwood, Mill, and Antelope Creeks currently have fish monitoring projects ongoing; 120 spring run salmon have been counted on Cottonwood and Antelope Creeks.

The Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) is in the process of reviewing projects funded over the last ten years as well as developing its long term plan for the next ten years.

The Red Bluff Diversion Dam Final EIS is posted on the Bureau of Reclamation website and can be accessed through the SRCAF website (www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf). The preferred alternative is for gates out 10 months, in 2 months. Comment period closes July 7.

Department of Water Resources –The EA/IS for the Sac. River Bank Protection program is available on the Sacramento District website with a link on the SRCAF website (www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf). There are 13 critical repairs included in the EA/IS with only two in the SRCA (RM 89.3 and 177.8). RM 89.3 is not included in the Environmental Assessment as it will not be repaired this year. The preferred alternative is a set back levee. The comment period ends June 9th 2008.

Stakeholder workshops for the FloodSAFE Program are scheduled to take place in Sacramento on June 9th, Clovis on June 19th, and in Chico on June 25th. Flood Safe Strategic Plan as well as other information about the urban levee evaluation and non urban levee repair schedule will be covered (<http://www.water.ca.gov/floodsafe/>).

The Flood Plain Delineation program which will be included in the FloodSAFE Program workshops. The program will support flood risk reporting for land owners and a new hydraulic analysis for the central valley flood plains. A 100 and 200 year flood plain map based on the hydraulic analysis is expected to be produced.

There is a new Local Levee Assistance grant program available through DWR. The grant application process ends June 30th.

A site visit to RM 182 took place following the May TAC. There is a current one year plant establishment period that will go through October 31, 2008. The site will be maintained for an additional two years including weeding and watering which will be gradually reduced as the site becomes sustainable. The total cost of construction, repair, and restoration was \$12.7 million, mitigation costs were \$3.2 million. The weeding schedule has been increased while the site gets established.

Current Projects/Updates

La Barranca Unit (PT#86) RM237-240 (Tehama Co) – Dan Efseaff, River Partners, provided a summary of the comprehensive floodplain reconnection and riparian restoration project on the La Barranca Unit of the USFWS Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. Phase III of the project included removal of an unpermitted levee and reconnection of a gravel pit with existing swales to reduce fish entrapment. AFRP provided funding from the fish entrapment funds for the project.

A priority of the project is to enhance non-structural flood control and improve fish and wildlife habitat. Re-grading of the topography disrupted by agriculture and gravel extraction may expand floodway storage capacity. The project will also enhance habitat for wildlife species and reduce the degradation and seed source posed from invasive non-native plant species. In phase I, alternatives related to fish entrapment, floodplain reconnection, and vegetation management were examined. Data gaps and the preferred alternative were identified. In phase II, 2004, an environmental assessment (NEPA) considered implementation alternatives and select preferred alternatives. Phase III (2004-present), implementation of the preferred alternative, was completed in early 2008. Kelly Moroney added that there are still about 230 acres of actively managed orchards at the unit that USFWS is seeking funding to remove and replant to native riparian habitat.

New Projects or Proposal Review

Lower Deer Creek Restoration and Flood Management Project (PT#139) RM218-220 (Tehama Co) - Representatives from DCWC did not show up to present their project. They will be rescheduled for a later date.

Lake CA Fish Screen(PT#135) RM270) (Tehama Co)– Tricia Parker, USFWS, provided a summary of the Lake California Water Intake Fish Screen project that was previously presented at the April TAC. A fish screen that does not meet modern fish protection criteria is in place at this time and should be replaced. The diversion is located in Tehama County at a highly visible public location at the Lake California boat ramp on the Sacramento River. The project proposes to construct a new fish screen that meets federal and state mandates for safe fish passage. The design, construction, and implementation of this fish screen will be done under an agreement with the DFG Screen shop and working together with willing landowners and agencies to resolve this compliance issue. Currently there is partial funding from AFSP for the planning and design of the project. DFG is seeking additional funding to build the new screen.

It was determined that the project meets the SRCAF Principals and Guidelines and will go to the Board for a letter supporting funding for the project.

Programmatic Safe Harbor/Voluntary Local Program

Josh Brown provided an update on the SRCA Programmatic Safe Harbor/Voluntary Local Program. Three public meetings took place in Chico, Red Bluff, and Woodland to discuss the program with interested parties. A representative of the Central Valley Flood Association attended the Yolo County meeting and expressed interest in getting the Reclamation Districts involved in the program. The SHA/VLP was also presented at an NRCS cluster meeting in Redding to District Conservationists who work along the Sacramento River.

Details need to be worked out for the list of covered activities and SRCAF staff is working with DFG and USFWS to finalize the list. Currently the document is waiting for DFG to complete the CEQA process. It is anticipated that the document will be finalized by the end of 2008. Prospective land owner applicants can have a baseline survey of their property done up to 18 months prior to signing the document.

Next Meeting Date and Location The next TAC meeting was scheduled for July 8th tentatively at the DWR office in Red Bluff.