

SRCAF Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Meeting notes – June 7, 2011

Chair: Tom McCubbins

Tom McCubbins opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Mary Randall, Kelly Moroney, Chris Barr, Michael Rogner, Abby Rizzo, Terry Roscoe, Erin Aquino, Jason Roberts, Larry Lloyd, Aric Lester, Tricia Parker, Bill Terschuren, Emma Suárez, Tricia Bratcher, Ashley Indrieri and Eugene Massa.

Staff: Jane Dolan, Rob Irwin and Ellen Gentry.

Announcements/Activity Reports

Aric Lester, DWR, gave a brief update on the Kopta Slough project. Funding is expected to start up again on this multi-faceted flood damage reduction and restoration project. Aric offered to give a full presentation at an upcoming TAC meeting.

Mary Randall, DWR, reported headquarters is reviewing the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (NSV IRWM) submittal. DWR will provide comments on the submittal in the near future. A final decision whether to remove conditional approval will be made in July. The NSV IRWM group has only been meeting since January. All board members have now been appointed and are forming a Technical Advisory Committee, selecting a consultant to work on the IRWM plan, approving their bylaws and working toward finalizing the Prop 84 grant agreement.

DWR and the Water Education Foundation co-sponsored a 1½ day conference on Integrated Regional Water Management on May 24 and 25. Leigh McDaniel, Glenn County, was a panelist for one of the sessions. There were panel discussions on the benefits and challenges of integrated regional water management and ways to improve the program.

The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan will hold a second Technical Analysis Workshop June 10 in Stockton, and will provide an overview of analyses supporting development of the State System-wide Investment Approach (SSIA), including evaluation methods and initial findings. The SSIA, in part, incorporates elements from three alternative approaches to flood management: achieve State Plan of flood control design capacity, protect high risk communities and enhance flood system capacity. For additional information and to RSVP for the workshop, go to: <http://www.water.ca.gov/cvfmmp/meetings/>.

The next Public Advisory Committee meeting, for the CA Water Plan Update 2013, will be June 29, in Sacramento. The committee works to form a comprehensive approach for water planning and management.

The first Sacramento River Regional Forum was held June 2 in Colusa. This forum was part of a new regional approach for discussing water issues and management strategies. The concept evolved from the Regional Workshops that supported Update 2009 of the CA Water Plan. Those workshops focused on developing the Water Plan Regional Reports, which described local conditions and activities related to water and flood planning and management. The participants voiced some concerns about the format of submitting comments on the Regional Reports, so Water Plan staff listened to the concerns, stepped back and are regrouping. Two to four Forums will likely be held each year in each of the 12 regions, with agendas focused on specific water related programs associated with DWR and other agencies.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Ag Use Efficiency Workshop will be held July 20 in Sacramento and will also be webcast. Go to the SWRCB website, www.swrcb.ca.gov/, for additional information.

Tricia Parker Hamelberg, USFWS, reported on the pursuit of funding for the proposal to restore the connection of Anderson Creek Slough to the Sacramento River. The project is no longer on the radar for federal funding. On his own, the landowner is working with hired consultants to remove the levee.

The Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project spans Tehama and Shasta Counties and would reestablish approximately 42 miles of prime salmon and steelhead habitat on Battle Creek, plus an additional six miles on its tributaries. The project proposes to facilitate the safe passage for, and the growth and recovery of, naturally-produced anadromous fish populations. The project includes removing dams and building screens to improve habitat.

The effort is progressing on schedule and is targeted for completion in 2013. Mary Marshall, US Bureau of Reclamation, is the primary contact for this project. Contact her at MMarshall@mp.usbr.gov, or (916) 978-5248.

The Greater Battle Creek Watershed Working Group meets every other month. The next Working Group meeting will be held July 19, 2011, from 10:00AM to 2:00PM, at the USFWS office, 10950 Tyler Road, in Red Bluff. More information on this group can be found at <http://www.battle-creek.net/bcwg.html>.

Tricia introduced Bill Terschuren, Friends of Northwest Hatcheries (Coleman NFH Friends Group). The volunteer group, working with federal and state employees developed the concept of a two-mile riparian trail along Battle Creek. They determined the trail route, interpretive content, constructed the trail, placed benches with bases and built the interpretive signage. In conjunction with annual spawning season tours of Coleman National Fish Hatchery, optional and custom tours of this wildlife viewing area has been offered to school groups. The project was officially dedicated September 2010. More information on the Battle Creek Salmon Trail and Coleman National Fish Hatchery can be found at: www.fws.gov/coleman/trail.html.

Fiscal funding has been received through the USFWS AFRP for riparian assessment of the Mill Creek Fish Passage Assessment and Restoration Project. Mill Creek is a tributary to the Upper Sacramento River near Los Molinos, CA, in southeastern Tehama County. A consulting firm will be used to assess dam structures on Mill Creek, in order to meet fish passage criteria. Also a Cow Creek water barrier assessment in Shasta County is planned to assess natural and man-made barriers for prioritization to improve fish passage.

For more information on these and other USFWS projects, contact Tricia (Parker) Hamelberg at Tricia.Parker@fws.gov, or call (530) 527-3043x248.

New Projects or Proposal Review

Jane Dolan, SRCAF Manager, clarified that the environmental analysis for the *M&T Llano Seco Fish Screen (Project Tracker #58)* is not funded, although an application for this funding has been submitted. Completion of additional analysis, for the recommended alternatives associated with implementation of long-term protection of the M&T Llano Seco Fish Screen and Pumping Plant, is still scheduled to be completed this summer. When analysis is completed and reviewed, a stakeholder meeting will be organized.

Kelly Moroney, USFWS, noted an extension, for the permit/environmental compliance for the temporary rock toe on the Capay Unit property, will be requested until a long-term solution is developed. The USFWS will develop a Subsequent EA/IS to address NEPA/CEQA compliance required for the extension in the winter of 2011/12.

Projects/Updates

Overview of the Yolo Basin Fisheries Enhancement Plan/Conservation Measure #2 of the Draft BDCP

Jason Roberts, CDFG, gave an overview of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The plan is designed to provide for the conservation of species and to restore water supplies, and proposes a new water conveyance facility in the north Delta. Conservation Measure 2 of the BDCP requires the preparation and implementation of a Yolo Bypass Fishery Enhancement Plan (YBFEP) to improve upstream and downstream fish passage, reduce straying and stranding of native fish, increase availability of floodplain habitat for fish rearing and spawning and to investigate the potential for food web export from the Yolo Bypass to the Delta. Proposed actions to reduce migratory delays and loss include: Fremont Weir fish ladder replacement, experimental sturgeon ramps, deep fish passage gates and channel, stilling basin modifications, Sacramento Weir improvements, Tule Canal/Toe Drain and Libson Weir improvements and Lower Putah Creek improvements.

Replacing the Fremont Weir Denil Fish Ladder will allow for effective passage from the Yolo Bypass to the Sacramento River, incorporating monitoring technologies. Experimental sturgeon ramps will allow for the effective passage of adult sturgeon and incorporate monitoring technologies. Jason reported a deep fish passage notch will be cut through a small section of Fremont Weir to an elevation of 11.5ft. The notch will be fitted with operable "fish passage gates." A fish passage channel will be excavated to convey water from the Sacramento River to the new fish passage gates. Modifications will be made to the existing stilling basin to ensure that the basin drains sufficiently into the deep fish passage channel.

Tule Canal/Toe Drain improvements include physical modifications to passage impediments such as road crossings, agricultural impoundments, existing berms, levees and water control structures. Lisbon Weir will be redesigned to improve fish passage, while maintaining or improving water capture efficiency. Lower Putah Creek

realignment will improve upstream and downstream passage of salmonids, and floodplain restoration will provide benefits for multiple species on existing public lands.

Proposed actions to increase seasonal floodplain habitat includes the Fremont Weir modification, Yolo Bypass modification and the Westside Option. In addition, a Fremont Weir modification includes lowering a section of the weir to 17.5ft., and fitting a section with operable gates that will allow for controlled flow into the Yolo Bypass when the Sacramento River stage exceeds 17.5ft. Yolo Bypass Modification includes sections of the bypass to allow water to inundate in certain areas of the Yolo Bypass to maximize biological benefits and keep water away from other areas to reduce stranding of covered fish species. The modification will also minimize impacts on terrestrial species and other land uses. The Westside Option will include a feasibility study and evaluation of a gated channel to provide flows into the Yolo Bypass along the west side.

Opportunities and constraints of proposed inundation were listed: December inundation benefits listed winter-run salmon, but impacts wildlife activities in the Yolo Bypass; late spring inundation benefits splittail, but impacts agriculture and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area; and increased flow increases inundation area, but adversely impacts agriculture.

All users of the Yolo Bypass must be considered in this fishery enhancement plan. The plan proposes to improve upstream and downstream fish passage, improve availability of seasonal floodplain habitat for covered species and take into consideration the current uses of the Yolo Bypass. Jason added that UC Davis was granted funding and that there is the potential to move these funds in order to do more studies.

The notch will be adjustable; currently there is inundation through late April. Implementation of the conservation measure is up to applicants and regulatory agencies. Permitting processes are required for any implementation of changes in the plan. It was noted that Yolo County and ag interests are not in favor of the proposal.

SRCAF staff provided maps of the enhancement area. More information on Fremont Weir can be found at: [www.sacramentoriver.org/srcf/publications/2011-06-07_Yolo_Basin_Fisheries_Enhancement_BDCP_\(Roberts\).pdf](http://www.sacramentoriver.org/srcf/publications/2011-06-07_Yolo_Basin_Fisheries_Enhancement_BDCP_(Roberts).pdf)

Riparian Sanctuary Restoration Project - (Project Tracker #110)

Michael Rogner, River Partners, provided an overview of the Riparian Sanctuary Restoration Project which will address bank erosion and ongoing river migration at RM 178-9, Glenn County. As the bank erodes, the angle of flow and velocity of the water passing the PCGID-PID Pumping plant fish screen will change. Rather than flowing across the screens, the river will begin to flow toward the screen, trapping fish against screens. USFWS habitat improvement worked with the pumping plant, so that fish screens and the pumping plant will be protected. During the feasibility study, public meetings and TAC meetings were held seeking input. Phase II of the project includes additional technical investigations, environmental compliance, project design and permitting.

Alternatives currently being evaluated: 1) No Action, 2) Spur Dikes, 3) Traditional Riprap with Planting Berm, 4) Traditional Riprap, and 5) Traditional Riprap with Upstream Rock Removal. Restoration alternatives include: 1) No Action, 2) Full Planting, and 3) Site-specific Planting.

Kelly Moroney, USFWS, noted that the upstream rock revetment is not currently maintained and heading toward failure.

A question has arisen regarding ownership of the rock, which is subject to a deauthorization process. The upper rock was installed in 1987; the lower rock was installed in 1985. The original purpose of the rock was to maintain the channel and flow split into Butte Basin, based on one dimension (1D) modeling. Subsequent studies, using 2D modeling, shows it's probably unnecessary to maintain the flow split. The Riparian Sanctuary TAC is investigating ownership, responsibility and liability questions. This issue will need to be resolved before moving forward.

Battle Creek Wildlife Area Riparian Restoration (Tompkins Parcel) - (Project Tracker #159)

Michael Rogner, RP, also reviewed this USFWS property, due east of Cottonwood, west of Jellys Ferry Road, just south of the Tehama/Shasta county line. Phase 1 is already planted; Phase 2 is what will be planted in the future. Thirty acres were planted last month, consisting of 50% trees and 50% shrubs. Funding is being sought for eradication of Tree of Heaven. For more information on the Riparian Sanctuary and Battle Creek Wildlife Area, please go to: [www.sacramentoriver.org/srcf/publications/2011-06-07_Riparian_Sanctuary_Battle_Creek_\(Rogner\).pdf](http://www.sacramentoriver.org/srcf/publications/2011-06-07_Riparian_Sanctuary_Battle_Creek_(Rogner).pdf)

Overview of Resources of the SRCAF Website

Rob Irwin, SRCAF, gave a brief overview of the Sacramento River Library and the Sacramento River GIS websites, which are located in the resources section of the SRCAF website. The Sacramento River Library's searchable database interface allows users to locate and download publications, photographs and links to over 450 documents related the Sacramento River. Information available on this website is expanded and improved on a continuous basis. The Sacramento River GIS website provides access to geographic information data within the Sacramento River 100-year floodplain. GIS data is documented and available for download in various file formats, such as shape files for GIS users and Google Earth files for quick viewing.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for 9:30-Noon, July 5, 2011, at Willows City Hall. However, the comment was raised that its proximity to the holiday and three-day weekend may be problematic for scheduling presentations and may limit attendance. **[This meeting has subsequently been cancelled due to the preceding, 4th of July, holiday.]**