

## **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – August 5, 2008**

Vice Chair – Basia Trout

Vice Chair Basia Trout opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Michael Fehling, Ryan Luster, Adam Henderson, Shirley Lewis, Holly Savage, Tony Chappelle, Scott Clemons, Jack Carroll, Earl Nelson, Marti Kie, Laura Bermudez, Laura Westrup, Jim Dempsey, Tracy McReynolds, Scott Rice, Woody Elliott, Ashley Indrieri, Maureen Teubert, John Merz, Rebekah Funes, Lady Bug Doherty, Tom McCubbins, Ernie Ohlin, Gregg Werner, Don Anderson, Jeff Sutton, Bob Hall, Paul Hoffman, Beverley Anderson-Abbs, Josh Brown and Ellen Gentry

### **Announcements**

Scott Clemons, WCB, announced his retirement and thanked the group for their good work in providing information to the TAC.

### **Activity Reports**

Bureau of Reclamation - Basia Trout provided a review of the Red Bluff Diversion Dam Fish Passage Improvement Project. The purpose is to substantially improve the long-term ability to reliably pass anadromous fish and other species of concern past the Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD), and reliably and cost effectively move sufficient water into the Tehama Colusa and Corning Canal systems to meet the needs of the water districts served by Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority.

The Record of Decision was signed July 16, 2008. Reclamation's decision is to implement the Preferred Alternative as described in the FEIS/EIR, specifically to construct a new pumping plant that will allow diversion of water when gravity diversion is not possible. Two comments were received on the Final EIS/EIR regarding air quality rules and water quality monitoring during and post construction. Reclamation anticipates gates in, July 1 through Labor Day weekend, and will defer to CVP-OCAP findings and subsequent ESA determinations. The project is currently in the design phase for construction. Project facilities will include construction of a vertical propeller pumping plant at the Mill Site on the west side of the Sacramento River upstream of the RBDD, with an initial installed capacity of 2,180cfs, allowing for expansion to 2,500cfs if necessary. A policy review board will be formed to provide input to the design team. Jeff Sutton and Don Reck are contacts for the project. Jeff reported that once pumps are in, the dam is not needed for irrigation. A summary sheet, the Notice of Declaration and CD's on the EIS/EIR were made available. More information is available on the SRCAF website: [www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf](http://www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf).

Department of Water Resources - Scott Rice, DWR, gave an update on levee repairs. The Corps has finished PL84-99 Order 1 sites, those levees with a potential to flood. Two Order 3 sites (those not in danger of significant damage) are located on the Sacramento River east levee, north of Colusa near Moulton Weir, at SF Levee mile 14-15. The levees are relatively far from the bank and repair of the damaged toe erosion includes excavation and reconstruction of the damaged slope to a 3:1, then reseed and mulch. Environmental issues concerning Swainson's hawk, VELB, and anadromous fish, have delayed final construction. Contractor selection is expected in early to mid-August.

The Elder Creek and Deer Creek repair sites are less than 500 ft. in length. Eroded rock will be replaced and vegetation will be planted.

The Sacramento River Bank Protection Program repair at RM177.8R has been delayed into September, with no changes in design. Repair is to re-rock the waterside bench to provide a better barrier, and not interfere with fish screen operation at PGCID. There is concern about a River Partners project upstream, where plans for rock removal could re-establish bank swallow habitat and help redirect the river, taking some of the pressure off this location. John Merz requested information about the budget and time line for construction, pointing out that in-water work must be complete by November 1. He also stressed the importance of coordination with the irrigation district to ensure the repair would not interfere with fish screen operation.

Bank swallow habitat mitigation for work done at RM182 is still underway. DWR is working on assessment of property in order to make an offer to the landowner for a conservation easement. Completion is expected by the end of the year.

For the Floodplain Evaluation and Delineation Project, topographic data at 1 ft. intervals is complete and will be available spring/summer 2009. One hundred and 200 year floodplain maps were provided to agencies, cities, and counties July 1, 2008. The next milestones will include flood protection maps for 3 ft. inundation areas by December 1, and a status report on Project Levees by December 31, 2008.

DWR is working on a strategy for dealing with levee inspections and vegetation on levees. The plan has been prepared by DWR, but is not yet released. It will include a phase approach with phase one focused on adequate inspection and flood-fighting, and phase two focused on set backs, intensive monitoring, and maintenance. The short-term plan is for protection; the long-term plan is for maintenance.

The Local Levee Assistance grant program closed the end of July. There may be another round in early 2009, in order to take advantage of funding availabilities.

Concern about communicating with affected landowners was raised when Adam Henderson, DWR, noted that Ben Carter and other landowners had no idea they had repairs occurring on levees. He emphasized increased communications with landowners. Scott noted that DWR has recognized a need to incorporate.

Department of Parks and Recreation- Woody Elliot gave a status report regarding the mitigated negative declaration on Butte City access on the west side of the Sacramento River, off of Hwy 162. Two parcels, 6acs and 31acs, are separated by Hwy 162 Bridge Road. The northern section (6acs) will include a parking lot, restrooms and picnic tables. The plan includes a domestic well and affords a bank for fishing and recreation. Environmental issues include valley elderberry beetle, bats, and potential bank swallow habitat. Parks may look at a safe harbor agreement for elderberry beetles. The informal levee is an elevated, access road. Document details are available through Woody.

John Merz, Sacramento River Preservation Trust, noted that it would be good to know about the use of the road, and asked about the fit with the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area Master plan. Woody said it was in the conceptual stage with the consultant. John added that grants should be pursued when you have a plan. He did not like the analysis, did not feel it was thorough, and stated that the bar needs to be set higher.

The Nature Conservancy -Gregg Werner reported that the Colusa Subreach Planning Project is finished. Copies of the final newsletter providing a project summary are being mailed this week to landowners and Advisory Workgroup (AW) members. At the final meeting in June the AW approved the final draft report and a final version will be forthcoming. Gregg thanked everyone involved in meeting objectives and setting standards for local involvement.

Tehama County RCD -Tom McCubbins reported on their application for CA Dept. of Food and Agriculture funding for invasive removal on 25 acres of publicly owned land near East Sand Slough in Red Bluff. Project work includes mapping, mechanical reduction, and chemical treatment of Himalayan Blackberry and tree-of-heaven infestations, with planting of native understory species by Sacramento River Discovery Center students. This would also allow some security from transients' encampments in the area. Mapping is provided through an in-kind labor match from TCRC, Shasta College, and NRCS. The City of Red Bluff will be involved with this project fitting into their overall trails, ultimately building a bridge to Bell Mill Road. Invasives removal will be done when the Red Bluff Diversion Dam gates are out and East Sand Slough is dry.

John Merz noted it would be helpful to have the City of Red Bluff give a presentation. This is a popular fishing spot and there is a linkage to Bureau of Reclamation land.

Beverley Anderson-Abbs, SRCAF Manager, reported she has discussed the overall trail plan with Red Bluff City Planner Scot Timboe and will contact him regarding a presentation at the next TAC.

### **FEMA Levee Certification Procedures**

Divisional Vice President Bob Hall and Engineering Program Manager John Carroll, Tetra Tech, gave a presentation on the FEMA program and USACE guidance. The National Flood Insurance Program was established in 1968 and mandatory purchase requirements were established in 1972. Pertinent Corps guidance memorandums require risk based analysis for flood damage reduction studies and certification of levee systems for national flood insurance.

Challenges include: data availability, such as maintenance and inspection records; geotechnical exploration issues; hydraulic capacity in channels; vegetation on levees; aggradation and degradation; and levee seepage. The certification process incorporates: complete levee inventory, research of available data, evaluation of existing levee conditions and performance, categorizing levees, submitting documentation, FEMA review and reaccreditation. The project goal is FEMA certification as appropriate.

Both federal and non-federal levees go through the same procedure for the national flood insurance program and mapping. Private levees can be certified and accredited by FEMA. Advantages for the private owner lifts the requirement for flood insurance and helps for recreational and habitat conservation areas. If insurance is no longer required, it is still available at a reduced rate. Building standards may be lower with certification. Certification is required every five years.

### **Current Projects/Updates**

Sacramento River Ecological Flows Study - Ryan Luster, TNC, gave an update on the Flows Study. TNC applied for funding in 2001, work began in 2004, and after three years of technical review the study was completed in March 2008. The Flows Study goals were to complement existing ecological considerations in the upper and middle river, facilitate linkage between upper river and delta management, and synthesize information to facilitate communication.

Synthesizing information was done through a Linkages Report, designed to provide resource managers and stakeholders with information and tools that will allow them to explore how changes in the pattern of flow releases can affect habitats in the Sacramento River. Focal species for the Linkages Report were steelhead, Chinook salmon (all 4 runs), green sturgeon, bank swallow, western pond turtle and Fremont cottonwood. New analyses of data (historic redd spawning data) is leading to new hypotheses (bed coarsening). Gravel studies, sediment transport modeling, and an off-channel water bodies study were reviewed.

One of the Flows Study tasks included developing a decision analysis tool: the Sacramento Ecological Flows Tool (SacEFT). The goal of SacEFT is to simplify and expand the ecological considerations and science foundation used to evaluate water management alternatives on the Sacramento River. SacEFT adds to water operation planning, allows comparison of effects on multiple ecological targets, enables this comparison among alternative water management projects, allows comparison of different management actions, provides a range of outputs from simple to complex for comparisons, and helps to develop ecological flow regime recommendations. SacEFT adds value because it expands ecological considerations, provides multiple levels of communication, acts as an "eco plug-in" without reinventing systems, and catalyzes exploration of new alternatives.

Ryan reviewed focal species performance measures, conceptual models, indicator ratings, hazard threshold boundaries for species, and explained how various scenarios could be evaluated with annual and multi-year summaries. Target and avoidance flows are not required every single year. Cottonwood recruitment flows are needed once every five to ten years.

The new Ecosystem Restoration Program grant term is June 2008-2011 and will include SacEFT refinement and building the DeltaEFT. The DeltaEFT will integrate management actions between the Delta and Sacramento River ERP ecoregions, work within existing Delta planning forums, and hold stakeholder workshops and conduct outreach.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Ryan Luster, [rluster@tnc.org](mailto:rluster@tnc.org), (530) 897-6370x213, or by going to [www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erp/sacriverexoflows.asp](http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erp/sacriverexoflows.asp).

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

*Lower Deer Creek Restoration and Flood Management: Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design Project (PT#139) RM218-220* (Tehama Co.) - Holly Savage, Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy, gave a summary of the feasibility study for this project which is an effort to respond to the flooding and habitat problems in lower Deer Creek and explore the concept of deliberately using the floodplain of Deer Creek to accommodate part of the flood flows in a controlled fashion. The conceptual design will seek to reduce flood flows and allow the channel to reestablish some of its irregular, hydraulically rough, and ecologically complete pre-levee condition.

The goal is to improve aquatic and terrestrial habitat, while developing feasible solutions to the flooding problem on lower Deer Creek, that are sensitive to the needs and values of the local landowners; emphasizing improved conditions for passage, spawning and/or rearing of Chinook salmon and steelhead, respecting private property, and cooperation with willing participants.

The end of Phase I – Feasibility will involve ongoing workshops with participants/stakeholders, conferences and other meetings and documenting alternatives and monitoring, with the Feasibility/Monitoring Report expected by August 15, 2008. Phase II - Conceptual Design of Initial Implementation Project Elements will include a Conceptual Design of Selected Alternatives (Sept. 19, 2008), Public Presentation/Workshop of Conceptual Design (July 8, 2008), and a Final Report/End of Project (January 31, 2009).

Integration with the Kopta Slough Project is part of the next phase and Deer Creek Watershed Group is working closely with SRCAF and DWR. The next Deer Creek TAC is scheduled for September 16.

For additional details and reports, contact or Holly Savage at [holly@deercreekconservancy.org](mailto:holly@deercreekconservancy.org).

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

The next TAC meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, September 9, at Willows City Hall. The SRCAF Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 18, at the Monday Afternoon Club.