

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – September 4, 2007

Acting Chair – Beverley Anderson-Abbs

Beverley Anderson-Abbs opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Bruce Ross, Lady Bug Doherty, John Merz, Tom McCubbins, Tiffany Yost, Barbara Castro, Gregg Werner, Michael Fehling, Scott Clemons, Woody Elliott, Rebecca Fines, Susan Strachan, Lee Delaney, James Rickert, Chuck Nelson, Kristin Cooper-Carter, Denise Reichenberg, Rae Ann Dubay, Kelly Miller, Leslie Bryan, Beverley Anderson-Abbs, Josh Brown and Ellen Gentry.

Announcements

Josh Brown was introduced as the new SRCAF Resource Conservation Assistant. Josh is from the Butte County area and has a degree in Rangeland Resource Science.

The new SRCAF website can be viewed directly at www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf. The front page contains a news and announcements section for public comment periods, registrations, documents, etc. Current announcements include: the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park CEQA Public Scoping Meeting, September 19, 2007; Draft EA-IS/MND, M&T/Llano Seco Pumps 30 day review and comment period Aug 7-Sept 7; Flood Management Association Annual Conference, Sept.4-7, registration is open; Draft IS/MND Jelly's Ferry Road Bridge Replacement Project, comment period ends Sept 14, 2007; Flood Protection Corridor Program Grant Proposal Solicitation due November 2. Announcements for this section of the website can be sent to SRCAF. The Project Tracker page has a link to Google Earth for special data which will load into temporary files. A conservation area map is also available. Both the Public Access and the SRCAF websites can be found at www.sacramentoriver.org through the partnership between SRCAF and CSUC.

Beverley reported receiving information on the solicitation notice for Prop 84 projects through DWR's FloodSAFE California. A workshop is scheduled for October 2, for the Flood Protection Corridor Program (FPCP), in Sacramento. More information can be found at www.floodsafe.water.ca.gov.

Scott Clemons, WCB, reported on legal actions involving the need for CEQA approvals prior to placement on WCB agendas and before funding takes place. A written directive will probably follow.

John Merz, Sacramento River Preservation Trust, announced their fall activities. Float trips are planned: September 30 from Irvine Finch to the washout and November 10 from Mill Creek Park to Woodson Bridge. A series of hikes are also scheduled. Additional information is available on their website.

Activity Reports

Gregg Werner, TNC, reported on the CalFed restoration project, with State Parks and EDAW, on the Nicholas and Singh properties. The plan includes 189 acres integrating recreation and restoration. The Department of Parks and Recreation is the lead agency to manage and certify the EIR, hold hearings, etc. The owner of the property between the two sites has been contacted. A public scoping meeting is planned for September 19, at 6:00PM, at the Bidwell Mansion Visitor Center, in Chico. Contact Gregg for more information.

The August 28 - 29 Vegetation Symposium was discussed. The Corps definition of levees includes the area above and a 3/1 slope into the water and channel. 800 miles of vegetation would fall under vegetation removal. As of this writing the Corps has dropped a deadline that could have forced 32 Valley flood control districts to cut down trees on their levees by March 30. For other issues, erosion, pest control and structure encroachment, the March 30 deadline stands. Communications will be kept open and research in areas regarding the effects of vegetation on levees will continue.

Current Projects/Updates

James Rickert, Western Ag Services, gave an update on Fenwood Ranch (Project Tracker #66). A conservation easement was placed on the property through Shasta Land Trust to preserve 2,200 acres in perpetuity. One location on the property, China Gardens, consists of 82 acres adjacent to the Sacramento River. Twelve acres, infested with Himalayan blackberry and Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus*), have been targeted for mechanical removal, including grazing, burning, and spreading organic hay to eliminate photosynthesis. This would reduce erosion adjacent to the river and return function to a seasonal stream.

The ranch is certified as organic, and livestock parts are used to provide donor tissue for burn victims, bone implants, etc. for Regeneration Technologies, Inc. in Florida. A three year transition back to organic certification would be required if herbicides were used to treat the invasives and goats or sheep cannot be used for pharmaceutical reasons.

A solar power water trough has been installed for off stream livestock water, piping overflow water to a nearby swale, which helps provide fresh water for wildlife. Enhancing the area with native vegetation and fencing the riparian area along the river is also planned.

Original funding was awarded from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. 2007 funding, targeting the China Gardens area, includes the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) from NRCS and Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program from USFWS.

Leslie Bryan, Western Shasta RCD (WSRCD), discussed the West Coast Regional Carbon Sequestration partnership, managed by the CA Energy Commission, to research geologic and terrestrial carbon sequestration potential in Shasta County. WSRCD is working with Winrock International, a non-profit organization, to implement projects that may reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) over time.

Opportunities include improved management of hazardous fuels to reduce wildfires and their emissions; conversion of marginal rangelands to forests (afforestation) benefiting ag, ranching and timber management; and providing safety to local communities. Benefits listed included bringing fire to the ground, reducing fire spread, reducing fire severity, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from loss of carbon stocks, providing fuel for biomass energy generation and increased growth rates in residual stands.

Four projects are currently being implemented totaling 150 acres, with the goal of planting 300-500 acres with native trees over the next two years and assisting interested landowners in registering with the CA Climate Action Registry. These conservation easements allow for \$400-\$700/acre with a 25% cost share. GIS analysis, site visits to determine feasibility and develop project plans, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis are required. The future intent is to increase the ability to lessen the area's "carbon footprint" through conservation, forest and fuel management, afforestation and other projects. Riparian land is included.

Lee Delaney, WSRCD, reviewed the Stillwater arundo control project. Native to the Mediterranean and Eastern Asia region, arundo was introduced to CA in the early 1800s, and to Shasta Co. in 1968 as an erosion control measure. A member of the grass family, arundo can completely occupy riparian zones, choke streams resulting in high flood damage, causes erosion, is highly flammable and has very little if any wildlife habitat value. Aquaneat and R11 Surfactant were used as systemic foliar herbicides certified to use on and over water. The primary goal was met – to treat arundo from the extreme northern extent on the East Fork of Stillwater Creek to Dersch Road. Monitoring for effects will occur at six, 12 and 24 months.

New Projects or Proposal Review

Susan Strachan, CSUC Research Foundation, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Sacramento River Monitoring and Assessment Project (Project Tracker #127). Partners include UC Santa Cruz, UC Davis and TNC. The primary goal of the project is to quantitatively assess the extent to which restoration activities have impacted the overall health of the Sacramento River ecosystem from Red Bluff to Colusa. Vegetation mapping through Chuck Nelson, Geographical Information Center, is incorporated. Key hypotheses include vegetative structure, native species compared to managed and restored areas, and the influence of channel and floodplain characteristics. The project will be presented at the SRCAF Board meeting September 20. The draft scorecard and monitoring plan is expected in December 2008 and a workshop is planned for February 2009. The project completion date is June 2009. Updates will be provided. For more information contact Project Manager, Kristin Cooper-Carter, at (530) 898-4037, or by email at kcooper-carter@csuchico.edu.

Gregg Werner, TNC, will provide a schedule for the State of the Sacramento River. TNC is managing an environmental flows project and changes necessary to maximize benefits for 6-7 target species. The principle consultant is Still Water Sciences. Information generated will be included in Kristen's project.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting was set for October 2, at Willows City Hall. The SRCAF Board meeting will be held Sept. 20, at the Monday Afternoon Club, in Willows. Updates for the Mitigation Library and Clear Creek projects will move to the October agenda.