

Technical Advisory Committee meeting (TAC) Notes – November 4, 2008

Chair- Ajay Singh

Vice Chair – Basia Trout

Chair Ajay Singh opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Scott Rice, Jessica Gibbs, Henry Lomeli, John Merz, Woody Elliott, Michael Fehling, Kelly Moroney, Lady Bug Doherty, Aric Lester, Charles McClain, Gregg Werner, Rebekah Funes, Maureen Teubert, Bob Foster, Laura Westrup, Tony Chappelle, Tricia Bratcher, Stuart Hong, Gabe Garbarino, and Josh Brown.

Announcements

The deadline for the River Parkways and Urban Streams Restoration Grant Program is **Nov. 12, 2008**.

A CA State Parks Central Valley Vision Implementation Plan public meeting will be held at the Bidwell Mansion in Chico, **Nov. 13, 4:00 – 7:00pm**.

The Tehama County General Plan comment period is open through **Nov. 14**. Comments can be submitted to the Tehama County Planning Commission.

The UC Davis Road Ecology and Information Center for the Environment is holding a California Connectivity Forum **Nov. 17 and 18**.

CA State Parks will have a public outreach meeting to discuss development and restoration plans of its Sacramento River Access at Pine Creek subunit, within the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park at Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park in Chico, **Nov. 19 at 6:30**.

DWR has scheduled a series of workshops on the Prop 84 and 1E funded Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP), including one in Sacramento on **Nov. 19 1:00-3:00pm**.

The Resource Agency and CALTRANS have released guidelines and application for the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program (EEMP) for the 2008-2009 grant cycle. Applications are available at <http://www.resources.ca.gov/eem/> and are due by **Dec. 22, 2008**.

CDFG is accepting applications for riparian restoration projects in agricultural settings under the Landowner Incentives Program (LIP). The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) will fully fund the habitat restoration on LIP-associated acreages. More points will be awarded to projects along the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. Land must be privately owned. LIP will follow the restoration work with a 10-year habitat management contract with the landowner. Applications are due by **Jan. 30, 2009**.

The Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park Habitat Restoration and Outdoor Recreation Facilities Development final EIR is available at http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=981.

The final Delta Vision Strategic Plan is posted at <http://deltavision.ca.gov>.

A meeting to discuss property rights, water rights, and the Yolo Co. General Plan will be held at the Hays Museum in Woodland, Nov. 12, at 6:30. The guest speaker is David Sterling, author of Green Gone Wild: Elevating Nature above Human Rights.

Activity Reports

Department of Water Resources - Scott Rice, URS, reported on the PL 84-99 Levee Repairs. There are four order 3 sites in the SRCA region; RM160.8 (2000'), RM159.7 (1000'), Elder Creek, and Deer Creek. The 160.8 and 159.7 sites were mulched and reseeded; vegetation at Deer Creek has been protected and Elder Creek will be hand planted with willow pole cuttings. These sites should be completed in November.

USACE has produced a video of the Stinger Mechanical Planting System. The tool is mounted on an excavator and mechanically drives a vertical 5' deep hole through soil or rock. Plantings then fall into the hole without damage, drastically increasing speed and survival rate.

Sac Bank Program - RM177.8R - Planting should begin mid November. Scott will try to get USACE to come to a TAC meeting to answer questions and discuss the '09 program.

SAC RM182 Mitigation - assessment is complete and DWR is ready to make an offer. There is a railroad right of way access on the property, which may delay the acquisition process.

FloodSAFE -There are three major programs: Non-Urban Levee Evaluations (NULE), Central Valley Flood Evaluation and Delineation (CVFED), and Central Valley Flood Management Program (CVFMP).

NULE is collecting information on what can affect levee stability. Physical explorations of the levees will begin next year. CVFED will determine issues within the floodplain that may affect flooding, to provide information for floodplain mapping. Initial outreach will begin next month. CVFMP will have a broader outreach program and will identify parties with an interest in participation. Geotechnical explorations for the urban program are about 70% complete.

No new information is available about the Levee Vegetation Roundtable in October; the program is still in internal review.

John Merz, SRPT, indicated that a program flow chart would be helpful and provide a way to know when decisions are made. He also noted that funding is needed for groups to participate in the CVFMP programs. Grant funding for non-structural flood projects, may be applicable.

River Partners - Phase I of the La BARRANCA project has been completed. Phase II includes removal of a walnut orchard. Funding for restoration of the 230 acre project is not yet available.

Woody Elliot, State Parks, noted that DWR has contracted with River Partners for restoration at Sacramento River State Recreation Area (Ward property in Colusa) as mitigation for the Tisdale Weir project. 140 acres will be restored to riparian and grassland habitat.

The Nature Conservancy - TNC received approval from the Central Valley Flood Protection Board for an Encroachment Permit to conduct the Jewett Creek Restoration Project (80+ acres) in Tehama Co. WCB is providing funding.

California State Parks Central Valley Vision Draft Implementation Plan

Stuart Hong, CA State Parks, explained that Assembly Bill 1426 directed State Parks to prepare this plan and work began in 2003. Studies indicate that Central Valley State Parks are smaller with fewer amenities than those in the Coast region. The valley makes up approximately 19% of California, but contains only 4% of public lands and people travel an average of 50 minutes to recreation areas.

The primary objective is to improve the 36 State Parks in the Central Valley (from Redding to Bakersfield), potentially tripling the number of camp sites from 12,000 to 32,000, doubling picnic sites, and nearly doubling the amount of Central Valley Parks land from 110,000 to about 200,000 acres. A secondary objective is development of 13 new parks including: Anderson-Sacramento River Park, Big Bend and Elkhorn Slough.

The Heritage Corridor plan seeks to acquire 20,000 acres over 20 years. The California Delta Heritage Corridor would link historic delta towns, recreation sites, nature areas and farm stands. The Cross California Ecological Corridor would link natural areas. The Black Gold Heritage Corridor would connect sites associated with oil development. The Central Valley Farm Trail would link Hwy 99 to I-5 with a local farm trail and other ag sites. And the Echoes of our Ancestors Corridor would link California's ethnic diversity history sites together.

In the North Valley region there are two proposed Parks that would link Redding and Red Bluff recreation areas. The Anderson-Sacramento River project includes acquiring 225 acres of river front property to expand recreation opportunities. The Big Bend project includes acquisition of 4,000 to 4,700 acres of river front property in Tehama Co. for 100 camp sites, 125 picnic sites, trails, fishing access, and boating facilities adjacent to the Bend Area BLM. The proposed Sacramento River Water Trail would connect Redding to Sacramento with camp sites, boat ramps and day use areas.

A series of public meetings is scheduled throughout the State, including one at Bidwell Mansion in Chico, Thursday, November 13; comments are accepted through December 15.

Henry Lomeli, DFG, noted that as State Parks moves forward with this plan they should consider possible land trades with other agencies, such as DFG. John Merz noted that effort should be made to link access areas on the proposed Water Trail Corridor to economic centers, in order to gain support from local economic interests.

Current/Projects/Update

Sacramento River Monitoring and Assessment Project (PT#127) - Charles McClain, CSUC Graduate Student, provided an update on his research: Passive vs. Active Restoration of Riparian Forest Understory Plants along the Sacramento River, as part of the SRMA Project. Approximately 95% of the riparian forests along the Sacramento River have been removed with active restoration efforts beginning about 1989. Since then, about 14,000 acres have been acquired and 5,000 acres restored.

Early restoration efforts took a passive approach to reestablishing understory, with the hope that it would colonize after the overstory was established. Karen Holl, UCSC, surveyed 15 restoration sites in 2001 and 2007 (restored between 1989 and 1996) and ten remnant forests. In 2001, overstory cover was 29% on average, and nearly 60% in 2007, approaching reference forest overstory cover (79%). Understory cover is also increasing in frequency and richness, but is not approaching reference levels so quickly. There is an apparent shift from light demanding species to more shade adapted ones.

Later restoration efforts included planting of understory species. As intensity of understory plantings increased, so did establishment of understory. Of 11 species planted, four have done well, mugwort, Santa Barbara sedge, California blackberry, and grasses. Native grasses can keep invasives from appearing.

Results indicate that planting may accelerate recovery for some species. Common natives do colonize on their own at sites where they are not planted. Less common native species should be planted. Light demanding natives should be planted early and shade adapted species planted later.

Sacramento River Access at Pine Creek, Brayton Parcel (PT#96) RM196 (Butte Co.) - Woody Elliot provided an update on the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park (BSRSP) Access at Pine Creek. The project includes a total of 41 acres; 25 acres will be restored for habitat and four acres developed for recreation. The remainder will be left in walnut orchard. State Parks has been working with the Mechoopda Tribe to protect cultural sites and establish gathering sites, interpretive and educational activities.

There is an existing riparian swale presently undergoing selective non-native eradication. The area will provide day-use recreation with a gravel parking lot, picnic tables and restrooms with running water. The project will provide safe river access for small boats, inner tubes and rafts, with improvements to parking lot and unpaved trails

Once all permits are acquired, restoration will be done in two phases. In the first year, most of the walnut orchard will be removed, leaving a few mature trees behind for aesthetics and bird habitat during the restoration period. During the second year, recreation facilities and restoration work will go in. The plan includes a cable fence along the west side of River Road.

For the CEQA process, State Parks will provide information to SRCAF TAC, meet with neighboring landowners, and hold a public outreach meeting November 19, in Chico. From public input, State Parks will finalize the project scope and description, and finalize the mitigated negative declaration.

Ajay noted that when walnut trees are kept alive and not managed, some ag owners argue that they harbor disease and bugs and continued management may be needed. What about walnut allopathic effects on other plantings? Woody doesn't think it will be a problem since the walnuts will be so far apart and the natives will be irrigated.

They hope to begin the project in the spring. For questions, contact Denise Reichenberg, CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation, at 530-895-4304.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, at Willows City Hall. **This meeting has since been rescheduled for Tuesday, January 6, at Willows City Hall.**