

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – November 6, 2007

Chair – Ajay Singh

Ajay Singh opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Jon Mulder, Lady Bug Doherty, John Merz, Rebekah Funes, Denise Reichenberg, Dan Efseaff, Bruce Ross, Basia Trout, Gregg Werner, Scott Rice, Michael Perrone, Woody Elliott, Dawn Garcia, Kim Davis, Ashley Indrieri, Beverley Anderson-Abbs, Josh Brown and Ellen Gentry.

Announcements

A CSP Public Information meeting on the Sacramento River Flood Control System between Princeton and Colusa will be held on Thursday, November 15, 6:30PM, at the Colusa Indian Community Complex. Cosponsors of the meeting are the SRCAF, DWR and TNC. All interested persons are invited to attend. A flyer was available.

John Merz, SRPT, reported the November 10 float trip is full. The Snow Goose Festival will be held the last weekend in January.

The Riparian Habitat Joint Venture Conference, December 4-6, Sacramento. The conference will provide a forum for discussing the universal issues associated with riparian community management and conservation, floodplain management and flood protection, including the obstacles and opportunities to improve and integrate these activities in the future.

Activity Reports

Woody Elliot reported that M&T is taking gravel from one side of the Big Chico Creek to the other, crossing State Parks land to the old dredge pile. This activity is part of the short term solution for continuing operation of the M&T/Llano Seco pumping facility. The long term solution may involve rock groins or dredging. It was suggested this be a topic for discussion in the near future.

Merz added that bank swallow mitigation is involved and that the mitigation site chosen is not acceptable, nor are the long term impacts. He noted that other options are being explored, but that riparian habitat is not prime habitat for bank swallows. The Sacramento main stem is the core of the population; the former sites where “swallow condos” were put in are available. Merz suggested that the TAC provide an update on this issue and that a physical survey also be done. Scott Rice, URS, said a meeting specific to this subject can be arranged.

Bruce Ross added that bank swallows will be discussed at the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture Conference, December 4-6, in Sacramento.

Dawn Garcia, CSUC, added that the mitigation site is not as good as what is being rocked and still presents loss of habitat for swallows. Mitigation should equal known loss. Annual surveys are conducted as to where colonies are. Dawn will talk to Ron Schlorff, DFG, to see about the availability of a list of identified sites.

Gregg Werner, TNC, reported that the Pest and Regulatory Effects Analysis is coming out mid-month and will be presented to the Colusa Subreach Advisory Workgroup December 10. It is also available for presentation at the next TAC. The analysis covers relevant cross boundary issues. Please contact Gregg if you are interested in a copy of the draft. Also, the draft analysis report for all of the eight potential restoration sites will be available later in the month.

Basia Trout gave an update on the Red Bluff Diversion Dam. Basia reported that all comments were addressed for the EIR and that there has been no further discussion. It was recommended that an update be given on the next TAC agenda. Basia stated that Jeff Sutton would be the one to do a December update. It was also suggested that the City of Red Bluff and the Bureau of Reclamation might want to send representatives to give additional updates.

Scott Rice, URS, gave a DWR Field Activities Report update. Topics included: levee vegetation policy update, 3Bs flood relief site, RM192.4L (M&T), RM182R mitigation, and levee evaluation program status.

The 3Bs privately permitted earthen weir was intended to overflow when the level at Ord Ferry gauge reached 114.5msl. Currently it is overflowing at lower elevation allowing increased frequency and duration of flooding. The longer duration is causing economic losses and roadway inundation. The Feasibility Study (FS)

scope of work was reviewed. 3Bs Site activities include: a DWR coordinated workgroup meeting held Sept 28, DWR preparation of a FS scope to assist county/project sponsors, a FS scope presentation at the November Reclamation Board meeting and DWR coordinating a follow-up meeting after the FS scope is completed. Challenges include FS technical issues (documenting economic analyses and incorporating affects of future downstream projects), identifying funding sources, cost sharing agreements, and developing local, state and federal maintenance and long term management plan for the area in coordination with the future State Plan of Flood Control. Butte County is the lead. It was suggested that future meetings be more inclusive with appropriate notification and a broader public forum, through the SRCAF. Scott noted that is DWR's goal for the meeting.

RM192.4 (M&T Phelan Levee) is a combined DWR/COE activity. This is a non-project (private) levee adjacent to, but not part of, the M&T flood relief structure. Some erosion has been noted during past field reconnaissance: 2003 site not found to be critical or potentially critical, 2005 site recommended for removal from further reviews, 2007 site selected for additional assessment. A field assessment was performed in July, 2007 and included the scour on the vertical bank, a water side bench with dense riparian vegetation, and an orchard on the land side. A site evaluation against critical erosion site criteria and a field action report were prepared in October (including a Flood Damage Analysis Report).

Conclusions/recommendations: the site does not meet criteria as a "critical" erosion site –bank erosion does not affect the integrity of Phelan levee and the site is not a project levee. Site monitoring should be conducted during the next several seasons and if found to be "potentially critical" levee owner should work with DWR/COE to maintain flood fight contingency. If found to be "critical", Butte county should work with property owner to establish funding for repairs.

Kim Davis, Senator Aanestad's office, said it was irresponsible to wait for flood fight, adding that this levee is part of the Butte Basin overflow. She stated that it did meet the "critical" criteria in the Ayres report; specifically the last 75 ft. that eroded. Ashley Indreiri, FWA, added that it was irresponsible that the Ayres report was never peer reviewed or adopted. Lady Bug said there was a moral obligation and asked about any effects if there was further erosion. Bruce Ross, DWR, explained that if the Phelan levee broke, there would be very little additional water in the Butte Basin because the levee is just upstream from the M&T overflow.

Scott noted there will be further discussions, including at the Reclamation Board, and that the most up to date information will continue to be disclosed. It was suggested that Scott report back to the TAC before a recommendation is made. It was also recommended that information be posted on the Flood Safe website and the SRCAF website.

On-site mitigation at RM182R is beginning with planting to be completed in early December and ongoing maintenance for two years. Scott gave a levee evaluation program update including: Marysville, Sutter Basin, Rd 784 (Feather River Basin), the 3-5 year non-urban levee program, LD-3 levee vegetation removal update (Glenn Co., north of the Colusa line), the system-wide levee vegetation management plan status, and the annual fall inspection status. Scott added that a recap of the policy will be completed by spring 2008 and he will bring information about the new policy to the TAC. DWR is inspecting levees for vegetation; however the new policy will allow some vegetation. The fall inspection criteria include vegetation within 20 feet of the top of the levee. Each district will be notified when inspections will take place and are open to the public.

Lady Bug added that the final communiqué on levee vegetation between the USACE, DWR, USFWS, NOAA, DFG, SAFCA, and the Reclamation Board is on the SRCAF website www.sacramentoriver.org/srcaf (homepage/announcements).

Scott offered to continue to bring any specific issues that require more detail/discussion to the TAC or another meeting as needed. Scott may be contacted at (916) 837-6415, scott_rice@urscorp.com.

Current Projects/Updates

Michael Perrone, DWR, reviewed the SRCA Habitat Restoration and Tisdale Bypass sediment removal project to increase flood carrying capacity. 2,000,000cys of sediment has been removed as well as vegetation in the bypass that restricted flow. The removal of vegetation requires mitigation for riparian habitat. Eight proposed habitat restoration tracts have been identified in the Colusa subreach studies, the public has been engaged and the potential effect of proposed restoration has been studied through Colusa Subreach Planning. The Ward tract, just upriver of Colusa and part of the State Park best fits DWR needs for riparian habitat mitigation and a favorable location near Tisdale Bypass. The Ward tract was transferred to States Parks and Recreation as part of the Colusa

State Recreation Area. CA Parks and Recreation will manage the site which will include a grassed overland flow corridor for recreation and flood conveyance. Restoration of 35 acres will include about 40 species of native trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, and forbs (herbaceous plants other than grass). Ayres completed the two-dimensional hydraulic modeling which indicates the project is technically feasible and results will be presented at a public information meeting (see **Announcements**). DWR has reviewed assumptions and results of the model and will ask for an encroachment permit at the December Reclamation Board meeting.

Kim Davis questioned why, this year particularly, SRCAF is bringing or discussing projects that are not of interest in the SRCA or within the scope of the Forum, citing Tisdale Bypass. Ajay explained that flood control is of interest to the corridor and impacts the Sacramento River. Ellen Gentry, SRCAF, added that outreach and education is also in the SRCAF scope of work.

Denise Reichenberg, CA State Parks, gave an update on the Colusa Boat Ramp. This is a cooperative effort between CA State Parks and the City of Colusa. Channel changes currently require excavating a channel to the existing boat launch. A construction agreement has been made and the master plan is finalized. The project will be presented to the Department of Boating and Waterways Commission for final approval. Next year's budget will see funding for final construction.

Ajay Singh, Glenn Co. Resource Conservation District, gave an update on the Stony Creek project. The goal includes the halting of further bank erosion and clearing the channel of non-native growth without harm to fish, wildlife, or native plant species, while respecting private property rights. RCD projects that have addressed the goals and objectives include: watershed assessment, demonstration site, arundo mapping project, monitoring program, permit coordination program, and a watershed restoration plan. Project implementation began in August.

The stream profile shows the streambed is decreasing. Elevation has gone down 10ft.; the floodplain is getting deeper and narrower. Between 1990 and 2006 lower Stony Creek down-cut about 2.4ft and creation of a negative sediment budget has increased bed and bank erosion. Water discharge from Black Butte Dam, 15,000cfs, is concentrated in the channel and is disconnected from the floodplain. Water has been working the same channel for 40 years, leading to further bed and bank erosion, which has degraded riparian habitat. Sediment has been cut off due to the dam and gravel mining has taken sediment out of the system. Post dam, the amount of time that flows reached above 4,000cfs has increased by 2.6 days per year. Biological changes include an increase in non-native plants due to physical disturbance. Vegetation mapping shows giant reed abundance and distribution changes from 1990-2006 and the distribution of *Arundo donax* (560 acres) and *Tamarix* (146 acres) in 2006.

Recommendations include reducing bank erosion by augmenting gravel supply to lower Stony Creek, shifting in-channel gravel mining to off-channel, and planning bank stabilization projects at a reach scale using a geomorphic bioengineering design approach. Also, developing a system for removal of arundo and *Tamarix*, creating conservation plans, and reducing invasive plants. Project costs may be reduced using *Tamarix* leaf beetle, TreeFree Technologies (WA) which has found a commercial use for arundo and is looking to cost share the removal and spraying of arundo, and using passive and active restoration/revegetation practices. A long term approach could explore options to reduce negative sediment budget and floodwaters.

Programmatic Safe Harbor/Voluntary Local Program

Beverly noted that a meeting is scheduled November 20 with DFG and USFWS. Their new staff is getting up to speed and looking for ways to connect to various funding sources for landowners. Updates will continue.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting was scheduled for Monday, December 3, 1:00PM, at Willows City Hall.

NOTE: changes in both date and time.