

## SRCAF Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting notes – August 2, 2011

Chair: Tom McCubbins

Tom McCubbins opened the meeting with self introductions.

The following were in attendance: Michael Rogner, Larry Lloyd, Aric Lester, Juleah Cordi, Michael Fehling, Natasha Nelson, Jas O’Growney, Ryan Luster, Joe Silveira, Dan Frisk, Chris Barr, Adam Henderson, Bill Menke, Henry Lomeli and John Merz.

Staff: Jane Dolan and Ellen Gentry.

### Announcements and Public Comments

Michael Rogner, River Partners, reported they are expecting 1,000 people to attend the Mudder Nature Challenge 2011, in Colusa, September 10. The 5k mud run and obstacle course is available to runners (individuals and teams), and bikers. The post-race celebration BBQ is open to non-runners. [www.MudderNatureChallenge.com](http://www.MudderNatureChallenge.com).

### Activity Reports

Department of Water Resources - Aric Lester, DWR, reported on the Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP). The draft 2011 Regional Acceptance Process (RAP) decisions were released on July 11, 2011. The Northern Sacramento Valley IRWM and nine other IRWMs have been recommended for approval. The draft decision is available at: [http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/integregio\\_rap.cfm](http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/integregio_rap.cfm).

The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) is being prepared by DWR and is due to the Central Valley Flood Protection Board in January 2012. Check the CVFMP website for updates: <http://www.water.ca.gov/floodsafe/docs/CentralValleyFloodManagementPlanningProgram.pdf>.

DWR staff is reviewing information submitted by prospective monitoring entities as part of their notification packages. When DWR determines notifications meet the requirements of the CA Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) Program, the prospective monitoring entities will be designated for the respective groundwater basins and sub basins. Prospective monitoring entities may be conditionally designated, based on information submitted in the notification. The conditional designation will identify the additional information required to be submitted to meet the CASGEM program requirements before DWR can formally confirm the agency as the designated monitoring entity. For more information <http://www.water.ca.gov/groundwater/casgem/>.

Public workshops on “The Future of Water Storage in California” will be held September 14 and October 25, 2011. For more information <http://www.cwc.ca.gov/>.

### New Projects or Proposal Review

The Nature Conservancy - Ryan Luster, TNC, reported they have secured funding for the *La Baranca Unit (PT85)*, a 143ac restoration project at RM 237-40. They are still seeking permits from CVFPB for the restoration project of the property known as the *Singh Unit (PT59)*, 43 acres of the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park and adjacent to the Sacramento River in Butte County at RM194. They are putting together a process for stakeholder meetings for late summer, early fall, and will hire a facilitator likely from the State University facilitator extension service. Also they are near completing analysis for NODOS; working with Adam Henderson and Aric Lester (DWR) to provide analysis looking at the effects of diversions on the Sacramento River.

### Projects/Updates

Shasta Tehama Watershed Education Coalition (STWEC) - Jas O’Growney, Tehama County RCD, gave a brief presentation on STWEC, which is an umbrella organization for irrigated lands. The Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP) is a result of the Clean Water Act; 1999 SB390; 2002 Lawsuit (Baykeepers, et.al.); 2002, 2006 Interim ILRP; and the March 2011 Long-term ILRP. The Regional Water Board oversees the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC). SVWQC developed and submitted its Regional Plan for Action to the State Water Resources Control Board and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) in 2003. To implement the Regional Plan for Action and to meet the Water Board’s

Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, SVWQC prepared and submitted a revised Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan (MRPP). SVWQC oversees STWEC and 11 other sub-coalitions, composed of more than 8,600 farmers and wetlands managers, and encompassing more than 1.3 million irrigated acres. The temporary program has been extended for two years. The State Board requires two years to write general orders. A permanent order includes ground water.

John Merz, Sacramento River Preservation Trust, noted the co-funding of several workshops in the area. He asked if the state decided to have a membership list to coordinate bringing back the education component.

Larry Lloyd, Sutter Co. RCD and Outreach Coordinator for the Butte Yuba Sutter Water Quality Coalition, indicated the next stakeholder meeting is August 10. Larry added that Jim Cornelius, SCRCD Water Resources Engineer and retired from State Board, helped write the basic plan early on and can help keep producers informed. Larry also suggested putting the ground water issue on the next TAC agenda.

STWEC and other coalitions work to help farmers and ranchers who irrigate to understand and comply with existing and new regulations as established by the Water Board. Many districts and companies are encouraging landowners to join for input on differences in Northern CA.

*Bank Swallow (Riparia riparia riparia) Conservation, Population and Habitat Trends* - Joe Silveira, USFWS, gave a presentation on this CA threatened species, including studies by a variety of programs and contributors. Over 70% of the Bank Swallow (BANS) population breeds on the Sacramento River and its largest tributary, the Feather River. The annual survey data shows the total burrow decline was the lowest in 2010, and although there was a slight increase in 2011, the decline remains at an average of -13% over time.

Joe reviewed the diverse characteristics of the Sacramento River Reaches and patterns of riparian and floodplain vegetation. Grasslands are important for colonies because insects are produced in grassland habitat. Bank armoring (riprap) is identified as a major cause of habitat loss; while meters of riprap have increased over the years, BANS populations have decreased. While medium size quarried rock (for example) supports vegetation, but not habitat for BANS. Nesting burrows are made in eroding banks. One example given was the levee removal at the Flynn unit in 2001, which by 2002 resulted in 2,770 nesting pairs. The proposed removal of revetment at Kopta Slough may show some habitat potential, but ownership of the rock at Kopta Slough has yet to be determined.

An example of high quality BANS habitat is seen at RM233.5L (former Spanfelner property), which according to a 2007 survey contained 1,191 burrows. Low gradient, low profile banks (over gravel and sand) are low quality BANS habitat. Habitat is lost and created as the river channel meanders, resulting in unpredictable soil types within the 100yr floodplain. Besides low quality habitat, predation by snakes and mammals also affects their population.

The BANS Technical Advisory Committee promotes collaborative long-term conservation and recovery of the species, by coordinating and supporting monitoring and research, habitat restoration and management, and outreach and education. The working group meets on a regular basis.

*The Backbone of Sustainable Communities: Infrastructure and Healthy Ecosystems* - Natasha Nelson, DWR/FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office (FESSRO), gave a presentation on Regional Advance Mitigation Planning (RAMP), a collaborative process which brings together State and Federal agencies (Caltrans, CDFG, FWS, NMFS, and DWR) to identify strategies for anticipated mitigation needs and to create a framework to accomplish the goals of improved mitigation planning. With Prop 1B and 1E there is money for projects and the goal of RAMP is to supply mitigation for the region that is conservation minded and cost effective. Benefits include protection of landscape scale

ecosystems and ecosystem function, support of regional conservation priorities, an advanced timeframe, and faster and more efficient project delivery.

The RAMP could be implemented through a pilot regional assessment in the North Central Sacramento Valley, encompassing 1,500sq mi. Mitigation needs can include Federal wetlands, up to 20 species (i.e., VELB, Giant Garter Snake, Bank Swallow), banks and beds of streams, and sensitive habitat types (riparian forest, Valley Oak).

Mitigation approaches considered includes joining current HCP/NCCP efforts, bulk purchases from private commercial mitigation banks, partnerships with private these banks to develop new mitigation banks, and agency-sponsored mitigation banks. RAMP uses Marxan, a computer program, as a conservation planning tool to identify potential suitable sites to meet targets. Factors for the selection of sites includes: cost, road density, urban density, crop value and urban growth. A conservation priority layer, combined with mitigation options, will be used to assess relative value(s).

Implementation for Caltrans' Statewide Advance Mitigation Initiative (SAMI) creates a set of tools to be used by RAMP. SAMI will give Federal assistance statewide, will have fully formed programs and will fund some of RAMP tools. SAMI and RAMP are not in competition.

Implementation for DWR's Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) includes potential integration with RAMP through conservation opportunity analysis and one method to mitigate CVFPP related impacts.

RAMP is in the engagement phase and working on funding for capital investment as planning dollars. The end product will result in planning tools and a collaboration for a larger mitigation area.

The Marxan analysis can be found at [www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss1/art47/](http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss1/art47/). RAMP information is available at <https://rampcalifornia.water.ca.gov>. Natasha Nelson may be contacted at [nelson@water.ca.gov](mailto:nelson@water.ca.gov).

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

Due to the Labor Day holiday, the next TAC meeting was set for the second Tuesday, September 13, 9:30-12Noon, at Willows City Hall.