

SRCAF Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Meeting notes – September 13, 2011

In the absence of Chair Tom McCubbins, Jane Dolan, SRCAF Manager, opened the meeting with self introductions. It was noted the meeting is a week later than the regular first Tuesday, due to Labor Day holiday the previous week.

The following were in attendance: Michael Rogner, Larry Lloyd, Aric Lester, Juleah Cordi, Michael Fehling, Ryan Luster, Henry Lomeli and Bruce Houdesheldt.
Staff: Jane Dolan, Rob Irwin and Ellen Gentry.

Announcements and Public Comments

Aric Lester, DWR, reported new DWR Deputy Director Gary Bardini and Division Chief Paula Landis will be visiting the DWR Northern Region Office tomorrow. Providing them with a boat tour of the Kopta Slough/Woodson Bridge is also planned.

Henry Lomeli, DFG, reported PG&E will be accessing lands in various DFG wildlife areas, clearing out vegetation in order to access lines and remove transformers. DFG recommended that PG&E leave the poles in place for use as nesting platforms, and other uses.

Activity Reports

Ryan Luster, TNC, reported that TNC and DFG are pursuing encroachment permits as a coordinated package for various locations that were part of Colusa Subreach Planning (CSP) process. Five parcels: the Womble, Stegeman, 1000-acre Ranch, Boeger and Colusa-North sites are part of this permit. There is no specific timeline for the actual restoration, as funding for restoration has not been secured. TNC owns the 1,000-acre Ranch and Boeger sites and is the applicant for those permits. The State owns the Womble, Stegeman and Colusa-North sites and DFG is the applicant for those properties. For more on CSP, go to: http://www.sacramentoriver.org/SRCAF/index.php?id=colusa_subreach.

New Projects or Proposal Review

Sacramento River Access at Pine Creek-Brayton Parcel (PT96) - Michael Fehling, Department of Parks and Recreation, reported Boating and Waterways has funded the reconstruction of the Pine Creek boat launch ramp, off River Road, Butte County (near Scotty's). The project will include ADA improvements, removal of pre-cast slabs, and installation of a wider ramp extending to the river and an extended dock next to it. Bids for contracting will go out in the spring 2012. For more information on this project, go to http://www.sacramentoriver.org/access_site.php?access_site_id=27&activities=Motor%20Boating, and/or http://www.sacramentoriver.org/ProjectTrak/ProjectTrack_Details.aspx?var1=96.

Projects/Updates

Introduction of an SRCAF project to update land acquisition changes and conservation lands along river corridor – Rob Irwin, SRCAF, gave a presentation of ongoing work to update the mapping of conservation ownership within the Sacramento River Conservation Area, with a focus of changes from 1995 to 2011. This effort entails reviewing mapping sources of various agencies and organizations and mapping the boundaries of properties, under both fee title and/or conservation easements, for habitat conservation along the river. The effort is to show the year in which properties changed from private to conservation ownership, to illustrate temporal trends in conservation along the river. Suggestions of sources of information, such as local title companies, were made. It was noted that changes in ownership may not

result in habitat conservation/restoration or other significant changes land use. This is an ongoing project and comments are welcome. Contact Rob Irwin at rirwin@water.ca.gov.

Overview of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (SVWQC) – Bruce Houdesheldt, Director of Regulatory Affairs of the Northern CA Water Association (NCWA), gave an update on the irrigated lands program involving approximately two million acres in the Sacramento Valley. A part of this program, the Shasta Tehama Watershed Education Coalition, was presented at the last TAC meeting by Jas O’Growney, Tehama County RCD. SVWQC is managed by NCWA and includes Ducks Unlimited, Larry Walker Associates, the Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES), several ag organizations and other coalitions including the CA River Commission.

Elements of the irrigated lands program includes a Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan – an annual monitoring report for 2009 and 2010, a management plan progress report, measurement of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), and future irrigated lands regulatory program.

The Monitoring and Reporting Program Plan began with monitoring in 2002, at sites representative of irrigated agriculture. In 2009 the Regional Board established a monitoring cycle – assessment, core and the Butte-Yuba-Sutter Subwatershed Monitoring Sites (lower Honcut Ck, lower Snake River, Pine Creek, Sacramento Slough Bridge near Karnak, Butte Slough, Gilsizer Slough and Wadsworth Canal). Henry Lomeli asked about how Butte Creek is handled in the array of monitoring sites; Bruce said he would check and report back.

Results of water sample exceedances from 2005 to 2010 were given for drinking water, agriculture, recreation and aquatic life. Management plans and implementation cycles were also reviewed, including evaluating data, progress report and requirements update, source ID and evaluation, source evaluation report, baseline management practice surveys, identifying additional practices and establishing goals and schedule for implementation, beginning implementation and assessment of effectiveness.

Overview of Butte-Yuba-Sutter Water Quality Coalition (BYSWQC) and information on Irrigated Lands Program – Larry Lloyd, District Manager, reported the BYSWQC, a three-county coalition of irrigated agricultural producers. There are approximately 1,200 members and 229,000 acres of irrigated ag (215,629 tons of peaches, 92,481 tons of dried plums, 151,071 tons of walnuts and 38,517 tons of almonds in 2010).

Their outreach and education coordinators include Sutter County RCD and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, informing members on changing water quality regulations and assisting members in efforts to comply with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). Future ILRP includes groundwater quality, tiering based on threats to surface and ground water quality, Groundwater Quality Monitoring Advisory Workgroup, ILRP Stakeholder meeting, and Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition Order (Summer or Fall 2012).

Various success stories were mentioned, including: “Stakeholders Cooperate to Reduce Diazinon in Runoff from Dormant Season Spray,” 2003: Total Maximum Daily Load established, 2010: EPA delists Lower Feather River (LFR) for Diazinon impairment, Implementation of Feather River Total Maximum Daily Load for Orchards (final report), and best management practices.

Outreach coordinators include Larry Lloyd, and Jim Cornelius, Sutter Co. RCD. Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau’s Megan Foster and Jaime Robertson serve as administrators.

Discussion of mapping critical infrastructure – Rob Irwin gave a general reference definition of critical infrastructure as “assets that are essential for the functioning of a society and economy.” Hard points are defined in the SRCAF Handbook glossary as “structures located adjacent to a river, such as buildings, bridges or levees that change the direction or rate of channel migration by interfering with the river’s

movement”. In various discussions of facilities such as irrigation pumping plants, the term *hard point* is often used. The handbook also suggests a map of hard points, and the text suggests this would be facilities, both public and private determined to be critical infrastructure.

Rob gave examples various facilities that would be either hard points or critical infrastructure: Keswick Dam, Red Bluff Diversion Dam, revetment along RM182 and revetment near RM178-9. A mapping of critical infrastructure would bolster the Sacramento River GIS, which is a planning tool to help resolve questions as they arise at specific river locations. Site-specific management plans include hydrology and flooding, ecological processes, habitats, current land use/ownership, infrastructure and the context of the entire subreach. Infrastructure mapping currently available includes bank protection, flood control structures, water diversions, highways, roads and railroads. Rob is seeking information of what infrastructure has not been mapped, but should be, and is looking to compile a list.

Jane Dolan pointed out that the term *hard point* is shown in various places, both with and without quotation marks, and is referenced in the Bank Stabilization section of Chapter 1, of the SRCAF Handbook (p 1-5):

“Specifically, there are places along the river where bank stabilization will be necessary to limit the meander to the inner river zone. This limitation will take into account the potential need to protect existing land uses including agriculture and structural ‘hard points’ such as buildings, bridges, pumping plants, flood management control structures, and levees from bank erosion. A structural ‘hard point’ is defined as a structure or group of structures within the area of recent river meander that because of various attributes—including but not limited to, historic location, public and private investment, and government commitment—is deemed necessary to be protected from river movement.”

Discussion followed. Henry Lomeli noted that, because the term “infrastructure” is used, it does not include geological control. Infrastructure could be a source of material that may need to be removed. Using manmade vs. geological could be problematic.

A boat ramp is not a hard point – it is infrastructure. A house that is affected by the river is an infrastructure you have to create a hard point to protect. You may want the river to be there and not move away. Nuances need to be defined; depending on context, it could lead to a different path. Rob commented that including the descriptive term “critical” might be fitting for clarifying the definition.

Aric Lester suggested identifying and considering impacts. It would seem local, federal and state should be responsible for protection; it is not necessarily the role of the Forum to fulfill an action, but to identify. As you improve what its defined, you gain a frame of reference. It should not be misinterpreted as giving expectations or direction that an agency is to complete an action (i.e., DWR).

Ryan Luster noted M&T is an example of what he views as an incorrect definition as a hard point. The SRCAF board likely intended it to be “critical infrastructure”, and that using a hydrologic term may create confusion. He suggested better clarification on definitions, then canvassing a list with who would be responsible for each piece of infrastructure. What would be classified “infrastructure;” or as a “hard point?” Is it a process, or a case by case? He also suggested that the process needs to be in a larger context of the river for a complete picture.

Jane noted the process in the Handbook for any amendment, which would also involve MOA signatories. As this work progresses discussion with the TAC could be the process that is followed.

Discussion of the function and process of the TAC – Jane Dolan reported that she is interested in strengthening and defining the role of the TAC. As it is now and has been the practice, the TAC membership is not defined, nor is the process of how the committee makes a finding or recommendation if

a determination needs to be made. She is interested in giving more form and a known process to this committee. Suggestions were considered.

Aric Lester stated that in general, TACs usually focus on a project's technical aspects, gathering information and input, and making recommendations on these issues for decision makers. He noted that there are also other opportunities to provide information outside meetings. Attendees have expectations. Concerns have been addressed by questioning how projects meet, or don't meet, the principles and guidelines of the SRCAF.

Ryan Luster commented that the SRCAF has been strong in providing information; however the role of the TAC needs to be more substantive. There are many who have an interest in the river, but with a half-day commitment the committee could better utilize time and be more purposeful. There is more going on than is being discussed.

Henry Lomeli commented on the review process and qualifications needed to provide technical input; the scientific and community providing an advisory role is a good subject. Everyone has a different expertise. There are benefits by attending meetings, in order to stay engaged and to hear what everyone is working on.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next meeting was set for 9:30-Noon, Tuesday, October 4, at Willows City Hall. **[This meeting has subsequently been cancelled.]**