

Technical Advisory Committee - December 13, 2001

Chair Anjanette Martin opened the meeting followed by introductions, announcements, and public comments. Anjanette made available copies of the Sacramento Valley Water Management Agreement. Tom Evans announced the resolution requesting the removal of lands outside the levees will be heard by both Glenn County and the Colusa City Council on December 18th. The Sites scoping will be January 9th from 6-9 p.m. at the Maxwell Inn.

Activities Updates – Joe Silveira, F&WS, noted they had received 5 comments back on the Refuge Conservation Plan, the comments addressed tax and public access issues. Ernie Ohlin, Tehama County, announced they had just finished the first geographic review for ERP projects. The panel of 11 reviewed 142 grant proposals for the Sacramento Region. The proposals will now go on to scientific and technical review; there will be a public comment period in late January or early February*. There was discussion by the review panel on the process regarding local contact and involvement which is not required initially; a letter of acknowledgement from the local Board is not required this year. There was agreement that there should be more interaction up front with local stakeholders; need to have local buy-in first. Educational outreach seemed to be very important as was the Arundo Donax issue which is now coming to the forefront with CALFED. Anjanette referred to Les Heringer's comments in the "Ag Alert" giving credit to the SRCA for the continued focus on the gravel bar removal project which he felt helped speed the process.

Discussion continued on the public review of CALFED projects that does not happen until after the projects have been recommended for funding. It was suggested that there should have to be a buy-in from the SRCA first on proposals. A question was raised as to whether or not CALFED would be willing to add that requirement?

(***Note** – Following the meeting information became available that the public comment period for the ERP project proposals will not start until the end of February).

Discussion of definition of area between IRZ and outer boundary of the Conservation Area -

What is its purpose and how should it be described? Stacy pointed out the need to come up with a good definition soon. The charge to the TAC is to provide factual information to the Board as to what this area is about, what are its advantages and/or disadvantages? Stacy discussed the draft "white paper" he had developed giving background on the original language defining the Conservation Area and another draft listing the advantages/disadvantages of having the Outer River Area (ORA). After revisions, the documents would be a product to deliver to the Board; the TAC also needs to review the language in the current Handbook definition of the SRCA and make a recommendation to the Board. There was a comment made that the language in the draft "white paper" is ambiguous, varies from one paragraph to another. Stacy noted there are different definitions because there are at least four distinct reaches of the River; the area has to be wide enough to capture hydraulic impacts but also broad enough to bring in socio-economic changes. There were also some suggested changes to the language in the draft comparison of the SRCA, with and without the ORA. Discussion followed and included some of the following comments:

~landowners believe Handbook is an advocate of expansion of riparian habitat; they are fearful of what happens to them if neighbors sell and that land is converted. If taken out of the conservation area, the landowners would look to the counties to protect themselves from land conversion through the zoning process. They do not believe there is any protection until the SRCA has the power to approve or disapprove projects.

~as a nonprofit organization it can recommend for or against but cannot veto projects; it would, however, have influence on whether they move forward because of its credibility with other

agencies.

~it was noted the emphasis has shifted since the inception of this plan, it was initially thought of in terms of landowner restoration but has changed to government supported restoration/conversion.

~this organization has never advocated "protection" of the landowner; SB1086 was a way to help the landowner because of the impacts that would be coming as a result of the ESA.

~a point was made at the Butte County meeting that there is no obligation for state or federal agencies to come to the SRCA; the reality is the agencies are coming on a voluntary basis. Change is going to happen, how do we do it in a way that impacts landowners the least?

~the agencies are not going to come in and take over because the conservation area is reduced; information on what projects are going on would be made available at the county level.

~one member stated that, as a county representative, he comes to the SRCA to find that information, not the county.

~the SRCA is a specialized body with a focus on resource issues.

Anjanette suggested that the IRZ boundary delineate the primary area where the restoration activity would be focused, and the ORA boundary would delineate the secondary area where possible impacts would be addressed before projects move forward. The ORA would also be established as an "Agricultural Preservation Area".

Discussion followed:

~need to have a non-scattered program. Landowners seem to be ok with IRZ, but might need assurances that IRZ is first priority, develop that and see how that goes.

~have to remember that anything that goes on within the IRZ impacts that area outside and need to coordinate that.

~boundaries need to be more definitive - priority on IRZ gives some definition. Fear of the 213,000 acre corridor. People need scope of what is being talked about.

Stacy suggested that the next step may be to put together some alternatives after the discussion on the pros/cons of the ORA. Charge was given to the Committee to send comments to Burt who will rework the Conservation Area definition incorporating Anjanette's suggestion.

A comment was made that the Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento/San Joaquin Comprehensive Study (Comp. Study) may change the Inner River Zone Guidelines in the future if a decision is made to use setback levees. It was noted that habitat does not drive flood control; this process co-exists but does not change flood control for purposes of habitat.

It was determined that (1) the draft "white paper" and draft advantages/disadvantages of the ORA will be cleaned up, the second draft forwarded to the SRCA Chair noting they had been reviewed at the TAC, discussion again at the January TAC and (2) Burt will make another attempt to define the Conservation Area using Anjanette's suggested language; bring to the next TAC. The discussion of the Conservation Area definition will be the number one agenda item at the January TAC meeting.

Proposal/Project Review – Burt asked that the Committee review the draft and forward comments to him. A question was asked about whether the review would address economic impacts. There needs to be a mechanism concerning this issue, but they will not be determining impacts. Stacy informed the Committee that his staff is working on formatting the project review form. He also noted that this form would be for use for future projects, not for the proposal reviews coming before the Board in Jan./Feb.

Manager's Report – Because of time constraints, the Committee was referred to Burt's written report and advised to contact him if there were any questions or if they needed additional information

Next Meeting – The next meeting will be on **January 17th**, 9:00 a.m. at the Willows City Hall