

## **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Notes – January 7, 2003**

In the absence of Chair Anjanette Martin and Vice Chair Stacy Cepello, Burt Bundy opened the meeting with self-introductions and activities updates.

John Merz, Sacramento River Preservation Trust, announced the upcoming fourth annual Snow Goose Festival January 24<sup>th</sup> to January 26<sup>th</sup> in Chico. The Festival includes several field trips, workshops and a Saturday evening banquet; additional information is available on their website, [www.sacrivertrust.org](http://www.sacrivertrust.org).

Kelly Moroney, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, reported on work being done on three units that were in the Environmental Assessment for the Sacramento River Wildlife Refuge. They are currently planting on the Del Norte Unit consisting of 110 acres, 59 acres below Red Bluff Diversion Dam, and will start planting an area 5 miles downstream next spring where they have completed removing a non-productive walnut orchard. Kelly also reported 19 wells were abandoned on Rio Vista at the request of Tehama County to protect ground water quality. The estimated cost varied from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per well. They are also working on the Feasibility Study for flood reduction on South Avenue.

Burt furnished pictures of the large woody debris in the river following the recent storms; he noted that Cottonwood Creek is the source of much of the debris. He also reported that the river has moved very close to the Ehrk house in Hamilton City. A more resistant geologic control has slowed the erosion at that location; however, further upstream and downstream erosion has moved the river very close to the toe of the J Levee. Glenn County has been working on a backup levee and work is nearly completed. The Corps of Engineers will begin emergency work (PL 84-99) only when the river level is at 143 and is predicted to continue rising.

The Feasibility Study is moving forward and a public scoping workshop is set for January 9<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m., at the Hamilton Union High School.

Bonnie Ross, Department of Water Resources (DWR)/Flood Protection Corridor Program, announced the ending date for their grant solicitation cycle is February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Paul Ward, Department of Fish & Game (DF&G), discussed the MWD Water Transfer Proposal which has a potential of taking 205,000 acre feet of water out of the system. He noted the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) is the lead on the federal side, DWR on the state side, but the process is different this time and each district is acting on its own. Paul agreed to forward information to the SRCAF staff for distribution to the TAC members regarding the dates of the CEQA public input sessions. Frank Michny, BOR, was given as a contact for additional information. It was noted the Farm Bureau has drafted letters expressing their concerns.

Burt reported that The Reclamation Board did adopt the Comprehensive Study noting much of the technical work is not completed. There are concerns that it is a “piecemeal

approach” versus a comprehensive plan. The burden of developing solutions will be placed on the local flood management and land use entities. The recommendations from the Floodplain Management Task Force were also adopted. The SRCAF staff will summarize the Task Force recommendations and make available to the TAC members.

Paul reminded everyone of the Landowner Assurances Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, and encouraged everyone to attend. Chris Beale and Renee Hawkins, CALFED, will continue their presentation on Incidental Take.

### **Project Updates-**

Scott Clemons, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), discussed the restoration project on 26 acres at the mouth of Cottonwood Creek. Because deer have caused extensive damage to the new plantings, the project has been extended for another year. This will allow time to put measures in place to address the deer problem. Additional funds will be put into the project.

Scott introduced Bev Stupek, Turtle Bay Exploration Park, and Terry Hanson, City of Redding, to discuss the **Turtle Bay Riparian Habitat Conservation Program**. The proponents are requesting funding to restore and enhance riparian habitat on 340 acres on both sides of the Sacramento River. Approximately 20% of the project is within the floodplain. The property has not been in agricultural use since the early 1900's. Approximately 70% of the area to be restored lies outside the fee area of Turtle Bay; the areas are accessible to the general public via paved and unpaved trails. Turtle Bay and the City of Redding will also work with the Corps of Engineers on wetlands restoration on the south shore of the complex. Funding for the project would provide for two years of monitoring; however, Turtle Bay has agreed to long-term monitoring because staff is on the premises. The proponents will continue to provide updates to the TAC as the master plan develops.

Concerns were expressed about the on-going problem of lack of funding for long-term monitoring and maintenance of projects. Burt noted that one of the goals of the SRCAF was to establish a long-term monitoring plan. One suggestion offered was that agencies require long-term monitoring on all future projects.

Scott and Carol Wright, Sacramento River Partners, gave an overview on the **Gaines Ranch Project**. The project proposes the acquisition of 36 acres near the Hwy 162 bridge at Butte City.

The property is subject to severe erosion and has lost 17 acres in the past 10 years. It was suggested that more detailed information was needed on this multi-faceted project, the mapping should be updated and that CalTrans, as one of the proponents, come to the TAC to discuss the project. The project will be on the WCB May agenda.

Paul Ward discussed the contract with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to update the existing DFG management plan for their lands in the Sacramento River Wildlife Area. The 3600 acres consists of 13 units, 23 separate properties, the majority in natural riparian

vegetation. Greg Werner, TNC, explained the process that will involve an extensive outreach plan and will stress coordination with other agencies such as US F&WS and the Public Access Study. A draft plan will be available in the early fall. A concern was raised that the plan should have extended to Redding, that the scope of work should reflect all properties.

**Handbook Amendment Request –**

The Board gave direction to the TAC to review the Handbook Amendment request from Family Water Alliance (FWA) that would delete language on page 6-12 of the Handbook. It is the responsibility of the TAC to see if there are technical impacts, not policy, as a result of the change to language. Tom Evans, FWA, noted that they no longer feel the language applies because it makes references to areas outside of the current Conservation Area; leaving the language in implies that the SRCAF is making a recommendation. It was suggested that a subcommittee be formed to look at the issue and the question was raised whether it should be a subcommittee of the TAC or the Board. Following further discussion it was determined that the TAC will recommend to the Board that a subcommittee be formed consisting of both TAC and Board members and that the Board establish a permanent Handbook amendment subcommittee.

It was suggested there needs to be more detailed information available on proposed projects and that the technical aspects of each project needs to be examined more extensively by the TAC.

Preliminary discussion has begun on the feasibility of an Interpretive Center in the Hamilton City Area that would offer educational information about natural resources, cultural history, and local agricultural heritage.

The next meeting was scheduled for February 4, 9:30 a.m., Willows City Hall, Willows.