

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting – March 2, 2004

Chair ~ Anjanette Martin

Vice Chair ~ Stacy Cepello

Burt Bundy, SRCAF Manager, opened the meeting with self-introductions. There were no announcements or public comments. Bonnie Ross, Department of Water Resources (DWR), Flood Protection Corridor Program (FPCP), reported they have applied for an exemption to the freeze on government spending but have not had a response. Paul Ward, Department of Fish and Game (DFG), noted the February meeting on the M&T/Llano Seco Pumping Plant has been rescheduled to the 3rd week in March. Greg Werner, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), reported they are in negotiations with CalFed to finalize the contract on the 3-year Colusa Sub-reach grant. TNC will be working with the SRCAF to ensure there will be a great deal of local involvement. Stacy Cepello, DWR, noted Lester Snow has been appointed new director for DWR effective March 8th. Stacy also reported that the design and database portion of the new project tracker website is done. Originally the interactive project fact sheet was to be on the existing SRCAF website; however, because of security issues with DWR it will run through a Chico State server. Chico is currently waiting for the necessary software which should take 1-2 months. In the interim, a copy of the fact sheet will be available to download on the existing website www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov. There was some discussion on the Sacramento River Portal website, a separate entity, and the information it provides on resources, projects, people and activities, and organizations. Stacy noted the Bureau of Reclamation will be scanning information provided to them by DWR on Sacramento River studies and returning that information to them; the Portal website could be a site for that information.

Greg Werner reported the DFG Management Plan has been formally approved and should be signed by the Director within the next two weeks.

Burt Bundy informed the committee that the Corps of Engineers (COE) has completed their report to Washington on the Hamilton City Project; the Reclamation Board is commenting and filing their statement. The Project will be printed in the Federal Register next Monday followed by a 45-day public comment period. The next Hamilton City Work Group meeting will be held in April, date, time and location to be announced.

Current Projects/Updates:

- *Riparian restoration planning and feasibility study for the Riparian Sanctuary, Llano Seco Unit, Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge* - Dan Efseaff, River Partners, gave an update on the project which is looking at alternatives to (1) restore 500-acres on the Llano Seco Unit and (2) protect the Princeton, Cordora, Glenn and Provident Irrigation Districts' (PCGID-PID) fish screen and pumping plant. Modeling will look at approximately 10 miles of river; existing modeling will be utilized but will be updated. A public meeting will be held the third week of April; a Draft Pumping Plant Protection Feasibility Study will be developed in summer, 2004; a Draft Riparian Restoration Feasibility Study in fall, 2004; and a Draft Interdisciplinary Monitoring Plan in spring, 2005. Some suggestions from the group included making sure DWR and Butte and Glenn Counties were on board, information be available on public and private ownership, and early notification (through newsletter, email, local paper) of public meeting dates. Paul Ward suggested the project proponents work with the anadromous fish screen team; Paul will provide Dan with the names.

New Projects or Proposal Review -

- *Drumheller Slough Unit Project* –River Partners will seek funding to restore and enhance 226 acres on the Drumheller Slough Unit, part of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. Potential funding sources include the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Wildlife Conservation Board, and others. Joe Silveira, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), discussed the project area which is located next to Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (VELB) and Giant Garter Snake (GGS) mitigation sites owned by Reclamation District 1004. Previously a prune orchard, the fallow flood-prone agriculture land provides poor wildlife habitat. Targeted species include bank swallows, salmon, sturgeon, Swainson’s hawk, GGS, VELB, and Bald eagles. Hydraulic modeling has been done and they will take into account that this is a very active part of the river. Some suggestions from the group included identifying the source for the flood analysis information, providing ownership information, changing language “Public use is not part of this project” to possibly read “public use is not yet a part of this project. The current language gives the impression that the public use component has been ruled out. Dan noted it is too premature, once the project is funded and restoration starts, they will come back to the SRCAF for input regarding the public use component. It was stressed that follow-up is critical because this is where the SRCAF provides the opportunity for involvement in the planning process. Having all of the agencies here in this forum provides the chance to make an impact.

It was noted it would be helpful if the Board could set a clear definition of a “neighbor” so the project proponents would know what scope of contact is expected. For now it was determined that contact would be expected with any *adjoining* landowners. Since this has not yet been funded and there are still some questions to be answered, the project will not go forward to the Board in March. Instead, Dan will put together the documentation regarding neighbor contact and try to address any other questions, bring back to the TAC in April, and then go forward to the Board.

Buffer Zone Discussion – Stacy gave a brief overview of the buffer zone discussion at the last TAC meeting. The group agreed that the value of the TAC would be to put the issue into context by looking at what really happens on the river and what has been applied. Project proponents were asked to provide any information they might have; Bonnie Ross noted she had found a site that spoke to buffers and she will forward the address to Pat and/or Stacy.

It was pointed out that there is a lot of information out there but the focus needs to be on real problems that have occurred and why they occurred. Documenting case studies may help sort through some of the issues and help identify priorities. It was suggested that input could be solicited through a mailing, possibly the SRCAF newsletter, or by contacting landowners in the conservation area who are adjacent to buffers. The Ord Bend Unit Restoration Project was identified as an example of a project that incorporated a number of measures to minimize impacts including owl boxes, new fences, and vegetative screening. It was suggested the TAC needs to clearly define the scope of work; Stacy will work with Adam to look at what’s there and try to determine the real, key issues. Michell Stevens, DWR, referenced information she thought would be useful to the group and offered to work with Burt.

Strategic Plan Discussion –Burt handed out a list of the 26 strategies that have been developed in the 3-Year Strategic Plan under both the programmatic and organizational goals. The committee was then asked to select and prioritize the top 5 out of those 26 strategies with 1 being the highest priority. This same process will be repeated at the LAC meeting on March 10th and at the Board level on March 18th. It was suggested that the Mission Statement be added to the top of the survey and that the organizational and programmatic goals be separated.

Manager's Report –A written copy of the report was available as a handout.

Next Meeting - The next meeting is scheduled for April 6th , 9:30 a.m., with a site visit to the Ord Bend Unit restoration project. It was suggested that everyone meet at the Ord Bend Park; additional information and directions will be forward to the committee as soon as plans are finalized.