

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – November 1, 2005

Acting Chair – Stacy Cepello

Acting Chair Stacy Cepello opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Ernie Ohlin, Henry Lomeli, Scott Clemons, Shirley Lewis, Dan Efseaff, Woody Elliott, Myrnie Mayville, Vickie Newlin, Burt Bundy, Beverley Anderson-Abbs, and Ellen Gentry

Announcements

The SRCAF co-sponsored the 6th State of the Sacramento River Watershed Conference last week. Approximately 230 people attended the two day event in Red Bluff which included field trips and website projects, along with sessions on a variety of topics.

Scott Clemons, Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), announced they will be holding their quarterly meeting at 10:00AM, November 17, at the Capitol Building in Sacramento. Cache Creek, Capay, Del Rio and the Llano Seco easement purchase will be on the agenda.

Vickie Newlin, California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA), stated the Little Hoover Commission (LHC) hearings are available on www.lhc.ca.gov and also through the CBDA website. KPMG (Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler), a professional services firm, is doing the analysis on governance issues and has completed a survey of stakeholders which is available through the CBDA website. The LHC will have a final report November 17 which will go to the governor and legislature for consideration. By January, information can be fed into the budget process. The next CBDA meeting will be held November 10. BDPAC will meet November 9th.

Ernie Ohlin, Tehama County Flood Control, expressed his thanks to Kevin Forester who gave a presentation at the last Tehama County Flood Control Board of Directors meeting, regarding the swales they put in at the Rio Vista Unit. The board was appreciative of what they had done. Ernie also reported the Battle Creek project, involving the removal of dams, was recommended for funding from CalFed. Money is in the F&G budget.

Activity Reports

Woody Elliott, Department of Parks and Recreation, distributed a handout regarding the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park Preliminary General Plan and Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report. Regarding the conversion of agricultural land to riparian and wildlife habitat, consultant(s) initially felt there was adverse impact to wildlands; however, that decision was reversed and it was determined that land use changes do not have significant adverse impacts on the physical environment within the CEQA Guidelines. Stacy added that when soil is put under concrete there is a permanent change and significant impact. Otherwise, soil doesn't change from agriculture to wildlife habitat. The public review and comment period ends November 17, 2005 and is available online at www.parks.ca.gov

Dan Efseaff, River Partners (RP), gave an update on the next Llano Seco Phase II Environmental Compliance and Design (2006), and potential future steps of the joint project. Phase III Implementation will be a separate grant in the future. Proposed tasks include: administration of project management, project coordination and review, collecting site data,

project design, and developing an action plan for implementation. A summary of products will be incorporated into the proposal. Dan noted this will be a two year process. The ERP application deadline for funding is December 15. The preliminary cost estimate is \$500,000.

Burt reported on the SRCA area proposal for the same grant, providing incentives for landowners with restoration on agricultural land and the inclusion of an investigation of a Safe Harbor for incidental take. This is an opportunity to join and coordinate projects. Burt added the need to determine specifics of working landscapes and long term funding. The whole SRCA area will be included.

Current Projects/Updates

Big Chico Creek - Woody Elliott also announced the public review and comment period for Big Chico Creek ends November 12, 2005. Shirley Lewis noted concern as a landowner about people parking in orchards (i.e., Scotty's Landing.) and that there could be a potential problem if parking is insufficient.

New Projects or Proposal Review

Llano Seco Conservation Easement – Scott Clemons, WCB, gave a presentation on the 4,000 acres proposed for purchase (Project Tracker #94). The Conservation easement project will be presented to CBDA for the Working Landscapes Subcommittee on Thursday this week. Ag land is tilled, but not deep ripped, and maintained in the condition of the Spanish Land Grant (circa 1850). 700 acres are in riparian and wetlands. The owners are asking for help with the proposal. Henry Lomeli, Department of Fish and Game (F&G), noted that in discussions with Paul Ward, 46 cfs are irrigated out of the river from an unscreened pump. F&G is promoting screens for salmonids. CEQA is not applicable, but there is a need to address this issue. 1700 acres of the Llano Seco project is currently being irrigated. Burt hopes that Resources looks at pumping through groundwater or a collection well. Henry noted ranches have creative ways to get water, and perhaps the ranch may consider decommissioning the pump which might settle the issue. Burt also suggested phasing it out over a period of time, and looking at options to provide water for those needs. Ernie added that the issue to provide water is important for maintenance and needs to be resolved before final purchase is approved. Stacy stated that this project is consistent with the guidelines and principles of the SRCAF handbook; however this issue has come up and should be resolved in the long term. Vickie added that the WCB project is directed action to F&G. Henry Lomeli noted that the Llano Seco Conservation Easement is a priority for F&G, as is working with WCB.

Brayton Unit – Dan Efseaff, RP, gave the presentation on the Brayton Unit (Project Tracker #96). The Brayton project features restoring and enhancing 41 acres, providing recreational and interpretive facilities, developing relationships with local tribes and other groups, and exploring options for the future. Recreational benefits include parking, restrooms, picnic areas, river and beach access, interpretive signs and trail guides. The proposed restoration incorporates 29 acres of walnuts, and enhancement of 12 acres. Henry added F&G has active hunting on adjacent property and safety buffers should be incorporated into the design. Dan noted fortunate topography is densely vegetated between the two properties. Stacy added the need to check with neighbors. This project will come back to the TAC with details. It was determined that this project meets the goals and principles of the SRCAF handbook.

Cross Boundary Issues Sub-Committee Update

Stacy distributed a copy of the SRCA Cross-Boundary Listed Wildlife Species Issues. SRCAF is submitting a proposal under the working landscapes PSP, including landowner incentives and investigating and implementing a Safe Harbor which will include species. Of these species, half are state and half are federal. Phase I investigates the Safe Harbor and determines which species make sense for inclusion (i.e., Giant Garter Snake). Stacy will present the list to the board and has committed to the budget portion for species, corridor habitat and likely habitat for species. Phase II implements the programmatic Safe Harbor with specific baseline studies with landowners that voluntarily choose to participate. Ernie commented that SRCAF would work with landowners to sign them up and that it would be a “huge” incentive for the public to not have to go through an agency. Burt added that we can insulate landowners from intrusion of agencies and still be acceptable to agencies. BMPs, easements, mitigation banking and other tools help to provide incentives. Stacy added there are three monitoring proposals including vegetation classification, LIDAR and topography, with which we could coordinate and incorporate. Vickie suggested that Ducks Unlimited be contacted to help with baseline studies.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting was set for Thursday, December 1, 2005, 9:30AM, at Willows City Hall. This date would allow a meeting before proposals are due. The meeting will be prior to the SRCAF Board meeting, 3:00PM, at the Monday Afternoon Club, the same day.