

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – February 7, 2006

Chair - Ajay Singh

Vice Chair - Stacy Cepello

Chair Ajay Singh opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Henry Lomeli, Jamison Watts, Bruce Ross, Woody Elliott, John Merz, Myrnie Mayville, Basia Trout, Greg Golet, Kelly Moroney, Dan Efseaff, Lady Bug Doherty, Gregg Werner, Shirley Lewis, Ernie Ohlin, Burt Bundy, Beverley Anderson-Abbs, and Ellen Gentry

Announcements

Stacy Cepello reported the new river atlas, covering Red Bluff to Colusa and based on 2004 photography, is available in limited quantities. It is also on the SRCAF website at <http://www.sacramentoriver.ca.gov> under "Publications". The atlas from Red Bluff to Keswick is expected to be available later this week.

Activity Reports

Ernie Ohlin reported on the Tehama County OES FEMA Flood Mitigation Plan. The Advisory Committee is holding meetings for public comment, and in order to identify issues. Ernie will continue to update the TAC with those issues at a later date.

Current Projects/Updates

Dan Efseaff gave a PowerPoint update on the Chico Country Day School Riparian Restoration Education grant. This is a NFWF grant for \$26,000. River Partners and the school are providing matching funds for the one year program integrating classroom work with hands on fieldwork at the Del Rio restoration site. The focus is on outdoor learning with educational opportunities in the field, service learning, stewardship, biology, geography, studying earth processes, art and music. This grant covered start up costs only and they are hoping to obtain additional funding to continue the program.

Dan also gave an update on the habitat restoration at the McConnell Arboretum, across the river from Turtle Bay Exploration Park. The project started in the fall of 2003 on 120 acres and was funded by a WCB grant. Dan's PowerPoint showed the planting design on the terraced area. He discussed the focus on species, geese exclusion enclosures to demonstrate geese impacts, education and outreach, and the paved bike trail. He indicated that the native perennial grasses and paved trails would serve to reduce fire risk.

Woody Elliott announced the CA State Parks and Recreation Commission will take part in a briefing on the Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park Preliminary General Plan/Draft EIR, to be conducted at various sites in Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park, on March 2, 2006. The briefing will begin at 12:30 at the Bidwell Mansion in Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park. The hearing for approval will take place in the Chico City Council Chambers on March 3, 2006 at 9:00am. For more information go to: http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=24228

Kelly Moroney announced the La Barranca/Blackberry Island report of No Significant Impact was available for public comment in October, 2005. The 200 acres project is projected to start in the spring. Kelly also reported the Rio Vista Swale project, completed this past fall, has worked. Receding floodwater showed improved drainage and the swale has since been used as a wildlife and rescue corridor. Neighbors have been pleased.

Ernie Ohlin noted he had high water pictures available for the SRCAF newsletter.

New Projects or Proposal Review

Gregg Werner reported on Project Tracker #111, the acquisition of 6+ acres within the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge. No restoration is required on the property which has been purchased by private funds. The property is surrounded on three sides by the National Wildlife Refuge and on one side by an orchard. The Glenn County assessed value was \$8,800. The seller has requested that the sales amount be kept confidential. A request for action was made. A recommendation to the SRCAF board that this project is consistent with the guidelines and principles of the handbook will be presented for review at the next board meeting, March 16.

Discussion of Project Follow up and Monitoring

Beverly Anderson-Abbs gave a quick review of Project Tracker and asked for guidelines to develop a project follow up process to improve future monitoring, noting benefits and issues that may arise with landowners and project proponents. The following suggestions were made: link to funding sources for status updates and understanding of project baseline(s), talk to locals and document agreements and discussions, conduct neighbor surveys, meet with project proponents, view quarterly reports or summaries of periodic updates, develop a questionnaire, look at long term monitoring, showcase one or two projects and report published updates to the TAC.

Beverly reported looking at a redesign of Project Tracker to make it more user friendly for proponents' updates. Dan noted the importance of the mechanism - specifics are solvable, theoretical are not. Greg Golet added that all concerns cannot always be addressed, but sampling addresses questions of concern that can be linked to work where answers are available.

Discussion of Issues and Alternatives for Unscreened Diversions

Burt brought up an interest in looking for alternatives to unscreened diversions. Problems that come up on a regular basis involve location, cost, required maintenance, ties to long term water rights, bureau contracts, and county ordinances. It was suggested that a workshop format, open to the public, would be beneficial. Jamison Watts, Gallaway Consulting, recommended contacting Howard Brown, NOAA, for a workshop. Greg Golet gave some statistics; approximately 90% of diverted water flows are screened and approximately 70% of diversions are unscreened and suggested a "white paper" that he will send to the SRCAF for dispersal to TAC members. Stacy added that CDFG has a database of unscreened diversions and provided an overhead map to view. Basia Trout, Bureau of Reclamation, said there is information from the anadromous fish restoration program in Sacramento and could recommend types of screens. She said there is no requirement to be under contract in order to screen. Gregg Werner suggested invitations to the TAC for guest speakers on this subject. Please contact Burt Bundy with any other ideas or suggestions.

Ernie Ohlin announced that Lorman Educational Service is providing a seminar February 9 in Redding, regarding Water Rights Sales and Transfers in California. Ellen Gentry will email additional information regarding the seminar to the TAC.

Cross Boundary Issues Sub-Committee Update

Stacy gave a brief review of the Cross Boundary Matrix, and noted that the recent PSP grant requested funding for a river corridor update and habitat modeling. Beverly reviewed baseline analysis and protecting neighbors from incidental take. Stacy noted the state has no jurisdiction on private property and that the grant's Safe Harbor needs landowners who see value in strategy and process.

Greg Golet reported, in the Colusa Subreach Planning (CSP) project, studies have been initiated and the issues of concerns for stakeholders included identifying cross boundary issues. EDAW was selected to study the regulatory limitations and pest species effects on agriculture that may be caused by restoration in the Subreach. Task 3 looks at pest issues (insects and small animals) associated with restoration. Task 2 includes the identification of regulatory limitations that surround restoration sites and activities or standards that may be implemented to reduce any adverse effects on farmers. The draft study design will be presented to the TAC for review. Greg said preliminary data on habitat types and samplings are fascinating. Gregg Werner added that CSP has been affected by a recent letter, noting a majority of Colusa County participants are opting out of the process. He is hoping for as much participation as possible, however, involving entities from other counties and coordinating efforts with the cross-boundary sub-committee and providing information to the TAC.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting was set for Tuesday, March 7, 2006, 9:30AM, at Willows City Hall. Please send projects slated for the next TAC meeting to Beverly at banderso@water.ca.gov.