

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting (TAC) Notes – March 6, 2007

Chair – Ajay Singh

TAC Chair Ajay Singh opened the meeting with self introductions. The following were in attendance: Gregg Werner, Bruce Ross, Woody Elliott, Ernie Ohlin, Tom McCubbins, Dan Efseaff, Adam Henderson, John W. Hunt, Kelly Moroney, Henry Lomeli, Don Anderson, Lady Bug Doherty, John Merz, David Martasian, Loren Murray, Pal Sandhu, Burt Bundy, Beverley Anderson-Abbs and Ellen Gentry.

Announcements

John Merz announced two upcoming outings: Saturday, March 10, 9am to 2pm the Sacramento River Preservation Trust will sponsor a Sacramento River Bend Area hike, starting at Jellys Ferry, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Cost is \$5 in order to provide beverages; Saturday, March 24, 9am to 2pm hikers will traverse along Iron Canyon and Chinese Rapids to the top of Bald Hill. Cost is also \$5.

Kelly Moroney announced the Supplemental EA, for hunting on Fish and Wildlife Refuge properties along the Sacramento River, will be released on Friday for a 30 day public comment period.

The SRCAF is looking for location suggestions for the June 28 Annual Meeting/BBQ. Last year the event was held at Llano Seco. The year before, it was held at Dan Gover's Ranch.

The Sacramento River Restoration Science Conference, hosted by SRCAF and TNC, is scheduled for April 9-10, at CSU Chico in the BMU Park Room. Thirty talks will focus on a range of topics. Social aspects will be covered day one, and applied science subjects will be the focus on day 2. A schedule of sessions is forthcoming. There is no fee, but attendees are asked to pre-register because of limited capacity.

Activity Reports

Colusa Subreach Planning reported the Advisory Workgroup and locals have been looking at initial hydraulic analysis and held their first subcommittee meeting. The model is calibrated against surface water elevations with existing design flow compared to 1957 data, in the area of Princeton and up several miles from Colusa.

Ernie Ohlin reported Tehama County is getting ready to install two groundwater monitoring wells. They are looking at putting in a high monitoring level (in the 50ft area), in order to start identifying stream flow and environmental mixes. This activity is being funded by AB303 through DWR.

Ernie also reported on the completion of the Tehama County Flood Mitigation Plan, part of which includes identified actions to undertake dealing with the area in Antelope Creek and Craig Creek (east side tributaries), and what can be done in the future to alleviate flooding in the Dairyville and Corning areas affected by Jewett and Burch Creeks (west side tributaries). The final draft is on the website at: tehamacountywater.ca.gov

Lady Bug reported attending a meeting on Tisdale Weir yesterday. Gregg noted that sites have been discussed as possible mitigation areas. The Tisdale Weir Channel Rehabilitation

Environmental Documentation, which was on the February TAC agenda, was reviewed. Contacts include: Scott Woodland, Keith Swanson and Kent Smith.

Loren Murray, Senior Program Manager, URS Corporation, gave a DWR Critical Erosion Repairs Status Briefing PowerPoint presentation. Electromagnetic scanning shows anomalies prone to levee failure. As it expands to encompass all areas, the scan provides a footprint encapsulated into the program. Web based information, including full digital mapping, videography of all vegetation, as well as boring results will be made available from the DWR Flood Management (DFM). Coverage is expected within one year; rural coverage is expected in the next two years, according to Pal Sandhu, Critical Repairs Branch, DWR. Publicly owned levees are now being looked at; private levees are still being discussed. The grants program has three different types of levees studies: those ready to go into design, levee evaluations and planning.

The original twenty-four (24) Critical Erosion repairs included 14 sites to be repaired by USACE and ten by DWR. 40 PL84-99 Rehabilitation Program repairs include Order 1 sites – protecting urban areas - with significant scour and erosion; 19 repaired by USACE, 13 repaired by Brannan-Andrus Island Local Maintenance District (BALMD), and eight repaired by DWR. Seven Order 2 sites – protecting undeveloped areas - with high benefits cost ratio (B/C) include four repaired by DWR and three repaired by USACE. There are 341 deferred sites.

Efforts to protect the environment were reviewed. The levee repairs will incorporate environmental features to mitigate impacts including: protect and replant vegetation in water and on benches, include woody material to compensate for fish habitat impacts, avoid VELB habitat, and pre-survey for sensitive bird species such as Bank Swallow, Swainson's hawk, and burrowing owls. The goal is to work in partnership with landowners to secure access.

The general schedule was discussed. Federal agencies agreed to operate on emergency repair and allowed continued consultation during construction. This drives up costs, but is considered worthwhile in order to get started sooner. The biological opinion for both the Corps and DWR sites, including on-site and off-site mitigation plans, are being developed. Construction is expected to be completed on all sites by September/October, with a final accounting of mitigation at that time.

The agency contact group has been meeting on a monthly basis and will continue to have public meetings. One will be scheduled for April. A contact list can be provided for the levee repairs team and the technical task group involved with design, in field checks, and mitigation. Some of those names include: Les Harder, DWR Deputy Director; Mike Inamine, Program Manager; Pal Sandhu, Project Manager; Loren Murray, Project Manager; Rob Fill, Construction Manager; and Stan Walling, USACE Project Manager. This information will be made available to SRCAF, or you can email: leveerepair@water.ca.gov

RM 182 was reviewed. Concerns included: no communication, no planning, previous decisions not to restore, lack of scientific basis - including geologic control, and no contact with anyone that understood the property. Loren reported that the template preserves the integrity of the certified levee. Multihydraulic modeling will be done later on DFG property downstream. The decision to expand was made by the design team on site and Northern District DWR input was not included.

The alternative for a trench was discussed, but was determined to be too expensive and only three weeks were allowed for coming up with a design. Interest was shown for reforestation and more riparian corridor, but there is also a need to come up with a palette. Impacts to the Bank Swallow habitat were questioned. Loren noted that sites are being looked at to remove rock in order to re-expose bank for potential habitat. Opportunities are also being looked at in order to improve next time.

Loren noted that a hydraulic study will be done for the site. If improvement has produced an anomaly, minimizing and negating with modification of the site will be considered.

Pal Sandhu noted that with decisions to extend in the future, they would like to include hydraulic evaluations to determine velocity and potential erosion. The key decision came out of the Corps decision and the prepared list of top priorities. Future programs will look into methodology for long term ranking with input from locals. More care will be taken, including economic criteria for the next list of 254 erosion sites identified by Ayres.

Current Projects/Updates

Dan Efseaff announced receipt of WCB funding for Wilson Landing, and a meeting tomorrow with the Reclamation Board, DFW and DFG to look at Del Rio and Dover Hill long term maintenance and a resolution that will allow them to move forward. It was noted that with the Safe Harbor at Del Rio, elderberry can be taken out at will. Ernie Ohlin mentioned active maintenance requirements to keep levees clean 10 feet from the toe. Ajay added that levees with riparian buffers didn't blow out. There was discussion that vegetation can play an important role in protecting levees, including dead trees chained for fish habitat. Ernie noted that root systems may help keep levees together, but debris may hook and pull out trees resulting in levee failure during high flows. Levees set back from the main channel providing more floodway are thereby appreciated, but the Corps philosophy would have to be changed. Burt noted that in the past, trees that fell over were cut off by barges leaving root masses.

New Projects or Proposal Review

There were no new projects at this time.

Programmatic Safe Harbor discussion

Beverly Anderson-Abbs distributed the first draft of the Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement for Restoration of Riparian Habitat within the SRCA. She reviewed the matrix for concerned species, noting some (i.e., Least Bell's Vireo and Bald Eagle) will be coming off that list. DFG is working on wording to tie into the voluntary local program.

Ajay noted #11B is good to develop - if there is a violation, work can be done with the property owner in order to come to a resolution. Gregg Werner suggested the covered area needs to go beyond the SRCA. Beverly noted that it will have to be up to the landowner in various areas. The SRCA is constrained within the reaches. Wording can be amended to cover those who wish to be covered. Landowners would sign up on a voluntary basis. Dan Efseaff suggested the benefit needs to be in a compact defined area. Shifting baseline can be handled programmatically or neighbor to neighbor. Dan also pointed out #10-3 and its reference to the Reclamation Board's responsibility for maintenance, along with DWR. The list of covered activities came out of the Legaci Grant and included consultation with Keith Swanson for levee and flood control works and covered maintenance activities. Dan suggested using the words "includes, but not constricted to."

The SRCA is working with the monitoring grant through CSU Chico and using aerial photography and vegetation mapping. The Working Landscapes grant will allow for baseline information to be collected for the entire SRCA. NRCS is a natural partnership and offered to do a presentation to the TAC to provide available information on their programs.

Next Meeting Date and Location

The next TAC meeting was set for April 3, at Willows City Hall.