

**Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum
Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes**

September 18, 2008
3:00 p.m.

Monday Afternoon Club
Willows, CA

Chair Jim McKevitt called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., followed by self-introductions. It was determined there was not a quorum of voting members present (underlined).

<u>County</u>	<u>Public Interest</u>	<u>Landowner</u>	<u>Agency (non-voting)</u>
Butte	<u>Jane Dolan</u>	<u>Shirley Lewis</u>	
Colusa	(Gary Evans)	(Knute Myers)	
Glenn	(Keith Hansen)	<u>Don Anderson</u>	
Shasta	(Glenn Hawes)	(Dan Gover)	
Sutter	(Dan Silva)	(Russell Young)	
Tehama	<u>Ron Warner</u>	<u>Brendon Flynn</u>	
Yolo	<u>Lynnel Pollock</u>	(Marc Faye)	
Resources Agency	<u>Jim McKevitt</u>		
DWR			Glen Pearson
DFG			Kent Smith
State Reclamation Board			(Lady Bug Doherty)
USFWS			Mike Hoover
USACE			Robert Koenigs
Bureau of Reclamation			Basia Trout

Names listed in parentheses represent absences.

SRCAF: Manager Beverley Anderson-Abbs, Resource Conservation Assistant Josh Brown and Administrative Assistant Ellen Gentry.

Other identified attendees: Adam Henderson (DWR); Ajay Singh (SRCAF TAC Chair); Aric Lester (DWR); Ashley Indrieri (Family Water Alliance); Bruce Ross (DWR); Chris Leininger (Landowner); Dan Hencratt (Landowner); Dave Sieperda (Llano Seco Rancho); Dawn Garcia (Altacal Audubon); Eric Larsen (UC Davis); Fran Peace (Rep. Wally Herger's Office); Greg Golet (TNC); Gregg Werner (TNC); Howard Ellman (Legal representative/Llano Seco Rancho); Jeff Sutton (Tehama Colusa Canal Authority); Jim Well (Ducks Unlimited); John Merz (Sacramento River Preservation Trust); Kelly Moroney (USFWS); Kevin Foerster (USFWS); Kim Davis (Rep. Senator Aanestad's Office); Lee Heringer (M&T Ranch); Les Heringer (M&T Ranch); Michael Fehling (CA State Parks); Mike Harvey (Mussetter Engineering); Olen Zirkle, Retired (Ducks Unlimited); Phil Johnson (Altacal Audubon); Quené Hansen (City of Chico); Richard Thierot (Llano Seco Rancho); Rob Capriola (Westervelt Co.); Ryan Luster (TNC); Sandy Dunn (Somach, Simmons & Dunn); Stacy Cepello (DWR); Tamara Miller (MPM Engineering); Todd Manley (Northern CA Water Assn.); Tom Varga (City of Chico); and Tracy Bettencourt (City of Chico).

1. Unscheduled matters

There were no unscheduled matters at this time.

2. Consent Calendar

The June 12, 2008 Board meeting notes and Executive meeting notes will be reconsidered at the next Board meeting.

3. Board Member Reports

Basia Trout, Bureau of Reclamation, reported there will be an informational presentation on Quagga and Zebra mussels tonight, 7:00PM, at the Red Bluff Discovery Center.

Ron Warner, Tehama County Public Interest, noted the Red Bluff Diversion Dam will be discussed, along with other water issues, Tuesday, 8:30AM, at the Tehama County Board of Supervisors' Office.

Lynnel Pollock, Yolo Co. Public Interest, reported the Elkhorn Basin Ranch Project has been finalized. 1600 acres will be permanently protected from development with habitat enhancement planned for later. There are no issues with the acquisition.

Glen Pearson, DWR, reviewed several items available on the DWR website: drought page including a water bank that is looking for buyers and sellers, a link to water conditions and flood maps. DWR is preparing to talk with local agencies, flood control and counties regarding floodways and protections, local levee systems and levels of performance. The purpose is to improve understanding of flood control benefits and to look at any additional focus that may be needed.

Mike Hoover, USFWS, reported there is a Sacramento River Bank Protection program application for an extension for construction at RM177.8. RM157.7R, RM136.7R, RM130.0L and Deer Creek projects are also coming up. The management strategy for Elder Creek is an effort to improve capacity and maintain eligibility by removing invasive species (mainly arundo and tamarisk). The Corps is also involved with completion of a Section 7 consultation on VELB, with associated efforts on Deer Creek. A draft plan correlation report for the Sites Reservoir is available and a public meeting is coming up. The Shasta Dam Enlargement draft EIS will be made available once it goes through the internal review process. The plan involves raising the dam for additional cold water storage and includes environmental restoration around the reservoir.

Robert Koenigs, USACE, noted the 60% design for the Hamilton City Project has been distributed for review and is on schedule for November. Construction at RM177.8 is expected to begin later this month, replacing 50% more instream woody material. USACE now has someone participating in the Bank Swallow Working Group.

4. Colusa Subreach Planning

Gregg Werner, TNC, provided Board members with a final copy of the Colusa Subreach Planning Report. The project met its objectives with involvement from local land owners and a clear consensus; there was satisfaction with the final results. The City of Colusa is now hiring a consultant to put in the boat ramp, and there is no opposition with the restoration. The Department of Parks and Recreation is supplementing the Master Plan to move ahead with major improvements proposed. The Pest and Regulatory Study provided valuable research and information and the Hydraulic Analysis addressed numerous questions, setting a higher standard of flood control impact on projects in general. Attention was called to Chapter 9, recognizing the strategies of the area for compatibility in the future. This was the third such project; Colusa Landing was first and Beehive Bend Subreach was second. If another area is identified, the process could be put together and funding pursued. Gregg thanked the SRCAF Board and staff for their work, support and outreach connected to the project.

Chris Leininger noted that as a landowner on Deer Creek, she has never been approached about studies in her area. She expressed interest in reviewing details of the CSP final report.

5. Kopta Slough/Woodson Bridge Feasibility Study

Aric Lester, DWR, reviewed the feasibility study for the Woodson Bridge Flood Damage Reduction and Habitat Restoration Project. The project has several major components including the

removal of rock revetment on state property, protection of the west abutment of Woodson Bridge, creation of a pilot channel through the Kopta Slough property, and restoration of an alfalfa field to riparian forest. Biological surveys have been recently completed for vegetation, VELB and Swainson's hawk. Requests for information regarding Native Americans sacred lands are being pursued. Completion of the study is expected by March 2009, at which time public meetings will be scheduled for the release of findings and additional feedback will be sought. Project meetings have been well attended and interim products will be discussed with the working group. Chair Jim McKevitt requested the Board receive products and be kept informed.

The project site was part of the recent Northern CA Water Education Foundation Tour, in which SRCAF participated as a presenter. SRCAF staff and DWR have met with the Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy to discuss coordination of this project with the Lower Deer Creek Habitat Restoration and Flood Management Project. There has been some concern that the project could make anadromous fish return to Deer Creek difficult. This concern is recognized and will be given full attention in the feasibility study.

Ron Warner, Tehama County Public Interest, noted Woodson Bridge State Park has lost 80 ft. of bank and there is additional stress on the bridge itself.

6. Activities

Public Outreach - SRCAF staff have been increasing public outreach efforts over past levels including: updating the SRCAF database for purposes of emailing the newsletter to nearly 800 recipients with hard copies going to 225 additional recipients; working with TCRCD and TCFB to host a Conservation Program Workshop tentatively scheduled for February 13; participating in meetings to discuss the next State of the Sacramento River Conference; and offering assistance to the City of Red Bluff for grant applications for their parks and trails plan including Dog Island, River Land Park and other areas. Jeff Sutton indicated an interest in working with SRCAF to find mitigation opportunities for Red Bluff's potential loss of recreation due to the changes in operation of the Red Bluff Diversion Dam.

Safe Harbor/Local Voluntary Program – application for the Incidental Take Permit for federal species has been sent, but not yet processed by USFWS for the Federal Register. It is currently at the Solicitor's Office. DFG is working on a Negative Declaration for State listed species. The SRCAF Safe Harbor agreement has been mentioned in the Ag Land Stewardship chapter of the 2009 Water Plan as an example of a program that may encourage landowners to take advantage of ag land stewardship programs by providing assurances. Chair Jim McKevitt, Mike Hoover (USFWS) and Kent Smith (DFG) said they would follow up on the Safe Harbor with the solicitor.

The SRCAF has begun planning an Advisory Council meeting for November. Former Senator Jim Nielsen has expressed interest in reacquainting agency personnel and MOA signatories with SB1086. Details will be forthcoming.

7. Board Committee Reports

The Department of Conservation requires a vote from the board indicating acceptance of the grant funding for the Watershed Coordinator Grant. The contract has been signed in order to get it processed before the 2007-2008 budget ended. Funds will be accessible once approved by the SRCAF Board. This action will be reconsidered at the next Board meeting.

TCRCD is hosting an event about the Environmental Benefits of Grazing and have requested SRCAF sponsorship, a \$50 donation to help off-set the cost of facility rental (State Theatre in Red Bluff). Josh will provide an SRCAF display at the event.

Jeff Sutton, Tehama Colusa Canal Authority, sent a letter prior to today's meeting requesting a letter of support for the Red Bluff Diversion Dam Fish Passage Improvement Project. The Executive Committee noted this is not an agenda item, nor an emergency action and adequate notice for inclusion on today's agenda was not received. The Board recommended that it go before the TAC in October as a project rather than an agency update, in order to provide an opportunity for issues to be recognized. The TAC will give a status report of the project, determining its consistency with the SRCAF principles and guidelines, and present at the next Board meeting. The Board will adopt a position on a letter of support at that time.

Jeff Sutton noted he will be unable to attend the next TAC meeting, but added that support for the project has been received from DFG, DWR, four counties in the service area, Resources Agency, and Bureau of Reclamation.

Ajay Singh, TAC Chair, reported the Lower Deer Creek Restoration and Flood Management: Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design Project (PT#139) RM218-220 (Tehama County) made a presentation before the TAC, in August and September, which was determined to meet the principles and guidelines of the SRCAF Handbook, however Chris Leininger stated that a memorandum will be supplied to the TAC as to how the project meets those principles and guidelines. Consequently, the project will be re-presented to the TAC at a later date.

Also at the TAC, Scot Timboe, Red Bluff City Planning, discussed a proposed parks and trails plan within Dog Island Park and River Land Park. County funding for preliminary invasive removal is being planned, utilizing goats. Scot is requesting letters of support for the initial invasives removal project.

8. M&T/Llano Seco pumping plant

Mike Harvey, Mussetter Engineering, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the M&T/Llano Seco Pumping Plant Project, noting it is primarily a fish screen problem. Potential solutions include relaxing fish screen criteria, evaluating a range of solutions that meet fish screen (in channel) criteria, or eliminating the need for fish screens (out of channel). The current pumping plant is in danger of not having sufficient flows because of downstream migration of a gravel bar and bank erosion opposite the pumps. The west bank has been moving further to the west (close to 400ft) since the pump was re-located to the Sacramento River from Big Chico Creek and the existing gravel bar is migrating downstream in front of the intake.

The CALFED mandate for the project is based primarily on environmental criteria to preserve river meander, and an adequate and secure supply of water to pumps and fish screen(s). Harvey added the value of economic criteria and engineering feasibility criteria. Jim McKevitt included the importance of political criteria.

Scientific experts brought in to determine a solution include: Yantao Cui, Ph.D. Research Scientist, Hydrology/Geomorphology; Michael Harvey, Ph.D., P.G. Fluvial Geomorphologist; Eric Larsen, Ph.D. Research Scientist-Geology; and Robert Mussetter, Ph.D., P.E. Hydraulic Engineer.

Four workshops have been held for the Steering Committee to direct studies:

Workshop #1 (Nov., 2003) led to several follow-studies; feasibility of groundwater wells, T-screen, evaluation of water supply and demand, impacts of Chico Waste Water outfall, river meander, and sediment transport modeling, as well as a cost analysis of alternatives.

Workshop #2 (Mar., 2004) resulted in rejection of several options including extended intakes, in-conduit screens, infiltration galleries, multiple production wells, but carried

forward dredging and modified screens, spur dikes and Ranney collectors. Additional studies were requested; 2-D modeling, meander modeling and drilling of test wells for Ranney collectors. Concerns about shifting from riparian water rights to ground water, the basis for rejecting production wells, were questioned by Jim McKevitt.

Workshop #3 (Feb., 2005) added four feasibility studies to inform on alternatives and a refinement of the meander analysis to look 50 years forward. At this point it was determined that the gravel bar would need to be dredged again and work on the environmental documentation and feasibility of interim bank stabilization began.

Workshop #4 (Apr., 2006) determined several alternatives; no action, 3-4 Ranney collectors, 1-2 Ranney collectors, 8 dikes, 9 dikes, 9 dikes extended and 3 dredge alternatives. Additional studies were suggested; 2-D model to evaluate upstream and downstream impacts of dikes and removal of rock revetment tied to the Butte basin model. Meander modeling was to be used to predict impacts of rock removal on river meander at potential mitigation sites and physical modeling to evaluate dredging options and spur dikes.

Current status includes the 9 dike alternative or moving the pumping plant. Moving the plant 1,800ft downstream, within a rock section, meets water quality standards and has a project life of 13-22 years. Moving the plant 3,400ft downstream would have a project life of 30-50 years, but revetment on an actively eroding bank would have to be extended in order to protect a new pump. The influence of Big Chico Creek is inconsequential either way. The final steering committee workshop is scheduled for September 30, but is not open to the public.

Tom Varga, City of Chico, noted that they were committed to moving the sewer treatment outfall to buy time and shared concerns for more permanence.

Eric Larsen, Research Scientist, indicated that there have been conflicting interpretations throughout the process. The gravel bar movement hasn't been investigated much; estimates are based on the work of others'; there has been a failure to evaluate assumptions; and a technical evaluation of dredging with cost/benefit analysis cannot be found. In his opinion, moving the pump is the best solution, although it has not been technically evaluated and there are no reports on the cost/benefits of moving the pump. He added it is inconvenient at the end of the process to say these options have not been studied enough. Harvey reported that a summary document is available that details the cost of dredging.

Les Heringer, M&T, reviewed written letters regarding the project and stated that the dikes may be the least environmentally damaging option. He gave a history of the project, emphasizing the importance in getting the study completed and finding common ground. Les indicated that this information was important for a public meeting; however, this Board meeting was not designated as such.

Gregg Werner, TNC, noted that the property sited for two of the dikes, is under a conservation easement specifically written to allow river meander. He added that everybody wants a resolution that keeps water rights in operation and honors and respects landowner property rights. The easement was a private transaction completed in 1991, six years prior to the pump being moved to its current location.

Kim Davis, Rep. Senator Aanestad's Office, stated that TNC's objection to the spurs on their property is an opinion that may not be environmentally safe.

Jim McKeivitt reminded the group that that one party doesn't control land on another property. He added that the Good Neighbor Policy respects property rights and that feasibility based on landowners must be considered.

Kent Smith, DFG, commended the commitment, research and investment involved to make the pumps work. He added that moving the pump may be a viable alternative, and that there are always tradeoffs. He encouraged the completion of the analyses and working together to come to a solution.

Brendon Flynn, Tehama County Landowner Representative, pointed out there is discussion in the SRCAF Handbook about the protection of hard points and limiting meander where appropriate.

Todd Manley, Northern CA Water Assoc., suggested the investment(s) made should be fully considered in determining a solution.

Fran Peace, Rep. Wally Herger's Office, stressed the importance of finding a long term solution. She encouraged the Forum to keep up the working partnership, in order to help solve some serious problems.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is scheduled for December 4, at the Monday Afternoon Club, in Willows.