

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

December 4, 2008
3:00 p.m.

Monday Afternoon Club
Willows, CA

Chair Jim McKeivitt called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., followed by self-introductions. It was determined there was 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)	(Knutte Myers)	
Glenn	(Keith Hansen)	<u>Don Anderson</u>	
Shasta	<u>Glenn Hawes</u>	(Dan Gover)	
Sutter	(Dan Silva)	<u>Russell Young</u>	
Tehama	(Ron Warner)	<u>Brendon Flynn</u>	
Yolo	<u>Lynnel Pollock</u>	(Marc Faye)	
Resources Agency	<u>Jim McKeivitt</u>		
DWR			Glen Pearson
DFG			Armand Gonzales
State Reclamation Board			Lady Bug Doherty
USFWS			(Jan Knight)
USACE			Frank Piccola
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: Ajay Singh (SRCAF TAC Chair); Aric Lester (DWR); Gregg Werner (TNC); Les Heringer (M&T Ranch); Denise Reichenberg (CA State Parks); Scott Rice (URS); Tom McCubbins (Tehama Co. RCD); Dave van Rijn (USACE); Martin Nichols (City of Red Bluff); Mike Urkov (NewFields Consulting for Tehama Colusa Canal Authority); Holly Savage (Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy); and Dan Ray (CA State Parks).

1. Unscheduled matters

Les Heringer, M&T Ranch, gave a review of the M&T/Llano Seco Pumping Plant and reported starting work on environmental documentation for a long term solution. He noted the City of Chico outfall is being moved downriver at a cost of \$6M, and their engineers (Ayres and Associates) estimated there will be 15-20 years before the gravel bar arrives at the outfall's new location. Les said that the Steering Committee for M&T has determined the best long term solution is to place rock spurs on USFWS property and a TNC conservation easement on the west bank. Options include building a pumping plant down river which will be modeled, and continuing to work with TNC. Les stated that the City is on board with the rock spurs and only want to move the outfall once. The City outfall has been at its current location since 1961. He reminded the group that the project affects ag, state and federal wetlands, and the City of Chico, and noted that it could be considered a hard point in the SRCAF guiding principles. Les recently met with Jim McKeivitt and Beverley Anderson-Abbs to discuss the current situation. He thanked them and the Board and appreciated the time taken.

2. Consent Calendar

Don Anderson moved to adopt the minutes of the June 12, 2008 meeting, seconded by Lynnel Pollock. Motion passed by unanimous vote. The Executive Committee notes for March 20, 2008 were accepted by consensus.

Brendon Flynn moved to adopt the minutes of the September 18, 2008 meeting, seconded by Don Anderson. Motion passed by unanimous vote. The Executive Committee notes for September 18, 2008 were accepted by consensus.

3. Board Member Reports

Lady Bug Doherty reported Ben Carter is on the National Levee Committee with Rod Mayer, DWR/ FloodSAFE.

Glen Pearson gave a brief update on the governor's economic stimulus package and opportunities with recently passed bond measures. Scott Rice, URS, provided information and handouts on three FloodSAFE programs that may impact the Forum: 1) Non-Urban Levee Evaluations Program – gathering information on 1,250 miles of non-urban levees for hidden defects; 2) Central Valley Floodplain Evaluation and Delineation Program - will release maps later this month. Information on floodplain maps is ongoing. A meeting will be held December 19th, in Woodland, regarding levee protection zone maps. Scott will keep Beverley informed; and 3) Improving Flood Management in the Central Valley—outreach is focused on identifying key participants with interest on the valley and a willingness to participate. Key stakeholders are being contacted. For additional information, please visit www.water.ca.gov/floodsafe.

Russell Young reported that the new boat ramp at Tisdale Weir is state of the art. The launch facility is located at the end of Tisdale Road, in western Sutter County, south of Meridian, north of Knights Landing, and is the only boat access point to the Sacramento River from the Sutter County side of the river.

4. Activities

Jeff Sutton, TCCA, and Basia Trout, BOR, gave a report on the Red Bluff Diversion Dam Fish Passage Improvement Project to the October TAC, as directed by the Board in September; the review will be discussed under today's TAC Report.

At the October TAC, Ashley Indrieri, Family Water Alliance (FWA), summarized the fish screen program, recently funded by DFG, which would allow farmers willing to have their unscreened diversions monitored for fish entrainment and provide appropriate fish screens at the end of the monitoring period. Tehama County RCD contacted FWA, on behalf of a Tehama County farmer, and was told that Tehama County was not included.

SRCAF staff has been working with USACE to get final survey data of the 90% design, which should be completed by late December.

The Woodson Bridge/Kopta Slough draft feasibility study has been completed for environmental and cultural impacts, and will be made available prior to the January Board meeting. Ayres and Associates is under contract with DWR to conduct the hydraulic analysis; a draft report should be completed by March. The final product is expected in April.

Beverley also reported the Programmatic Safe Harbor is at the solicitor's office. USFWS will send it on to the national director with a memo from the regional director.

The research for the Sacramento River Monitoring and Assessment Project, looking at passive vs. active restoration of understory plants, has been completed. Results indicate that active planting may accelerate recovery for some species, especially less common native species.

The Sacramento River Access at Pine Creek, Brayton Parcel, was reviewed at the TAC by State Parks. The area will provide day-use recreation, a gravel parking lot, a small boat launch, picnic tables, and restrooms. Once permits are acquired, restoration will occur in two phases: 1) removal of a walnut orchard; and 2) recreation facilities and restoration implementation.

5. California State Parks Central Valley Vision Draft Strategic Plan

Dan Ray gave a PowerPoint presentation and provided handouts on the Draft Strategic Plan. The twenty-year plan focuses on meeting the public's recreation needs in the Central Valley. It outlines planning options to develop new and improved recreation opportunities, acquire new park lands, and build economic and volunteer partnerships. The draft plan's recommendations include several options for which they are seeking public comment for long-range planning purposes and do not imply a commitment.

According to the plan, "research shows that successful communities have ample green space for recreation, natural beauty, tourism and health, and that well-planned parks and other open space are important contributors to vibrant cities and towns." Along with that, is the premise that if parks are more successful, they are more sustainable and therefore, more likely to receive funding. The Sacramento River is the premier recreation resource in Northern California.

The initiatives summary includes two new state parks linking Redding and Red Bluff recreation areas, with the addition of 5,200-5,800acs, 140-160 campsites, 150-180 picnic sites, and restoration of about 200acs; expanded hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, boating facilities, and interpretation and education opportunities. Additional improvements along the Sacramento River would allow the creation of a Sacramento River Water Trail to connect river-oriented recreation facilities. Other concepts include heritage driving trails linking California heritage sites, and agriculture driving trails.

Dan commented that a partnership with the SRCAF would be beneficial, as the Forum already has a public access website and partnerships along the river.

For a copy of the plan, go to: www.parks.ca.gov/planning, or call (916) 653-9901. Comments are being accepted until December 15 at centralvalleyvision@parks.ca.gov.

6. Hamilton City Flood Damage Reduction and Ecosystem Restoration

Dave van Rijn gave a PowerPoint presentation on the 60% design of the setback levee and restoration plan at Hamilton City. The 90% design is to be completed in January. Final design is expected in April.

David explained the need for a positive benefits/cost ratio on Corps projects and that habitat restoration along with the setback levee made this a feasible project. They are looking into using material from the degraded J-levee and spoils from the Glenn-Colusa canal in construction of the setback levee to reduce costs. An 8ft chain link fence with gates is planned for the length of the project (6.8mi) to protect orchards from possible wildlife damage, and to keep people out of the restoration areas. A 15ft wide road on either side of the levee will provide access for general maintenance. A new drainage canal will carry water under Hwy 32. Drainage to the river is planned to avoid pooling in specific areas.

Lynnel Pollock, Yolo County, asked about animals trapped by the fence during a flood event. David stated that animals can get out on County Road 23. Glenn Hawes, Shasta County, added that pedestrians would create a trail along the fence; the cost is exorbitant and shouldn't be done. Don Anderson, Glenn County, stated that it would not keep animals out of orchards. Jim McKeivitt asked about the creation of high ground locations within the restoration area to provide refuge for animals during a flood

1,500 acres will be restored to habitat between the setback levee and river. Gregg Werner added that the setback balances the additional height of the levee, so water will not be redirected to Butte County on the other side of the river. The existing levee will be removed, restoring hydrologic connectivity. A pinch point at Hwy 32 has been hydrologically modeled.

Lady Bug Doherty asked if there was still time for comments on the design. David stated that after the feasibility report, there is no additional comment period

7. Sacramento Bank Protection Project and Sacramento River Projects

Frank Piccola, USACE, reviewed the background of the Sacramento River Bank Protection Project (and the Mississippi River) which began in 1917. The bank protection project was authorized in 1960, to protect facilities associated with the Sacramento River Flood Control Project. Phase I (PL 86-645) included authorization for 430,000 linear feet (lf) of levees in need of repair and was completed in 1985. Phase II (PL 93-252) included 405,000lf. There are 15,600lf left under Phase II. The Water Resources Development Act Bill (WRDA) 2007 (section 3031) added 80,000lf to Phase II authorization. Phase III is being discussed, but may include an additional 400,000lf.

The team is in the process of ranking critical sites for repair in 2009. After determining priorities, 152 sights have been identified that need repair, and a list of those sights is expected to be made available in January. Frank stated that for as many as are fixed, there will be that many more to repair. Another current action includes preparation of a decision document and an environmental document for the additional 80,000lf in Phase II and a Project Management Plan for Phase III.

Considerations in Phase II (remaining) and Phase III include: the cost benefit ratio for \$43B worth of damageable property; environmental impacts/mitigation; risk analysis; vegetation on levees; a watershed approach; and cumulative impacts. There are 1,600mi of levees in Northern CA.

Since a 1950 policy, there has been no vegetation on levees. Frank asked, "As taxpayers, should money be spent on fixing levees or removing vegetation?" Oftentimes, mitigation has been done on levees in order to meet mitigation requirements. If there is to be no vegetation on levees, other locations would have to be found to plant mitigation on the river. It is currently in a negotiation situation, and a framework document is being developed. More science is needed (i.e., root systems) as documented levee failures do not generally include trees. Also a watershed approach needs to be reviewed, looking at the river hydraulically, for a better expenditure of dollars.

Cumulative impacts involve a comprehensive study of the Central Valley Plan, and the Delta Plan. Currently, in CA, winter rains are moved out to the ocean as soon as possible. In summer, there is no rain. The State is looking at ways to store those winter rains for use in the summer.

The framework is expected next month and includes a timetable to study and remove vegetation. In the long term, trees will be gone. At present trimming is being looked at as a start, with removal done incrementally. Trees have been removed from levees in the past, because it was believed that when they fall into the river they take levee with them. It was pointed out that this does not cause levee failure; when a tree falls over dirt and rock will fall into the root hole left behind, creating a self repair. It was also noted that USACE will be looking at cut off walls, so roots can't get into the levee.

Frank used a Twinkie analogy in discussing levees, indicating that although they may appear structurally sound they are often filled with "mystery" contents and they can be dissolved with water. He will follow up with the list of identified sights at the January Board meeting.

8. Board Committee Reports

Jane Dolan, Board Development Committee Chair, asked that a review and discussion of SRCAF by-laws concerning a quorum, be placed on the January Board agenda. A quorum currently is made

up from all members and should be reconsidered to include active members only. Inactive members are those with three consecutive absences. Suggestions are being taken into consideration.

Jane recommended the following Executive Committee members for 2009: Chair, Brendon Flynn; Vice Chair, Ron Warner; Secretary/Treasurer, Lynnel Pollock; Past Chair, Jim McKeivitt; Landowner Representative, Shirley Lewis; Public Interest Representative, Jane Dolan; and Ex-Officio Agency Representative, Sandy Morey. Appointments will take place in January.

The Department of Conservation requires a vote from the board indicating acceptance of grant funding for the Department of Conservation 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. Lynnel Pollock moved to authorize the execution of the agreement, seconded by Russell Young. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

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 presentations before the TAC, in August and September, and it was determined to meet the principles and guidelines of the SRCAF Handbook. Chris Leininger's previous offer of a memorandum to the TAC is not required. Glenn Hawes moved to write a letter stating the project meets the principles and guidelines of the SRCAF Handbook, seconded by Don Anderson. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ajay also reported on the Red Bluff Diversion Dam (RBDD) Fish Passage Improvement Project (PT#144) (Tehama County). The project identifies alternatives to operate the RBDD, to maximize fish passage while minimizing impacts to agricultural water supply, by means of a new screened intake to the Tehama-Colusa Canal and Corning Canal. Currently the Bureau of Reclamation operates the diversion dam. Tehama Colusa Canal Authority (TCCA) will operate and maintain the fish screen and pumping plant. The project has been discussed at the TAC several times in 2008 and came before the TAC as a project in October. It was determined to meet the principles and guidelines of the SRCAF Handbook and a letter was requested for support of funding for the project. Some TAC members did not participate in this determination due to ongoing litigation.

Mike Urkov, NewFields Consulting for TCCA, reported the project is moving into an accelerated phase. They are currently working to defend against an environmental lawsuit to take gates out prior to construction of the pumps. A second lawsuit (with the City of Red Bluff) involves keeping the gates in. TCCA has no control over operation of gates. They are also working to develop conservation measures to offset continued operation of the dam in the near term, while trying to regain independent operating capabilities to provide water for farms.

Martin Nichols, City of Red Bluff, stated that Gutierrez/Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Association (PCFFA) is suing the Federal Government under the endangered species act, wherein the operation of the water system affects endangered species and needs to be reconfigured for irrigation. Operation of the Red Bluff Diversion Dam falls under this suit. The City of Red Bluff is also filing suit, claiming that mitigation for economic losses should have been included in the EIR under CEQA and NEPA. He stated that the documents should include a provision to mitigate for economic losses the project will have on the City.

Mike added the Bureau of Reclamation and TCCA believe that the legal claim by the City is incorrect. A letter of support is helpful in the event of infrastructure or stimulus packages, so that the extremely accelerated construction schedule can hope to be met. The request is for support of the overall project consistent with findings of the courts.

Brendon Flynn, Tehama Co landowner, moved to direct Beverley to write a letter indicating that the project meets the principles and guidelines of the SRCAF Handbook as currently proposed, and the Forum supports funding for it, seconded by Don Anderson. Motion passed with three no votes: Shirley Lewis, Jane Dolan and Russell Young.

Jim McKeVitt questioned the removal of the agenda item requesting a letter of support for invasive removal on Dog Island Park in Red Bluff. Scot Timboe, Red Bluff City Planning, came before the TAC in September to discuss removal of invasive species, either by burning or with the use of goats, from Dog Island and River Land Park. At that time the City was experiencing problems with homeless camps, debris, unwanted fires, and other safety issues in the area, and had an overall vision for the park. Members of the TAC did not recommend burning. Soils, water, maintenance, and funding options were discussed at that time. Scot later requested a letter from the Board, in an email to Beverley Anderson-Abbs.

Since then, the City involved inmate crews to clear the park, and burning was done without a permit. Jim McKeVitt asked about mitigating for elderberry in the area. Basia indicated that the city planner claimed to have marked the elderberry bushes, of which she had counted five mature ones, on the Bureau of Reclamation property in the area cleared. Planning was suggested for recreation use, along with a Master Plan, and ongoing maintenance. Jim McKeVitt noted that if the City wants the SRCAF to participate, they only have to ask. No action was taken.

9. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is scheduled for January 22, at the Monday Afternoon Club, in Willows.