

Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum
Board of Directors Meeting
Summary

September 25, 2014
3:00 PM

Rolling Hills Human Resources
Corning, CA

Chair John Nock called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Self-introductions were made. Forum Board (the Board) status was reported to be 10 voting members, 7 members present at the meeting and a quorum established. Names underlined indicate present; names in parentheses represent absences.

| <u>County</u> | <u>Public Interest</u> | <u>Landowner</u> | <u>Agency (non-voting)</u> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Butte | <u>Steve Lambert</u> | <u>John Nock</u> | |
| Shasta | <u>Leonard Moty</u> | <u>Glenn Hawes</u> | |
| Sutter | (James Gallagher) | (Brian Fedora) | |
| Tehama | <u>Burt Bundy</u> | (Brendon Flynn) | |
| Yolo | <u>Jeanette Wrynski</u> | <u>Lynnel Pollock</u> | |
| Resources Agency | (Vacant) | | |
| DWR | | | <u>Mike Berry</u> |
| CDFW | | | <u>Sandy Morey</u> |
| Central Valley Flood Control Board | | | (Emma Suarez) |
| USFWS | | | (Jan Knight) |
| USACE | | | <u>Mark Cowan</u> |
| Bureau of Reclamation | | | (Don Reck) |
| Bureau of Land Management | | | (Jennifer Mata) |
| US Forest Service | | | (Eduardo Olmedo) |
| CA Department of Parks and Recreation | | | (Aaron Wright) |

Forum staff: Executive Director Jane Dolan, Program Manager Susan Strachan, Resource Conservationist Rob Irwin and Administrative Assistant Ellen Gentry.

Other attendees: Kandi Manhart, Glenn County RCD, Mark Young, Westervelt.

1. Announcements

There were no announcements made at this time.

2. Meeting Notes

Leonard Moty moved, seconded by Lynnel Pollock, to accept the July 24, 2014 meeting notes. Motion carried.

3. Forum Committees

Jane Dolan gave an update on the following committees:

Kopta Committee – Jane reported that the formation of the broader committee is not yet timely. She will work with the two appointed Board members, Burt Bundy and Brendon Flynn, to discuss how and when to bring forward the committee and its members. The Project Description is being refined by DWR NRO staff. Staff of Tehama County and the City of Corning is kept informed.

PARC – To date, the Board has appointed 36 members. The Board was asked to appoint the second member of the Board to the PARC and to appoint Rachel Long, nominated by the Yolo County RCD. Lynnel Pollock moved, seconded by Leonard Moty to approve the appointment of Rachel Long. Motion carried. Lynnel Pollock nominated Glenn Hawes, seconded by Burt Bundy to approve the appointment. Motion carried.

CMP Committee – One Board member from each reach has been appointed (Reach 1, Burt Bundy; Reach 2, John Nock; Reach 3, Brian Fedora; Reach 4, Lynnel Pollock). The Executive Director asked that the Board delegate to this committee the ability to review and make revisions to the Concept Paper in response to comments from, and discussions with, key stakeholders. Since the Board has adopted a specific document and the outreach process is ongoing and dynamic, it would be helpful for this committee to have the ability to review and make revisions, with the final product coming back to the Board for final approval. Burt Bundy moved, seconded by Jeanette Wrynski, to give the CMP Committee members the ability to make revision(s) to the CMP Concept Paper. Motion carried.

4. Introduction of Forum Bylaws Revisions

The Executive Committee, in consultation with the Forum attorney, has made the following bylaw recommendations:

Revisions recommended conforming to changes in law or other corrections:

- a. The term “ex-officio” is changed to “advisory” to conform to changes in law.
- b. Delete all references to the Advisory Council and/or the 1086 Advisory Council as this body no longer exists.
- c. Change Department of Water Resources Northern *District* Office to Northern *Region* Office.
- d. Delete the section regarding the requirement of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to conform with the changes to committees made by the Board. A section remains that allows the Board to form committees.

Revisions recommended that are policy changes:

- a. Revise the wording that a landowner member of the Board shall “reside on, own or manage property adjacent to the Conservation Area as defined in the Handbook” to “reside on, own or manage property adjacent to the Sacramento River.”
- b. Change the term of Board members from two years to four years.
- c. Change the term of officers from one year to two years.
- d. Change the section calling for the Natural Resources Secretary to appoint an at-large member to having this at-large member appointed by the Board after consultation with the Natural Resources Secretary. This member would then also have a term of four years.
- e. Change the organization name to Sacramento River Forum.

There are other revisions of grammar, spacing and punctuation. A research effort concluded there is no other organization named the Sacramento River Forum. The process of bylaw revision is to introduce and then to finalize at the next meeting. These recommendations, if acceptable, will be up for adoption at the December 11, 2014 Board meeting. A process will be recommended for transition to the new four year term that retains the staggering of terms. Burt Bundy complimented staff and the Executive Committee for their work on the bylaws.

5. Designation of Critical Habitat for the Western Yellow Billed Cuckoo comment letter

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has issued, via a Federal Register notice of August 15, 2014, to create a Designation of Critical Habitat for the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Comments will be accepted until October 14, 2014. The species is proposed for listing as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. It has been listed as Endangered under the CA Endangered Species Act since 1998. One area proposed for critical habitat is a portion of the Upper Sacramento River. The notice states: “a 69mi long continuous segment of the Sacramento River starting 5mi southeast of the city of Red Bluff in Tehama County, California, to the downstream boundary of the Colusa-Sacramento River State Recreation Area next to the town of Colusa in Colusa County, California.” The Executive Director reports that many individuals and organizations have asked if we will submit comments. Given the Mission of the Forum, the area of our interest and the concerns of stakeholders, the submittal of a response is appropriate. The Board was asked to authorize submitting comments with a focus on (1) requesting an extension of time for comments due to the timing of the

notice coming at a time when farming, a major economic sector, is fully involved with harvest and the severe effects of the drought, and (2) stating that the Forum strongly supports cooperative partnerships with landowners as a more effective process of achieving mutual ecological and economic goals. Burt Bundy moved, seconded by John Nock, to authorize the Executive Director to craft a comment letter to be submitted by the deadline. The letter is to focus on (1) the short notice given for the wide array of issues, (2) a busy time for landowners during harvest and a severe drought, and (3) support of partnerships with private landowners to benefit the habitat. Motion carried.

6. Presentation of the launch revised, updated Forum website

The Executive Director gave an overview of the history of the website and the work to update and provide a user-friendly interface with our organization and the vast array of information and resources we make available to the public. Rob Irwin gave a presentation of the launch of the revised and updated Forum website. The new website is now simply www.sacramento.org. An extension is no longer necessary as this URL will go directly to the Forum site. Rob Irwin provided a view and demonstration of the updates to the website and the new links for resources, committees, projects and activities, contacts, available maps, etc. He built the colorful, interactive site using standard coding processes that any web designer could maintain if necessary. It was noted that when "Sacramento River" is entered into a search engine (e.g. Google) the Sacramento River Forum shows up as the first, second and third hit. Rob was thanked by the Board for a great job.

7. New Project Concept

The Board was provided a copy of a Concept Paper of this potential new project. The Executive Director and Program Manager have been investigating a potential future project of the Forum. There have been brief reports at prior meetings and it is now at a point of formally moving forward to begin to seek funding and formal partnerships. Forum staff and the managers and Board of six County RCDs have been in discussions regarding a joint effort for landowner-based restoration along the river corridor, providing incentives for private agricultural landowners to conduct habitat restoration. RCDs would help identify interested landowners and would serve as technical advisors for restoration. A CSU, Chico economist would develop a pricing mechanism sufficient to engage landowners. It was recommended NRCS conservationists could be involved as well. The first step would be to seek funding for the program development phase.

A landowner would enter into a long term agreement, which would vary from landowner to landowner. At the end of the agreement, the Programmatic Safe Harbor would allow landowners to return to baseline habitat, should they so desire. It will be necessary to establish evaluation measures, standards for implementation and potential impacts. The key is the landowner connection through the RCDs, Board assistance and resource committees. Kandi Manhart added RCDs work with interested, and willing, landowners only; RCDs have worked hard to gain trust and respect of landowners which it is a high priority to maintain that relationship.

Jane discussed how historical government incentives were instrumental in "reclaiming" frequently flooded wetlands and riparian areas. This project envisions that a similar incentive based approach would be appropriate to implement current policy that supports restoration of riparian areas. DWR reported they knew of a landowner that wants to restore private property, and stressed the importance for agencies to be involved. Yolo commented that the effort could support active conversion of existing land that is not farmed, or land that has been taken out of production can be considered as well and, in addition, existing riparian areas on farms could be enhanced. The Board commented on the concept and encouraged the Executive Director to pursue this project.

8. Board Member Reports

Jeanette Wrynski said that she can provide information on the feasibility study for flood protection for the City of Winters if anyone is interested. She also mentioned that DWR is providing a tour.

Lynnel Pollock reported the regional flood management program for the Lower Sacramento/North Delta is now going before participating organizations' boards for resolutions of adoption. Lynnel is also looking for a new habitat management manager for her conservancy; details are available on their website.

Mike Berry said he will send to Jane, for distribution to the Board, a summary of drought information generated by DWR. DWR, CDFW and NMFS are identifying sites in Shasta County that could have restoration work; there is a need to reclaim floodplains and side channels to improve fish habitat. DWR wants interaction with the Forum to survey the first site on private lands (1/4mi fish habitat). Burt Bundy added there are opportunities further downstream as well.

Mark Cowan will submit USACE updates that can be included in Board packets for Jane to send out. He noted that a new project manager for the construction for the Hamilton City project was assigned recently. Funding for the first phase has been appropriated and contracts are being developed. The first contract is to move elderberries and a setback levee, set for the spring of 2015.

9. Executive Committee's Report

The Executive Committee completed the performance review of the Executive Director. Board Chair John Nock thanked the Executive Committee and was happy to have everyone participate, making the process worthwhile.

10. Executive Director's Report

Jane Dolan asked for suggestions on Board meeting dates for 2015; please let her know prior to the December Board meeting. She has been busy with many additional meetings. Staff is working on developing one page, information sheets describing the projects of the Forum. Previous newsletters have been printed and available in the Board folders. The Kopta staff project group is working to update information, running models again, and early in 2015 we will see more recommendations. The habitat mapping is on target; more specifics will be created over the course of this effort to provide information on what has changed in vegetation, land ownership, etc., that will make for a comprehensive and useful report.

11. Correspondence and items of interest

A list of items of correspondence, meetings, announcements and other items of interest is available for distribution to the Board. Copies of each item are in a folder that is provided at the meeting for review. Copies of any item are available upon request.

12. Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, 3:00 – 5:00 PM, at Granzella's Inn Conference Room, in Williams.