



**SB 1086**

**SACRAMENTO RIVER  
CONSERVATION AREA FORUM  
HANDBOOK**

**SEPTEMBER 2003**

*Prepared for The Resources Agency  
State of California  
by the Sacramento River Advisory Council  
under the SB 1086 Program*

# **Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum Handbook**

**2003**

*Prepared for The Resources Agency  
State of California  
by the Sacramento River Advisory Council  
under Senate Bill 1086  
authored by Senator Jim Nielsen*

Revised and updated by the  
Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum  
September 2003

*Cover photo: Looking west over Murphy Slough near the M&T flood relief structure. By Geoffrey Fricker*

*Dedicated to Bob Bosworth, who has grown up and worked along the Sacramento River his entire life. Bob is a strong advocate of balancing the needs of agriculture and wildlife habitat for the benefit of future generations.*

This Handbook is a “living document.” As conditions change and our understanding of the river system increases, periodic updates may be made. Substantive changes will be made following an established amendment procedure. If you have comments, corrections, or suggestions, please contact:

**Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum  
2440 Main Street  
Red Bluff, CA 96080  
(530) 528-7411**

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# *Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum*

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## Foreword

Passed by the State Legislature in 1986, Senate Bill 1086 called for a management plan for the Sacramento River and its tributaries that would protect, restore, and enhance both fisheries and riparian habitat. The law established an Advisory Council, composed of representatives of state and federal agencies, county supervisors, and representatives of landowner, water contractor, commercial and sport fisheries, and general wildlife and conservation interests.

After more than 50 lengthy meetings and workshops, the Council and its action teams developed a plan which included a specific and action-oriented fisheries plan and a more conceptual riparian habitat plan. This plan, the Upper Sacramento River Fisheries and Riparian Habitat Management Plan (1989 Plan), was published in 1989. Many of the fisheries action items have since been, or are currently being, implemented, such as fish bypass structures at diversions on Sacramento River tributaries and the Shasta Dam temperature control structure.

The Riparian Habitat Committee of the Advisory Council, an informal and consensus-based planning group that included landowner representatives, environmental group leaders, and agency personnel, continued the work of on-the-ground implementation. The Advisory Council was reconvened by the Secretary of Resources in 1993 to “complete its earlier work concerning riparian habitat protection and management, including the development of a specific implementation program.”

The committee developed this Handbook to guide an implementation program for riparian habitat management along the Sacramento River, and worked to ensure that this Handbook addresses both the dynamics of riparian ecosystems as well as the realities of local agricultural issues. It did this by developing a set of guiding principles and planning tools that should govern riparian habitat management along the river.

The six principles fall into the categories of:

- \*Ecosystem management
- \*Local concerns
- \*Flood management
- \*Bank protection
- \*Voluntary participation
- \*Information and education

A Memorandum of Agreement between local, state, and federal agencies has been signed by most of the key agencies and all of the named counties that formally adopts the Handbook and commits support for the formation of a locally based nonprofit organization to coordinate activities along the river. In May 2000, the Sacramento River Conservation Area (SRCA), a nonprofit, public benefit corporation was formed. The SRCA is governed by a Board of Directors that includes both private landowner and public interest representatives from each of the seven involved counties, an appointee of the Resources Agency, as well as ex-officio members from six state and federal resource agencies. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), composed of experts from relevant disciplines, as well as landowners, has been established to advise the SRCA Board on issues related to river management and site-specific planning. Committee members include agency and academic scientists as well as stakeholders. Much of the work of the organization focuses along an area within the *inner river zone guideline*, where flooding and channel movement are present, primarily between Red Bluff and Colusa. Whether a particular parcel or property is within the inner river zone will be determined on a case-by-case basis, using voluntary participation, erosion and accretion projections, and flood frequency as criteria. If all landowners within the potential inner river zone choose to participate, the area could include about 50,000 acres between Red Bluff and Colusa.

The MOA, Handbook, and Sacramento River Conservation Area represent a new type of sustainable river corridor management in which all stakeholders, including local, state, and federal agencies, public interest groups and landowners are closely involved in the planning and decision making process and implementation of river related activities. Restoration efforts, as well as flood control, water supply and other activities, benefit from the open dialogue fostered through the forum provided by the Sacramento River Conservation Area planning process.

The descriptive and scientific portions of this Handbook (Chapters 2–6) are based upon current knowledge. As our understanding of the Sacramento River system improves over time, these chapters are periodically amended. Similarly, the portions of the Handbook (Chapters 1, 7, 8 and 9) dealing with institutions and policies also become outdated as circumstances change. Therefore, the SRCA Board will, from time to time, adopt revisions to this Handbook. In 2001, the SRCA Board addressed two areas of concern in the Handbook that were not completed prior to the printing of the Handbook, and were listed in the “Issues to be Resolved” section. Through the TAC, and with help from an ad hoc committee that had worked on these issues under the Riparian Habitat Committee, recommendations to formally adopt acceptable language were agreed with and forwarded to the SRCA Board. The Board also worked through the TAC to define the Inner River Zone Guidelines for Reaches 1, 3, and 4 that had not been defined in the January 2000 edition.

In 2002, the Board amended the Handbook to re-define the outer boundary of the Conservation Area. Below Tehama County, the outer boundary is the same as defined for the Inner River Zone Guidelines. The Board also made it clear that any related activity outside of the IRZ would be addressed by the SRCA. In 2003, an amendment was adopted that revised language in a section of Chapter 6. All of the changes to text and acreages as a result of the amendments have been incorporated in the 2003 edition of the Handbook. Although not a Handbook change, but noteworthy, was direction from the Board to change its name to the Sacramento River Conservation Area *Forum*. Members of the Board felt that by adding “*Forum*” to the name, it better described the role of the organization. Chapter 1 describes the guiding principles and planning tools that the SRCAF organization uses. Chapter 2 describes the Sacramento River ecosystem and how it relates to riparian habitat.

This chapter also includes a complete description of the inner river zone guidelines. Chapters 3 through 6 discuss the river ecosystem in more detail within the four broad river reaches of the Conservation Area. The restoration priorities and inner river zone guidelines are then applied to each reach. Chapter 7 describes existing riparian habitat management programs along the river. Chapter 8 describes those government agencies and private organizations that the nonprofit management entity works with most closely in conducting riparian habitat management activities. Chapter 9 describes the recommended actions to be carried out on the ground. A series of appendices on topics useful to the nonprofit management entity is also included.

## **The SB1086 Advisory Council - 2002**

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William Waite, Colusa County  
Glenn Hawes, Shasta County  
Hank Wyman, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Lynnel Pollock, Yolo County



## **Riparian Habitat Committee 1993-1999**

### **Diana Jacobs, Chair**

The Riparian Habitat Committee is an informal group. The following individuals have attended meetings, participated in discussions, and contributed to this handbook:

Ken Anderson, California Department of Fish and Game  
Mike Bonner, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Bill Borrer, Tehama County Board of Supervisors  
Bob Bosworth, SB1086 Advisory Council  
Annalena Bronson, California Department of Water Resources  
Burt Bundy, Sacramento River Conservation Area Coordinator  
John Carlon, Sacramento River Partners  
Stacy Cepello, California Department of Water Resources  
Bob Clark, Sacramento River Water Contractors Association  
Scott Clemons, Wildlife Conservation Board  
Kristin Cooper-Carter, University Foundation  
Earle Cummings, California Department of Water Resources  
Dave Cox, California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Julie Cunningham, California Department of Water Resources  
Kim Davis, Representing Senator Maurice Johannessen  
Matt Davis, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Chuck DeJournette, Tehama Fly Fishers  
Rich Dixon, California Department of Fish and Game  
Rick Dreher, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Gary Falxa, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Rebecca Fawver, The Resources Agency  
Brendon Flynn, Pacific Farms  
Wendell Gilgert, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Tom Griggs, California State University, Chico  
Kate Hansel, CALFED-Bay Delta Program  
Diane Hanson, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Les Heringer, M&T Ranch  
Flynn Hoffman, Representing Congressman Vic Fazio  
John Icanberry, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Dan Keppen, Northern California Water Association  
Patrick Koepele, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Joyce Lacey-Rickert, California Department of Water Resources  
Jason Larrabee, Larabee Farms  
Sam Lawson, The Nature Conservancy  
Mike Matthews, EA Engineering  
John Merz, Sacramento River Preservation Trust  
Marlyce Myers, The Nature Conservancy  
Ernie Ohlin, Tehama County  
John Repanich, Sacramento Valley Landowners Association/Landowner representative appointed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Pat Repanich, Sacramento Valley Landowners Association

Fraser Sime, California Department of Water Resources  
Rita Singer, California Department of Water Resources  
John Siperek, California Department of Fish and Game  
Jim Snowden, California Department of Fish and Game  
Marie Sullivan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Audrey Tennis  
Tanis Toland, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Ramon Vega, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
William Waite, Colusa County Board of Supervisors  
Paul Ward, California Department of Fish and Game

## **Technical Advisory Committee**

**2002 Chair—Anjanette Martin**

**Vice-Chair—Stacy Cepello**

The Technical Advisory Committee, composed of scientists from relevant disciplines, has been established to advise the SRCA on issues related to river management and site specific planning. Team members include agency and academic scientists as well as private individuals. Representatives from the following agencies and/or organizations have attended the TAC meetings:

California Department of Fish and Game  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Department of Water Resources  
Sacramento River Partners  
Sacramento River Water Contractors  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Wildlife Conservation Board  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
State Reclamation Board  
CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Bureau of Land Management  
Northern California Water Association  
The Nature Conservancy  
Sacramento River Preservation Trust  
Senator Maurice Johannessen  
Family Water Alliance  
California Farm Bureau Fed.  
RD 1001  
RD 108  
Nor-Cal Guides Association

California Resources Agency  
Assemblyman Dick Dickerson  
Congressman Doug Ose  
Trust for Public Land  
Butte County Farm Bureau  
UC Cooperative Extension  
RD 1500  
Colusa County Farm Bureau  
Sacramento River Reclamation Dist.  
Sacramento Valley Landowners Association  
Hamilton City Community Services Dist  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Assemblyman Sam Aanestad  
Princeton-Codora-Glenn Irrigation District  
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Gary Falxa, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Geoffrey Fricker, Butte College  
Molly Fuller, U.S. Forest Service  
Tom Griggs, The Nature Conservancy  
Todd Hillaire, California Department of Water Resources  
Brad Hubbard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Jean Hubbel, California State University, Chico  
Dan Keppen, Tehama County Public Works Department  
Cathy Klinestecker, Sacramento River Discovery Center  
Bill Lawhorn, U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
Kent Manuel, City of Redding Planning Department  
Eric McGuire, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
David Morrison, Yolo County Planning Department  
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Daryl Peterson, The Nature Conservancy  
Mike Peterson, California Department of Water Resources  
Katie Pye, Yolo County Resource Conservation District  
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Penny Ruvelas, National Marine Fisheries Service  
Ron Schlorff, California Department of Fish and Game  
Joe Silveira, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Megan Standard, California Department of Boating and Waterways  
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