

# COSUMNES RIVER TASK FORCE

Oversight Committee  
February 14, 2003  
USDA Service Center  
7:00 PM – 8:45 PM

Minutes: Tina Lunt, Cosumnes River Task Force

**1. Welcome and Introduction:** Don Nottoli (Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, 5<sup>th</sup> District) opened the meeting at 7:10. Self introductions were made by Bill Mosher (Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District), Ed Hamberg (Landowner), Walt Hoppe (landowner), Ron Lowry (Southeast Sacramento County Agricultural Water Authority and Omochumne-Hartnell Water District), Tina Lunt (CRTF), Carol Manning (Landowner), Ken Oneto (Sacramento County Farm Bureau), Keith Whitener (The Nature Conservancy), Carl Werder (US Bureau of Reclamation), Larry Rodriguez (Robertson-Bryan, Inc.), Stuart Robertson (Robertson-Bryan, Inc.), Jay Schneider (Cattlemen's), Rick Bauer (Landowner) and Surjit S. Toor (Natural Resources Conservation Service).

**2. Southeast Sacramento County Agricultural Water Authority (Authority), Larry Rodriguez & Ron Lowry**

The Authority completed their preliminary Groundwater Management Plan (GMP) in December 2002 to ensure that groundwater resources are sustained and protected. The plan is a stepping stone to develop a more comprehensive plan. The Authorities objective is groundwater recharge for agriculture and environmental uses.

The GMP reflects the following goals:

- *Establish a contract for surface water*
- *Maintain local control of groundwater management*
- *Preserve agricultural activities in the area*
- *Maintain local control of water distribution, advocacy, and planning*
- *Maintain each District's independence in representing its respective voters and water users*

The GMP includes the following elements that are considered pertinent to the Authority's groundwater management area:

- *Groundwater Levels and Groundwater Volume in Storage*
- *Groundwater Quality*
- *Surface Water Contributions to Groundwater*
- *Water Conservation*
- *Conjunctive Use*
- *Identify, Protect, and Enhance Groundwater Recharge Areas*
- *Well Abandonment and Well Destruction*
- *Work With State, Federal and Local Agencies and Stakeholders*

To accomplish these goals and objects the Authority submitted a grant to the Department of Water Resources requesting funding to develop a more comprehensive plan and to implement water enhancement and protection projects. If funded, possible projects are to identify areas of overdraft; provide data to calculate changes in groundwater storage and net recharge and depletion overtime; collect past and current water quality data to assist in setting groundwater quality objectives;

quantify the amount of groundwater recharge attributable from local waterways; evaluate the potential to expand on the uses of local waterways; enhance and protect surface water contributions to groundwater; work with other agencies and private parties to increase the amount of surface water available for groundwater recharge; educate water users within the Authority's area about water conservation practices; actively pursue the development of a conjunctive use program where surface water supplies are made available to groundwater users, in lieu of pumping, or where surface water is recharged into the underlying aquifer as a water banking operation; assess all significant recharge areas that influences the authority's area; assist in identifying locations of operating and abandoned wells, and to advise owners why proper well destruction is important for protection of water quality; investigate alternatives to well abandonment such as conversion to monitoring wells or pretreated injection wells; and collaborate with the appropriate agencies and stakeholders to help further disseminate information on groundwater.

There are a lot of opportunities to partner with others interested in groundwater protection and enhancement. Stakeholders might want to comment on the EIR/EIS for the Freeport Project and the Zone 40 Master Plan and let them know that they believe a partnership with the Authority would be a good idea.

Questions & Comments:

Is there any plan to meter farmer's pumps? No, the 3 districts are opposed to charging for the water.

What if you found a gravel bed (aquifer) that is void can it be filled? Yes, in most cases this would be ideal.

Is there any evidence that the water stays where you put it in the ground? Doesn't it move? Water tends to move to the lowest point in elevation so studies will need to be done to determine where and how fast it will move. An ideal location will have to be picked where the water stays put or moves very slowly.

Giving incentives to use surface water rather than groundwater is the only way you are going to get ranchers to switch.

Why aren't ranchers using surface water? Because of the maintenance, pumps get washed out. It is cheaper to pump surface water but since most ranchers had to put in wells anyway they tend to use them. What about off stream storage sites on ranchers property? Too expensive, permits and fish screens, seems like more effort than it is worth.

### **3. Cosumnes River Resources Inventory Phase II**

Our consultants are still working on Task 2; they should be finished with task 2 in March. Jones & Stokes will be presenting some of the information at the March or April meeting to get input from the CRTF. If you would like additional information on the progress since the last meeting please request the handout that was distributed at the meeting.

This CALFED Grant will be coming to an end in September 2003 so we might want to start thinking about the next phase, a watershed plan if that is where we want to go. It was suggested that we should try for an amendment to the current grant rather than applying for a new grant.

#### **4. Project Progress Update**

- **Stream Gages**

Craig could not attend the meeting so we are not sure if there has been any progress made over the past month. As of last month, DWR received a bid for the installation of the gages, contracting and in-kind match will take a couple of months but it looks like early spring for the installation.

- **Army Corps Project**

Not sure if any progress has actually been made. The last memo that was seen it looked like the project was moving forward.

#### **5. Activities in and Around the Watershed**

- North Delta Improvements Project Public Meeting  
6-8 p.m. February 19, 2003 at the Jean Harvie Community Center in Walnut Grove  
-or-  
1:30-4 February 20, 2003 Bonderson Building in Sacramento
- South Fork of the American River Watershed Group recently completed their Watershed Assessment and would like to present it to the group, probably at the next meeting.
- Agricultural Waste Discharge Waivers - waivers expired back in December and new rules have been set, specifics for this area should be coming out in March.

#### **6. Newsletter**

The newsletter should be out later this month. Don suggested the newsletter include information on the Zone 40 Water Supply Master Plan & Freeport Project and the Southeast Sacramento Agricultural Water Authority.

**Adjourn - Next Meeting will held March 11, 2003**