

COSUMNES RIVER TASK FORCE

Oversight Committee
July 9, 2002
USDA Service Center
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Minutes: Tina Lunt, Cosumnes River Task Force

1. Welcome and Introduction: Tina Lunt (Cosumnes River Task Force & Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District) opened the meeting at 7:15. Self introductions were made by Craig Crouch (Sacramento County Department of Water Resources), Surjit S. Toor (Natural Resources Conservation Service), Marv McCauley (Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District), Keith Whitener (The Nature Conservancy), Carl Werder (US Bureau of Reclamation), Ed Steffani (General Manager of the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District), Ed Hamberg (landowner), Carol Manning (landowner), and Ken Oneto (Sacramento County Farm Bureau).

2. Groundwater Project Presentation – Ed Steffani

Introduction by Carl Werder

The CALFED Conjunctive Use Grant Process recommendations for funding included 5 applicants: Kern-Tulare Conjunctive Use Project, Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation District, City of Tracy Aquifer Storage & Recovery Project, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency and the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District. Recommended funding for the projects ranged from \$300,000 to \$462,500.

Ed Steffani – retired general manager of Stockton East Water District and is now working a few days a week at the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District.

The Mokelumne and Cosumnes River share common problems of overdraft of groundwater and having too much water in wet years. This project is designed to take some of the water from wet years and put it into the ground. The water will be taken from the Mokelumne River to the Water District's distribution system to a site in Victor (east of Lodi) where the ground is very sand and has rapid percolation. Land will be leased for the ponds, two – four acre ponds will be constructed, measurements of how fast the water percolates into the basin will be taken, and monitoring wells will be punched to see where the water goes after it goes in. The groundwater will be recharged for a couple of years and then half the water will be pumped back out and put into the Mokelumne River in dry years.

The overdraft in the area is 220,000 acre feet of water per year, currently the county uses about 1 million acre feet. If everyone cut back by 22% that would solve the problem but there is a billion dollar agricultural industry in San Joaquin County so that can not happen.

North San Joaquin Water Conservation District has had a hard time convincing San Joaquin County farmers that this project is not going to hurt them. That is the reason why they are doing the demonstration project - to monitor the effects.

This is an important project because we have to find a way to recharge large quantities of water.

The North San Joaquin Water Conservation District is thinking about collaborating with others who may want the water in dry years and possibly selling the water.

In the Cosumnes River Watershed, Deer Creek might be an ideal site for off stream storage (800,000 mil. acre foot reservoir). The reservoir could be filled by water from Folsom at the end of summer when they are preparing for rain.

The main thing is that we all need to work together. Ed feels that the Sacramento County Forum pushed them out because they would rather deal with their problem individually than look at the larger picture and work cooperatively. He also believes that the Mokelumne River Association should work with the Cosumnes River Task Force.

Carl: Craig, does the County have any plans to send water to Galt when they put in the Freeport/Folsom South Canal system? No, in fact, the County will not have the capacity for the last 2 or 3 miles, it will have to be East Bay MUDs capacity.

Carl mentioned that the Bureau of Reclamation in Klamath punched wells and discovered that all of the irrigation has caused a rise in the groundwater table.

The Groundwater Forum meets the 3rd Thursday of the month.

3. CALFED Watershed Program Update – Cosumnes River Resources Inventory, Phase II

The first phase of the Resources Inventory, compiled by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, was a data gathering phase. The Resources Inventory identified data gaps which led to a plan for phase II. The Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District then submitted a grant application for the second phase to CALFED, which was funded.

Recently the Sloughhouse Resource Conservation District signed a sub-contract with Jones & Stokes to perform the majority of the work. The RCD is currently gathering necessary information that will help Jones & Stokes in their analysis. Also, since the latest aerial photographs the RCD has access to are 1993, and do not show the effects of the 1997 flood, Jones & Stokes ordered a 2002 flight of the Cosumnes River Watershed.

4. Project Progress Update

• Stream Gages – Craig Crouch

Two gages are proposed for the upper watershed. One is on BLM land and the other is on an El Dorado County right-of-way.

- BLM land - located on the Middle Fork
Received the BLM agreement for a 30-year permit, signed and returned it. Hopefully the gage will be installed by October 1st
- Eldorado – located on the North Fork
Obtaining this permit is going to be a little harder because we are trying to put the gage housing right next to the bridge at an intersection so there is some concern about site distance for drivers. It will have to be lower than the guard rail or moved back. Sacramento

County is currently trying to figure out where the right-of-way is so the gage can be moved back to avoid obstructing the view of passing motorists. We are going to try to place sensors on old abutment. Hopefully the gage will be installed by October 1st

- **Army Corps Project**

The Army Corps Project will look at habitat restoration on the Cosumnes River downstream of Dillard Road Bridge to the confluence with the Mokelumne River and up the Mokelumne to Woodbridge. The Army Corps Project is also an attempt to achieve some collateral flood control benefits.

The budget issue has been resolved and the project is back to the original \$2.08 million. There is a problem with who will be the lead agency. The Resources Agency doesn't want to be the lead. People involved in the project are working on convincing their attorney that they should be the lead agency because they are putting a million dollars into the project so there is no way they are not going to be.

Keith – Craig what is your thought about the Corps being the lead on the projects?
I think the Corps is warming up to the idea of being the NEPA lead for this project.

- **Distribute Copies of the Resources Inventory, Phase I**

Copies of the Resources Inventory, Phase I were distributed to all who attended that did not receive them at the last meeting.

- **Other Topics**

The final Newsletter is at the printers. The Project Coordinator will distribute the newsletter next week. The newsletter is available on the recently updated Cosumnes River Task Force web site, <http://www.cosumnesriver.org>.

Carl has written a proposal to the Fish and Wildlife Service to tag some additional fish to study the release on the east-side of the delta cross channel. The fish will be raised until they are large enough to be radio tagged. Then they will be released on the Mokelumne and recaptured around Chips (?) island. The purpose is to see what happens to the salmon on the Mokelumne. Depending on flows the gates will be closed October 7-11 for this project.

5. Cosumnes River Task Force Plan

To complete the State Water Resource Control Board grant the Cosumnes River Task Force had to submit a Cosumnes River Task Force Plan. The Plan was submitted and approved. The Plan was distributed to all those that attended.

Adjourn - Next Meeting: Cancelled