

Cosumnes River Task Force Minutes September 14, 2004

The meeting opened at 7:00 pm. In attendance were Ron Lowry, Carol Manning, Chuck Mitchell, Larry Rodriguez, Surjit S. Toor, and Ellen Carlson. Minutes submitted by Tina Lunt.

1. Lower Cosumnes & Mokelumne Rivers Flood Plain Restoration Study

The contract between CALFED and the Southeast Sacramento County Agricultural Water Authority (Authority) is expected to be signed within the next two weeks. When the contract is finalized Larry will provide Tina with a copy of the scope of work and she will send it out to the group.

The Nature Conservancy received a grant from CALFED that has some overlap with this grant. The Authority will work closely with them so as not to duplicate efforts.

Groundwater recharge is of interest to the Authority, but is not part of this grant.

2. Irrigated Land Waiver

Due to the lack of interest or ability by other agencies, the Amador, Lower Cosumnes and Sloughhouse Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) are considering strongly taking the lead for the South Sacramento/Amador Subwatershed. Although the RCDs don't agree with the regulations, they feel irrigators need an option to comply with the regulations that is less expensive and time-consuming than complying as individuals.

Within the next month, the three RCDs will be reviewing a Memorandum of Understanding between the RCDs to see if they can come to a consensus on how the program should operate. If the Memorandum of Understanding is signed, they will form an Advisory Council. The Advisory Council will assist the RCDs with decisions regarding the implementation of the local program.

3. Ranch Water Quality Planning Courses

Tina is working on putting together Ranch Water Quality Planning Courses to be held in February for Sacramento and Amador Counties.

4. Best Management Practices (BMP) Development

Tina is working with NRCS to put together a list of practices that are most applicable to this Watershed.

5. Watershed Plan / Council Development

A Cosumnes River Watershed Council will be formed. The initial meeting will probably be January, after the holidays. See attached list of invitees to see if there needs to be any changes to the contact information or if additional names need to be added.

Cosumnes River Watershed Council

Larry Rodriguez mentioned that the Authority will be putting together an Integrated Regional Water Plan for the area and wonders how the two might be tied together.

The Lodi Woodbridge Grape growers expressed interest to Larry in helping to develop a Watershed Plan on the Cosumnes. Larry also suggested that Tina contact the Galt Economic Development Council.

In addition to people that already have an interest in the CRTF, Tina has received interest from CDF in both Sacramento and El Dorado Counties, the Amador Land Trust and some individual landowners in the Wilton area.

Additionally, Barbara Washburn of Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has offered to review our Watershed Assessment to let us know if there are any areas we should be concerned about.

6. Watershed Portal

Wolf and Associates have the ability to develop a Watershed Portals (data libraries). Two examples of what they have created are: Cache Creek Metadata Library http://www.watershedportals.org/cache_creek/listDocs_html and the Sacramento River Portal & Library, <http://www.watershedportal.org/>. They are currently working on one for the American River Watershed. One of the unique features of the Watershed Portals is that it lets people upload their own documents and add events to the calendars. Watershed Portal start-up and operating costs for the first two years is ~\$4,400.

Larry Rodriguez said the Authority may be able to fund a portion of the development of a Watershed Portal for the Cosumnes River Watershed through their CALFED grant. As part of the grant they are required to do outreach and to gather existing data. Larry thinks a Watershed Portal could help them do both.

7. National Water Quality Monitoring Day

The month-long monitoring window for World Water Monitoring Day opens September 18. NRCS has a monitoring kit and the Regional Water Quality Control Board has offered the use of their equipment. Tina will be working with Ellen Carlson to set up a day for testing. When that day has been set, Tina will send out an announcement.

8. Dry Creek Watershed Assessment

The Resource Conservation and Development Council received a grant from CALFED for the upper Dry Creek Watershed. A large portion of the grant will be for outreach and education to stakeholders.

9. Laguna Creek (to the North of the Cosumnes River Watershed) Watershed Grant (This section has additional information about the project that was not presented at the CRTF meeting)

The lower Laguna Creek Watershed is mostly developed, and presents numerous opportunities for creek enhancement and restoration, as well as community stewardship. The upper Laguna Creek Watershed is largely undeveloped and includes open space, agricultural land, and approximately 380 acres of vernal pools that will require protection or mitigation as development progresses. Until the formation of the Laguna Creek Watershed Council (Watershed Council) in fall 2002, no work had been done to study this watershed or engage the citizenry and local agencies in its protection and preservation. There is little water quality or other data available to assess conditions in the creek or to identify and attempt to control potential pollution sources, and there is little in the way of community education and stewardship. The goals of the proposed Laguna Creek Watershed Program are as follows:

1. Prepare a Watershed Management Plan that will:
 - promote coordinated planning, development and management of the watershed by the various local agencies over the long term;
 - document and assess existing environmental conditions within the riparian corridors of Laguna, Elk Grove and Whitehouse Creeks and their tributaries and identify additional data needs; and
 - identify projects for protection, restoration and/or enhancement of water quality and natural resources (projects could be funded by local agencies through their capital improvement programs, by the Watershed Council, or by community groups).
2. Cultivate watershed education, stewardship, planning, and assessment (until and beyond when the Watershed Management Plan is available to recommend implementation projects) by:
 - supporting the continuation of the Laguna Creek Watershed Council;
 - engaging residents, schools, and local public agency staff in meaningful watershed education, monitoring and restoration activities; and
 - facilitating community “adoption” of 50% of the creeks in developed areas by the end of the project.

10. Eldorado National Forest Service

Eldorado National Forest Service just completed a Landscape and Roads Analysis for both the Middle Fork and North Fork of the Cosumnes River Watershed. Tina will keep a hard copy and electronic copy at her office. This report is a perfect example of what could be put on the Watershed Portal site.

11. Plymouth Area Vineyard Erosion Control Project (This section has additional information about the project that was not presented at the CRTF meeting)

The Sonoma Ecology Center will be gathering water quality and management practices data. Stream water quality and stage monitoring will be used to assess the current contributions of vineyard and non-vineyard erosion to stream water quality. The effects of the erosion control measures in controlling negative impact and their influence on peak flows of Pigeon Creek, Big Indian Creek and

associated smaller creeks within the area (including the Plymouth Ditch) will also be monitored. The project will also make use of rainfall simulation to assess the potential for erosion and associated sediment, nutrient and pesticide residue transport from fields.

Information will be gathered on management practices currently being used and how effective they are. Soils samples will be taken to predict runoff potential, organic content, structure, permeability and to aid in determining erosion control mitigation. Also, Best Management Practices (cover crop seeding, installation of wattles, etc.) will be installed to monitor the degree of effectiveness. Three or four erosion control strategies will be selected by the group participants to be implemented at 10 to 12 locations in the study area. When completed, the effectiveness of management practices can be used in other parts of the watershed where applicable.

After a final determination of the stream-monitoring sites during the initial project meetings, monitoring equipment will be installed and project participants will be trained. Additionally, the Sonoma Ecology Center will be contracting with a certified lab to analyze samples taken from Big Indian Creek and Pigeon Creek (a tributary to Big Indian Creek).

Prior to implementation of the erosion control measures, each site will be monitored for hydraulic conditions (peak flow, etc) and water quality above and below each project location during at least the first two storms of each winter of the project duration and during the first storm following any fertilization or pesticide application to determine the degree that runoff from vineyards influences stream water quality and if implementing erosion control strategies measurably changes that influence. Big Indian Creek is only being tested during the storm season because it is an ephemeral stream. Samples will be taken prior to peak flow, at peak flow and as the peak descends. Stream stage measurements will be taken using a staff gage above the project area, and/or located above and below each project location depending on the site owner's ability to conduct sampling.

After erosion control measures have been implemented, erosion control potential will be monitored using rainfall simulation. After erosion control measures have established (cover crops grown in, etc), rainfall simulation tests will be conducted at the same locations as the initial tests and occur twice for each location. Each site will have three test locations such that 60 specific locations will be tested and 3 tests will be completed for each location (one initial and two follow-up). Approximately 15 samples of runoff are anticipated for each test. Measurements of water quality constituent concentrations, sediment volume, runoff volume and infiltration depths will occur for each site.

12. Grants

The Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program (AWQGP) has been release by the State Water Resources Control Board. Proposals are due November 10, 2004.

Ecosystem Restoration Program

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program agencies through the California Bay-Delta Authority, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries, requests proposals for programs and projects to monitor and evaluate ecosystem restoration actions previously funded by the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program or by Central Valley Project Improvement Act programs. Application Period: September 20 - November 19, 2004. The proposal solicitation package can be downloaded from <http://calwater.ca.gov>.

13. Conferences

The CALFED Bay-Delta Science Conference is Oct. 4-5. Gerrit Platenkamp of Jones & Stokes will be presenting Phase II of the Cosumnes River Watershed Resources Inventory at 4:10 on Oct 5th.

Agricultural Summit 2004: The Future of Our Working Landscapes, Hosted by Valley Vision & the UC Davis Agriculture Issues Center. Exploring strategies for protecting and enhancing farm and ranch lands in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba Counties

October 27th, 2004

Sierra Health Foundation

1321 Garden Highway, Sacramento

8:00 am – 4:00 pm