



Cosumnes River Task Force

<http://www.cosumnesriver.org>

June 2003

Cosumnes River Resources Inventory and Assessment Phase II

The Cosumnes River Task Force in conjunction with the Sloughouse Resource Conservation District (RCD) applied for and received a grant from the CALFED Watershed Program to conduct the *Cosumnes River Watershed Resources Inventory and Assessment Phase II*, focusing on sediment and erosion in the Cosumnes River Watershed. The Sloughouse RCD hired Jones & Stokes to conduct the inventory and assessment. Jones & Stokes recently concluded the inventory stage of the project and is currently working on the assessment.

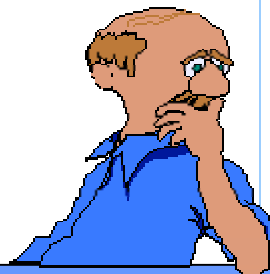
The Sloughouse RCD recently held three community-based Technical Committee meetings to review and comment on the Historical Geomorphology of the Lower Cosumnes River, the Inventory of Streambank Instability in Alluvial Reaches, Land Use and Cover of the Cosumnes River Watershed, Ground-Disturbance Survey of the Cosumnes River Watershed and Sediment Yield.

Examples of interesting preliminary conclusions include:

- Between 1974 and 2002 it is estimated that acres in crops declined by approximately one-third, acres of vineyards and orchards increased approximately four to fivefold, and acres in urban development increased approximately threefold.
- A total of 3,490 miles of native-surface roads (unpaved roads) were mapped in the watershed. This does not include agricultural roads around fields.
- Land clearing and grading associated with new residential development are responsible for approximately 16% of the ground disturbances inventoried in the watershed.

The *Draft Cosumnes River Watershed Resources Inventory and Assessment Phase II* will be available in mid-July and the final report in September.

The Public Draft Review meeting dates will be July 15, 2003 in Elk Grove and July 17, 2003 in Placerville. If you are interested in attending the Public Draft Review meetings or wish to obtain a draft copy so that you can make comments please contact Tina Lunt at 916-714-1104 ext. 112.



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Sacramento County, Sacramento County Farm Bureau, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Reclamation District 800, The Nature Conservancy, Sacramento-El Dorado-Amador Cattlemen's Association, and Sloughouse, Amador, Florin, Lower Cosumnes and El Dorado County Resource Conservation Districts

"The Mission of the Cosumnes River Task Force is to develop a long term strategy that will encourage restoration of watershed health and improve flood management."

AGRICULTURAL DISCHARGE WAIVERS

(The following was taken from a newsletter issued by UC Cooperative Extension, May 2003.)

In 1982, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board), a state regulatory agency responsible for the Water Code and the protection of beneficial uses of receiving waters, adopted a resolution waiving Waste Discharge Requirements for 23 categories of discharge, including irrigation return flows and storm water runoff from irrigated lands. However, on December 31, 2002 those waivers expired. Anticipating the expiration of the waivers, the Regional Board adopted a new "Conditional Waiver for Irrigation Return Flows and Storm Water Runoff from Irrigated Lands". Under the Conditional Waiver, the Regional Board will allow irrigation discharge for a period of two years beginning January 1, 2003 under one of the two conditions below:

- 1) The dischargers participate in a watershed effort to achieve water quality objectives to comply with the waiver.
- 2) The dischargers apply for and obtain an individual Waste Discharge Requirement Permit to comply with the waiver.

In January 2003, a group of water districts, farm organizations and waterfowl organizations in the Sacramento Valley formed the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition. The goal of the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition is to create a "watershed effort" in which stakeholders may participate to ensure compliance with the waivers at a less costly rate than applying for permits and conducting water quality monitoring on their own. The Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition has until June 30, 2003 to submit a general plan describing its stakeholder-based watershed approach to compliance.

MAPPING THREATENED VALLEY ELDERBERRY LONGHORN BEETLE

Theresa Talley is a graduate student at UC Davis who, along with her advisor, Dr. Marcel Holyoak, is studying the threatened valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle. Ms. Talley has been mapping elderberry shrub, home to the Elderberry Longhorn Beetle, along several local rivers including the Cosumnes. A primary reason she is studying the Elderberry Longhorn Beetle is its status as an indicator species of a functioning habitat. Ms. Talley's research is exploring factors that influence beetle survival including spatial characteristics of the habitat such as elderberry shrub isolation and size, habitat quality such as shrub health and number of stems per shrub, and landscape characteristics such as land use, vegetation community and elevation.

Elderberry beetles spend their entire lives on the elderberry shrub and when that habitat is removed, so are the beetles. Removal of habitat, along with other factors Ms. Talley is hoping to identify, has led to a decline of the species. In 1980, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the Elderberry Longhorn Beetle as threatened. Although the listing of the species has probably halted its extinction, studies have not shown an increase in the number of beetles or their range.

The studies currently being conducted by Ms. Talley and Dr. Holyoak will eventually lead to Habitat Management Plans for well-studied river systems and will help the USFWS revise Recovery Plans and mitigation guidelines.



Pictured: Elderberry Longhorn Beetle. Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/photo by Richard A. Arnold.

EL DORADO COUNTY COORDINATED WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District recently submitted a preproposal to CALFED in hopes of being selected as a grant recipient for the “El Dorado County Coordinated Watershed Improvement Project”.

The “El Dorado County Coordinated Watershed Improvement Project” was designed by the Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District in response to growing concerns for the ecological conditions and sustainability of the South Fork American River and North Fork Cosumnes River Watersheds. The primary objectives of the project include the protection and improvement of water quality by focusing on erosion and sediment control and a reduction of fuel loading to decrease the threat of broad scale catastrophic wildfire.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through this voluntary program, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical assistance to install structural enhancements or implement improved management practices on their lands that help to address natural resources concerns related to soil erosion, water quality and conservation, air quality and wildlife habitat.

If you are interested in finding out more about this program contact your local USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service office:

- Sacramento County, Elk Grove Field Office, 916-714-1104 ext. 3
- El Dorado County, Placerville Field Office, 530-295-5630
- Amador County, Jackson Local Partnership Office, 209-223-3758

AMADOR WATERSHED PROJECT COMPLETED

(The following was taken from a press release issued by Amador Resource Conservation District on June 18, 2003)

In 1998, local foresters from the California Department of Forestry (CDF), the United States Forest Service (USFS), and Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) and board members from the Amador Resource Conservation District gathered to plan a grant application to help protect and restore the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed.

The Amador Resource Conservation District recently completed the Amador Watershed Project, a \$372,440 project for the California Water Quality Control Board funded under proposition 204. Through funding provided by proposition 204, approximately eight miles of shaded fuel breaks were constructed; 25 miles of rural roads received road-side clearance to permit safer emergency evacuation and firefighter access; nine road drainage problems that were contributing sediment to the Mokelumne river were fixed; significant research work in the watershed was compiled; stewardship programs were conducted at two high schools and one elementary school; and public workshops were conducted for fire protection and road maintenance.

STREAM GAUGES

The housing units have been installed, one on the North Fork and one on the Middle Fork of the Cosumnes River. The gauges have been ordered and will be installed when received. It is expected that the gauges will be operational by September 2003.

Cosumnes River Task Force
News

Volume 4 Issue 2 June 2003

Editing by
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Funding for this newsletter is
provided through the CALFED
Watershed Program.

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WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!

Public Review Dates

Cosumnes River Watershed Inventory and Assessment Phase II

July 15, 2003 Elk Grove 6:45 p.m.

July 17, 2003 Placerville 1:45 p.m.

Please R.S.V.P.

Tina Lunt at 916-714-1104 ext. 112

or

e-mail Tina-Lunt@ca.nacdnet.org