

**YOLO BYPASS WORKING GROUP
MEETING 33
MEETING MINUTES**

MEETING DATE: December 15, 2004

LOCATION: California Department of Fish and Game
Yolo Wildlife Area Headquarters
45211 County Road 32B (Chiles Road)
Davis, CA 95616

IN ATTENDANCE: Robin Kulakow, Yolo Basin Foundation (YBF)
James Navicky , California Department of Fish & Game (DFG)
Dave Ceppos, Center for Collaborative Policy
Petra Unger, EDAW
Petrea Marchand, Yolo County Planning Department
Rick Martinez, Triad Farms and Dixon Resource Conservation District
(RCD)
Dan Tibbits, US Army Corps of Engineers (COE)
Mike DeWit, DeWit Farms
Jack DeWit, DeWit Farms
Bob Schneider, Regional Water Quality Control Board
Robert Eddings, California Waterfowl Association
Mark Kearny, Landowner
Kathy Kuivila, US Geological Survey (USGS)
Jim Orlando, USGS
Ed Towne, Bullsprig Outing
Dennis Kilkenny, Dawsons Duck Club
Ted Sommer, Department of Water Resources (DWR)
Marianne Kirkland, DWR
Michael Perrone, DWR
Butch Hodgkins, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA)
Mick Klasson (SAFCA)
Brad Burkholder, DFG
Tom Schroyer, DFG
Mike Mirmazaheri, DWR
Ron Tadlock, Tadlock Farms
Lori Clamurro, Delta Protection Commission
Spencer Defty, Diamond D
Ron Morazzini, Yolo County Board of Supervisors, Mike McGowan
Betsy Marchand, State Reclamation Board
Walt Cheechov, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Jeanette Wrysinski, Yolo County Resource Conservation District
Mike Egan, Yolo Flyway Farms
Beth Gabor, Yolo County Board of Supervisors, Helen Thompson

NEXT MEETING: March 25, 2005 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

Action Items

1. A DWR flood control person should be added to the Colusa Basin Study Subcommittee.
2. Ron Tadlock should be added to the Colusa Basin Study Subcommittee

Meeting Introduction

Dave Ceppos called the 33rd meeting of the Yolo Bypass Working Group (Working Group) to order. The Working Group was started four years ago with funding from the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (now the California Bay Delta Authority, [CDBA]). The group continues to be funded through CBDA. It is the primary forum for Yolo Bypass (Bypass) issues, specifically on Bypass conditions as related to landowners, tenants and regulatory entities that have a direct responsibility or land ownership responsibility in the Bypass.

Robin Kulakow requested participants to let her know whether they are receiving and would like to continue receiving meeting summaries / meeting agendas via email. The Yolo Basin Foundation (YBF) continues to make use of email as a cost saving device to distribute Working Group materials.

Introductions were made around the room.

The previous meeting minutes were adopted as final for the project administrative record.

Update on Regional Hunting Conditions Robert Eddings, California Waterfowl Association

This action item was slight impacted by schedule changes in some meeting participants and a computer system failure leading to the loss of a critical file that was to have been used in the presentation. General hunting numbers for the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area were reviewed by Mr. Ceppos, reading from a recent Wildlife Area spreadsheet (also available on the web).

The remainder of the presentation/discussion was largely anecdotal. Generally speaking, conditions in northern rearing habitats were poor. Species composition in the Sacramento Valley is skewed compared to what there normally is. General discussion took place about what affect the Wildlife Area has on hunting conditions on clubs in lower Bypass. Participants commented that these clubs are not holding as many birds. Two club owners stated that hunting is getting progressively worse and that many clubs had a bad first day. Alternative opinions were raised that the Wildlife Area may be keeping more birds in the Bypass and actually benefiting duck clubs. Hunting on the Wildlife Area is improving. Rice fields in the newly acquired lands seems to be holding birds and conditions should continue to improve once new areas are hunted when the management plan is done.

Generally speaking, the last early wet season (similar to this year) was 1995. There was a lot of rice that flooded early this year and this is the highest rice acreage year ever recorded including over 600,000 acres of rice in the valley. Early storms dispersed the birds and lots of grain (rice) was left on the ground. Therefore, this is probably not a good year to assess general valley-wide conditions.

Update on Putah Creek Fisheries Conditions
Marianne Kirkland, DWR

Fall run salmon arrived in Putah Creek in November when the Putah Creek dam was removed in the Bypass. DWR is considering using an infrared counting device in the future to better track the numbers of fish migrating upstream. This equipment would need to be approved by the State Reclamation Board due to its location in the floodway. Generally speaking there were not as many salmon this year as in recent years. James Navicky took a tour of Putah Creek with Rich Marovich, the Putah Creek Stream Keeper. They saw salmon near Dennis Kilkenny's home near Winters.

Update on Ag Waiver and City of Woodland Water Quality Studies
Rick Martinez, Dixon RCD and Robin Kulakow, YBF

Ag Waiver Conditions. Rick Martinez gave a short report. Monitoring started in July 2004 as required and the first year of monitoring showed no problem sites. Letters requesting acreage information of irrigated land are going out and members of each watershed group are encouraged to respond in a timely manner. The next billing for landowners will probably go out in the second half of 2005. A question was asked about what happens with landowners that are out of compliance in 2005? Mr. Martinez stated that those people will be identified if there is a problem found through monitoring that is related to their property. There is no penalty phase yet as the program is still signing people up.

City of Woodland Water Quality Study. Ms. Kulakow gave a short report on the monitoring study. Thirteen sites were monitored. Monitoring is completed and the data is being compiled /reviewed. Early information shows that there are problems with mercury and electrical conductivity (EC) levels.

Update on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers/Department of Water Resources Yolo Bypass
Modeling Project and Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC)
Dan Tibbets, Corps, Mike Mirmazaheri, DWR, and Dave Ceppos, CCP

Mr. Ceppos reiterated information from the October meeting, describing the history of the Bypass original hydraulic issues technical advisory committee that was re-engaged as the MTAC.

Dan Tibbets and Mike Mirmazaheri discussed project status. The Corps is doing a sensitivity analysis in the Toe Drain /Tule Canal to assess how much topographic and site-specific information should be incorporated. A sensitivity analysis helps them determine how complex or simple the base model data needs to be to accurately assess impacts to flows and water surface elevations. Additional data makes the model more complete but is more expensive and makes the model runs slower. The basic question is how much detail can be left out and still get reliable results.

Dan and Mike described that there is a limit to how much of base condition data can be used due to budget constraints. Mike explained that updating the model was intended over time (assuming future funding is available) but that this project will just develop the initial revised model.

The next MTAC meeting will be in the February – March timeframe and the group will assess / react the Corp's proposals for developing model sensitivity.

Q: What is the timeframe for model completion?

A: The model will be ready for use nine months from now. One year from now, a case study on the Causeway Ranch land will be underway. This is a two-year program and includes developing a user manual the public can use. Once all appropriate and cost effective data is collected, the modeling will begin.

Q: What is the geographic area of project?

A: The entire Bypass. Fremont Weir to Rio Vista including Egbert Tract and Liberty Island. Technically speaking, the model will start a few hundred feet downstream of the Fremont Weir. The Corps will not evaluate changes to the weir. SAFCA would like to see some data on the Port of Sacramento ship channel and the Upper Elkhorn area east of the Fremont Weir.

Q: Can proposed LIDAR work be helpful to modeling and what is LIDAR?

A: Ted Sommer responded. LIDAR stands for Light Detection and Ranging. It uses the same principle as RADAR. The LIDAR instrument transmits light out to a target. The transmitted light interacts with and is changed by the target. Some of this light is reflected / scattered back to the instrument where it is analyzed. The change in the properties of the light enables some property of the target to be determined. The time or the light to travel out to the target and back to the LISAR is used to determine the range to the target.

DWR plans on doing LIDAR analysis for the entire Delta including the Bypass however it will take a couple of years to evaluate data. LIDAR generates a huge amount of data that takes months to assess. Also, LIDAR can't read through turbid water, which could be a future constraint for Bypass conditions. DWR's South Delta Program is funding the LIDAR study. This is the Delta Levees Section under the Division of Flood Management.

Dan explained that Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers Comprehensive Study topographic data is being used for the model. It is at a 2-foot contour interval, which should be of a sufficient level of detail for the Bypass. So far the model is on schedule. It is important not to expand the scope such that the budget and schedule get impacted. DFG is dependent on the model being ready to assess hydraulic impacts described in the future Wildlife Area Management Plan. The Causeway Ranch of the Wildlife Area will be used as case study for the model. The timing is important since the Management Plan needs to be approved in time to use NAWCA funding.

Update on Colusa Basin Drain Study Numerous Participants

A study is underway regarding the Colusa Basin Drain. Agricultural drainage from the Basin is usually delivered to the Sacramento River above Knights Landing. During wetter times it is delivered through the Knights Landing Ridge Cut into the Bypass. Some parties are interested in diverting more drain water into the Bypass in an effort to improve Sacramento River water quality conditions below Knights Landing. These parties also believe that such additional flows could be a benefit to Bypass water users during the summer season. A study is underway to look at available data and conduct an initial feasibility assessment. In October, the Working Group created a subcommittee to track this study. A subcommittee meeting was held with some of the

project proponents in late November. Mick Klasson, Michael Perrone, Ron Morazzini, Kathy Kuivila were among the meeting participants and also attended this Working Group meeting.

Members described the project proponent's attempts to improve Sacramento River water quality and do something beneficial for the Bypass. The project proponents (lead by the Northern California Water Association [NCWA]) are waiting for initial study results from CH2MHill, their consultant. NCWA does not know how they will proceed until the report is in and they have had a chance to review it with the Subcommittee and other interested parties. NCWA firmly believes that future efforts regarding the Colusa Basin have to be a win-win situation or it's not going to happen.

The group further reported that discussion of a potential fish ladder at the Fremont Weir took place since additional Sacramento River water in the Bypass (by way of the Colusa Drain) might cause the attraction and stranding of more salmon in the upper Bypass. Kathy mentioned a proposal from Yolo Flood Control and Water Conservation District to assess if some west valley water could be captured upstream and west of the Basin and used to recharge the aquifer near Dunnigan Hills. Butch asked if anyone has evaluated using the Colusa Basin drain to get salmon further upstream. DWR and DFG attendees stated they have looked at this idea before and it appears infeasible. They would prefer a closer way to get the fish back into the Sacramento River. Betsy noted that the primary function of the Bypass is flood control and that this should not be lost in the discussion. She recommended that a DWR flood control person should be on the subcommittee. Ron Tadlock should also be added to the subcommittee

Update on Lower Bypass Subgroup Feasibility Assessment Dave Ceppos, CCP

Dave reiterated some of the information he presented in October 2004. He described that CCP is conducting a feasibility assessment to determine whether conditions in the Lower Bypass could be addressed through some type of stakeholder process. He explained that for a number of years, there has been some levee degradation such as on Liberty Island. Over time there has also been a diversity of public and quasi-public landowners: Prospect Island is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Liberty Island by Trust for Public Lands, Little Holland Tract by the Corps. There are private landowners on Ryer Island, Little Hasting Tract, and Egbert Tract. There doesn't appear to be a way to resolve lower Bypass issues. No agency has stepped forward to try to find solution. The assessment is an interview process. Interviews are being set up now. CCP will talk with many interests, including private landowners as the budget allows. CCP will assess how much people know about the Bypass, what they perceive as problems, what forum would be appropriate to convene a stakeholder group, etc. Dave described that a new group could be part of the Working Group with the same structure, it could be more formal in structure to facilitate agreement on solutions, or it might not be feasible at all.

**Update from SAFCA
Butch Hodgkins and Stein Buer**

Butch introduced Stein Buer, the new Executive Director for SAFCA. Butch retired last fall but was asked to stay on as SAFCA staff supporting Yolo Bypass and Lower Sacramento River issues.

Butch gave a summary of a recent Yolo County Board of Supervisors meeting wherein Yolo County unanimously agreed to partner with SAFCA on assessing the feasibility of creating a Lower Sacramento River collaborative process, similar in concept to the Lower Bypass assessment. The Bypass is out of SAFCA's jurisdiction area but it plays a critical role in the flood control system. SAFCA is funding the initial assessment.

**Update on Conaway Ranch Joint Powers Authority (JPA)
Petrea Marchand, Yolo County**

The next JPA meeting is January 26. Legal action related to the eminent domain process is constricting what the JPA is doing. There may not be any action on legal status of the property until April 2005. The County is considering a service agreement with the JPA. A land management committee of the JPA has met with tenant farmers on the Ranch. There should be a final decision on the status of the Ranch by the end of 2005.

Q: What is relationship between the JPA and the County?

A: The two entities are completely separate. The only interaction will be through the proposed service agreement

Q: What is the assessed value of the Ranch?

A: This information is not publicly available. A jury trial will be held and the assessed value will be debated at trial.

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:30.