**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY**

**Tulare Basin Watershed Connections – Working Group**

**April 6, 2016**

**Participants**

Michelle Selmon – California Department of Water Resources (DWR) (working group lead)

John Austin – retired National Park Service

Dezaraye Bagalayos – Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP)

Elissa Brown – Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC)

Ann Chapman – Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT)

Carole Combs – Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) (on the phone)

Kristin Dobbin – Community Water Center (CWC)

Hillary Dustin – Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT)

Bonnie Eyestone – Point Blue (PB)

Dave Hoffman – Deer-Creek Tule River Association (DC TRA)

Bobby Kamansky – Kamansky Biological Consulting (KBC)

Adam Livingston – Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) (on the phone)

Jennifer Morales – California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Mohammad Safeeq – UC Merced Sierra Nevada Research Institute (UCM)

Bethany Soto – Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)

Candace Toogood – US Forest Service (USFS)

**MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

* Sequoia Riverlands Trust has received a $60,000 grant from the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint
  + Goals are to identify and map areas for conservation and groundwater recharge for on the ground project implementation and informing GSAs developing policy on groundwater recharge
* The Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Program promotes awareness of the importance of watershed management and has some grant funds to assist with forest management (‘climate-smart’); the SNC works with other underfunded agencies to help them leverage resources and find other funding sources to do work such as meadow restoration and forest thinning
* The TB WCW member have varying internal capacity, and there is a need to identify specific projects and priorities that can be moved forward, perhaps through a strategic plan; we need more of the right people in the group, but external environment is stressing (regulations, politics, etc.) and many folks already have too many meetings. We need to find a way to be relevant so that they make time for the meetings.
* The Southern Sierra IRWMG is working on multiple projects with various partners, including the Mill Flat Creek project pertaining to riparian restoration and road decommissioning; they are seeking additional funds and partners and have been communicating with UC Merced about using research data to update the SSIRWM Plan to obtain additional Prop 1 funds

**DETAILED MEETING NOTES (Note – speaker is identified when it makes sense for context, otherwise comments not attributed to encourage free dialogue)**

**Opening remarks – Michelle Selmon**

* Agenda and ground rules were reviewed

**San Joaquin Valley Greenprint Pilot Project - Adam Livingston, Hillary Dustin and Ann Chapman, Sequoia Riverlands Trust**

* $60,000 funding received from SJV Greenprint
  + Goal is to increase watershed function and groundwater recharge using mapping and planning for on the ground restoration projects
  + Other side of project is SGMA implementation- gathering info from GSAs and BMP to inform policy recommendations for plans and groundwater recharge.
* Hillary and Ann running stakeholder and mapping part of project.
  + Connecting and restoring Kaweah River corridoris a focus area
  + Mapping areas important to conservation and watershed function
  + Many opportunities to connect multiple projects to enhance ecosystem services; this project can bring together collaborators.
  + Attempting to identify and characterize who’s doing what, which will help us identify collaborators, opportunities for grazing management, easements, or riparian restoration.
  + We’re currently identifying appropriate GIS layers. Stay tuned for more information, and may be reaching out to many TBWC members for input.
* (Sarah) Sequoia Parks Conservancy may be a good partners.
* (Carol) can you give us a broader idea of what other organizations are doing? i.e. American Farmland Trust(AFT) and Sustainable Conservation (SC) also received funds
  + (Adam) AFT is mapping areas of greatest opportunities in SJV, while ours focuses on two particular riparian corridors; SC is working on tools to map and measure GW depletion and working with land owners to recharge in an economic way
    - One project is Kaweah and one in SJV, so we’re working with both of them.
  + SRT is working with SC on developing web based interactive toolsre: planning scenarios.
  + Our focus is on natural watershed function to GW sustainability and management; restoring flood plan function, conserving soil carbon and water holding capacity through managed grazing, etc.
* (John) how big are the riparian corridors?
  + (Hillary) TBD.
  + (John) I thought they might be fairly extensive to include all the Kaweah riparian corridors.
  + (Hillary) we’re still trying to work with stakeholders to determine where the best outcomes would be in what areas
* (John) are you looking at today’s climate or future climates?
  + (Hillary) we are definitely looking at climate change in the future.
  + (John) I would like to be involved. Carol and Sarah both seconded John’s response.
  + (Hillary) we are trying to filter these projects based on what’s already been done and what we’re limited to with only $60,000.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) – Sarah Campe, Sierra Nevada Conservancy**

* SNC covers Modoc to Kern, and does anything to improve the well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region.
  + They do have a grant program, but doesn’t issue huge grants.
  + The Sierras are in trouble, and there are tangible things we can all do to help.
* 60% of our developed water supply comes from the headwaters of the Sierra, especially in Tulare.
* We still have a good economic machine, tourism and rec, timber, and hydroelectric.
* These huge fires are making it difficult to manage the Sierras.
* Climate change is the foundation shifting beneath our feet; we need ‘climate-smart’ forest management
  + We have enough information to take action now, on a noticeable scale
* Budgets are being cut, then the money we have is going towards emergencies rather than preventative measure.
* Even if you don’t use the Sierras there are things happening that impact you because they are impacting the watershed.
* On the ground management actions like thinning, meadow and fire restoration, and other projects can be scaled appropriately and make a huge difference we can see.
* The NPS and other agencies do not have the resources to deal with this problem alone, so SNC wants to act as a liaison to help these agencies.
  + SNC can encourage other to apply for funding to do these things whereas federal agencies can’t.
  + Spread the word, encourage other agencies to work on restoration, streamline impediments from environmental laws (for example air quality rules preventing prescribed burns).
* Elissa Brown tracks funding so talk to her if you want to do a project.
* SNC wants to break CA into manageable chunks for restoration, which act as a starting point/list of needs.
* We would like to give this presentation to the water districts/ID’s to introduce this idea.
  + TB WCW member could also attend
* (Dave) do you have a copy of the Edmonton report? In the 1970’s record of water rights, showing who gets water from where.
* SNC sees it’s self as a granting agency, but the problems are getting bigger and the grants are getting smaller.
  + We rep 25% of land mass in CA, so we need to acquire more funding from other areas.
* Elissa has set up a SNC website to make it easy for people to find other sources of funding.
* Elissa will give a grant writing workshop up and down the Sierras hoping this will result in more grants coming into the Sierras.

**Capacity Building Discussion – Elissa Brown, Sierra Nevada Conservancy**

* Discussion about capacity building survey we conducted a few months ago
* (Carol) Some members have capacity to manage funds better than others.
* (Sarah) we need a work plan to address our goals;
  + Everyone is really busy so it seems no one wants to spearhead efforts.
  + Also, we need more upper watershed managers and lower watershed managers. We have to make it worth their while. What would they get from coming to this group?
* (Dez) an obstacle is a lack of general understanding.
  + We have a limited number of people who are doing a lot of different things.
  + Also this region is generally neglected, we need more people, more of them to be educated, and there are a lot of politics, some of whom are decision makers who don’t like to talk about climate change.
* (Bonnie) we need to get private land owners here.
* (Adam) there is a lot of fear in the ag community about SGMA and available water in the future.
* (Sarah) many IRWMP and SGMA stakeholders don’t have time to add another group or meeting.
* (Elissa) in summary; a) this group’s internal capacity is varying, b) need to identify projects and priorities; c) we need the right people in the group, but external environment is stressing (regulations, politics, etc.).
* Groups that get funding and do projects are more attractive and people will prioritize coming to those meetings.
  + Bring this back to internal capacity; does this group want to look at projects or just be a communications group?
* (Michelle) shows Sarah’s Draft Outreach Plan.
  + We have projects we’ve identified with other members, and we recognize this group needs to bring in more dollars.
* (Carol) we’ve already done a lot of these things you’re talking about but right now their pieces of the puzzle, and we need to make them a whole, maybe with a strategic plan and a strong focus.
* (Safeeq) I’ve been coming here for a year and we talk about the Mill Creek projects and others and I still don’t understand what they are, so maybe these project managers need to come here and discuss their projects and we can see how our members fit into these projects.
  + Having a list of project and their focus could help, and from there it could be one-on-one communications.
* (Carol) the valley water districts are still not represented
  + Dick Moss created a list of most engaged ID’s, and we need to try to engage them again.
* (Bobby) maybe have an update of projects at each meeting; present all info on outside work at each meeting so we’re all up to speed.
  + Perhaps we should dedicate a full meeting to talking about all of our projects and where we’ve gone and where we’re going (identify actions for the group to take)
* (Elissa) creating relationships through this group and other meetings allow us to be able to contact each other when needed.
  + Encourage people to attend the grant writing workshop where we would do a lot of engaging with each other, we can make that time by removing the Excel training portion of the class, and instead use that time to discuss projects.
* (Dez) if stakeholders can’t come to us then we should go to them.
* (Sarah) we can try to find a way to fund Dez to go to the SGMA meetings and do this presentation.
  + (Dez) the meetings are less frequent and not as pubic as they used to be, but we can try to find opportunities by talking to Kristen Dobbin.
* (Carol) We are applying for a grant currently that would enable Dez to attend more meetings.
* (Michelle) we could have another workshop in Spring 2017 to try to engage some of these others stakeholders.
  + (Sarah) it would be good to get a grant first to fund the outreach component so people have heard of TBWC before the next workshop.
* (Elissa) getting funding is a yearlong process; Carol already has some funding we can use, also we have DWR here with resources that we can use right now.
* (Sarah) we probably wouldn’t be able to do this outreach by spring, plus we would really want a facilitator.
* (Elissa) DWR has a funding source for facilitation in DAC’s.
* (Candace) Maybe we need a list of ‘bios’ for each participating organization, who they are and what they do?

**Southern Sierra IRWM Grant Proposal Update – Bobby Kamansky**

* SSIRWMG involved in plan implementation, encouraging new projects, chasing funding for Mill Flat creek project.
  + Mill Flat Creek about riparian restoration and road decommissioning
  + In the Kings River watershed there are a lot of projects going on: Dinkey Collaboration, Upper Kings RWMG, meadow restoration projects
  + Candace’s CRU projects, IRWMP, KRCH, DFW.
  + Mill Flat Creek is identified as a critical habitat for fish breeding by CDFW, originally our project was funding for $65,000.
* Since rough fire, we’re going for more NEPA funding, I’m asking Lisa to help develop a plan b and c. Some Prop 1 funding could work too. SNC may or may not be a great fit.
* (Sarah) the timing might be bad,we also might be out of funding; but the future is hopeful depending on guidelines.
* (Bobby) in terms of analysis we also might need more time.
  + (Sarah) so there are multiple projects? Or just the road decommission project?
  + (Bobby) we’re potentially adding more restoration projects. Bobby, Maryanne, Sarah, and Elissa plan on having an offline discussion.
* (Bobby) planning to implement BMP of 14 separate meadows that were identified 14 years ago
  + Other meadow projects are providing data and benefits to encourage further meadow projects.
* (Bobby) waiting on DWR review of Three-Rivers Water Study
* Data Portal for SWWG could be good model for this group
  + Rapid data portal: draft data portals created for CABY, T-Stanislaus, Yosemite-Mariposa IRWMGs ($1,500 per year)
  + Kate Gladstein is the contact
* DAC water recycling project project with tech asst. funding from Prop 1.
  + Springville and Big Sandy Rancheria are considered severally disadvantaged, qualifying them for this funding.
  + Big Sandy is applying for sewer line project funding. The tech assistance can be used very broadly. We anticipate the funding will eventually encompass the UCs.
* (Safeeq)UC Merced project is getting too big now looking at two other watersheds: Kings, plus now Kaweah and Tulare.
  + If RWMGs get additional funding they have to update their planning documents, UC Merced data could be useful
* USDA is next target for funding
  + (Carol) Kathy Viadala with the CWF would be good to talk to also

**Subgroup and Partner Updates**

* (Michelle)DWR and the TB WCW are hosting a Climate Change and Ag workshop, sept 27 and 28th, Ag and DAC focus at the Southern California Edison Energy Education Center
* (Elissa)upcoming free Grant Writing Workshop, think about who you want to invite and engage with.
* (Bonnie) NRCS, SRT, UC CoOp, and Point Blue are hosting a 4-day workshop teaching streambank restoration to land owners for small streams with erosion issues. Hosted at River Ridge. Oct 17-20th.
* (Dez) watershed e-newsletter underdevelopment, will include lower and upper watershed news.
  + Quarterly newsletter, has 250 recipients already. Could highlight members of this group!
  + We could target those we want to engage with, as well as the general public.
  + Include a map that targets different projects going on in the watershed.
  + Submit article suggestions to Dez. Next edition will be out early Sept to announce workshops.

**Forest Service KREW Outreach Materials – Candace Toogood – Americorps/USFS**

* Outreach materials for KREW (Kings River Educational Watershed) were reviewed by the group
* KREW only long term study on forest restoration in Kings River, trying to create a public education flyer, understandable to the average high schooler
  + (Sarah) pair the handout with a short presentation “this is why it matters to you”
  + (John) UC Berkeley template and flyer on Floods/Droughts are good examples

**Next meeting Nov 3rd, 1-4 pm**