

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Tulare Basin Watershed Connections – Working Group

November 3, 2016

Participants

Michelle Selmon – California Department of Water Resources (DWR) (Working Group lead)
Alfredo Arredondo – Conservation Strategy Group (CSG)
John Austin – retired (formerly National Park Service)
Dezaraye Bagalayos – Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP)
Becca Brooke – U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Nancy Bruce – Circle J Ranch (CJR)
Carole Combs – Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP)
Bonnie Eystone – Point Blue (PB)
Dave Hoffman – Deer-Creek Tule River Association (DC TRA)
Matt Hurley – Angiola Irrigation District (AID)
Bobby Kamansky – Kamansky Biological Consulting (KBC)
Adam Livingston – Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) (on the phone)
Jennifer Morales – California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
Larry Saslaw – retired (formerly U.S. Bureau of Land Management)
Shane Smith – Kaweah-Delta Water Conservation District (KD WCD)
Robb Tibstra – California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- 📌 Sequoia Riverlands Trust reported on a San Joaquin Valley Greenprint project focused on mapping and water quality components to recharge and improve GW function in Lower Kaweah. They received support from Sustainable Conservation, Mid-Kaweah, and American Farmland Trust who is also doing a mapping project for Ag and GW recharge.
- 📌 Bobby Kamansky and the SSIRWMG are working on an IRWM plan update that will incorporate UC Merced work on climate change, drought, and water supply (creating the first predictive model for this region). SRT will be the grant administrator. Kings River was used as a template, but the goal is to expand to Kings, Kaweah, and Tule.
- 📌 RCIS (Regional Conservation Investment Strategies) authorized under AB 2087 provide legal authority for advanced mitigation credits approved by DFW; this is an all voluntary and non-regulatory program. The purpose is to guide investments in resource conservation, avoiding high value lands, and identify lands with potential for advanced mitigation. There is a 2020 sunset and a maximum of 8 projects can be approved by CDFW, per the legislation, so it's unclear at this time if the TB WCW can help advance a RCIS in this region.
- 📌 There are now 9 subbasins in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region; all are advancing.
- 📌 The TB WCW will develop outreach materials on watersheds and the benefits of headwaters management in the region for long-term sustainability to present to GSAs at their meetings

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

Opening remarks - Michelle

- 📅 Agenda and ground rules were reviewed

Update on Outreach Events - All

- 📅 Michelle provided an update on the “*Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Agriculture and DACs*” workshop that was held in September at the SCE Energy Education Center.
 - Sixteen people attended from various organizations
 - PowerPoint presentations are available on the TB WCW website
 - Carole suggested that this should be an annual event
 - Jennifer recommended inviting an economist to speak next time
- 📅 The Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant-writing workshop led by Elissa Brown with SNC also had about 15 people attend, many from local tribes.
- 📅 Bonnie provided an update on the Point Blue Riparian workshop held in October
 - Multi-stakeholder, 4-day event held at the River Ridge Institute
 - Focus on hydrology and geomorphology
 - Rock dam structures slow down water and preserve banks, also increases water storage in shallow aquifers associated with streams
 - More workshops planned in the future; they’re looking for ranches that can host the workshops and in-field training

Sequoia Riverlands Trust/San Joaquin Valley Greenprint project - Adam Livingston

- 📅 Mapping and water quality components, to recharge and improve GW function in Lower Kaweah.
- 📅 Support from Sustainable Conservation, Mid-Kaweah, and American Farmland Trust who is also doing a mapping project for Ag and GW recharge.
- 📅 We’ve been reaching out to stakeholders gathering maps for farmland, riparian habitat, etc.
- 📅 In terms of GW policy component we’re developing a set of recommended BMPs for GSA’s.
 - Hoping to be Kaweah/Lower Tule-specific as it relates to GW recharge. Still in early stages of policy development; we’ve been focusing more on the mapping project.
 - Will be using DWR BMPs too.
- 📅 Will have more information two meetings from now and will present to the group within the first half of next year. The grant period goes to April 2017.
- 📅 Carole suggests we get Greenprint folks to present to the group at the next meeting.
- 📅 Adam says the Greenprint is looking at how and where to recharge GW on Ag land, and suggests it would be good to hear from American Farmland Trust on that within the next two meetings.
- 📅 (Carol) Kelley McClure and Ed Thomson are good contacts to set that up.
- 📅 (Bobby) in terms of Kaweah, it’s a dammed river so it makes it isn’t as good of a recharge source, so you may want to call out the potential stormwater capture in other watersheds.
 - Specifically look at Cottonwood Creek where they did a full EIR to return Cottonwood creek to its original channel, and have done some work with Deer Creek so there is potential there for off-stream recharge.

- Promote off stream basins that are undammed and good for recharge and storm water capture.
- Kaweah-Delta has done a good job of identifying recharge basins and undammed streams, so check with them
 - Adam- Hillary is probably already incorporating that information in the mapping but he'll double check.

Southern Sierra IRWMG update – Bobby Kamansky

- 📌 Bobby is putting together short term plan to update Southern Sierra IRWM plan and incorporate UC Merced/Safeeq's work to update drought, climate change and water supply with the Kings River watershed as a template.
- 📌 We put together a planning grant for Prop 1 money to DWR, with the help of Safeeq and DWR. Sequoia RiverlandsTrust is the grantee; they did a tremendous amount of work.
- 📌 Asked for \$230,000: includes outreach, and a piece of the research that includes a template to build on existing knowledge and expand across Kings, Kaweah and Tule.
- 📌 So we will do the first ever assessment of drought and the future conditions. It will be preliminary, but this will guide the future use of resources.
 - No information currently exists while other watersheds already have existing models.
 - Provost and Prichard stepped up to help; wrote the grant.
- 📌 We're benefitting from having the Critical Zone Observatory. We have some initial analysis.
- 📌 Will include DAC's that have no backup water supply and no way to adapt to cc. This has been a really big success. These are starter funds and we will be using this as a starting point for shopping around for more money. This is a good investment of tax payer dollars to help project potential future scenarios and water investment.
- 📌 SSIRWMG is looking for a sponsor for Dec meeting for facilitation, refreshments, venue, and outreach.
- 📌 In 2017 we are soliciting funds for another range of projects.
- 📌 (Nancy) We are helping on Springville PUD, Tulare Basin DAC, and Mt. Counties DAC funding area with a Tribal Water Treatment Project that is going to be implemented as they are a severe DAC.
 - Getting a pipeline for a water treatment pipeline approved.
- 📌 Safeeq- looking for partners/end users in Kings River Basin and feedback on what products are most needed from the model.
 - Bobby suggests: Kings River Conservation, IRWM, as well as DWR, and DFW, SCE. Called out the TBWCW as a great coordinating event, and will let the workgroup know how else we can help.

Goals for 2017

- 📌 Subgroups should meet as appropriate based on opportunities that arise
- 📌 (John) – GSA comments on BMPs are open right now; subgroups could contribute to 'best available science' and
- 📌 What can each of the individual agencies we're associated with contribute to this process?
- 📌 Ideally we'll develop some materials by mid-year to promote to GSAs
- 📌 Michelle will send out another capacity survey

- 📌 John (we should add 'action items' to the minutes)
 - Also, keep 'Data' and 'Science' separate as they are called out separately in SGMA
- 📌 (Bobby) – what is our desired means of communication for the science we want to share?
 - (John) – it could be as simple as a 30 minute PowerPoint

AB 2087– Alfredo Arredondo (Conservation Strategy Group)

- 📌 Legal authority for advanced mitigation credits approved by DFW; all voluntary and non-regulatory.
- 📌 Purpose is to guide investments in resource conservation, avoiding high value land, identifies lands with potential for advanced mitigation so it's a great tool for planning.
- 📌 Bobby- under HCPs you can do pre-project mitigation, so how does this change it?
 - The bill is not an alternative to an HCP, there is no regulatory permitted. Meant more for large projects: renewable energy, flood plain restoration, etc. This does link with existing HCP's as complimentary.
- 📌 Local agencies partner with State agency to put forth RCIS to further statewide goals.
- 📌 Pilot projects: 2 in SF Bay on transportation, one in Antelope Valley for renewable siting and development and the last is in Yolo county focused on floodplain management; projects linked with the existing HCP.
- 📌 The RCIS doesn't permit development, it provides a non-regulatory assessment of what the conservation needs are in an area to guide projects by state agencies and others.
 - Can link high value lands with the mitigation required for a project.
- 📌 No budget for DFW to do implementation but is developing guideline for spring 2017, pilots are being funded by the Bechtel, TNC and other foundations, working closely with DFW.
- 📌 There is a sunset and a cap by 2020 which can only approve 8 projects; CSG working to try to lift those caps.
- 📌 Transportation is a key source of mitigation that we'd like to have a revolving fund for which credits can be sold and help to replenish funds.
- 📌 If interested in applying talk to Kevin Hunting. No CEQA authority, but has to be able to enter into contract with the State, so can't be an NGO, has to be an agency.
- 📌 DFW is the approver, and the agency would seek funding elsewhere. We'll set up a conference call with Julie Vance to give Kevin hunting a heads up of our interest, Carole and Alfredo will be included.
 - (Carol) We should use preexisting Tulare Basin CAPPs and WCB-supported plans to apply for funds with the 25 other groups that are already in line. DFW can only approve 8.
 - Alfredo will provide an easy to understand paper covering the language.
- 📌 Michelle also mentioned **AB 2480 – Source Watersheds**, which states that watersheds are state water infrastructure, and are eligible for water infrastructure funding
 - Bobby noted that the language called out 'specified forests' so this may be limiting

SGMA Update – Matt Hurley

- 📌 Matt just returned from Tri-County SGMA meeting where they are now an exclusive GSA.
 - Basin boundaries have been fixed, and they have been approved.
 - Only one new sub-basin was created in Tulare.
 - Kern county line has been altered to include Devil's Den.
 - The lines are certain (approved by Water Commission) now so now we can draw maps.
- 📌 Next DWR has written implementing regulations which have been approved giving us our marching orders and the first of the BMPs are online.
 - Still lots of question but good progress has been made.
- 📌 9 sub-basins in the hydrologic region. Each is moving along.

- 📁 June 30th 2017 GSA's have to cover entire sub-basin or it goes to county then state board, which comes with fees and probationary status till local takeover.
 - Fees have also been raised for state participation.
- 📁 DWR is also working on a report on water available for replenishment, fully implementable by end of 2017.
- 📁 GSA formation is the easy part the plan writing will be the really tough job!
- 📁 The basins also have to coordinate before the Department accepts the plan if there are more than one sub-basin, showing how they plan to comply with the 7 terms.
 - DWR only accepts completed coordination agreements.
 - Adjacent sub-basins can voluntarily coordinate.
 - We should really have just a single GSA in each hydrologic region. See TCwater.org for more information.
 - (Dez)The best science has to match up in the sub-basins so how will they accomplish that?
 - (Matt) The Department is set up to give tools, and help facilitate and I think the Department will help match models, and recommend the State used models, and has created two pilots.
- 📁 DWR conducting two pilots for Tulare Lake and Central Coast Hydrologic Regions
 - They'll model last 15 years' worth of data
- 📁 (Carol) TBWP developing a document locating potential lands for retirement under conservation plans, and offering habitat solutions.
 - They predict a lot of land might need to be retired to meet the requirements of SGMA, so information might be needed on alternative land uses.
 - Collaborate with NRCS, Safe Harbors with DFW, which will include grazing to offer economic opportunities.
 - Want to use those lands for upland species recovery without burdensome regulation.
- 📁 (Matt) – Angiola WD has a land retirement program they are working on; he's like to work with partners in this group on it