

DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Tulare Basin Watershed Connections – ~~Working Group~~ Collaborative January 26, 2018

Participants

Julie Allen – Oak Hill Ranch (OHR)
Roger Bales – UC Merced (UCM)
Dezaraye Bagalayos – Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP)
Sarah Campe – Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC)
Carole Combs - TBWP
Annie Esperanza – Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park (S/K NP)
Abigail Hart – The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Paul Hendrix – Tulare Irrigation District (TID)
Matt Hurley – Angiola Irrigation District (AID)
Deanna Jackson – AID
Bobby Kamansky – Southern Sierra Regional Water Management Group (SSRWMG)
Soua Lee – Kings River Conservation District (KRCD)
Adam Livingston – Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT)
Jennifer Morales – California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
Cindy Quezada – TBWP
Nat Seavy – Point Blue (PB)
Scott Sellers – Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)
Michelle Selmon – DWR (Working Group lead)
Trent Sherman - DWR
Jordi Vasquez – DWR

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- 📌 The Headwaters to Groundwater Symposium was a big success, a summary document that includes feedback from participants is available
- 📌 SSRWMG is working with UC Merced on data for the IRWM Plan update
- 📌 Funding workgroup members have been working on a USBR WaterSMART grant proposal to bring funds to the TB to develop outreach materials and a projects matrix for the watershed; also requesting funds for an arundo project (which has clear upper/lower watershed benefits)
- 📌 Scott Sellers from EDF has agreed to lead the Wildlife and Ecosystems workgroup, which will focus on ways to engage SGMA practitioners and landowners interested in potential opportunities for retired ag lands to provide habitat and other regional benefits; **contact Scott if interested in participating!**
- 📌 A revised Charter and Strategic plan were discussed, with the suggestion to rename the group to the Tulare Basin Watershed Connections Collaborative (indicating that the workgroup is ready to formalize the partnership, and pursue funding as a full collaborative)

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

Headwaters to Groundwater Symposium

- 👤 Summary sent to TBWCC participants, including post symposium attendee survey feedback.
- 👤 Paul: the HW2GW symposium had a very broad audience and SGMA is driving that collaboration.
- 👤 John Austin: we should continue riding this momentum and not wait a year to have another collaboration.
- 👤 Michelle: We will have regional collaboration in between the larger science updates.
- 👤 Matt Hurley: we would like to collaborate with these other groups to do projects that benefit the GSA's.
- 👤 John Austin: The Governor gave his last State of the State and mentioned headwater/watershed protections.
- 👤 Michelle: The State, NGO's and others are all starting to talk about the importance of headwaters, and this group is in a position to take advantage of funding opportunities to build healthy watersheds.
- 👤 Bobby: I heard a lot of great conversations at the tables and the science provided facilitated the openness of those conversations.
- 👤 John Austin: We could provide funding recommendations to congress as a project. We could focus our attention on valley legislators that support water in the valley.
- 👤 Michelle: Plan a focused sub-group workshops as a follow-up to the symposium.
- 👤 Carol: Suggests focusing on Tule and Tri-county GSAs would be a good start. Matt:
- 👤 This is a great time to make project suggestions and are willing to hear all ideas. We have no preconception and are working on a blank slate at this point.
- 👤 Paul: the basins from here south are very anxious to identify projects that enhance water that are married with environmental benefits. I think we'd all be willing to hear the ideas of this group.

Southern Sierra RWMG Update – Bobby Kamansky

- 👤 SSRWMG working with UC Merced and Provost and Pritchard to develop water quality chapter. Bringing on a modeler from UC Merced.

- 🚩 Roger Bales is working hard to get us good press. We're trying to develop talking points, i.e. 213,000-acre ft. of water went into the Kings Basin after the tree die off.
- 🚩 Bobby will send UC talking points to Michelle to disseminate to the group. Trying to develop models that show how these areas react to fire, droughts and other stressors and how that impacts water and what projects we can benefit from. ***Let Bobby know if you have any suggestions or are interested in reviewing the chapter.***
- 🚩 Matt: Tule River Basin IRWM new group, got approved under 2012, has grant for the 2016. Should be ready to submit in 60 days. Same group here is also the SGMA group. We want to form a group with other sub-basin to develop headwater projects that provide combined benefits to the IRWM's, even if the projects are not in our backyard.
- 🚩 Bobby: I spoke with Dave Huffman about an old boundary map that he'd like Matt to review for accuracy.
- 🚩 Bobby: Blue Forest can help lower risk in investment, as told at the symposium.
- 🚩 Sarah Campe: There is a new effort to reconvene an agency specific southern sierra group in an attempt to get all the leaders in one room to make decisions. Objectives are to rethink landscape management to include fire issues and climate change.
 - Annie: as a collective group they would learn more and at times even bring in subject matter experts. Each meeting would have 2-3 topics which could be a variety of subjects that would give them a great education for landscape management, and together they had a louder voice.
 - Carol: Southern Sierra Federal Lands Management Group. Doesn't have a title now, especially since State entities will be involved.

2018 WaterSMART Grant Proposal – Bobby Kamansky

- 🚩 Michelle: a core group (the funding group) has been working to meet the rapidly approaching deadline of next Wednesday, putting together a Water Smart grant that we started talking about two years ago to help establish or build the capacity of groups like this and then go for a phase two project implementation group.
- 🚩 Bobby: this is one of the few funding sources that supports watershed groups. With this funding, we could become more official and provide more outreach and education opportunities. Task 1 would be watershed development then an education piece then a watershed design matrix. These are high-level tasks. The framework is set up in phases that supports group development and project implementation at almost the same time.
- 🚩 Projects are bigger scale, Arundo project is one, and we have a few other projects awaiting funding with our other partners.
- 🚩 Paul: is there a match requirement? You do not need a match.

- 🚧 Michelle: SRT should be able to administer the grant. We've been trying to refine the tasks into simple projects, such as moving from a workgroup to a formalized collaborative with a charter and commitments which seems like the next evolution of this group.
- 🚧 Carol: under the grant we'll develop region specific presentations and outreach materials. Sarah will be developing a high-level presentation that summarizes watershed hydrology in the Tulare basin and will work with UC Merced to develop data for sub-basins.
- 🚧 Matt: an initial education phase to bring us all up to speed and in line, so we all have a common language and a common understanding of headwaters to groundwater issues.
- 🚧 Roger Bales data on losing all those trees producing 213,000 acre-ft. of water would really drive the point that we need to care about upper watershed issues because they really impact the lower watersheds.
- 🚧 Paul: the GSA's immediate goal is to develop their plans so if we can provide information they can point to get their plans and projects approved that's something they'd really be interested in.
- 🚧 Sarah: Elizabeth Bettencourt spoke to DWR and was given the ok on incorporating headwaters projects but to do that you have to include headwater matrix and your project has to be defensible.
- 🚧 We can help connect GSA data needs to the data. But still, we need to start with basic education on watershed hydrology.
- 🚧 Matt: the mountains have been considered a block. We don't understand mountain sub-service flows so that's something we need information on. Bobby: this is precisely the information we're trying to develop after this same discussion was had at the symposium.

Wildlife and Ecosystems Workgroup

- 🚧 Scott Sellers: EDF identifying parcels that can be restored ag lands as well as developing guidance for ag land retirement.
- 🚧 Sustainable Conservation and others are studying the ability to flood productive ag lands for GW recharge, can those projects be included?
- 🚧 Madera and Angiola ID are looking for partners in beneficial use of retired lands.
- 🚧 Anyone interested in participating on the workgroup to develop outreach materials for SGMA practitioners and other strategies for taking advantage of the opportunities for habitat restoration should contact Scott (workgroup lead) ASAP
- 🚧 Sarah: do the GSPs need to go through CEQA?
 - Matt: no, the GSP's are the only aspects of SGMA that don't need CEQA. Will look at how other water-wikipedia/data websites were developed and funded and staffed and report back to the group at our next meeting.

Strategic Plan and Charter

- 📌 Michelle asked all members to review the Charter and Strategic Plan.
- 📌 The revised Charter proposes renaming the group to “Tulare Basin Watershed Connections Collaborative”
- 📌 “Subgroups” will now be called “working groups”
- 📌 The group will make a decision about whether or not to adopt the documents at the next meeting.
- 📌 Collaboration members will rotate meeting facilitation duties while waiting on Water Smart and other potential funding for facilitation.