



TULARE BASIN WILDLIFE PARTNERS
Creating Opportunities for Nature and People

TBWI
Tulare Basin
Watershed Initiative

MEETING SUMMARY

Allensworth-Alpaugh-Atwell Island Work Session

October 9th, 2015

Participants

Kelvin Alfaro - Central Valley Community Foundation

David Johnson - Central Valley Community Foundation

Gabe Garcia - BLM Bakersfield

Steve Larson - BLM Bakersfield

Jihadda Govan - BLM Bakersfield-Atwell Island Project

Rob Hansen - Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP), College of the Sequoias (COS) Biology Faculty

Carole Combs - TBWP and Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative (TBWI)

Denise Kadara - TBWP, Allensworth Progressive Association

Kayode Kadara - TBWP, Allensworth Progressive Association

Roel Marroquin - Allensworth Elementary School

Rob Hudson - Alpaugh School

Monte Mitchell - Nut Farmers LLC

Matt Hurley - Angiola Water District

Deanna Jackson - Angiola Water District

Julieta Martinez - Tulare Co. Board of Supervisors

Eric Coyne - Tulare County Resources Manager

Jessi Snyder - Self-Help Enterprises

Dezaraye Bagalayos - TBWP & TBWI

Themes of the AAA Work Session

- Environmental stewardship
- Water quality
- Youth leadership development
- Regional identity/ sense of place
- Donor outreach and development

Overview of purpose and goals of the work session

Kelvin Alfaro and David Johnson, Central Valley Community Foundation

- Both Kelvin and David came representing Central Valley Community Foundation (CVCF), formerly known as the Fresno Regional Foundation, in an exploratory and information gathering mission.
- Fresno Regional Foundation was renamed Central Valley Community Foundation in order to more accurately represent the mission and goals of the foundation.
- CVCF is active in a region that covers six counties: Mariposa, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, and Tulare but would like to expand its reach. Right now the foundation is looking at where they want to be in 50 years and how they can connect with new communities, developing collaboration and fostering philanthropy.
- David's focus is investing in communities and Kelvin's focus is on the intersection of youth and environment as well as on smart growth. Kelvin is developing a multi-year strategy to build livable communities.
- The tour of Allensworth and Alpaugh, that proceeded the work session, showed the riches and the plights of both Allensworth and Alpaugh, which you can read about in articles but don't get a genuine sense of these places until you are in them.
- Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners has been a grantee of CVCF's Smart Growth work for the last two years. Allensworth and Alpaugh were the recipients of a \$150K Community Services Employment Training grant. In 2015, in partnership with Kern County, CVCF released the report [Beyond Almonds and Blond Lawns](#), an in depth look at the drought's impacts on San Joaquin nonprofits. It is different from many of the drought studies in that the information is geared towards the donor base to address needs. If El Nino delivers these issues will not go away.

Community Engagement in Alpaugh, problems & solutions

Jihadda Govan, BLM-Atwell Island Project

BLM Atwell Island Project (AIP) has partnerships with TBWP and Alpaugh School District. There were some community engagements with previous Atwell Island managers and with previous Alpaugh high school science teacher. There was a program in place that had 15 high school aged kids involved in a summer work class education program that was very successful. A program day was six hours long during which the students engaged in restoration projects, collecting and planting seeds, habitat improvement projects, and maintenance. Next time around AIP would like to engage students from both Alpaugh and Allensworth.

There have been a few bumps to getting the Alpaugh Community Engagement program going this year:

- Alpaugh School is K-12, but none of the teachers live in Alpaugh and it is difficult to retain teachers
- The original program teacher was great and thoroughly engaged, the new teacher is overwhelmed and doesn't want to lead the way
- AIP is talking to Randy Wallace with the Tulare County Office of Education and Linked Learning about funding the students, giving them an hourly wage
- We can make this work if we can get the staff

Kelvin Alfaro: The ideas presented so far at the meeting are essentially all approaches that can potentially alleviate blight; what we need to hear about are youth engagement, awareness and addressing water quality issues, environmental stewardship.

Jihadda Govan: We would like to see the community more engaged in the project. It gives a solid biological foundation and greatly contributes to creating regional identity. The students that went through the first program still talk about it. Our newer southern and eastern boundary neighbors - pistachio growers - are showing an interest in investing in the local communities. They have already donated to the Summer Night Lights program and would still like to do more. They are looking to engage and partner with more neighbors in the community to further youth development in the area.

Eric Coyne: Do you want to do in Allensworth what you have done in Alpaugh?

Jihadda Govan: Yes, but we need a teacher. Allensworth students want to participate in the program that the Kadaras and BLM are discussing; the question is how can we go about combining the two communities?

Matt Hurley: If you had all the money you wanted what could you do?

Jihadda Govan: We could have 25-30 students in the program, but I need the staff to do this, preferably a science teacher to provide a solid science foundation.

David Johnson: Is this busy work or work that needs to be done?

Jihadda Govan: This is work that *needs* to get done. We have seed that needs to be collected and propagated, we have wetland plants that need to be collected, and wetlands that need maintenance. This program will benefit both communities.

Eric Coyne: The Tulare County Office of Education is doing a program for Tulare and Kings County that focuses on developing children's natural interests. Personal focus is media arts and that includes students who are interested in business. This is a county-wide program, maybe they can potentially provide a teacher if a local one cannot be found.

Community Engagement in Allensworth, problems & solutions

Denise Kadara and Kayode Kadara, Allensworth Progressive Association & TBWP

Denise Kadara: Our presentation is different because of the differences in the communities. We distribute food every second Friday of the month. Tulare County came out and gave flu shots on the most recent food distribution day. Entities like Tulare County show up because the people show up. The Allensworth community is emphasizing the need to address housing issues.

The Allensworth community wants to undertake activities with youth that develop leadership skills. We have partners and programs on the ground:

- Summer Night Lights has been sponsored by the County for the last couple of years, and Supervisor Vander Poel gave \$2,000 to get kids outside and active;
- we have taken the kids to McDermot Field House;
- we have resource fairs that bring students, parents and communities together. Nothing like SNL had ever happened here before and it is benefitting our youth;
- The County is working with us to create safe routes to school
- we received \$5,000 from Step-Up and led a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles;
- we've taken the kids on field trips to Bakersfield College and Cal State Fresno;
- we planned a camping trip in the Sierra, but the spot we were to camp out became the staging area for firefighters fighting the Rough Fire so we had to cancel;
- this past April we partnered with TBWP and BLM to hold the Community Nature Fiesta, which included educational booths, a nature walk, and a scavenger hunt;
- Self-Help Enterprises has done a tremendous amount of work in Allensworth in regard to addressing water quality issues.

When we engage with the kids they really respond; we are trying to build our youth up to take over the work we are doing and inspire them to become environmental stewards.

Kayode Kadara: Typically after graduating high school kids go to Magic Mountain. Instead, this last summer we took the students to San Francisco for the weekend. Twelve 8th graders went to Golden Gate Park and a baseball game and just explored the city. Afterwards we asked the kids to do a write up of their experience because these are memories that will stay with them for life. Some of these kids have never left this area so we are broadening their horizons.

Allensworth has serious water challenges with arsenic in our water supply. We have a well in town with the arsenic level over 100 parts per billion. Three wells east of town sometimes exceed the standard. We have a 40,000 gallon storage tank and 2 years ago a fire broke out; in less than five minutes the fire crew was driving to other communities to get water. We received two grants to look at existing water conditions in Allensworth to see if we need a new well but we can't find any owner to help. A consulting firm recommended that we get a new 500K storage tank. A proposed second grant application to the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to look for a regional solution for a water supply for Allensworth and Alpaugh in partnership with Angiola came to a grinding halt because of fast approaching deadlines.

Eric Coyne: The Tulare County Board of Supervisors ratified an agreement that says that Alpaugh and Allensworth will have separate infrastructure but share tools and expertise. The engineering report will be out by Nov 6. The communities have separate needs. Citizens in the 2 communities know something is being studied and they need to know what is going on. We need to complete a feasibility study under a current SGC grant by February - a nearly impossible deadline. We need to figure out how these wells will be managed and maintained with a combined methodology and then this needs to be rolled into a construction grant.

Carole Combs: We met with John Buchard, General Manager of the Alpaugh Community Services District (ACSD) earlier today. He said that he had received federal funding (a USDA Emergency grant) that enabled him to (1) construct and put into operation equipment that has already ensured that arsenic levels in the Alpaugh domestic water supply are diminished to safe levels and (2) gives the ACSD the capacity to supply safe drinking water to Allensworth AND meet fire suppression needs in Allensworth. In response to our question regarding what was keeping that from happening, he stated that local citizenry would likely oppose the idea, i.e. local citizens need to be encouraged to endorse such a collaboration.

Eric Coyne: We need the science to prove that. We need to look at today and tomorrow's needs. We are looking at a more robust climate change forecast. These communities need A LOT of things. We are doing parks grants for some DACs. We are down to basic subsistence, doing work in communities with no water. We need to strengthen basic infrastructure to move on to Smart Growth.

David Johnson: I was at a fundraiser last night raising money to get water in the Congo and here we are looking for water for our communities...

Kayode Kadara: Infrastructure is a major issue in Allensworth. We have open cesspools; we have kids hopping over raw sewage to get to school. We had discussed with Self-Help about getting planning grants to do feasibility studies on getting a sewer system in place. How can we get affordable housing without a sewer system?

Eric Coyne: By May 16th of next year counties have to put in onsite septic. We have 90+ DACs. A septic tank becomes worthless as soon as it is installed.

Kayode Kadara: As far as issues with youth development go, Internet connectivity is a huge problem. They have it at school, but many families do not have it at home. We have discussed this issue with people at Fresno State. We can train the kids as best we can at school, but how can we help them at home? Also, transit opportunities are a big issue for our youth. Our kids get stuck without personal transport, unable to get to COS or Fresno State. Can Delano extend their transport service to us?

Eric Coyne: We have a real challenge serving Alpaugh and Allensworth. How do we equalize this? With these affordable housing funds they can't compete. Short deadlines, not enough traffic here; GHG reduction is a big source of funds, but not enough people are moving here; there isn't enough traffic to qualify GHG funds. The communities of Allensworth and Alpaugh need a GHG rule set-aside. We can get loans but no grants, but how do these communities repay a loan? Infrastructure is a focus, but we can't get businesses out here because they can't be responsible for building an entire infrastructure system. We developed BIG matches and we are looking at several funders, USDA, DWR, State Water Board (DAC and contaminated water angle). To have a funder come in and want to do work is HUGE.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Eric Coyne: What kinds of project opportunities are attractive to you?

Kelvin Alfaro: That is described in our grant selection criteria. The Environment Grant cycle is open. Selection Criteria includes:

- How are communities coming together to discuss and share information to build upon mutual successes? *Including this information in applications helps focus the selection committee.*
- Leveraging dollars; we appreciate when other funders are participating. We launched the Environment program in 2008, then took a break in 2011 to see how we could stretch dollars. We came to Smart Growth because it's non-inflammatory; *it is an area where limited dollars have an impact.*
- Groups will be competing for a max of \$50K in this grant cycle. What can we expect to come from \$50K?
- What are the expected outcomes from this work? We need head count data; we are trying to figure out how to attract more dollars. We need success stories to share.

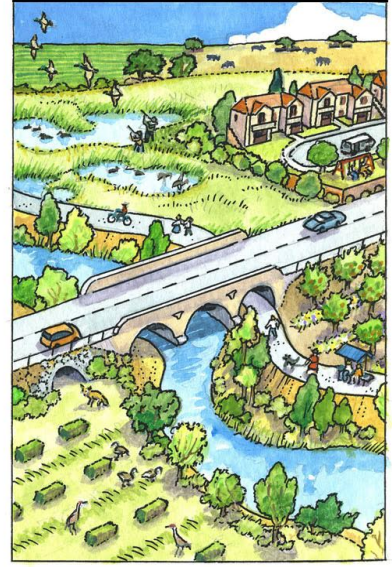
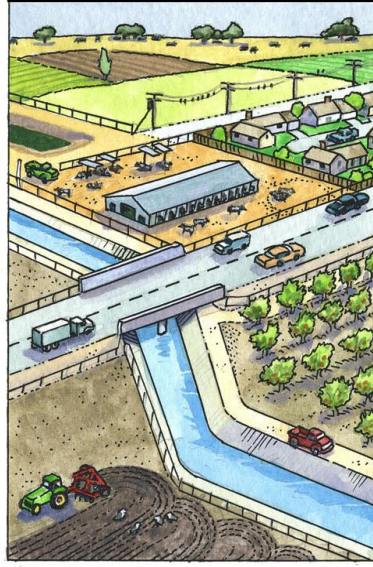
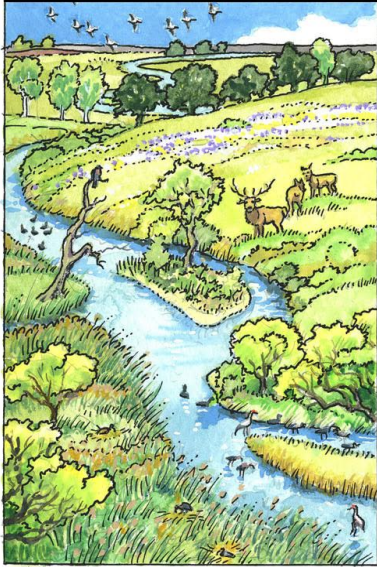
We know that dollars have been most effective when used to engage communities, give them a voice, and hold their elected officials accountable. What is important to CVCF is matching resource dollars and knowing that the work groups are doing fits into the broader scope with measurable outcomes. Our organization has been around for 50 years and will be around longer. We need to connect to local philanthropists. We are not in competition with other organizations; we would like to partner with them to help donors invest. Local dollars will stay here. We can help to invest them in a way to continue to bring benefits to the community. How do we foster local philanthropy in our region? That is what David is focused on.

David Johnson: We have a generous donor who has an interest in focus areas, and we have helped him invest his money so that communities can benefit in perpetuity, developing a real, legitimate regional strategy. There are a lot of common issues across the six counties that CVCF is involved in.

**At this point both School District Superintendents from Allensworth and Alpaugh arrive.*

Kayode Kadara: We've had discussions on how to link Atwell Island Project to Allensworth State Park. The State Park attracts 30,000+ people a year and if we could link both assets in the area it would create an opportunity to get our youth to exercise. The challenge is how do we go from there to here? How do we create access to paths?

Rob Hansen: TBWP has talked about an Oaks to Tules trail, going from Kaweah Reservoir to Pixley Wildlife Refuge to Atwell Island. When we think big enough some of the assets we have here can link regionally, from 40-50 miles.



Artist: Doug Hansen

Denise Kadara: Talk about engagement, leadership development, and getting kids to be environmental stewards. We can build off that.

Carole Combs: We are creating a vision. This can be a community collaboration demonstration project. We have all the elements needed to build the vision and get this done. Let's put some teeth into this and get serious about how we get the communities involved and bring in more local philanthropy.

David Johnson: We operate on a competitive grant cycle under various topics; as we think of these projects how do we fit the projects into these grant cycles; we don't do a lot of year round grant cycles; the grant cycles are competitive. We do have individual donors that do have money to give to special projects outside of grant cycles, however...

Kelvin Alfaro: There is no set geography; the grant money is open to six counties, mostly Fresno and Tulare. The types of projects are up to you. We provide goals to fund and the outcomes we want to see. The strategies to achieve those goals are up to you.

- More compact economies and sustainable communities
- Educating developers
- Infill development
- Preservation of prime ag land
- Water quality and conservation efforts
- Smart growth goals linking dollars and civic engagement around Smart Growth
- Creating healthy communities via bike trails and youth engagement

David Johnson: Each grant cycle has its own funding goals.

Kelvin Alfaro: CVCF Youth grants are restricted to four communities: Reedly, Cutler-Orosi, and Dinuba. The Youth grants result from a legacy donor who wanted to invest in the communities in which she she grew up.

James Irvine Foundation & Hewlett Foundation have partnered with the Central Valley Community Foundation. CVCF is a community foundation that is gathering funds from individual donors to help them maximize their philanthropy throughout Valley communities.

How CVCF can help these communities:

- Recommend grant investments
- Assess development tools
- Act as a convener to help connect issues
- Represent communities at the State level to potential donors

Grant making we do towards non-profits, counties and school districts can apply.

David Johnson: We can receive assets and liquidate them; we have a program that can take crop donations from philanthropic farmers and we then sell the crops and take the money and invest it into the communities.

Kelvin Alfaro: We have developed a multi-year strategy for the environment. Our goals are broad and we want to go beyond Smart Growth. We are building a platform where other funders can help. We need to develop this multi-year strategy before we go to these funders. We are a couple of months away from completion of this strategy and there are a couple of potential funders in this area.

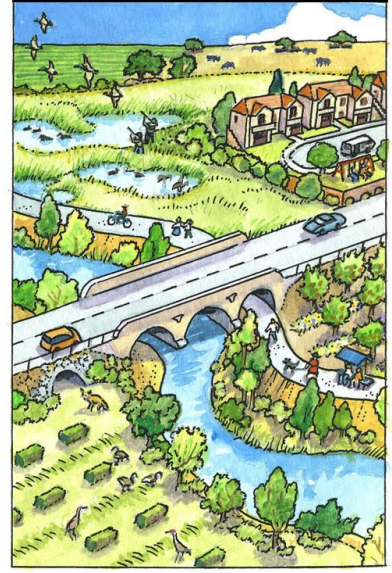
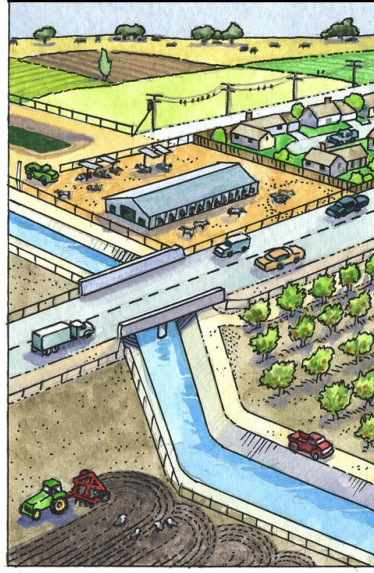
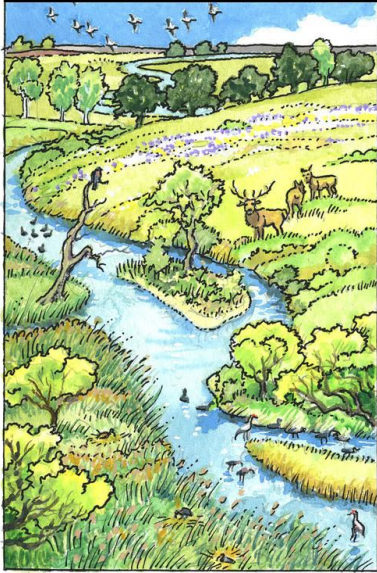
Eric Coyne: Will CVCF even look at something off cycle if everything is in place?

Kelvin Alfaro: This would be more in line with individual donors and we do have some, but typically when working with donors they already know what and who they want to fund. In that kind of instance we could share the information with Charise Hansen, CVCF Program Officer, to see whether there are any interested donors. Right now competing grants are the focus.

David Johnson: We will be asking people to help us reach out to potential donors in this County and your area.

Eric Coyne: We have people looking for challenge matches, *a lot* of people looking for partners. We need to respect territoriality and that is a learning process. We are looking for local groups to really lead the way through partnerships.

Rob Hansen passed around his brother's illustration of the three views of the valley to give people a visual idea of what can be accomplished.



Artist: Doug Hansen

Kayode Kadara: What is the time line for grant cycles?

Kelvin Alfaro: Yearly, and the Environment grants are the last of the year.

Carole Combs: I would like to propose as a first baby step we follow up on AAA trails idea. A component of that would be bringing the communities together through the use of visuals. This could be a one year start up process that develops into a multi-year community collaboration initiative. Many of the partners or participants in this are already involved, but we should reach out to others who need to be involved.

Denise Kadara: The two communities can create a committee to start looking at this.

Carole Combs: Jessi, wasn't Self-Help a part of the original discussions on the AAA Trail? Do you have anything to add to this based on Self-Help's involvement?

Jessi Snyder: Personally, I'm VERY interested in the AAA Trail but as far as Self-Help is concerned with the communities, we are looking at sewer infrastructure and the obvious benefits there.

Rob Hudson: Crossing the Ton Tache is intriguing! We can connect the two communities. SNL has gone a long way in bridging the communities. It's as natural as Alpaugh water. Anything we can do to bridge communities can help build political clout. We can utilize Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds for the summer program and get the kids involved in the trail project.

Eric Coyne: We need to get 10% community support then go after the environmental aspects. We don't want this to blow up to where we have to fight for peace, so if we have a good idea we need to get the community involved and invested and then talk to them about the environment. We are dealing with issues of water quality and sewage so these trail ideas are nice but both communities need basic infrastructure. We have a 10 year workload on grants... What can we do to support you? This project will need more development.

Carole Combs: Before we proceed on the AAA Trails idea, shouldn't we talk about floodplain management.?

Kayode Kadara: In 2011 our community flooded. When the next flood comes how do we capture the water and not waste it?

Eric Coyne: We have good data, and we are now looking at the fixes. The whole work plan based on the next 40 days is to focus on the juvenile facility. We have people working on flood prevention, working with the irrigation districts to be very proactive, working with the feds to take care of habitat, and looking at pots of money and plots of land where we can quickly sink water. We are looking at those kinds of flood plain management.

Allensworth is so small and traffic is so light that it's hard to compete for state grants. We've promised Allensworth a Safe Routes project. Where will they put their first sidewalk? A 3rd project is being funded with a local match and the state is investing \$2 million in an Earlimart park.

Kelvin Alfaro: Historically, Fresno Regional Foundation (FRF)/CVCF has focused on funding programs. That COULD change. How do you leverage additional dollars? If worded correctly, connecting the schools to the Park, that aligns. These are appealing things. If we can make a \$10K investment in a \$150K project, that's a great thing! The challenge then is that this is a competitive process.

Eric Coyne: We've got the data. We've got the numbers.

Denise Kadara: The project that Jihadda spoke about with the kids could tie into the Trail.

David Johnson: FRF assisted with the River Rangers at Reedley College. We do stuff like that.

Carole Combs: So now we clearly have two separate potential proposals for CVCF (the AAA Trails community collaboration project, and the Tulare County floodplain management project).

Rob Hudson: This area is unique. Allensworth and Alpaugh are very interesting places. We are poor but we can improve greatly. We can sell this. We sell what is special.

Kelvin Alfaro: I am happy to continue conversations and other project proposal discussions online or on the phone. I will also be happy to connect you with other potential donors and funders as they come up. We have information about the CVCF new community center to offer training to nonprofits to develop and to strengthen the people DOING the work.

Denise Kadara asked if others had anything to add to the discussion at this point. As there were no more comments, Denise thanked all for attending and adjourned the work session.

