

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 Eystone – 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 corridor is 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 public 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