DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Tulare Basin Watershed Connections – Working Group
October 28th, 2014

Participants
Michelle Selmon- California Department of Water Resources (DWR) (interim working group lead)
Julie Bear – Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) (on the phone)
Sarah Campe- Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC)
Carole Combs- Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP)
Dave Hoffman- Deer-Creek Tule River Association (DC TRA)
Carolyn Hunsaker - US Forest Service (USFS) (on the phone)
Denise Kadara- Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) (on the phone)
Adam Livingston- Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) (on the phone)
Nino Mascolo- Southern California Edison (SCE) (on the phone)
Jennifer Morales- California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
Dick Moss – Provost and Prichard Consulting Group (on the phone)
John Shelton – CA Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
Katie Young – Vollmar Natural Lands Consulting (VNLC)

Presentation by Niki Woodard on a "regional land-use decision-making mapping tool"

- Maps based on a collection of more than 100 layers from the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint
- Main question: *Where are the opportunities to pursue projects with multiple benefits within the basin?*
- Niki has worked with Nate Roth at UC Davis; he can give users administrative privileges to save maps
- Three composite maps created [*recharge*; *protected lands* (e.g. forested lands, special districts, parks, recreation areas, etc); *non-prime farmland* layer (to show potential wildlife corridors, conservation areas, groundwater recharge sites, etc)]
- Comments when Niki asked "Are these layers of value?" and "What other layers would be useful?"
    - Layers valuable but groundwater recharge areas all look the same…which are better or worse for recharge or wildlife corridors?
    - Could add urban spheres of influence and likelihood of development; US population density layers; Southern Sierra Partnership Regional Conservation Design layer (Niki confirmed that is included)
    - Compatibility with RUCS (Rural-Urban Connection Strategy) will be important
        - RUCS is a system developed to look at the economic effects of agricultural fallowing and taking cropland out of production
        - RUCS program is being expanded to look at all land use changes anywhere in the state in a very granular way
        - The California Economic Summit has a goal for their Working Landscapes to make RUCS an open and usable tool available to everyone
            - RAMP (Regional Advanced Mitigation Planning) component
    - Layers can be downloaded and manipulated (can add additional layers based on specific project) but Greenprint layer is massive and runs in the background (so there are limits to zooming in to a project-level area

- Other comments:
  - Carole Combs mentioned that she, Rob Hansen, Katie Young, and John Vollmar met to discuss on-the-ground implementation of the Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative and that John and the others felt the maps would be very useful in helping to focus on locations for projects
  - Niki mentioned that the Central Valley habitat corridor layer represents a conservation network and shows potential corridors based on current species locations
    - a comment was made that more details would be helpful (e.g. streams, creeks)
  - The San Joaquin Valley Recovery Team gap analysis maps should be available soon (from Larry Saslaw, larry7719@sbcgolobal.net) and will include additional information on habitat and natural features important for conservation
  - Phase 2 of the SJV Greenprint will probably include a utility to upload maps
  - Patrick Huber's PhD work included development of a 'Central Valley Core Habitat Areas' layer
  - Niki mentioned a mapping tool discussed by Denise Akins England at the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners meeting that is an output of a DAC study that shows number of users for water systems; want to add a layer of depth to groundwater
  - Denise Kadara also recommended touching base with Denise Akins England (Tulare County Board of Supervisors Administrative Liaison) re: information coming out of DACs
  - Carolyn Hunsaker mentioned that forest managers are interested in who uses surface water and asked if we have a dataset that shows which cities are more dependent on surface water vs. groundwater; Forest Service would like to engage people at that level
    - Sarah Campe from SNC also interested in local source water and surface water (which recharges groundwater more than precipitation) and linking that to snowpack
  - It was noted that it can be very difficult to determine which agriculture and urban areas are groundwater dependent vs. surface water dependent. Certain cities may be pumping groundwater but may still be primarily surface water dependent
  - A comment was made that there is both a need and capacity for localized hydrologic studies (e.g. at the level of creeks and streams)
    - The Southern Sierra IRWM has a great example (Three-Rivers hydrologic study)
    - This would be a good topic for a subset of people to discuss

Overview of the San Joaquin Valley Greenprint Phase 2 by Carole Combs

- Phase 2 of the SJV Greenprint will be about demonstrating the utility of the Greenprint land use mapping tool
- RFP closed Oct 21st – 4 strong applicants
- Carole and Denny Grossman from the Strategic Growth Council (SGC) are both on the project selection committee
  - SGC working on a resolution with the California Biodiversity Council (CBC) on Integrated Resources Planning (IRP); SGC meeting on October 6th passed he resolution[1]
  - The IRP concept is closely aligned with watershed-based IRWM planning
- Task 3 pertains to pilot projects; there will be another RFP for these (about $210,000 available)
- This working group should continue to monitor and be involved with the Greenprint Phase 2

[1] Note: the SGC proposed resolution was adopted by the Council at the October 6th meeting; CBC also adopted a resolution to work closely with the SGC on IRP at the October 29th meeting

- Need to consult with Denny Grossman at SGC on identifying pilot projects; identify opportunities to leverage cross-pollination via pilot project under Greenprint Phase 2 and the CA LCC Conservation Design pilot project

Overview of the California Landscape Conservation Cooperative Conservation Design project by Michelle Selmon

- The CA LCC is just getting started on a pilot project for creating a regional collaboratively-developed conservation design in the Central Valley
- The goal "…is to identify actions that will maximize adaptive capacity of priority species, habitats, and ecosystems to support and ecologically connected Central Valley landscape. The project will create spatially-explicit products that assess current and projected landscape patterns and processes, identify measureable objectives for priority resources, and define climate-smart adaptation strategies"
- The outputs from this process will be useful for the TBWCwg as we work to identify climate-resilient, multi-benefit projects
- The CA LCC staff is coordinating with the SJV Greenprint folks and the SCG to ensure that Greenprint Phase 2 and the SGC plans for a pilot study on integrated regional planning are complementary rather than duplicative

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Outreach and Education Effort (Sarah Campe)

- Upper watershed management and downstream water quality are associated with healthy forests
  - ***State of the Sierra Nevada's Forests***[2] report indicates that we have highly vulnerable forests
- Forests are overgrown from 100+ years of fire suppression and are now vulnerable to high heat destructive fires; this affects downstream water users, particularly in the Tulare Basin.
- Sara will do outreach on the state of the forests and lay out the connections then take it from there. She's open to feedback and groups that might be interested in a presentation.
- In the foothills for this region there aren't as many 'economic drivers' as in other parts of the state,
  - We need to educate the end users groups (in the Valley) about how the upper watershed is managed affects them,
    - E.g. Overgrown forests impede snowpack retention. How do we make that connection to those living on the valley floor?
- It was suggested that a subgroup be formed that would include those who have an interest in how we manage the forests and how that affects our water balance in the Tulare Basin.
- Southern Sierra IRWM needs to continue in the IRWM program but doesn't have the necessary economic drivers, how can we support upper watershed collaboratives that are lacking in capacity?
  - A comment was made that DWR reps at the Southern Sierra Symposium were not interested in discussing how the agency allowed downstream IRWMPs to be established separately from their upstream source waters and thus perpetuates a disconnected situation in the State which inhibits watershed collaboration at the whole river basin scale.
    - It was noted that in northern parts of the state, watershed management is very political due to complexities of water allocation and deliveries to distant parts of the state, but here in the valley we might be more readily able to show that

[2] http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/our-work/state-of-the-sierra

connection with upper watershed management and lower watershed use of surface water.

- It was noted that a good start is having the IRWM groups in that area collaborate.

Discussion of Overlapping Goals and Priorities for Working Group and Partner Efforts

- The group reviewed the "Tulare Basin Watershed Connections –Common Goals and Objectives" document that was prepared based on working group participants' submissions and web search
- Initially six common themes were identified, the group discussed how these issues are what we can focus on to identify actions/projects that benefit our common goals
- It was proposed that many water districts in the Tulare Basin already manage for climate variability, so this doesn't necessarily need to be a separate goal; and it was also noted that while that means the region has inherent adaptive capacity for climate change, the future range of variability will be even more dramatic than the past and thus we do need to continue to consider climate change as a 'new' challenge; adaptation strategies can and should be incorporated into existing planning efforts
- It was pointed out that for this working group to actually accomplish something we need to have a sustainable management framework, so that no one person is a critical component that could cause momentum for this effort to dissolve if they move on or retire
- It was proposed that smaller teams break off to work on the individual themes so we can 'divide and conquer' to tackle how to move forward
- Based on discussion, two additional common themes/subgroups were added: need for funding, and governance planning
- The final breakdown of subgroups is as follows:
  - **Extreme events** (e.g. floods, droughts, wildfire)
  - **Sustainable groundwater and surface water** (e.g. conjunctive management)
  - **Wetland and wildlife habitat protection and restoration** (we all depend on ecosystem services)
  - **DAC and Tribal community support** for resolving water-related challenges
  - **Resilience to increasing climate variability**
  - **Public education about water**, including the need to connect upper and lower watersheds and properly manage forests (develop partnerships)
  - **Funding** (how can we bring $ to the region to help meet our common goals?)
  - **Governance planning** (we must persist! How best to do that…)
- Working group members will volunteer to convene small groups of interested parties to identify next steps/potential projects/ key actions the group can take or support; the lead person for the subgroups will then report back to the working group; non-TBWCwg members will likely participate on these subgroups
- The Tulare Basin Watershed Initiative website has a funding source database
- The remaining people on our 'key players who should also be at the table' will be invited for the next meeting
- Michelle will send out meeting notes and a doodle poll for our next meeting in January 2015