



**Item #09-12-6
Information**

Land Use & Housing Committee

November 25, 2009

Update on Six-County Aquatic Resources Inventory

Issue: Consultant Stacey McKinley will update this committee on recent activities related to the Six-County Aquatic Resources Inventory.

Recommendation: None; this item is for information only.

Discussion: Work continues on the Six-County Aquatic Resources Inventory. The first meeting of the Technical Committee was held on November 5, 2009. The draft notes of that meeting are attached. The next meeting of the Technical Committee is scheduled for December 9, 2009, and will continue monthly through completion of the project.

Stacey McKinley, consultant to SACOG, will brief the committee on points of particular interest from the November 5 meeting, and also brief the committee on integration with the Regional Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) concept.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Executive Director

MM:RS:sb

Attachment

Key Staff: Rebecca Sloan, Director of External Affairs & Member Services, (916) 340-6224

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MEETING MINUTES

1st Monthly Technical Team Meeting

SACOG Offices
Board Room, 3rd Floor,
1415 L Street, Sacramento, CA

Time: 8:30am – 11:00am (PST)

November 5, 2009

1. Introductions (Attendees and contact information)

Attendees introduced themselves; first those sitting in the room and then the teleconference attendee (Leanne Mueller)

Attendees Present:

Joe Concannon (SACOG)
Loren Clark (Placer County)
Stacey McKinley (SACOG)
Leanne Mueller (Sutter County; by teleconference)
Van Boeck (Yuba County)
Kathy Kerdus (City of Loomis)
Dan Artho (USACE, Sacramento District)
Dan Smith (USACE, ERDC-EL-MS)
Harry Gibbons (Tetra Tech)
Rob Plotnikoff (Tetra Tech)

2. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District (USACE) (goals and objectives for the project)

- a. Objectives from the Corps perspective were reviewed by Dan Artho.
- b. Dan Artho stated that monthly Technical Team Meetings will be organized and facilitated by Tetra Tech.
- c. The group will determine a timeframe for the next Technical Team Meeting prior to adjournment (Wednesdays were suggested as a better day for the group meeting).
- d. The primary goal for a project deliverable was to describe a “snapshot” of aquatic ecosystem conditions in the Six County area.





- e. The aquatic assessment will assist in long-term planning and regulatory permitting (actions) by the Corps and in planning by the local agencies.
- f. All governmental organizations will have a better grasp of what permits mean at the larger watershed-scale and how decisions are coordinated among permits so that decision-making is transparent.
- g. Every effort will be made by the Corps and contractor in including the End-Users on decisions that involve building the aquatic assessment tool for guidance in permitting.
- h. The initial effort for reaching the long-term goal if focused on developing a GIS-based assessment tool. This is precursor to defining a streamlined regulatory approach to permitting in the Six County area.
- i. The first effort in this series of Technical Team Meetings ensures that the group will thoroughly cover issues involving available data for this project; this effort is expected to identify additional information from each of the End-Users not previously listed in the contract or discussed in past Six County project work..

3. Review of Tetra Tech's Tasks and Deliverables

The following information is observations related to various tasks and deliverables for the Six County project. The entries are comments and suggestions made by end-users in response to questions presented by Tetra Tech staff.

- a. The latest revision of the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) dataset published in 2009 differs from the previous version; revision will be noted and described in the geodatabase.
- b. Naming convention of waterbody types may be inconsistent among datasets recovered for consideration in this project. There may be inconsistencies between the datasets. The inconsistencies and non-comparable elements of these coverage's will be noted in order to make decisions on how to combine the information.
- c. The NWI typically uses a strategy that relies on geomorphic features and hydrologic condition as naming convention.
- d. Naming convention for waterbody types in the Six County area will reflect current standards (including use of other naming systems used in the past).
- e. All non-jurisdictional waters beyond those recognized by the Corps 404 permitting process will be included as waters within the Six County Aquatic Resource Inventory area.
- f. Distinguish between current jurisdictional versus non-jurisdictional waters and include in the final geodatabase (the aquatic resource inventory will not be establishing jurisdictional boundaries for individual permitting actions).
- g. This product may be used as a broad-planning tool for multiple organizations to include assessments that account for interrelatedness of waterbodies.
- h. An interagency meeting on the proposed South Sac HCP and Placer County Conservation Plan is scheduled for Nov. 12, 2009. The meeting will cover discussions on a Regional LEDPA and possibilities for increased





coordination between regulating agencies and their compliance actions for these areas. Stacey McKinley recommended that the Corps present the SCARI effort at the meeting so that agencies and stakeholders are aware of it. Perhaps a tool to support the LEDPA determination effort? Dan Artho and/or Mike Nepstad will try to attend the meeting. If not, Corps Regulatory (Mike Jewell) will be present at the meeting and could speak about the inventory as appropriate.

- i. The following species in specific waterbody types are the focus of the USFWS in the Six County area: species in vernal pools (general focus), giant garter snake, valley long-horn beetle, et al.
 1. Recovery Plan for vernal pools (goal is for 85-100% preservation; 1937 aerial photos may be useful as a benchmark to describe change that has occurred in landscape features to the present time)
 2. The use of benchmark information may be useful only as an informative analysis and not to suggest that restoration or reference be based on historic environmental conditions.
 3. Placer County is using the older information (1937 aerial photos?) data generated by the USFWS for the purpose of inventorying waterbodies.
- j. NOAA-Fisheries list several threatened and endangered species; content in the Draft Recovery Plan will be informative for determining waterbody features and important factors necessary for implementing species recovery plans. The Draft Recovery Plan is currently available for general review and will inform on basic elements that should be considered for describing the condition of waterbodies in the Six County area.
- k. Stormwater issues (toxics); differences of opinion on the presence and effects of toxics in local rivers and is influenced by current political issues from other regions in California; toxics in aquatic environments throughout the Six County area are based on collected information and not perception.

4. Primary Meeting Goals (Discussion of Task 1):

- a. Background overview of existing data (End-User comments)
 - i. Where must the lens be set in order for the Corps to get more utility from this tool?; NWI mapping standard requires 1-meter resolution for landscape data and 1 acre as a mapping unit.
 - ii. Data dump from Loren Clark (Chris Brown is the holder of the data) of Placer County and will send all data they are using for development of their HCP.
 - iii. FTP site should be 100 GB; will be shared with the Six County TT (Technical Team)
 - iv. Resolution of images (data) that differ among sets will be discussed further by the Technical Team in order to make decisions about estimates for location and size of waterbodies.
 - v. Landowner data accessibility may be explored at some point in order to validate or enhance the resolution of the inventory.





- vi. Additional information sources: Department of Defense/Homeland Security mapping-potential flood risk on major waterways in the Six County region; (Stacey McKinley and Dan Smith will provide Dan Artho with specific contact information to acquire this information); differs from FEMA's maps in that the FIRM effort digitized existing maps and not generating newer information.
- vii. Contact Joe Concannon for SACOGs extensive database; urban mapping and imagery collections are important contributions
- b. Additional sources of Data
 - i. CA DFG has completed a large number of stream surveys in the Russian River drainage (acquired landscape data from Dan Smith-USACE ERDC in electronic format).
 - ii. CA DWR/CALTRANS has completed extensive studies on aquatic resources in the region.
 - iii. Geodatabase construction – South Sacramento model would be a good guidance.
 - iv. Aerial imagery (Proprietary format from Airphoto USA); can be accessed through Joe Concannon (SACOG); Joe and Dan Smith have the software to read the photos.
 - v. Yolo Co. and Yuba/Sutter Counties have just collected new vegetation information (contact Leanne Mueller).
 - vi. Levee system mapping of the Central Valley (CA DWR) may be useful or determining potential condition of existing waterbodies and benefit, if any, to naturally occurring aquatic species.
 - vii. El Dorado County will be deficient in the type of coverages and resource assessments available from the other Counties.
 - viii. Acquisition of data from Cities within the Counties: contact cities that have known databases useful for this data gathering effort (Stacey McKinley)

Non-Profit Organizations and Data Availability

- i. Placer Land Trust (Bob Holland is conducting vernal pool mapping work)
- ii. Federal National Wildlife Research
- iii. Conservation Resources
- a. Discussion on obtaining data, issues, strategies, etc.
 - i. Extent of inclusion of watershed areas beyond the County boundaries
 - ii. Watershed scale to use for description of land covers and necessary for developing the assessment tool (up to the origin of the water reaching the Six County area – LULC?);
 - iii. The scale of watershed area used in this analysis will consider what scale(s) regulatory agencies use to establish policy and conduct planning.





- iv. Ducks Unlimited should be consulted to for additional information available within the Six County area.
5. Secondary Meeting Goals (discussion of task 3 and 4)
- a. Begin discussion of existing waterbody classifications and assessments
 - i. Determine primary sources of information from current effort
 - ii. CRAM Methodology (assessment of wetland types: CA Rapid Assessment Methods)
 - Stacey McKinley commented– discussion about using CRAM in the region has occurred and the “rapid” assessment methodology described; rapid methodology can be used as long as extensive ground-truthing is included as an effective approach (Paul Jones from U.S. EPA will add valuable insight as he is a co-developer of the method)
 - iii. Wetlands Mapping Standard (Federal Geographic Data Committee)
 - iv. Discussion of strengths, weaknesses, and utility for remote sensing of the existing classification systems
6. Optional (if time permitting)
- a. Habitat Conservation Plans (Status on development in each of Six Counties)
 - b. SACOG Effort/Role in developing HCPs
 - i. Western Placer County is the focus for development of HCP development (Phase I); estimated completion by January 1, 2010.
 - ii. Water irrigation canals may be promoting establishment of wetlands in immediate adjacent areas.
 - iii. Yuba-Sutter County progress on HCP; wrapping up the planning documents by rafting the first few chapters; no firm completion date ~ approximately 2 years away from completion.
 - iv. El Dorado County – attendees were unsure of the progress.
 - v. South Sacramento County – in review of all chapters of the HCP (vernal pool-driven data sets; very detailed, descriptive database for vernal pools).
 - vi. Yolo County Natural Heritage Program (Maria Wong) is a good contact for understanding County information that is available to date; sensitivity to issues and linkages that are driven by the Delta Protection Act; Williamson Act is affecting tax revenue for County budgets.
 - vii. Natomas Basin HCP (Complete)
Status is on the influence of the Delta protection Act; contact Mike Nepstad for more detail on status and influence of the Act on the Six County ARI project.
7. Identify Technical Team members and Steering Committee members, with understanding that the Technical Team is for those who will be contributing to the development of the inventory and the Steering Committee is for those who have an





interest in being updated on status, reviewing, and commenting on the inventory.

- i. Inclusion of state and federal members (e.g., USFWS, USEPA, CADFG, CADWR) will benefit the project; Inquire with the Tahoe Region USFS, et al. staff for interest in participating on this project.

8. Identify agenda Items for next technical team meeting.

- i. Next meeting December 9, 2009; include PowerPoint presentation and any handouts.

TECHNICAL TEAM MEETING CONTACT LIST

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