



## Central Valley Flood Protection Plan

### Meeting Summary **DRAFT**

### Lower San Joaquin Regional Conditions Work Group Meeting #6

**Time:** November 18th, 2009, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

**Location:** Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center  
2101 E. Earhart Ave.  
Stockton, CA 95206

#### MEETING ATTENDANCE:

##### Present:

Name	Organization	Status
Susan Dell'Osso	Reclamation District 2062	Member
Alex Hildebrand	South Delta Water Agency	Alternate
Mary Hildebrand	San Joaquin Farm Bureau, South Delta Water Agency, California Central Valley Flood Association	Member
Kevin Kauffman	Stockton East Water District	Member
Koosun Kim	City of Manteca	Member
James Nelson	Stormwater Consulting	Member
Dave Peterson	San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency	Member
Steve Winkler	San Joaquin County	Member
Joe Bartlett	DWR, Central Valley Flood Protection Office (CVFPO)	CVFPO Representative
Gary Hester	DWR	CVFPP Program Manager
Carolyn Lott	Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP)	Facilitator
Sam Magill	Center For Collaborative Policy	Facilitation Support
Mark Nordberg	DWR	DWR Lead
Keith Wallace	MWH	Technical Lead
Scott Woodland	DWR	Regional Coordinator

##### Absent:

Deedee Antypas	RD 2074	Member
Jim Giottonini	City of Stockton, SJAFCA	Member
Roger Churchwell	San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCA)	Member
Tony Refuerzo	Stanislaus County Planning Department	Member
David Zezulak	California Department of Fish and Game	Member
Wes Fujitani	City of Lodi	Member
Jesse Roseman	Tuolumne River Trust	Member
Julie Retner	River Partners	Member

## **WORK GROUP ACTION ITEMS/HOMEWORK**

1. Jesse Roseman will provide alternative wording for the levee vegetation section in Chapter 3 of the Regional Conditions Summary (RCS) and Regional Conditions Report (RCR).
2. Keith Wallace will send the Central Valley Flood Management Program (CVFMP) local briefing presentation to Work Group members for review.
3. Merritt Rice will provide a bond expenditure report to Work Group members for review as soon as it becomes available.
4. Sam Magill will poll Lower San Joaquin Regional Conditions Work Group (Work Group) members for their availability for an 8<sup>th</sup> Work Group meeting between January 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.
5. Staff will distribute Chapter 4 of the RCR to the Work Group for comment by December 7<sup>th</sup>. Comments are due on December 21<sup>st</sup>.
6. Mr. Wallace will request the team consider alternative wording for Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) Goal #3 (Ecosystem Restoration).
7. Mr. Wallace will request the team consider revising the first objective under "Flood Risk" on Worksheet #10 and report back the Work Group members at meeting #7.
8. Work Group members will provide comments on the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) Descriptive Document by December 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **GROUP RECAP** (meeting highlights for use by Work Group partners in their communications)

The Work Group continued its work on November 18<sup>th</sup> with the following actions:

- Continued review of problems, opportunities, and goals.
- Continued development of draft CVFPP objectives statements.

The Work Group's purpose is the development of content for the RCSR, a key component for developing the 2012 CVFPP. The RCS and RCR will identify resources, conditions within the Central Valley, flood management and related problems and opportunities, and goals and objectives for use in preparing the CVFPP. The Work Group is one of five regional work groups in the Central Valley.

### **MEETING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Discuss Roadmap for Remainder of 2009 and early 2010 (Schedule for Document Review)
2. Review Comments Received and Organization of Chapters 1 and 2
3. Review Comments Received on Chapter 3
4. Continue Development of Goals, Principles and Objectives (Chapter 4)
5. Discuss Next Steps

## SUMMARY:

**\*\*ALL PRESENTATIONS AND MATERIALS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[www.water.ca.gov/cvfmp](http://www.water.ca.gov/cvfmp)\*\***

### Welcome

Carolyn Lott and Joe Bartlet opened the meeting and thanked participants for attending. Mr. Bartlet thanked the Work Group for developing management actions during meeting #5, and noted that the focus of the day's discussion would be to develop objectives derived from those management actions or new, standalone objectives.

### Opening Remarks

Merritt Rice delivered opening remarks on behalf of DWR. He reminded the Work Group to remember the process that led them to the current objectives development task. He also announced that elected officials and staff from the City of Fresno have raised a substantial concern that Fresno is being included in the requirements of the CVFPP, even though the Tulare Lake Basin is outside of the CVFPP planning area. However, information from the US Geological Survey (USGS) shows that most of Fresno is part of the drainage system of the San Joaquin River. DWR has made a commitment to the mayor of Fresno to get additional clarification from the legislature on the geographic scope of the CVFPP. Mr. Rice added that adjusting the boundaries of the planning area for Fresno could have ramifications for other communities wishing to be excluded from SB5 requirements.

Mr. Rice then explained that DWR has released the first draft of the "State Plan of Flood Control Descriptive Document". Additionally, the CVFed group is moving forward with its hydraulic modeling of the San Joaquin. CVFMP staff is actively coordinating how this information will be incorporated into the CVFPP. Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) flights are being done to accurately map elevation contours of the Central Valley for this effort. This effort is much more intensive than the mapping effort done as part of the Comprehensive Study (Comp Study). CVFed work is expected to be finished after the 2012 CVFPP is released, but will be available for the 2017 update.

#### Discussion:

- A participant asked what this means for flood flows originating in the Tulare Basin that may affect areas in the Lower San Joaquin Region. Mr. Rice responded that it could be that Fresno is excluded entirely from the requirements in SB5. The CVFPP would still have to include management actions to mitigate these flows.
- One participant asked how the Early Implementation Project (EIP) Guidelines will be informed by the CVFed mapping. Scott Woodland clarified that the EIP Guidelines are guidelines only, and do not include project-specific information.
- A Work Group member remarked that reservoir reoperation must be a central component of the CVFPP. Staff agreed that this will be an important piece of improving flood risk management, but added that it is enormously complex and must balance the interests of the dam owners, all users of dams, and all benefits of reservoir water. A pilot project has started on the Feather River to see how best to use reservoir reoperation to attenuate flood risk. Mr. Rice noted that after the RCS and RCR are completed, a series of topic-specific work groups will be convened to deal with controversial issues; reservoir reoperations will have its own work group.

### Review of Previous Meeting Action Items

Mark Nordberg reviewed the previous meeting's action items. He noted that action items 1, 4, and 5 will be carried over to Work Group meeting #7 (**see Action Items 1-3**). Ms. Lott noted that Work Group

response to homework from meeting #5 was low and stressed that participant input on proposed CVFPP objectives is very important to the process. Work Group members were encouraged to provide additional objectives as soon as possible.

## **Roadmap for Remainder of 2009 and 2010**

Keith Wallace delivered a presentation on the remainder of the Work Group process. This presentation is online at the website listed above. Local elected officials will continue to receive briefings on the RCS through March 2010. Chapter 4 of the RCR should be completed and distributed to the Work Group for comment in early December. An additional Work Group meeting will be scheduled to discuss Chapter 4 and the RCR in depth. Sam Magill will send out a poll to the Work Group to determine member availability in late January (**see Action Item #4**). He then discussed next steps for the RCS and RCR, as well as the status of the Regional Conditions Topic Work Groups.

## **Outline of Regional Conditions Summary**

Mr. Wallace continued his presentation with an outline of the RCS. Participants were provided with a general overview of what the RCS will look like. The RCS will be a summary of the RCR. The RCR is intended to be a source document/reference work that will contain substantial technical details; the RCS will be a 20-30 page document to provide the public or elected officials with a “snapshot” of the overall regional conditions.

### Discussion:

- A Work Group member asked what the difference is between a goal in the CVFPP and an objective. Ms. Lott explained that a goal is a final outcome the CVFPP hopes to achieve by a specific date. An objective is a measurable action taken to help accomplish the goal; a management action is the method utilized to meet the objective.
- A participant commented the overview of the RCS does not appear to address regional conditions directly. Mr. Wallace reiterated that the goal of the RCS is to provide a brief summary of the larger RCR. Technical details will still be contained in the RCR and will be referenced in the RCS. Participants stressed the importance of being able to easily find information in the RCR based on the references in the RCS.
- Another Work Group member asked what the map on page three of the overview will contain. Mr. Rice responded it will be a map of the San Joaquin Drainage District; this corresponds directly to the jurisdiction of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (CVFPB).

## **Review of Comments Received and Status of Chapters 1, 2, 3**

Mr. Wallace provided a presentation on the comments received on chapters 1, 2, and 3 of the RCR. This presentation is available on the previously listed website. He noted that most of the comments received were on the sections in chapters 1, 2, and 3 on physical problems, infrastructure issues, and institutional concerns. Mr. Rice added that the next version of these chapters will be organized into a near-final format. He also commented that in this version, Work Group members should pay particular attention to sections such as Chapter 2.4 on likely future conditions. Staff will distribute Chapter 4 of the RCR to Work Group members on or around December 7<sup>th</sup> with comments due on December 21<sup>st</sup> (**see Action Item #5**). The full RCR will be available for review in January 2010.

### Discussion:

- A Workgroup member asked that the table of contents for the RCR be included in the RCS for quick reference. Staff agreed to bring the request to the team for consideration.
- A participant commented there appears to be inconsistency in the level of detail between the chapters. There is one paragraph on reservoir reoperations and numerous pages on biological

resources. He suggested the section on biological resources be summarized as much as possible.

## **Review of Revised Goals and Problems**

Mr. Wallace provided a presentation on the revised problem statements and definitions for problems, opportunities, goals, objectives, and principles. Work Group members were instructed to review the revised problem statements and goals. Work Group members then provided comments on each goal.

### General Discussion:

- A participant noted the problem statements and goals do not appear to discuss the importance of reducing flood stage, and the reader of the RCS/RCR may not understand non-structural improvements like reservoir reoperation could be much cheaper than levee improvements. Staff noted this is a prime example of an objective or managements action; a topic for discussion later in the meeting.
- Participants noted none of the problem statements include discussions of opportunities. Mr. Wallace responded the narrative in Chapter 3 does include an opportunities discussion.

### Goal 1: Flood Risk

- A Work Group member commented that the flood risk goal and associated problem statements are good, but may be too general.
- Participants discussed the need to clearly include the importance of population growth in the goals and problem statements. As communities in the Central Valley continue to grow, the flood management system will need to be updated in perpetuity. One participant noted that this can also be expressed as an opportunity statement, since urbanized areas tend to have more money for flood system improvements.
- It was suggested that Goal 1 (flood risk) bullet 3 be revised to read “within the Sacramento/San Joaquin Valley watershed.”
- Participants noted that there are activities outside of the watershed that nonetheless have an impact on downstream communities in the floodplain, such as timber harvest practices. Goal 1 could be revised to include some mention of this.

### Goal 2: Operation, Maintenance and Repair

- Participants generally agreed the goal, as written, could place too much emphasis on other issues outside of flood control.
- One participant noted the goal suggests building/repairing the system so it functions up to the existing design standard, but in many cases the design standard itself is the problem (i.e., standard is either too low or too high to appropriately protect the surrounding land uses). She also noted this could be in direct conflict with Goal 1.
- Participants generally agreed repair and maintenance could be more efficient if improvement projects could be completed at the same time. This would lower the overall cost, but is currently not authorized by state/federal regulations.
- Participants agreed the goal should be revised to read: “Reduced system-wide maintenance and repair *needs...*”

### Goal 3: Ecosystem Function

- A participant noted a major difference between the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers is that the Sacramento always has some amount of flows, while the San Joaquin does not. In order to improve the aquatic environment, flows in the San Joaquin must be restored.
- Participants asked a statement be included that flood control is only one factor in the degradation of the aquatic environment. Although the construction of the flood control is a factor, other things like upstream demand have dried up the San Joaquin River and completely severed the hydraulic connection between Vernalis and the San Francisco Bay.

- Mr. Wallace will request the team consider a revised goal to address Work Group concerns (**see Action Item #6**).

#### Goal 4: Institutional Support

- A participant noted the assignment of liability in a flood disaster is a huge issue. This should be called out directly in the problem statement or goal, even though it is mentioned in the narrative of the RCR.
- Ms. Lott noted earlier concerns about the need to be able to construct improvements simultaneously with repairs should be captured under this goal.
- A participant suggested and the Work Group agreed that “stable” be deleted from the goal.

#### Other Water Resources and Needs

- Participants discussed the need to call attention to the benefits and harms of single-purpose projects. The general sentiment among all participants was that creative thinking is required for all future flood control projects so that they provide benefits in other areas like water supply or ecosystem improvements and visa versa.

## **Review Revised Principles**

Ms. Lott led the group in a discussion of the revised CVFPP principles. She reminded the Work Group that they are not prioritized in any particular order and are instead things that should be considered in the planning for *all* CVFPP projects.

#### Discussion:

- A participant asked that one of the principles speak to the need for maintenance funding on all future projects.
- Participants noted the “system-wide” approach in principle #1 could place a heavy burden on small reclamation districts at the bottom of the system, since technically speaking they could affect the entire system.
- It was suggested that Principle 4 (“Protect and restore natural floodplain...”) be revised to include the statement “...restore *where feasible* natural floodplain...”

## **Continued Discussion of Objectives**

Mr. Wallace delivered a presentation on objectives for the CVFPP and presented Worksheet #10 for review and completion. He noted that at meeting #5, Work Group members developed a series of objectives and management actions, and asked participants to review the worksheet to ensure that all of their input was recorded. Objectives were defined as something that needs to be accomplished to achieve a goal, but does not describe specifically how that objective is completed. A management action was defined as the specific thing done to achieve that objective.

Ms. Lott then led the group through an exercise to review all draft objectives developed to date. Participants were instructed to review the draft objectives in worksheet #10 and provide comments on each objective. This discussion is captured below by topic area (10 topics total).

#### Topic: Flood Risk

- A participant asked why the second objective refers to agricultural and rural areas instead of just rural. Mr. Wallace will look into the issue and report back at the next Work Group meeting (**see Action Item #7**).
- Participants commented it won't be possible to provide 100 year protection to all agricultural areas and that, in fact, not all agriculture is incompatible with flooding.
- With revisions, Work Group participants agreed both objectives under flood risk are applicable to the Lower San Joaquin region.

#### Topic: Ecosystem Restoration

- A participant asked why the first objective refers to “shaded riverine habitat” instead of just riparian habitat as a whole. The group agreed that for the objective, it should refer to riparian habitat. A specific management action could be developed later that speaks to shaded riverine habitat.
- Ms. Lott asked if wetlands need to be separated out from the first objectives. Participants confirmed that it does. One Work Group member added that a healthy ecosystem needs more than one type of habitat (i.e., wetlands, floodplains, riparian, etc.)
- A participant suggested the first objective be reworded to refer to promoting habitat continuity instead of avoiding habitat discontinuity.
- Meeting participants agreed the objectives, with revisions, apply to the Lower San Joaquin region.

#### Topic: Streamlined Permitting

- A participant suggested the first objective be revised to include flood system improvements.
- The Work Group agreed this objective applies to the Lower San Joaquin region.

#### Topic: Flood Preparedness and Response

- A participant asked how the emergency response plan in this objective would be activated for the entire Central Valley. Ms. Lott responded there could be 15 separate management actions that speak to who will carry out the objective. Mr. Rice suggested this could already be interpreted as a management action, since the objective in this case is to increase preparedness for a flood event.
- Meeting participants agreed this objective needs additional work. While revising, staff should be careful that the objective will not require something that may already be under way. Counties already have emergency response plans and there are communications and hazard response plans at many different levels. This issue will be revisited at meeting #7.

#### Topic: Operations and Maintenance

- A Work Group member commented that the idea of a “pass rate” in the first objective is disconcerting, as pass rates are sometimes defined by unreasonable criteria. Participants generally agreed that a different measurement than a percentage should be developed for this objective. This objective will be revisited at meeting #7.
- Participants generally agreed pass rates and maintenance standards are generally about assigning liability. An additional objective to clarify liability issues is needed.
- A Work Group partner asked to what the baseline for the 30% improvement in the second objective referred. Staff will revise this objective.

#### Topic: Education and Outreach

- A participant noted that elected officials, public works staff, and the public works commissioner should be added to this objective.

#### Topic: Groundwater Recharge

- A participant asked that “use” be changed to “divert” in the first objective.
- Another member suggested the blank spaces in the first objective be revised to read “50% of the current overdraft as defined by the state plan...”
- Several Work Group members agreed that a percentage of flows should be used for groundwater recharge. This may go beyond large, out-of-bank flood flows and include smaller events when dam releases are necessary. A percentage of these flows could be diverted for groundwater recharge.

#### Topic: Funding

- A participant asked if this objective was aimed at eliminating the individual reclamation district processes and moving towards a system-wide assessment of flood protection. Mr. Wallace responded that it’s actually meant to make sure that all reclamation districts have a mechanism to fund O&M.

- One Work Group member suggested revising the objective to read “comprehensive” instead of “system-wide.”
- Another member raised the concern that there are enough regulatory hurdles for receiving bond funding for flood protection already, and that this objective should be revised to promote the development of stable funding for implementation of projects. Staff agreed, but noted that there must be some standards for receiving state funding.

#### Topic: Land Use

- A participant suggested a new objective to read “Achieve compliance with SB5 and AB162 by the dates mandated...”
- Participants suggested revising the first objective to read “develop *model* guidelines...” instead of “consistent guidelines.” Ms. Lott added that more clarification may be necessary as to whether or not the state is dictating land use decisions or suggesting land use guidelines.
- A participant commented the second objective is not viable, and suggested that it could be rewritten to read, “Maintain the viability of agriculture by creating compensation and safe harbor agreements for ecosystem/flood easements.”
- A new objective was suggested to read, “Develop a flood banking program to provide monetary incentives to farmers who allow a minimum of XX acres to be flooded at specified times.”

#### Topic: Other Potential Objectives

- A new objective was added to increase the number of pilot projects like the Feather River reservoir reoperation project mentioned earlier in the meeting.
- Participants agreed an additional objective aimed at solving the liability issue is critically important.
- Develop a categorical exemption from the Corps levee inspection policies for the Central Valley and Delta was suggested as an additional objective.

## **SPFC Descriptive Document**

Mr. Bartlet provided a presentation on the SPFC Descriptive Document. This presentation is available online at the website listed above. The Descriptive Document, the SPFC History, and the Flood Control Systems Status Report, in addition to the RCS and RCR will comprise the majority of the CVFPP. A DVD of the Descriptive Document with interactive maps will be available in January. Work Group members will provide comments on the Descriptive Document by December 1<sup>st</sup> (**see Action Item #8**).

## **Discussion of Valley-Wide Forum**

Ms. Lott delivered an overview of the proposed Valley-wide CVFMP Forum. The Forum will be held on February 3<sup>rd</sup> from 9am-4p at the San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton. Work Group member Steve Winkler will represent the Work Group. A full agenda will be available for Work Group review at the next meeting.

## **Adjourn**