

Summary of Environmental Stewardship Opportunities

Discussed in ESSD Workgroup Meeting 1

(September 16, 2009)

The following list of opportunities was summarized from the individual sticky notes prepared by the participants in ESSD Workgroup Meeting 1. These opportunities are of two types. The first type, “Opportunities to use existing tools or approaches” was the primary intent of the exercise. The second type, “Opportunities to achieve specific outcome/goal”, can be useful for informing subsequent discussions about draft goals.

I. Opportunities to use existing tools or approaches

These opportunities are grouped into two categories: Physical Tools and Policy Tools. The Physical Tools category represent actions that can be taken that directly result in changed physical conditions. The Policy Tools represent management actions that can be taken that indirectly affect physical conditions.

A. Physical tools

1. Re-operate reservoirs to improve performance for current objectives
2. Increase floodplain storage of flood-water (e.g. use Tulare Lake) to store water and improve ecosystems
3. Increase the number of setback levees along the Sacramento-San Joaquin river system(e.g. Sacramento ship channel; TRLIA project on Feather River; South Delta)
4. Provide new and develop enlarged flood by-passes (e.g. Yolo Bypass, San Joaquin River)
5. Develop bio-engineering approaches to flood management, e.g. use native vegetation to strengthen levees; incorporate practices from weed management districts
6. Increase use of levees and floodplain space created by setback levees for public access, trails, education and recreation

B. Policy tools

1. Collaborate and leverage funds from other programs (e.g., BDCP; CALFED, FERC licenses; San Joaquin River settlement; NRCS and Farm Bill; State Water Project, Habitat Joint Ventures, DFG state wildlife plan, Caltrans blueprint plans)
2. Develop and expand on alternative funding approach, such as Water Code 12585.7, beneficiary-pays
3. Expand use of Safe Harbor agreements with fish and wildlife agencies to encourage habitat development on private lands
4. Make use of programmatic and regional permits
5. Develop a USACE regional variance for vegetation management on levees
6. Develop and implement corridor management strategy for flood project maintenance
7. Develop and use mitigation banks
8. Increase use of flood easements to accommodate flood waters, preserve agricultural land and allow winter habitat
9. Revise COE Operations and Maintenance manuals to benefit multiple objectives.
10. Modify Williamson Act to accommodate habitat restoration

11. Mitigate or compensate for loss of flood-water conveyance capacity in floodplains resulting from urban development
12. Take advantage of local land trusts and other NGOs to manage habitat projects and thereby reduce management costs
13. Collaborate with plans from other programs (e.g. HCPs, NCCPs, IRWMPs, climate change adaptation policies) to obtain programmatic and regional, rather than local and piecemeal, conservation plans as part of a system-wide flood plan.
14. Develop habitat targets—amount and location; this will attract money
15. Provide more outdoor education—school programs--to influence long-term behavioral change and to connect the stewardship ethic and practices to K—12 education
16. Use ecological and economic models to plan, prioritize and evaluate opportunities for multi-objective actions
17. Adapt to climate change by restoration of floodplain function, reservoir re-operation, increased habitat connectivity, and increased conveyance capacity via setback levees
18. Align setback levees with road infrastructure to leverage CalTrans funds and meet COE levee maintenance mandates
19. Support agriculture by developing a way to pay for environmental services provided by private lands (financial incentives, types of insurance, etc)
20. Accommodate ag/working landscapes into an ecosystem stewardship strategy
21. Develop an NCCP/HCP for flood system and collaborate with other NCCP/HCPs

II. Opportunities to achieve specific outcome/goal

- A. More reliable future for agriculture in terms of flood and water supply
- B. To protect valuable farmland
- C. To develop new environmental education programs
- D. Improve flood conveyance while restoring habitat
- E. To update old flood infrastructure
- F. Increased flood control and hydropower
- G. Improved public awareness about flood and ecosystems
- H. Increased floodplain and habitat protection, reverse habitat losses, improve connectivity, restore natural processes and flow regimes
- I. Increased access to water recreation
- J. Improved water supply (groundwater recharge, etc.)
- K. Use more systems approaches to flood, water supply, ecosystem, etc
- L. Improved water quality
- M. Restore habitat in specific places
 1. TRLIA restoration site along Feather River.
 2. Tulare Lake.
 3. Sacramento ship channel - new flood bypass
 4. South delta flood bypass.
 5. Yolo bypass.
 6. San Joaquin bypass.