

## **Summary of Comments from the Flood Corridor Program Public Hearing on Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project**

A public hearing was held on Thursday, July 12, 2012 at 2:00 pm in Bieber to receive comments on the Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project to be funded by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) through the Flood Corridor Program (FCP). Approximately twenty people attended including Itzia Rivera and David Martasian representing DWR's FCP. Itzia Rivera gave an overview of the FCP and the purpose of the public hearing. Todd Sloat, Watershed Coordinator for the Pit Resource Conservation District (Pit RCD), gave an overview of the project and welcomed questions and formal comments from the public. Public attendees included local residents and property owners.

Below are the comments and concerns received at the hearing and in the mail and DWR and Pit RCD's joint responses to those comments and concerns:

- Comment 1: Concern that project would impact water rights on Willow Creek upstream of this project
- Response 1: There is no evidence to suggest water rights or availability on Willow Creek will be affected by this project on Ash Creek. The project has been designed to maintain the diversion at Big Valley Ditch which DFG currently operates to provide water to downstream water right holders.
- Comment 2: If the project were to proceed, there is concern whether potential impacts to neighboring ranches would be considered and questions of who would maintain the project improvements in the future.
- Response 2: Potential impacts to neighboring ranches and specifically to water rights have been taken into consideration by Pit RCD and DFG and will also be addressed in the Plan to Minimize Impacts to Adjacent Landowners which is a document required by the FCP and will be prepared by Pit RCD early in the project schedule. Project improvements will be maintained by DFG through its current operations and maintenance budget.
- Comment 3: How will surface water percolate into aquifer if it is being transported inside a PVC pipe?
- Response 3: The pond and plug element of the project which causes water to overflow into the adjoining floodplain is what will allow surface water to percolate into the aquifer.
- Comment 4: Department of Fish and Game (DFG) should allow the community to lease part of the Ash Creek Wildlife Area (ACWA) for livestock grazing and hay harvesting.
- Response 4: DWR does not have the authority to direct DFG in the management of the ACWA; however, Pit RCD will continue to work with DFG to manage grazing, haying and farming leases on the ACWA while working to expand this management plan.
- Comment 5: Concern whether the project has received approval for impacting the natural course/flow of water from Army Corps of Engineers.
- Response 5: Pit RCD has applied for the appropriate permits with the Army Corps of Engineers and DFG and has received a letters of approval.
- Comment 6: Concern that this project would create additional taxpayer burden.
- Response 6: FCP grant funds for this project will come from the Proposition 1E bond measure that California voters passed in 2006. There will be no additional taxpayer burden caused by this project beyond the payback of the bonded indebtedness already approved by the voters and DFG's current and ongoing responsibility to maintain the property.

