

Flood Management Working Group Meeting #7

MEETING NOTES

October 13, 2016

Location:

Dos Rios Ranch
Shiloh Road
Stanislaus County, CA

10:00am – 12:00pm

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Update on RFMP Activities

- a. Project Partners had a meeting with California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on September 21, 2016 on the following aspects of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) 2017 Update: State Investment Strategy, incorporation of RFMP projects, Flood Policy issues, and DWR's interest in potentially funding an RFMP 3 effort.

The State is still planning to provide us with an early draft of the 2017 CVFPP this month, prior to public release in December. There will be ample opportunity after that for public comment before the June 2017 adoption by the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB, the Board).

- b. Small Communities Flood Risk Reduction (SCFRR) Guidelines comment: Through Stanislaus County and River Partners, the Mid San Joaquin Region provided input on the grant program guidelines that were accepted, making it plausible for the Grayson Project to be eligible for funding under the Small Communities Flood Risk Reduction Program.

- #### 3. Emergency Response (ER) Grants Outreach
- Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is beginning planning for the development of a training program for the region that would be carried out in Spring and Fall of 2017. With ESA's support, they are also developing plans to generate emergency action resources for parts of Stanislaus County and will be reaching out to reclamation districts (RDs) and first responders as development of the training program progresses.
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4. RFMP 3

DWR has told us that they are contemplating providing continued funding for regional flood management planning support after the current grant ends on June 30, 2017. The ongoing effort would provide a framework for them to continue to work with the regions in the development of the next iteration of the CVFPP, the 2022 Update.

We are looking for stakeholder thoughts on where the Mid SJR's efforts under RFMP 3 would be best spent.

Ideas from the stakeholders:

- Look beyond the San Joaquin River; County is also very concerned with flooding in Orestimba, Tuolumne, and Dry Creek
- Interested in having a mutual aid agreement between RDs; would like to use funding to get the memoranda of understanding (MOUs) in place
- Look at what the State will accept as a process and outcome if landowners want to "opt out" of the State Plan of Flood Control (SPFC) Facilities
- Look at effects to neighboring areas if landowners "opt out" of the SPFC Facilities
- Like the County, the City of Modesto is also concerned with flooding beyond the mainstem, including flooding from the Tuolumne River
- Provide a mechanism to add more projects to be considered for future funding as time passes
- Supporting communication among regional stakeholders as projects proceed, so that they can be engaged and represent their interests

5. DWR: Deferred Maintenance Project

This item was inserted thanks to the presence of Ran Singh and Meredith Harvan from DWR. They explained what kinds of work would be eligible for funding under this new \$100M program from DWR and how DWR expected to work with the levee maintenance agencies (LMAs) to implement it. The program will focus on remediation of SPFC levee penetrations by pipes.

6. Levee Maintenance Presentation by Stephen Sheppard

Stephen talked about RD 2092's levee maintenance regime, which consists primarily of spraying, mowing, dragging. He spoke of a project River Partners did for Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), planting native grasses (e.g., creeping wild rye and purple needlegrass) on levees to provide wildlife value as well as an easily managed

vegetative cover for levees. He then demonstrated a special gyroscopic mower that keeps the operator level on levee slopes, as well as a harrow that they drag to smoothen slopes and remove vegetation. Lastly, he mentioned that they have turned to a relatively wildlife-friendly herbicide called Milestone to deal with plants that have become resistant to Roundup. He indicated that the District spent about \$5,000/year on levee maintenance.

7. Dos Rios Field Visit

We saw a field that had been planted in 2013 with cottonwoods, oaks and native understory. The cottonwoods were already 15-20' tall in just 3 years. They built low mounds as refugia (places to escape the floodwaters) for terrestrial species during minor flood events, though when a big flood happens, even these would be inundated. Stephen also pointed out a field that was used for an experiment to test the suitability of the environment at Dos Rios for salmon and steelhead rearing. As in other locations (e.g., Knaggs Ranch), the juvenile salmon used in the experiment displayed phenomenal growth rates on the floodplain.

River Partners is still using some of the land at Dos Rios for agriculture while they continue to raise more funds for the implementation of restoration actions and sought permits to carry it out. The expectation is that it will be 15-20 years before the project is complete. Once complete, they expect another entity, perhaps the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to take over ownership and management of the property.
