

Greater Battle Creek Watershed Working Group

January 23, 2007

Meeting Notes

I. Introductions: Kerry Burke, Liv Imset, Mary Marshall, Peter Jacobsen, Mike Ward, Sharon Paquin-Gilmore, Steve Tussing, Jim Smith, Curtis Anderson, Mike Tucker, Jess Newton, Scott Hamelberg, Melanie McFarland, RJ Roth, Bruce McCampbell, Glenn Graham, Mike Berry, Scott Ferris, Kevin Niemela, Tricia Parker, Brenda Olson

II. November 14 meeting note review:

Tricia had one correction: Regarding the statement I made at the Barge Hole clean-up: Although I had stated that Greenwaste was involved in the event, they had no part in it at all. The clean-up was coordinated by the with the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF) specifically Beverly Anderson-Abbs and the Tehama County/Red Bluff Landfill Agency. The Winter 2006 issue of the SRCAF newsletter has a front page article with photos of the effort they coordinated (passed copy around).

III. Round Table Announcements

Curtis: Aric Lester has accepted another position (Stacy Cepello's old position). Fraser Sime has taken on additional duties.

Mike T.: Beth Campbell is the new leader on the CVP consultation as I am now Section 7 lead for Sacramento Office. There is the chance the FERC BO will be assigned to someone else.

Melanie: Regarding Forest accomplishments of CalFed funded projects. Approximately 20% of the work is accomplished in coordination with BCWC. Thirty road treatments have been completed to minimize or eliminate sources of sediment associated with roads in the Nanny and Martin Creek sub-watersheds. One road decommissioning project occurred in the Panther Creek sub-watershed. In 2007, 50 sites are targeted within 5 sub-watersheds. In addition to the CalFed funding, the Forest has been successful in obtaining an additional \$300,000 toward this work.

Mike B.: CDFG Warden positions now are fully staffed in Shasta and Tehama Counties. One is on site at Battle Creek and is heavily patrolling Shasta County Park/Battle Creek Picnic Area, Spring Branch Road and Barge Hole.

R.J.: Requested an update on the PG&E Kilarc facility on Cow Creek. Synergics was turned down for a FERC license. Liv also gave information on this facility.

"Be hard on the issues/problems, easy on the people."

There is a 30 day appeal period for Synergics that runs through January 31. PG&E may decommission two power plants if Synergics does not appeal/loses appeal.

Curtis: On the FERC website the Lassen Lodge Hydro Project timeframe is set to expire September 30, 2007. Requested an update if anyone knew of more information. Liv responded that FERC has sent a letter because no progress has been made on their application. Lassen Lodge has 30 days to respond.

Tricia:

> Recognized Glenn Graham, Shasta Trinity Fly Fishers (STFF). Glenn organized a group to assist with revegetating the Orwick bypass pipe site on December 19. They did a fine job. The planting went quite well, and with the rain later that week the trees should have a good start. STFF members Sandra Merhoff, Keith Turner, and Glenn Graham, along with FWS staff: Keith Paul, Nick Demetras, Hayley Potter, Brenda Olson, and Tricia Parker, planted about 300 trees and shrubs over two planting days (178 in one day). Glenn says "I'm sure the Battle Creek fish will be pleased with the great work the STFF and FWS has done. Hopefully Shasta Trinity Fly fishers will be able to provide additional assistance to them in the future, as we all want to help the fish."

> UPDATE The BLM Battle Creek National Recreation Area (NRA) was submitted to the Legislature in 2006 however it didn't make it through. [H.R. 6413: Sacramento River National Recreation Area Establishment Act of 2006, To establish the Sacramento River National Recreation Area consisting of certain public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Tehama and Shasta Counties, California, and for other purposes.] It will be resubmitted again this year. One of Herger's aids is requesting information from the Watershed Conservancy and Sierra Pacific Industries. Shasta Fly-fishers has also been contacted. It appears that it will go forward and pass. The bill covers 17,000 acres of land within the Sacramento River, Battle Creek, and Seven-mile Creek drainages.

> River Partners will be on the History Channel highlighting large-scale watershed restoration.

> Snow Goose Festival in Chico is coming up the end of January.

> An aerial photo of the proposed Shasta Gravel Ranch was pointed out.

> A recent news article in the Redding Record Searchlight on private timber harvest practices in the Battle Creek watershed was referred to for interest.

Mike B.: Kevin Gale (CDFG) and Mr. Orwick have come to an agreement for the headgate operation on the diversion.

Curtis: Feather River Carcass survey was on Discovery Channel's Dirtiest Jobs program.

IV. Issue Tracking Document

There are three new issues to add:

- 1) Shasta Ranch Gravel Project
- 2) Litigation against the Restoration Project
- 3) New designation of BLM lands to a NRA

#1 – The Shasta Ranch Gravel project has an inaccurate portrayal of the floodplain in the Draft EIS. There is concern over the juvenile stranding potential. Scott Ferris and Shasta-Trinity Fly Fishers Club are concerned about gravel loss and do not feel it is a good project to pursue. They feel more needs to be done by CDFG and USFWS in bringing concerns to Shasta County. The Shasta Fly-fishers have responded to the Request for Comments on the Draft EIR.

Melanie: Question regarding #2, Litigation concern. Does this not fit under the old issue #1??

Mike B.: Rock Springs Ranch, LLC, and Outfitter Properties want the EIR recirculated, i.e. they do not want it certified by the State Water Resources Control Board. If that were to happen, the timeframe would be extended. If we get held up, we will no longer have the interim flow monies. Without continued interim flows, the increased trout population resulting from the current interim flows may be jeopardized. Recirculation of the document could kill the project. Mike just wants the group to be aware that this is the biggest threat to the project. The lawsuit was passed around the group.

“...lawsuit is to SWRCB to vacate and set aside the Certification and Notice of Determination pursuant to the CEQA adopted on or about 9/19/2006 by Executive Director of the SWRCB and ordering respondent SWRCB to vacate their Certification of the CEQA Final Environmental Impact Report for the Battle Creek Salmon and Steelhead Restoration Project on the basis that the EIR does not comply with CEQA.”

Jim: This is a public process, they have the right to litigate but it does have ramifications. We can't discuss the specifics of the case and this group can't do much with this issue except keep informed as to its progress.

#3 – Covered above.

Curtis: All issues are up on the walls. Voting members will be given one sticker per five issues – 10 minutes for voting.

Tricia: there are still some issues that need to be refined.

Issues #2 and #24 were divided into two parts with separate voting for each.

Forest Service abstained from voting – neutral on the issues.

Voting: New #1 Issue is Litigation

New #2 Issue is Old #1 (Cost)

New #3 Issue is Old #2 (Screening of CNFH Intakes)

New #4 Issue is Old #8 (Outreach)

VI. Greensheet (handout)

> The fish viewing facility at the Red Bluff Diversion Dam has a new poster display area – the Battle Creek display could be put up in the future.

> Battle Creek Monitoring: Program no longer in operation because of delays in funding the Restoration Project.

Q: Scott Ferris asked why the monitoring funds were tied to the restoration project proposal. A: All the monitoring work is associated with the funding assurance letter. The state needs to finish the CEQA and Determination letter before they can transfer the money to the Bureau. The Bureau needs all the money upfront but the state can't give the funds all up front because they are in bonds. The Directors of CDFG, State Resources Agency, and the Bureau are determining the best way to transfer the funds. CDFG will be burdened with interest on those funds transferred until they are expended. They are trying to determine a process for the transfer to minimize the burden rate. The total burden to CDFG would be \$800,000. Annual costs in the project proposal for Battle Creek monitoring are \$1 million per year.

Matt: For the two tasks identified on the green sheet, it would cost \$100,000 per year.

Jim: Some office funds for limited monitoring have been spent but are only for collecting the data, not for analyzing the data.

Kerry: Question as to why this funding is tied to the restoration project and not a separate budget line item. Answer: The funds are tied to monitoring adaptive management of the project.

Mike B.: Point is if the project dies, there is no point in monitoring because the cold water is lost (interim flow).

> Scott H.: The public meeting for the CNFH intake screens will occur March 20, the same day as the next scheduled GBCWWG meeting. I hope many of the people attending the GBCWWG meeting will come to the public meeting. There are three action alternatives along with the No Action Alternative. The NEPA document may be released prior to the public meeting.

The current screened intake #2 is on the south bank of Battle Creek. This site is impractical due to the access difficulties. The new proposed intake #2 is on the north bank, will be automated, and is still for emergency use only.

Money is the issue. The Bureau of Reclamation has been funding the project but the USFWS needs to find a match. CalFed and CVPIA are not lucrative at this point in time.

Scott F.: Proposed that the group write a letter to CalFed regarding the situation and have on record that the GBCWWG supports screening of the CNFH intakes.

Tricia: in the AFRP plan, intake screening is 1 of 8 actions that needs to occur in the Battle Creek watershed.

> Scott H.: Update. As of 1/17/07, 56 natural origin steelhead have returned, however this is unverified. By this time last year, 171 natural origin steelhead had returned. An apparent drop of 75% in natural origin steelhead.

VII. Outreach

Sharon: brought in newsletters from the Conservancy and passed around. One write-up is regarding GBCWWG outreach activities.

In May Watershed Awareness Day will occur. The groups involved are looking at holding it at Caldwell Park this year.

The Outreach Committee will need to meet to determine its next steps.

The Conservancy is planning on working with the Manton Museum on the History of Battle Creek. The goal is to have the display done by summer.

VIII. Restoration Project Update (Mary Marshall, USBR)

Mary: Page 4 of the BCWC Newsletter has a write-up on the Restoration Project. As an update to that write-up, the critical element is resolution on the transfer of funds. Once resolution occurs, DFG's CEQA Findings and Notice of Determination can be issued and funding assurance letter can be signed by the Director at DFG.

Subsequent to this, PG&E can submit the FERC license amendment application. Once a determination is made by FERC, construction contracts can be awarded.

Agency Directors understand that is critical to resolve the funding transfer issue in order to move the project forward.

The group decided to write a letter to the Director at DFG and to the Secretary of the Resources Agency, supporting the project and urging quick resolution on the funding transfer issue.

IX. Winter-run Chinook Salmon (Kevin Niemela, FWS)

In the mainstem last year, 2006, 17,205 winter-run Chinook salmon were estimated. This is nearly five times the average number over the previous 20 years. Approximately 2,300 were of hatchery origin. More than eighty percent of the winter Chinook spawned upstream of the Hwy 44 Bridge.

Five additional hatchery origin winter-run Chinook salmon returned to Battle Creek after March 1, 2006. These fish were collected during sampling at the Barrier Weir. This is the first occurrence of hatchery winter Chinook salmon in Battle Creek from juveniles reared entirely at the Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery. If the same ratio of marked/unmarked (natural) winter-run found in the mainstem Sacramento River is used, then an estimated 31 natural winter-run fish may have entered Battle Creek. Genetic analysis is currently being conducted of tissue samples from natural origin Chinook collected at the Barrier Weir to validate this estimate.

Very few winter-run Chinook salmon jacks were found in the 2006 carcass count. Only 2% of the carcasses were jacks. Generally, a low jack count relates to low returns the following year; however we have not detected a good relationship between jacks and next year's return with winter-run Chinook salmon.

X. Review

If the group decides to write a letter, how do we proceed?

- 1) Use process used a few years ago if public agencies can sign.
- 2) Individual groups can also send letters.
- 3) Sharon and Mike Ward will work on this. To expedite the process, they will send out for review, vote on it by the end of Thursday, 1/25, and have Sharon sign for the group. Language will be included that states signatory groups concur.

March 20 is next meeting.

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Topics:

Issue Tracking Document update

Nothing on winter-run Chinook

Letter response

Mike Ward – monitoring work update at the May meeting

Short field trip to BLM NRA between meeting and evening public meeting.

Additional announcements:

> Trinity Restoration Program is going to have a symposium February 6 – 9 in Weaverville.

> Klamath/Trinity Fish Health workshop January 31 through February 1 in Fortuna.

> Salmon Restoration Federation Conference is coming March 7 – 10 in Santa Rosa. <http://www.calsalmon.org/>

Adjourn 12:30 pm