

# SAN JOAQUIN RIVER RESTORATION PROGRAM



Seepage and Conveyance Technical Feedback Group  
Friday, April 29, 2011 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Exchange Contractors Water Authority  
541 H Street, Los Banos, CA  
Draft Meeting Notes

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## **Attendees:**

Shelly Abajian	US Senator Diane Feinstein
Joe Brummer	CNS
Roger Burnett	Bureau of Reclamation
Sean Coburn	Coburn Ranch
Ron Cunha	San Juan Ranch
Ali Forsythe	Bureau of Reclamation
Sarge Green	California Water Institute – RMC coordinator
Katrina Harrison	Bureau of Reclamation
Steven Haugen	Mitigation Lands Trust
Randy Houk	Columbia Canal Company
Shay Humphrey	Circlepoint
Stephen Lee	Bureau of Reclamation
Bill Luce	Friant Water Authority
Mari Martin	SJR Resource Management Coalition
Palmer McCoy	San Luis Canal Company
David Mooney	Bureau of Reclamation
Craig Moyle	MWH
James Nickel	Nickel Family Farms, LLC
Patti Ransdell	CirclePoint
Paul Romero	CA Department of Water Resources
Dan Royer	Wolfsen, Inc
Brent M. Stearns	San Juan Ranch
Allison Warren	Bureau of Reclamation
Chris White	Central California Irrigation District

## **Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Agenda**

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Patti Ransdell, facilitator, opened the meeting with introductions and the group reviewed the agenda, plans for the next several meetings, and process for developing the Seepage Project Handbook.

### **Action Item Review and Update**

The first item on the agenda was to review and update actions items. Individuals provided status reports on current action items.

#### *Recently completed action items:*

- Sarge Green provided information on soil temperature and the status of developing an operating plan to incorporate impacts of soil temperature on thresholds. Sarge reported:
  - There is no short term soil temperature issue
  - There is a potential need for monitoring after the Mendota Pool Bypass is built
- Katrina Harrison discussed the recently posted data from hand auger field work. Katrina discussed soil texture and the use of the USDA system of classification, and determination of the capillary fringe and application to seepage thresholds.
  - Several members of the group requested an additional two weeks to review the data from the hand auger field work.
- Joe Brummer provided an overview of the data that was gathered from the hand augering to calculate capillary fringe and explained how the data was collected and how it is reported in the soil logs. Joe also discussed EM-38 sampling and the interpretation of results.
  - Concerns were expressed regarding timing of measurements in relation to completion of the hand augering. More than 5 minutes may be necessary for water levels to equilibrate for water level measurements.
  - Attendees discussed the amount of air in the anoxic zone.

#### *Open action items-*

Item 1: Work Plan for additional tensiometer work to develop more data on capillary fringe

- Discussion: Sarge Green and Stephen Lee will work on the study

Item 2: Provide Monty Schmitt and Chris White with the Excel files that the graphs are based on

- Discussion: Katrina Harrison is working on providing these files

Item 3: Add river mile station to river profile to link wells to locations

- Discussion: Katrina Harrison is working on adding the river mile station

Item 4: Explore partnering on the cultural resources survey to expand the scope to go out beyond the levee to collect information that would help evaluate projects.

- Discussion: Chris White is working on his item of exploring partnering on the cultural resources survey to expand the scope. Discussions are underway with DWR.

Item 5: Reclamation will double check what is specified in the legislation regarding ownership of facilities built on private property.

- Ali Forsythe reported that PL 111-11 encourages that facilities modified or improved as part of implementing the Settlement remain in the owner of the property. If property acquired through eminent domain authority is no longer needed to implement the Settlement, then the right of first refusal to the property is given to the original owner.

### **2011 Interim Flows**

Dave Mooney provided an overview of the 2011 Interim Flows and discussed flood flows.

- During the discussion about flood flows and the types of data currently being gathered as a result of the higher than normal-year flows, a meeting attendee asked a question regarding how riparian growth and recruitment would be handled by the Program going forward. In the long-term, riparian growth and recruitment may be designed in advance. Current flood flows are providing important data to inform future riparian recruitment efforts.
- A concern was raised regarding the transition from flood flows back to Interim Flows and sustained high groundwater levels. Attendees shared their opinion that drainage to reduce groundwater levels below thresholds may take awhile.
- During the discussion about Seepage Hotline calls received to date a concern was raised regarding the classification of calls in 2011. Meeting attendees believe that calls regarding flood flow monitoring in Spring 2011 should be identified as Seepage Hotline calls.

*Action Item (Katrina Harrison):* Calls during flood releases will be recorded as seepage hotline calls

### **Release of Draft PEIS/R**

Ali Forsythe provided an overview of the release of the Draft PEIS/R.

- There are executive summaries and a CD with the entire document available. Let Ali know if you would like a full set or a CD.
- Time extension on the comment period can be requested.

### **Site Evaluation Process - Overall**

Katrina Harrison gave an overview of the site evaluation process. Discussion based on questions included:

- Easements or property acquired versus putting in physical projects
- There was a discussion about the potential impact of full restoration flows on the Firebaugh area

### **Site Evaluation Process – Site Specific Influences**

Katrina Harrison gave an overview of site specific influences. The sources of salinity, possible influences and possible factors were discussed, as well as initial screening criteria.

#### Discussion

- There was concern about considering fertilizer, as it is not high on the list of possible salinity sources.
- It was asked why Reclamation is looking at salt when it is known that groundwater elevation is the problem.
- It was noted that Reclamation should consider using interceptor lines near the river.
- There was a discussion on how water quality issues and the potential need for a discharge permit could affect the type of project installed.
- If it is good quality water, growers may be willing to take drain discharge. There was desire voiced by the group to work with the Settling Parties to develop a solution for these issues.
- Plan formulation is the next step towards selecting a project and will be covered at the next meeting.

#### **Information and Data Exchange**

- Reclamation is developing a complete process for working with landowners to work through options for projects.

#### Discussion

- There was discussion regarding how we start moving through the issues surrounding water discharge. There was discussion about developing a smaller group for this purpose. The lower reaches of the river will be an even greater issue for water quality.
- There was a discussion about how much restoration flows will impact groundwater.
- USDA SCS or other programs may be able to form partnerships to incentivize different crop patterns as a solution to seepage.
- A participant noted the need to see what the draw down will look like to see if interceptor drains will work or if something else will be better.

#### **Next Steps and Follow Through**

- Next meeting will be July 6, 2011 from 1:30-4:30 at the San Luis Canal Company office located at 11704 Henry Miller Avenue, Dos Palos

### *New Action Items*

- Revisit Sarge Green's and Stephen Lee's capillary fringe study
- Clarify language on seepage hotline calls-
- Make CDEC streamgage info on stage consistently report in elevation rather than an arbitrary stage.
- Clarify the transition between flood and Interim Flows. What thresholds will be adhered to, and how quickly will flows ramp down?
- Provide an additional two weeks to review the raw data from the hand auger field work.
- Confirm times and location of next meetings