



Seepage and Conveyance Technical Feedback Group  
Thursday November 10, 2011, 1 – 4 p.m.  
San Luis Canal Company  
11704 Henry Miller Avenue, Dos Palos  
Meeting Notes

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**Attendees:**

Shelly Abajian	Office of Senator Dianne Feinstein
Joe Brummer	CNS (Soil Sciences)
Sean Coburn	Landowner
Sarge Green	California Water Institute – RMC coordinator
Katrina Harrison	Bureau of Reclamation
Randy Houk	Columbia Canal Company
Richard Harman	Harman Bros.
Brian Heywood	CDM
Shay Humphrey	Circlepoint
Chase Hurley	San Luis Canal Company
Bill Luce	Friant Water Authority
Mari Martin	SJR Resource Management Coalition
Palmer McCoy	San Luis Canal Company
David Pruitt	Christiana-Santa Rita Farms
Scott Rice	Dept. of Water Resources
Dan Royer	Wolfsen, Inc
Brent Stearns	San Juan Ranch
Chris White	Central California Irrigation District

**Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Agenda**

Shay Humphrey, facilitator, opened the meeting with introductions and the group reviewed the agenda, objectives for the group, discussion topics, and the process and timeline for developing the Seepage Project Handbook.

The purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss the design, plan formulation, and design data collection sections of the Seepage Project Handbook.

**Action Item Review and Update**

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

*Recently completed action items:*

- Item 1: Brainstorm on seepage project scenarios at future meetings
  - Completed – this brainstorming session was completed at the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Item 2: Coordination with Non Urban Levee Evaluation (NULE) – report on opportunities for cross evaluation work and exchange information on drilling permit
  - Completed – Scott Rice, DWR, confirmed that the geotechnical borings have been completed and the data will go into a larger regional report that will be available in July of 2012.

***Other Updates***

- Katrina Harrison introduced Brian Heywood to the group. Brian is with CDM and they have been brought on to help Reclamation with monitoring activities, finalize the Seepage Project Handbook and assist with the review and evaluation of project locations and project designs.
- Katrina also provided an update on monitoring wells that are currently being installed at 17 locations. Wells are being drilled at location in Reach 2A, Reach 3 and Reach 4A and B. This will be the last round of monitoring wells that Reclamation will install.

*Action Item: Post a map of the well locations on the website and send out to the group.*

- Katrina also explained that a summary of the parcel group scenarios will be included in a section of the Seepage Project Handbook.

**Interim Flows Update**

- Katrina Harrison provided an update on Interim Flows and fall pulse flows from Friant Dam. The fall pulse flows were released and releases are back down to 350 cubic feet per second (cfs). Chase Hurley and Chris White confirmed that they have released flows from the Mendota Pool (50-80 cfs) but they have not seen a change in flows below Sack Dam yet. They expect to see a change within the next day.
- Maintenance is still scheduled on the Mendota Dam, so flows will continue to be reduced for the winter and then increase again in January if feasible.

**Design Process**

Katrina Harrison led the group in a discussion regarding Reclamation's design process focused on how to define roles in the design process. Reclamation would like to be the lead on everything up to final design

and then work out financial assistance agreements with landowners or water districts to take over the last design pieces and construction portion of the project.

- The group agreed that Reclamation should do most of the design work and then let the water districts take the lead on construction.
- The group emphasized the need to allow private landowners the ability to enter into financial assistance agreements - not just water districts.
- It was clarified that for individual projects, Reclamation would not need to repeat environmental studies conducted for the Program EIS/R. Reclamation will use existing data to the extent possible.

*Action Item: Reclamation to ask Paul Romero about seepage laboratory data. The goal is to identify existing data that would be useful in identifying, evaluating and selecting projects.*

*Action Item: Look into working with or partnering with NRCS spell out because they already have a system in place for financial assistance on projects. The goal is to identify how their process could inform and streamline our process.*

*Action Item: Find out if WAPA spell out could provide preference power to seepage avoidance projects.*

### **Plan Formulation**

Katrina Harrison led the group in a discussion regarding Reclamation's Plan Formulation process. The focus of discussion was on the criteria table shown on pages 20 -21 of the Seepage Project Handbook.

- The group was primarily concerned with how much the cost of long-term Operation and Maintenance (O&M) would affect a project's likelihood of being selected.

*Action Item: Locate the NRCS project ranking criteria and determine if it can be applied to this process.*

### **Design Data Collection**

Katrina Harrison led the group in a discussion regarding Reclamation's design data collection process. She highlighted that geotechnical investigations and surveys will probably be the only data collection needs. Existing data will be used to the greatest extent possible.

### **Information and Data Exchange**

This agenda item served as an open forum for other comments. Reclamation is seeking input for missing information, creative solutions to challenges, and strategies to avoid inducing seepage.

Discussion topics included:

- Working through challenges such as ownership, maintenance, water discharge, water rights, long-term monitoring, cost-sharing, competing interests, project feasibility, terms of agreement and legislation.

- The group was asked to provide any information they could think of that should be included in the development of the construction section of the Seepage Project Handbook.
  - The only suggestion was that construction for interceptor lines would be easiest to do during the winter but could also be done in late summer if scheduled correctly.
- Chris White asked what the process is for submitting ideas for projects and provided plans for a series of projects that would address seepage issues.
  - Katrina Harrison explained that Reclamation will need to follow the steps in the Seepage Project Handbook. While having plans will speed up the process, Reclamation will still need to conduct a site evaluation, work through the plan formulation process, gather design data if necessary, prepare the feasibility design and then conduct environmental compliance before getting to the final design or negotiating financing agreements.
- If interceptor lines are determined to be the best project, it is still unclear who would own the facilities, who would be responsible for the long-term O&M, and who would own the water pumped from the seepage avoidance projects.
- It was suggested that the table on page 5 of the Seepage Project Handbook be developed as a Gantt chart so it is easier to see the timelines for each part of the process.

*Action Item: Modify the language regarding permanent crops and the level of seepage protection that will be accommodated.*

### **Next Steps and Follow-through**

The group was asked to provide comments on the Seepage Project Handbook by December 5<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting will be on December 15<sup>th</sup> from 1 - 4 p.m. The location is to be determined.

#### ***Action Items:***

- Post a map of the well locations on the website and send out to the group.
- Ask Paul Romero about Seepage Laboratory data. The goal is to identify existing data that would be useful in identifying, evaluating and selecting projects.
- Look into working with or partnering with NRCS because they already have a system in place for financial assistance on projects. The goal is to identify how their process could inform and streamline our process.
- Find out if WAPA could provide preference power to seepage avoidance projects.
- Locate the NRCS project ranking criteria and determine if it can be applied to this process.
- Modify the language regarding permanent crops and the level of seepage protection that will be accommodated.

## **Parking Lot Topics**

- Impacts to Firebaugh
- California State Lands Commission Findings
- Full range of alternatives for environmental compliance including:
  - All tile/interceptor scenario
  - All easement scenario
- Ownership of water pumped out from seepage projects
- Provide an update on the process with Chris' project at next meeting- walk through the process as a group.
- Identify at least one project that we can start working through at the next meeting in addition to Chris' project.
- Identification of potential willing sellers along the river for acquisition projects

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