San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Seepage & Conveyance Technical Feedback Group Kick-off Meeting
Friday, December 17, 2010
San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority
541 H Street, Los Banos

Draft Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Chester Andrew	SJR Resource Management Coalition
Roger Burnett	Reclamation
Steve Chedester	SJR Exchange Contractors Water Authority
Kevin Faulkenberry	California Dept. of Water Resources
Alicia Forsythe	Reclamation
Charles Gardiner	Facilitator
Seth Gentzler	URS
Margaret Gidding	Reclamation
Sarge Green	CA Water Institute/SJR Resource Management Coalition
Drew Guintini	Central California Irrigation District
Katrina Harrison	Reclamation
Randy Houk	Columbia Canal Company
Chase Hurley	San Luis Canal Company
Ron Jacobsma	Friant Water Authority
Stephen Lee	Reclamation
Bill Luce	Friant Water Authority
Mari Martin	SJR Resource Management Coalition / Landowner
Scott McBain	SJRRP Technical Advisory Committee
Rod Meade	SJRRP Restoration Administrator
David Mooney	Reclamation
Craig Moyle	MWH
James Nickel	Nickel Family Farms LLC
Patti Ransdell	CirclePoint
Monty Schmitt	Natural Resources Defense Council
Claire Marie Turner	USACE, Sacramento District
Ali Warren	Reclamation
Chris White	Central California Irrigation District
Beth M Wrege	NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Agenda (Reclamation)
Alicia Forsythe, Bureau of Reclamation, opened the meeting with introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda and the purpose of the Seepage and Conveyance Technical Feedback Group (TFG).

Technical Feedback Group (TFG) Purpose and Charter
Charles Gardiner provided an overview of the Charter for the Seepage and Conveyance TFG. The Charter was developed based on interviews with local landowners, agency/water district/irrigation district management, and the Settling Parties. The group noted the following questions/issues related to the Charter:

- Will the Charter be revisited once participants are fully aware of what is going on with the Seepage Monitoring and Management Plan (SMMP) and discussion needs evolve?
  Yes, the Charter can be updated as discussion needs change.
- How does this tie into the Reach 4B High Flow Studies decision making process? How will it blend in with high flow conveyance vs. habitat concerns that are also being addressed?
  The Reach 4B studies are a related topic, but are not the current focus of the TFG discussions.
- The Technical Advisory Committee and Restoration Administrator for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) are responsible for making flow recommendations – how will this tie in with those recommendations?
  Those recommendations will continue on the required schedule informed by the best available information from this TFG, the agencies, and other sources.
- What is the relationship of this group and the objectives related to getting a certain amount of water for restoration flows?
  There was concern about the tight schedule of getting studies for the SMMP done by March 2011. Dave Mooney clarified that the SMMP is targeted for completion in March 2011. It will take longer to identify and evaluate projects to avoid seepage impacts. The Charter focus will be on near-term activities – many other items will be identified as the process evolves.

Action Item
1.) Revise draft Charter and distribute to group

Overview of Seepage Management Topics
Dave Mooney provided an overview of the SMMP for 2011. The purpose of the plan is to describe the approach to conveying flows while reducing or avoiding adverse seepage impacts. Meeting attendees shared the following concerns/information:

- Soil conditions can vary tremendously– even within the same parcel of land.
- Flows can't get ahead of the studies – How can we know what non-damaging flows are without the studies?
- Consider the timing of when flows happen and impacts occur – the severity of seepage impacts may vary at different times of the year depending on crop activities.

- Where will identification of flow restrictions be included? Specifically, there are features in the river that increase seepage impacts – i.e. Sand Slough Control Structure.
- Soil temperature needs to be added as a potential impact. Water coming down can cool soil and interfere with germination.
- There needs to be a clearly defined claims process so landowners don't have to sue the U.S. Government.
- The SJRRP needs to share existing survey information with stakeholders.

Action Item(s)

2.) Share survey data with stakeholders.
3.) Add ground elevation and soil temperature to monitoring program items.

Chris White of Central California Irrigation District (CCID) provided an overview presentation of local seepage investigations. This presentation was based on the ITRC Report and presentation given at the State Water Resources Control Board SJRRP Workshop on November 15. Chris noted that CCID has shallow piezometers installed (since 1983) in Reach 4B, 4A and Reach 3. This has provided useful data for the SJRRP.

Monitoring Approach and Potential Improvement Actions

The group reviewed and discussed the existing surface and groundwater monitoring system with the intent to identify gaps and potential improvement actions. Based on local knowledge and experience meeting, attendees had the following questions and offered the following suggestions:

- The SJRRP needs to plot the profile of flows, stage, and well data to identify sensitive areas.
- The SJRRP needs to know the relationship of flow stage related to adjacent ground elevation. Has the ground elevation been surveyed? The operational concept relates stage to groundwater level, but ground surface elevations determine the depth of root zone. The ground surface level varies and needs to be related to stage and groundwater level.
- The SJRRP needs to develop a glossary of terms so there is universal understanding of what is meant by terms such as "thresholds" and "operating criteria."
- Have we considered individual irrigation practices related to thresholds?
- The SJRRP needs to incorporate drainage into the threshold discussion.
- What about capillary rise? Will that be considered? It can be very site specific based on soil conditions.
- Will we be making threshold assumptions to build our framework? Where will we get the data to make those assumptions? Field work?
- Any analysis/field studies won't necessarily have to cover every square inch of the project area- they can be based on ground elevation.
- We should also check soil conductivity – check horizontal and vertical data and share your data with the group.
- What do we know about soil conditions – do we have any overlays that can be reviewed?

Action Item

4.) Plot the profile of flows, stage, and well data to identify sensitive areas.
5.) Identify field elevation data to include in the analysis.

6.) Share well Meta data and well screen information that is not in the well atlas.

Dave Mooney provided maps of each of the Reaches for review. The maps included locations of existing monitoring wells. The intent of this was to have attendees share information of existing seepage issue areas and potential areas for future studies. The Well Atlas that is used by the SJRRP was shared with the group. Dave asked the group:

- Does other data exist that the SJRRP should be aware of?
- Are there other existing wells that should be evaluated?
- What's missing from the monitoring program?

Meeting attendees provided the following insight/information:

Reach 2

- There is a data gap in Reach 2 on the north side – Paramount lands.
- In Reach 2, there are annual reports that show information for 85 wells related to Mendota Pool pumping.

Reach 3

- Reach 3, left side – CCID has numerous piezometers.
- In Reach 3, all lands between Columbia Canal and the river are impacted.
- Majority of lands east of Columbia Canal are not affected.
- Eastside Dr to Sack Dam – between dark blue and light blue on map are impacted by river.

Reach 4A

- In Reach 4A, the SJRRP would like to install more wells on the east side of the river, but has not been able to gain access.
- In Reach 4A, the wells near Highway 152 are not tied to ground level elevations of the fields.
- Chase Hurley indicated that he would work with his landowners to get additional information.

SJRRP staff will post the maps on the SJRRP website for sharing with other interested parties. New data related to the monitoring program will be posted on the SJRRP website by January 10 in preparation for the January 14 meeting.

Information & Data Exchange
The group reviewed issues and topics for future information and data exchange. The group identified the following additional data needs and potential resources:

Soil Conditions

- California Soil Resources Lab at UC Davis is a resource for information about soil conditions.

- Reclamation had a soil scientist review 85 site logs and that data can be shared with interested stakeholders.

Vegetation Management

- As a future topic, future vegetation management expectations/requirements in the river channel are of concern to landowners. This does not directly affect seepage issues.

Irrigation Practices

- The SJRRP needs to address applied water practices and tile drainage systems when evaluating seepage.

Next Steps and Follow-through

The group confirmed action items and scheduled three additional meetings. Action items are captured at the end of each section above. All action items are due by January 10, 2011.

The next meetings are currently scheduled for:

- January 14, 2011 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- February 9, 2011 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- February 25, 2011 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.