

Draft Meeting Summary
California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC)
Working Landscapes Subcommittee (WLS)
March 10, 2005; 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Working Landscapes Subcommittee web site:

<http://calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/Subcommittees/WorkingLandscapesSubcommittee.shtml>

1. Introductions

Co-Chair **Bungarz** convened the Subcommittee meeting at 9:15 A.M. with introductions.

2. Review of December 2, 2004 Meeting Summary

The December 2, 2004 Subcommittee meeting summary was approved by consensus. **Bungarz** requested that agenda item 6, on payment-in-Lieu-of-taxes, be moved to the last action item on the agenda. The proposed agenda change was approved by consensus.

3. Chair's Report

Bungarz reported that he has been in conversation with CBDA staff and the BDPAC chair about a second co-chair for the WLS. He noted that in the past, co-chairs were assigned from the BDPAC's membership, but that this is no longer the case. He asked that anyone interested in the co-chair position, or who knows of someone who would make a good co-chair, talk to him after the meeting. **Sutton** said that he would like to see a co-chair who comes from the private landowner perspective.

4. Agency Reports

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – **Kiger** announced that the RFPs for the new Conservation Innovation Grants – both state and national versions – are now available. She reported that \$75,000 is available for the state grant program and \$500,000 for the national grant. She noted that applications for the national grant program are submitted via the California NRCS state conservationist, who forwards the best application for national consideration.

Kiger also announced the upcoming Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) priority-setting listening sessions being held by NRCS-California in Perris, Fresno and Redding in March.

Finally, **Kiger** reported that NRCS-CA would be conducting up to 15 workshops for growers in the five selected California Conservation Security Program (CSP) watersheds.

California Department of Food and Agriculture – **Cady** announced that the CBDA Watershed Program's Watershed Boot Camp nominations are due March 15, 2005. She reported that the two-week Watershed Boot Camp nominations can be in the form of self-nominations.

Trott reported that Secretary of Food and Agriculture, A.G. Kawamura, is leading the third in a series of Agricultural Innovation and Stewardship tours of California's agricultural regions. This tour will be of agriculturally related stewardship initiatives in San Bernardino, Riverside, Imperial and San Diego Counties on March 30, 2005. He noted that many of the tour stops on these tours are of "working landscape" type projects on farms and ranches. The tour includes agency executives from state and federal resource, environmental and agricultural agencies.

5. Future of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee.

Trott gave an overview of the results of the WLS member telephone survey that was conducted by Subcommittee staff over the past month. (See attached summary; a detailed transcript of survey responses is also available from staff.) He noted that 15 members were interviewed. Those interviewed were those who have been consistent participants in the Subcommittee's work, and who represent a cross-section of non-agency stakeholders of the Subcommittee. **Trott** said that the purpose of the survey was to determine satisfaction with the direction and operation of the Subcommittee and to gather information for setting the future course of the Subcommittee's work.

Leininger suggested that a good way to secure better participation of Subcommittee members in meetings is to ask the organizations wanting to participate on the Subcommittee to sign a letter of commitment to participate actively in the Subcommittee's work and to contribute resources to do the work by designating a representative to attend meetings.

Medvitz said that he believes that the value of the Subcommittee is in its legitimacy with BDPAC. He said that the Subcommittee is a place where people whose feet are in both the agricultural and environmental worlds can come together. He suggested that the Subcommittee identify commodity organizations at the county level and invite them to participate, broadening the Subcommittee's base and legitimacy.

Chamberlin stated that in his interviews, Subcommittee members indicated that the Subcommittee's work has been somewhat diffuse and needs to focus on just two or three work items for the next year to regain momentum.

Medvitz referred to the chart on page 11 of the draft ERP Multi-Year Program Plan and suggested that the chart needs to show a circular relationship between agencies, clientele and subcommittees.

Leahy concurred with Medvitz that the Subcommittee has an important role to fill with CALFED and that taking time to listen to those working on the working landscape and to re-focus the Subcommittee's agenda is necessary.

Sutton expressed reservations about the value of the Subcommittee unless it is able to get back to the issues over the implementation of CALFED that he believes are important to his local/landowner constituents. He emphasized that the Subcommittee

needs to be a voice for those he deals with at the ground-level of CALFED implementation.

Leininger observed that the Ecosystem Restoration Program Subcommittee (ERS) is vital to the WLS' work because ERS controls the money that will be used to implement the kinds of working landscapes projects that WLS supports. She believes that the WLS needs to be engaged with the Proposition 50 \$20 million PSP in a meaningful way. She suggested that such a meaningful role could reinvigorate the Subcommittee.

Geyer said that it is his belief that CALFED needs to do more to empower the WLS and be explicit with its expectations for the Subcommittee's work. He feels that the Subcommittee's early energy was due to the prospect of the Proposition 50 \$20 million for working landscapes projects.

Geyer said that he favors a "ya'll come" approach to the Subcommittee's membership rather than an appointed body. He favors the Subcommittee focusing on doing things to better understand the barriers faced by landowners who are trying to do good work on their lands, and to identify needed fixes to those barriers.

Buttner referred back to page 11 of the Ecosystem Restoration Program plan. He emphasized that the purpose of the Subcommittee is to advise the BDPAC; i.e., the BDPAC is the Subcommittee's client. He seconded Geyer's observation that if the Subcommittee is experiencing mission creep it is probably due to a lack of direction from BDPAC. As a result, the Subcommittee has been creating its own work, which may or may not be supported by BDPAC.

Patterson agreed that the lack of acknowledgement of the Subcommittee by BDPAC diffuses the sense of effectiveness of the Subcommittee's work. He added that the Subcommittee is important because, in his mind, it is one of the few forums for landowners to have a voice in the implementation of CALFED.

Krug suggested that the Subcommittee be providing review and comment on CALFED documents, including the recent annual CALFED report.

Kiger agreed that one of the jobs of the Subcommittee should be to help CALFED agencies to a better job of implementing their programs through the review and comment on planning and project documents. She said that she believes that the Subcommittee has been a success because of a need for local and landowner stakeholder input.

Leininger suggested that there needs to be more and improved exchange between WLS and the ERS. **Medvitz** agreed that there needs to be better information flow both ways between these two Subcommittees. **Remick** pointed out that the relationship between these two subcommittees needs to be clarified: Does the WLS advise the ERS, or BDPAC? If the former, WLS needs buy-in and input from the ERS on its proposed work, she suggested. **Sutton** said that he believes that the Subcommittee is

a stakeholder group that should be an advocate on behalf of landowners, not just serve the needs of BDPAC or the ERS.

Leahy suggested that the WLS really has both BDPAC and landowners as its clients. **Medvitz** said that he doesn't come to the Subcommittee's meetings to represent CALFED's concerns, but those of his neighbors and the organizations that represent those trying to make a living off of income-producing (working) landscapes. He said that the Subcommittee has been successful in the past, but that it would be good to take a step back to reframe and refresh its purpose. **Russell** agreed that it is time for the Subcommittee to revisit its mission and charter. **Medvitz** suggested that the Subcommittee focus on a successful use of the \$20 million of Proposition 50 to promote the integration of wildlife restoration and agriculture. He said that if this money can be used well, it could lead to additional dollars being directed to a working landscape approach to ecosystem restoration.

Ferguson said that the mitigation of CALFED implementation impacts on working landscapes was an issue that the Subcommittee should pick back up for further work. He also suggested that the Ecosystem Restoration Program needs input from the WLS "up-front" in ERP program implementation planning. He agreed with others that the WLS should be participating actively in the development of the \$20 million Ecosystem Restoration Program PSP.

Russell recalled a quote by Secretary of Food and Agriculture, A.G. Kawamura, that agriculture is always reacting, but the time has long ago come that agriculture should be proactive. He agreed with Ferguson that the WLS needs to be at the table on the Ecosystem Restoration Program \$20 million PSP. **Remick** seconded Russell's sentiment. She said that she had been a consultant with CALFED early on in the process and felt that agriculture would serve itself better if it were to play more of an "up-front" instructive role, than to just stand on the sidelines and complain.

Geyer recommended that the Subcommittee focus on the question: "What will it take to make wildlife an income-generating crop for agriculture?" **Medvitz** added that agriculture should think of itself as an environmental manager whose crops can include an emerging market for environmental goods that the public is willing to enhance or protect. He said that the WLS should help identify those potential markets and buyers.

Leahy stressed that private landowners managing the working landscape have to be able to make a living from the land, but that with public incentives, markets for new and enhanced public benefits that agricultural land can provide, can be created. **Kiger** said that the WLS can help create an image of what the income-producing working landscape looks like. She said that Representative Sam Farr has tried to promote this image in Monterey County.

Bundy said that there are already a number of good programs available to provide incentives for the private landowner to produce more public environmental benefits from their lands, but that there are also a lot of barriers. He said that the WLS should be the

change agent to address those barriers. **Sutton** agreed that the barriers need to be addressed in order to secure significant landowner buy-in on some of the incentive programs. He said that two of the more significant barriers are (1) the lack of regulatory assurances for landowners wanting to enhance habitat, and (2) impacts on neighboring landowners.

Remick cautioned that if WLS were to take up the advocacy role, it would set itself up for continuous conflict within CALFED. She suggested that WLS focus on framing issues and offering solutions for BDPAC consideration. **Medvitz** suggested that WLS needs to facilitate change at two levels: within CALFED and at the farmer level.

Leininger recommended that a workgroup be formed to follow-up on the ideas discussed at this meeting.

Bungarz suggested that the work group established at a prior WLS meeting to update the WLS work plan be given the charge to re-evaluate that WLS' vision, mission and goals and come back in April with recommended action items for the future work of the WLS.

Bungarz noted the members of the previously established work group and asked if anyone else wanted to serve on it. Vance Russell, Jim Patterson and Ajay Singh said that they would also be willing to serve on the work group. **Bungarz** asked Trott and Chamberlin to staff the work group. The work group now includes:

Al Medvitz
Brian Leahy
Jeff Sutton
Olen Zirkle/Chris Leininger
Vance Russell
Ajay Singh
Jim Patterson

Bungarz asked if there were any thoughts about changes needed to the WLS structure and process. **Remick** suggested that form should follow function, so the work group just charged with coming up with recommendations for future WLS work should also address Subcommittee structural and process issues.

There was a consensus to direct the work group to meet before the April 7 WLS meeting and be prepared on April 7 to report recommendations for future WLS direction as well as any necessary changes in WLS structure and process.

6. Ecosystem Restoration Program PSP Update

Chamberlin reported on the January meeting of the ERS meeting where four non-agency WLS members were in attendance to participate in a discussion of the \$20 million PSP. **Chamberlin** repeated his presentation on the PSP that he used at the January ERS meeting. He stressed that the Ecosystem Restoration Program has

historically implemented its program in part through voluntary, on-farm projects, better known as “wildlife friendly agriculture.” **Sutton** wondered that if this were the case, then why are there still so many people unhappy with Ecosystem Restoration Program implementation. **Krug** suggested that the WLS can be a place for examining the sources of discontent among Sutton’s stakeholders.

Bundy observed that \$20 million is not a lot of funding for doing many of the kinds of projects that WLS recommended be done. **Trott** noted that the language in Proposition 50 is that *not less than* \$20 million be spent in support for projects that assist growers to integrate ecosystem restoration into their farming operations. **Chamberlin** said that the WLS could weigh in with CALFED on that matter.

Geyer wondered from where in CALFED’s budget the funds in excess of \$20 million would come. **Leininger** suggested that the additional funds could come from the State Water Resources Control Board’s remaining Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program funds. **Leininger** also suggested that WLS could recommend a future bond measure for working landscapes projects on agricultural land.

Leininger wondered if the two-part PSP recommended by WLS to help with local capacity-building was still a possibility. **Chamberlin** said that a decision had been made by ERP to not do more than one PSP for the \$20 million.

Medvitz asked if landowners would be able to apply for the Proposition 50 \$20 million PSP. **Remick** suggested that the details of the PSP, such as multiple cycles or who could apply in response to the PSP are details that the WLS needs to work on and develop recommendations to address. She said that Ecosystem Restoration Program priorities may actually be more important for the WLS to work on than the structure of the PSP. For example, she asked if the PSP should focus on supporting projects that monitor the impacts of water transfers on on-farm wetland benefits. **Sutton** responded that that was not a good example as such impacts of water transfers should be addressed using Water Transfer Program or EWA Program funds, not ERP funds. **Leininger** added that water transfer impacts include both agricultural and habitat impacts. She suggested that the impact of water transfers on working landscapes is a subject for CALFED science; the WLS could present the Independent Science Board with working landscapes science hypothesis and questions.

Russell expressed concerns that the Proposition 50 \$20 million could be diverted to other uses. He suggested that the WLS prepare a letter to BDPAC expressing its support for using the \$20 million to fund integrating habitat restoration on agricultural lands, as was intended by the voters.

Bungarz proposed that staff work with Russell to put together a letter for his signature, circulate it among those present at this meeting for approval and then submit for his signature and transmittal to BDPAC. He said that the letter should express WLS’ support for moving the PSP forward to use the \$20 million consistent with the WLS’

“Framework” recommendations. He said that the WLS “Framework” recommendations should be attached to the letter.

There was consensus among the Subcommittee to prepare and send the letter prior to the next BDPAC meeting.

7. Ecosystem Restoration Multi-Year Program Plan

Bungarz noted that it was almost time to adjourn the meeting, but that the final agenda item hadn't been addressed. He asked that Subcommittee comments on the Ecosystem Restoration Program draft Multiple-Year Program Plan be handled by e-mail. He requested that Subcommittee members send their comments on the Ecosystem Restoration Program Multi-Year Program Plan to Chamberlin who could then compile them as a WLS comment letter to be circulated among WLS members for approval, and eventually sent to him for his signature and transmittal to the Ecosystem Restoration Program. There was consensus to try to handle WLS comments on the ERP multiple-year program plan this way.

8. Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) Recommendations – Next Steps

Bungarz announced that the PILT Work Group had met prior to today's WLS meeting to go over changes to the PILT report proposed by CBDA staff. He said that the Work Group agreed to the proposed changes and would report on them at the April WLS meeting. He noted that the PILT report would have been mailed to BDPAC before the WLS' next meeting, but that there would still be time for WLS to advise him before he gives the PILT presentation to BDPAC at its April meeting. He said that, at worse, if WLS has any problems with the changes to the PILT report, the item can be pulled from the BDPAC April agenda.

9. Public Comment

None offered.

10. Next meeting date and agenda – The WLS will meet next on April 7 at its regular location and time.

Meeting Participants

Burt Bundy, Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum
Denny Bungarz, Working Landscapes Subcommittee Co-Chair; Member, Glenn County
Board of Supervisors
Paul Buttner, California Rice Commission
Casey Walsh Cady, CDFA
Jay Chamberlin, CBDA, Ecosystem Restoration Program
Aaron Ferguson, Northern California Water Association
Bill Geyer, Resource Landowners Coalition
Luana Kiger, USDA-NRCS
Mike Krug, CDFA
Chris Leininger, Ducks Unlimited
Brian Leahy, CARCD
Al Medvitz, McCormack Sheep and Grain, Solano County
Vickie Newlin, CBDA, Sacramento Valley Regional Representative
Jim Patterson, Colusa County RCD
Vance Russell, Audubon
Carolyn Remick, Sustainable Conservation
Ajay Singh, Glenn County RCD
Jeff Sutton, Family Water Alliance
Ken Trott, CDFA

Attachment I

Working Landscapes Subcommittee March 10, 2005 Meeting Summary

Date: March 10, 2005

To: Working Landscapes Subcommittee
Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee

From: Subcommittee Staff

In January 2005, Subcommittee Co-Chair, Denny Bungarz asked the Subcommittee's staff to interview a sampling of Subcommittee members about the direction of the Subcommittee. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain Subcommittee public stakeholder satisfaction with the past work of the Subcommittee as well as its current direction. In addition, the interviews were conducted to gauge satisfaction with the structure and meetings of the Subcommittee. Finally, it was intended that the interviews would help point towards priorities for the future work of the Subcommittee.

Sixteen non-agency stakeholders of the Subcommittee were selected for interviews. Interviewees were selected to reflect the diversity of interests on the Subcommittee. An additional screening criterion was the length and consistency of participation on the Subcommittee.

Following are a few of the major themes that surfaced from the interviews. Next is a listing of the six questions asked of each interviewee, along with highlights of the responses to each question. Also, attached is the interview instrument used, including the six questions.

A full compilation the transcribed responses is available from staff. Staff conducting the interviews included Casey Walsh Cady and Ken Trott from the Department of Food and Agriculture, and Jay Chamberlin of the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program. Contact staff for copy of the full compilation of interview responses at (916) 657-4956.

RESULTS OF WORKING LANDSCAPES SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Performance and Future Directions of Working Landscapes Subcommittee

Big Themes:

- The Subcommittee has provided value as a forum of bringing diverse CALFED stakeholders together who have a common interest in the “working landscape.” The Subcommittee has produced meaningful products, including recommendations on funding for “projects that assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration,” and payment in-lieu-of-taxes. It also serves as a forum for information sharing about successful approaches to address agricultural and environmental concerns, tracking the activities of CALFED, and as a channel for providing input to CALFED (e.g., In-Delta Storage, Finance Plan).
- The Subcommittee started strong, but now seems to lack clear purpose and goals. The Subcommittee could do a better job of choosing and tackling concrete tasks consistent with its mission and purpose. While the Subcommittee appears to have had an impact on CALFED, participants may feel that the impact is limited.
- The Subcommittee’s structure is, in general acceptable. However, there is some concern that the Subcommittee’s “looseness” in attendance and how it conducts its business degrades its ability to function effectively. Specifically, because there are no appointed members, there is typically a different mix of participants at each meeting, which can disrupt continuity and result in shifts in direction or a rehashing of the same material from one meeting to the next.
- Subcommittee meetings are well run, but agenda items need to tie together better and support more focused goals and action items of the Subcommittee.

HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVIEW RESULTS BY QUESTION

1. Why do/did you attend the WLS meetings?

- To be sure that rural and agricultural interests have a voice in CALFED.
- There is a lack of rural representation in CALFED and rural people have a lot to offer that hasn't been heard.
- To learn about CALFED and how it affects my constituency and members.
- To identify and resolve conflicts resulting from CALFED implementation on the working landscape.
- To share with CALFED decision makers the benefits of ranching and farming for the environmental goals CALFED hopes to accomplish.
- To have a chance to help mold CALFED policy and program implementation.
- The Subcommittee is a good forum for those interested in "working landscapes" to connect with each other, particularly those from the agricultural industry and the conservation community.
- The Subcommittee is one of the only CALFED Subcommittees with a tie to, or focus on agriculture.
- The Subcommittee is a good group of people where good information on agricultural issues pertinent to CALFED is available, and where it is easy for anyone to participate.

2. *In your opinion, what have been the main accomplishments or benefits of the WLS?*

- The recent workshop on the Finance Plan, though late in the process, was a good opportunity for agricultural stakeholders. If done in a timely fashion, this kind of opportunity for learning and input is a good thing for the Subcommittee to do.
- Good discussions of issues pertaining to working landscapes, but that need to be brought down to specific actions.
- Professional learning about strategies and approaches to conservation.
- The Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes recommendations.
- Recommendations on the agricultural component of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Proposal Solicitation Package (\$20 million+ from Proposition 50).

- Being a squeaky wheel within CALFED on behalf of those on the working landscape to integrate working landscape concepts into ecosystem restoration; raising the visibility of working landscape issues.
- Informative case study presentations from those doing working landscapes work.
- The Subcommittee's charter documents – Local Partnerships Planning Process white paper, work plan and vision/mission document (Subcommittee description).

3. *In your opinion, has the Working Landscape Subcommittee taken on the right issues?*

- Yes, but not much progress; the Subcommittee has a ways to go; not many accomplishments. Need action-oriented agenda items. Need to refocus and prioritize work plan.
- The discussions seem repetitious and too big picture, and there doesn't seem to be much progress.
- The Subcommittee needs to keep abreast of, and take on the issue of water user fees.
- The Subcommittee could work on documenting the contributions of agriculture to the goals of CALFED; i.e., the work already occurring on the landscape with and without CALFED funding.
- Recommendations on the agricultural component of the ERP PSP was a "right issue."
- Need to focus on getting agencies to collaborate more to support working landscape projects that involve partnerships with landowners; e.g., leveraging USDA conservation dollars with CALFED dollars. Need to champion local implementation.
- "Show and tell" parts of the agenda need to be related to focused actions that the Subcommittee has made priorities.
- PILT was a right issue, but the bigger issue is getting CALFED ERP projects to be able to "stand alone" in terms of mitigating economic, environmental and landowner impacts. Ecosystem Restoration and Working Landscapes Subcommittees should be required to be in agreement on ER projects that are funded.
- Need to find market mechanism to help growers have incentive and be rewarded for CALFED related public benefits they provide or could provide.

4. *How does the Subcommittee's structure work in your opinion?*

- The Subcommittee's structure works well; like the open and accessible nature of meetings due to the "anybody who attends is a member" structure of the Subcommittee.
- Major problem is that due to the fluid nature of the membership, there seems to be a different mix of people at each meeting, which requires going back over old material to catch people up. The Subcommittee structure does seem to contribute to a lack of continuity.
- An alternative could be a hybrid to the current structure where members are appointed to secure a more committed desired representation, but meetings are conducted as they are now; i.e., open participation.
- Need two co-chairs to help give structure and focus to discussions.
- No concerns regarding balance of agency versus non-agency participation, but agency staff should refrain from interfering with the free flow of ideas.
- Participation has declined; need everyone there. US Fish and Wildlife Service should be attending.
- Might consider merging Subcommittee with another CALFED Subcommittee such as the Watershed Subcommittee where there are common interests.
- Need better interaction with the Ecosystem Restoration Subcommittee.

5. *What do you think of Working Landscape Subcommittee Meetings?*

- Meetings are run well and the format is good. Agency reports need to be more focused to issues of interest to the Subcommittee's charter, shorter, and use less inside lingo that all can understand.
- What about holding a series of meetings in each of the CALFED regions to listen to working landscapes stakeholder concerns or ideas about CALFED implementation?
- Hold regional meetings and then one large annual meeting each year.
- Any presentations should support priority action items on the agenda.
- Hold meetings less frequently.

6. *Anything else you want to say about WLS?*

- Agriculture needs to do a better job of telling its story. Perhaps WLS could focus on putting together a compilation of stories about how private landowners are contributing to CALFED goals, including those efforts supported by CALFED.
- Need greater buy-in on the principals of working landscapes from other CALFED programs, including their willingness to work with WLS.
- WLS should work on an annual action plan over the next few meetings with a strong focus on no “redirected” impacts.
- Continue to be interested in the issue of agricultural land conversion as it related to CALFED.
- What can WLS to help CALFED be more accountable on its actions and expenditures with respect to the restoration of species?
- Need greater participation on the part of growers on WLS.
- Interested in North Delta wildlife and how growers could be paid to grow wildlife. Need to facilitate landowner participation in CALFED implementation goals.
- WLS could suggest future research that should be done to document benefits and costs of working landscapes approaches.