

Meeting Summary
California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC)
Working Landscapes Subcommittee (WLS)
July 7, 2005; 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Working Landscapes Subcommittee web site:

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

Key Follow-Up Items

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>	<u>Completed yet?</u>
1. Subcommittee rep attend next Watershed SC	Trott	Yes
2. Subcommittee chair attend next ERP SC	Bungarz or Russell	Yes
3. Submit further comments on WLS SC membership to Trott	All	None received
4. Reconvene PILT Workgroup	Bungarz or Trott	No

1. Introductions

Co-Chair **Denny Bungarz** convened the Subcommittee meeting at 9:10 A.M. with introductions.

2. Review of June 2, 2005 Meeting Summary

Jeannie Blakeslee noted that there was an error on page one of the meeting summary with respect to her Department of Conservation agency report; the potential easement referenced is actually in Butte County, not Glenn County, as indicated in the summary. The June 2, 2005 Subcommittee meeting summary was approved by consensus, as corrected.

3. Chair's Report

There was no report from the Chair.

4. Agency Reports

Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum – **Bev Anderson** announced that the Forum will be hosting a landowner incentives workshop in Willows on Thursday, July 28, 2005.

Central Delta Water Agency – **Tom Zuckerman** announced that he is working on a "vision for the Delta" forum for next June (2006). He said that the forum was inspired by Lester Snow's recent comments about California's water needs, and will be similar to the forum that the Subcommittee hosted on increase in Delta exports in Stockton in 2004.

Zuckerman also announced that the University of Pacific is developing a dispute resolution effort, focusing on natural resource conflicts among agricultural, urban and wildlife conservation groups. He said that people interested in the effort should contact him.

California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G) – **Dave Zezulak** reported on the Ecosystem Restoration Program Multiple Year Program Plan (MYPP). He announced that the Ecosystem Restoration Subcommittee would be meeting jointly with the Water Supply Subcommittee on the Environmental Water Account element of the MYPP on July 14, 2005.

California Bay Delta Authority (CBDA) – **Jay Chamberlin** updated the Subcommittee on the CALFED program refocusing effort. He announced that there would be a joint BDPAC/CBDA workshop on program refocusing on July 14, 2005, from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. at CBDA headquarters. Chamberlin also distributed the latest CBDA *Science in Action* newsletter, which features CBDA-supported projects that aid native grasses through rangeland management and other tools. Chamberlin suggested that the Subcommittee may want to consider the value of a Working Landscapes newsletter.

Resources Agency – **Patrick Wright** added to Chamberlin's report that, as part of the CBDA refocusing, discussions have touched on the roles of some subcommittees, such as the Watershed and Working Landscapes Subcommittees. **Wright** reported on a July 6 meeting between Resources Agency Secretary Chrisman, Food Agriculture Secretary AG Kawamura, CBDA Acting Executive Director, Joe Grindstaff, and others, that touched on working lands topics, including the potential roles of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee. He relayed to the Subcommittee that out of that July 6 meeting came the proposal that options be developed for elevating the Working Landscapes Subcommittee beyond CALFED to statewide status. He said that **Ken Trott** and **Jay Chamberlin** have been tasked to come up with options structures and roles for such an elevated entity. **Trott** noted that one option could be a reinventing of the Resource Conservation Commission (Division 9 of the Public Resources Code), which used to be the state and federal agency venue for promoting working lands stewardship through resource conservation districts. **Wright** suggested that someone from the Subcommittee attend the next Watershed Subcommittee to learn about how that subcommittee is addressing the topic of its future. **Blakeslee** asked how Subcommittee members could have input on the development of these options. **Wright** replied that there will be opportunities for input. **Al Medvitz** suggested that an elevated Working Landscapes Subcommittee should also address the issues of international trade as part of the package of the economic sustainability of working lands.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – **Luana Kiger** announced that the Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up that was just completed had a very good sign-up of landowners in the five targeted CSP watersheds in California. She said that there will be a decision by the NRCS Chief by the end of the week on approving the sign-ups.

California Coalition for Food and Farming – **Claudia Reid** reported on the Coalition's recent workshop on the 2007 Farm Bill. Reid pointed out that the primary purpose of the workshop was education of interested stakeholders about Farm Bill issues. She said that one of the outcomes was the decision to work on the future farm bill as part of a coalition of nutrition, trade, energy, food safety and conservation interests. She

announced that there will be a follow-up Farm Bill workshop in November where the focus will be on initiating work on issues where there are a convergence priorities and positions on the next Farm Bill.

5. ERP's Proposed Priorities for Projects that Integrate Ecosystem Activities with Agricultural Operations

Chamberlin reported on the progress of the Guidelines for development of a PSP (Proposal Solicitation Package) for "projects that assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration." He noted moving forward with a solicitation in the fall has support from officials at the highest levels. He announced that the staff recommendation was to have a focused PSP (not part of a big package of different ERP grants). He reiterated that any ERP PSP must focus on key CALFED Multi-Species Conservation Strategy species.

Chamberlin reviewed the draft solicitation priorities with the Subcommittee, noting five priority topics, nine priority conservation practices, and proposed geographic focus areas that staff propose be emphasized in a solicitation. (The geographic areas highlighted in the draft guidelines include: Butte, Colusa, Sutter, and American River Basins for Giant Garter Snake conservation; other priority areas in the draft include the Sacramento River, Cosumnes River, Yolo Bypass and Calhoun Cut, Toulumne River, Merced River, the Grasslands area of Fresno and Merced Counties, Napa River, and Petaluma River.)

Chamberlin pointed out that the proposed solicitation guidelines is consistent with the Subcommittee's 2003 PSP framework recommendations, including prioritizing permit coordination and regulatory assurances; technical and financial assistance to benefit species; farmland protection -- buffering of restoration projects from urbanization; among others. Other desirable features in the solicitation include landscape scale projects; locally-based partnerships; benefits for landowners; multiple objectives; and, investment durability (e.g., secured by easements or long-term agreements.)

Chamberlin explained that \$17.9 million of the \$20 million (the balance is in fund administration costs) in Proposition 50 that was set aside for assisting farmers integrate ecosystem restoration on-farm is expected to be made available in the coming year, with approximately half of that amount for the subject PSP. The proposed solicitation guidelines will go before the ERP Subcommittee for review next week and then to BDPAC and CBDA for approval on August 10th and 11th, respectively.

Chamberlin said that ERP plans to release the PSP by September 19, 2005 for a 60-day solicitation period and then make final proposal selections within six months of the PSP. He said that the timing of the PSP is intended to help local applicants bring together USDA Farm Bill Conservation funds with the Proposition 50 funds. Following the PSP solicitation, Chamberlin said that there will be regional and state level proposal review panels, including a scientific review panel.

Reid asked if BIOS groups would qualify as applicants under the PSP. **Chamberlin** said that the focus will be on local non-governmental organizations (funds can also be made available to local, state, and federal governments, Indian tribes, and universities, among others). Under Proposition 50, however, grants cannot be given directly to private landowners.

Zuckerman emphasized that the science and other PSP review panels should be populated by people who understand working landscapes dynamics. **Medvitz** seconded Zuckerman's comment by suggesting that the panels include legal, economic, political science (regulatory issues) and agronomic expertise. **Clamurro** echoed Medvitz and Zuckerman's suggestions, adding that the review panels need to include expertise that is broader than just wildlife biology and includes agricultural expertise.

Delfino said that the multiple objectives emphasis of the draft PSP points to a need for project components that include an assessment of the economic impacts of various practices and actions on farmers and their communities.

Zeulak pointed out that getting the PSP evaluation criteria right is very important based on his experience with the ERP monitoring PSP. He suggested that the Subcommittee's comments on the PSP focus on the criteria to be used.

Medvitz asked if agricultural production associations or boards could qualify as non-governmental organizations that could submit proposals under the PSP. He suggested that the PSP be flexible enough to allow different kind of local entities to participate. He noted that there are more than just farmers using the working landscapes, including energy companies, road builders, miners, etc. He said that the PSP should be open for these groups to participate, too.

Cannon pointed out that the term "non-profit organization" is subject to confusion at this point in time. She said that the Attorney General is evaluating the definition and that to play it safe, applicants should be non-profit organizations incorporated in California.

Chamberlin asked that comments on the draft PSP be submitted to him as early as possible.

Russell asked the Subcommittee for direction with respect to commenting on the draft PSP. **Zuckerman** said that the Subcommittee needs to be vigilant in making sure the PSP remains consistent with the Subcommittee's recommendations. He pointed out the pressure that CBDA is currently under to direct funds to "big R" species conservation. There was consensus that the Subcommittee should provide comments to BDPAC at its August meeting. **Boren** suggested a letter be prepared with the Subcommittee's comments. **Ramirez** recommended that such a letter be directed to BDPAC Chair, Gary Hunt either prior to July 20 (when BDPAC agenda packet is distributed), or at the August 10th meeting. **Boren, Delfino** and **Russell** volunteered to form a work group to prepare a comment letter for the Subcommittee's consideration at its August 4th meeting. **Trott** said that he would capture the comments made during this meeting and

put together a first draft for the work group. **Walsh** said that she would get the draft PSP out to all Subcommittee members with a deadline to submit comments to the work group via Trott. **Zuckerman** said that the most important comment should be to keep the PSP focused on furthering collaborative restoration with private landowners via the working landscapes approach as described by the Subcommittee.

Blakeslee asked if there would be PSP workshops. **Chamberlin** said that there would once the PSP is released.

Bungarz and **Russell** said that they would confer over which of them would attend the next Ecosystem Restoration Program Subcommittee (ERS) meeting to represent Working Landscapes Subcommittee at ERS' discussion on the PSP.

6. Working Landscapes Subcommittee Priorities.

Blakeslee reported that the Priority Goal III work group of Cannon, Sutton, Anderson (for Bundy) and herself as staff support, met on June 21. She described the meeting as the "discovery" phase of the work group's efforts. She said that the work group will be assessing existing policy resources and bringing in outside experts where necessary. She noted that the work group will be looking at policies with regard to such issues as landowner assurances, and barriers landowners face in attempting to practice conservation and restoration. She said that the work group's next meeting will be in August.

Russell reported that the Priority Goal II work group, likewise, was unable to meet yet, but will meet on July 8.

Walsh said that while **Kiger** had to leave the meeting, she wanted to Walsh Cady to relay to the Subcommittee her interest in serving on work groups I and II.

Walsh said that she will be providing staff support to the Priority Goal I work group. She reported that the work group has not yet met. **Medvitz** said that he will be working with this work group to incorporate working landscapes ideas and expertise into scientific conferences such as the upcoming American Association for the Advancement of the Sciences (AAAS) and CALFED Science conferences.

7. Subcommittee Membership

Russell reported on Subcommittee comments he has received since the July meeting on subcommittee membership. He said that there seems to be a consensus for a smaller subcommittee membership of 10-15 core members. He said that of the suggested representation not currently reflected on the Subcommittee, he has contacted representative organizations to gauge their interest, and has found that there is willingness from them to participate actively as members. (Russell said that he had contacted Erik Vink with Trust for Public Lands, and Dennis Orthmeyer with CA Waterfowl Association.)

Russell noted that in light of Wright's earlier report that the Subcommittee is being considered for elevation to a statewide status, the Subcommittee may want to hold off on further membership consideration until its status becomes clearer. He said that a different role for the Subcommittee might require broadening membership to include the real estate, energy and other communities. **Blakeslee** suggested that an elevated Subcommittee may need to also include representatives from the development and housing industries. **Trott** noted that the Subcommittee already included representatives from one component of those industries in the form of the Resource Landowners Coalition. **Medvitz** supported Blakeslee's suggestion, pointing out that the recent American Farmland Trust Farm Bill conference included a surprising level of interest from the non-traditional interests. **Reid** agreed, observing that even the American Planners Association (primarily city and regional planning professionals) is paying attention to agricultural land use issues.

Russell said that if there are further comments on membership, particularly in light of the possible change in status of the Subcommittee, to get them to **Trott**.

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

Bungarz gave an overview of BDPAC's June meeting where the Subcommittee's PILT recommendations were considered. He reported that there were no substantive directions given to the Subcommittee on the recommendations. **Trott** suggested that rather than return to BDPAC in August, the PILT Work Group reconvene and explore with the CDBA legal staff specific actions under each recommendation that would be appropriate for BDPAC to take. **Trott** said that the BDPAC meetings through the year's end will be dominated by the CALFED refocusing exercise, and that the PILT recommendations would likely receive scant attention until the first of 2006. **Bungarz** agreed and said that he would reconvene the work group.

9. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Trott reported that CDFA has been working with CDF&G, USDA, the Wildlife Conservation Board and others on the feasibility of establishing a new or expanding California's existing, CREP, using Proposition 50 bond funds to provide the state's 20 percent match for the federal funds. **Trott** explained how a CREP works to provide landowners with incentives and assistance in setting aside marginal agricultural lands for conservation purposes. **Zuckerman** reminded the Subcommittee of its previous attempts to establish a CREP in the Delta and suggested that NRCS be involved early in the feasibility assessment. **Delfino** suggested that the Central Valley Joint Habitat Venture be engaged in the effort and invited **Trott** to attend the Venture's next meeting.

8. Public Comment

None offered.

9. Next meeting date and agenda – The WLS will meet next on August 4th. Agenda items will include the future of the Subcommittee; work group progress; and, PSP comments.

Meeting Participants

Bev Anderson, Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum
Jeannie Blakeslee, California Department of Conservation
Marina Brand, California Department of Fish and Game
Ashley Boren, Sustainable Conservation
Denny Bungarz, Co-Chair and Glenn County Supervisor
Casey Walsh Cady, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Tina Cannon, California Department of Fish and Game
Jay Chamberlin, California Bay Delta Authority, Ecosystem Restoration Program
Lori Clamurro, Delta Protection Commission
Kim Delfino, Defenders of Wildlife
Luana Kiger, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dean Kwasny, California Department of Fish and Game
Al Medvitz, California Farm Bureau Federation
Tim Ramirez, California Bay Delta Authority, Ecosystem Restoration Program
Claudia Reid, California Farms and Food Coalition
Vance Russell, Vice Chair and Audubon California
Ken Trott, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Patrick Wright, California Resources Agency
Dave Zezulak, California Department of Fish and Game
Tom Zuckerman, Central Delta Water Agency