



Seepage and Conveyance Technical Feedback Group
 Wednesday, July 6, 2011, 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
 San Luis Canal Company
 11704 Henry Miller Avenue, Dos Palos
 Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Roger Burnett	Bureau of Reclamation
Steve Chedester	San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority
Ali Forsythe	Bureau of Reclamation
Sarge Green	California Water Institute – RMC coordinator
Larry Harris	Wolfsen, Inc.
Katrina Harrison	Bureau of Reclamation
Randy Houk	Columbia Canal Company
Richie Iest	Landowner
Katie Lichty	Circlepoint
Bill Luce	Friant Water Authority
Mari Martin	SJR Resource Management Coalition
Palmer McCoy	San Luis Canal Company
Rod Meade	Restoration Administrator
David Mooney	Bureau of Reclamation
Patti Ransdell	CirclePoint
Dan Royer	Wolfsen, Inc
Monty Schmitt	NRDC
Brent Stearns	San Juan Ranch
Mike Stearns	Landowner CCID
Chris White	Central California Irrigation District
Beth Wrege	NOAA – National Marine Fisheries Service

Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Agenda

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

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss parcel groupings for projects and seek input from the group on how to select which areas should be the highest priority.

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 5: Reclamation will double check what is specified in the legislation but the group thought that right of first refusal was offered to the landowner.

- Dave Mooney confirmed that right of first refusal is offered to landowners

Item 6: Clarify language on seepage hotline calls

- Katrina Harrison reclassified requests for monitoring during floods as seepage hotline calls

Item 8: Clarify the transition between flood and interim flows

- Dave will discuss later in the meeting

Open action items:

- Item 1: Work plan for additional tensiometer work to develop more data on capillary fringe
 - Reclamation is reviewing the study. More specificity may need to be added.
- Item 2: Provide Monty and Chris with the excel files that the graphics are based on
 - Profile plots will be incorporated into a deliverable given today
- Item 3: Add river mile stations to the river profile to link wells to locations
- 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
 - Discussions are underway with DWR
- Item 7: Make CDEC streamgauge information on river stage consistently report in elevation
 - A request for this has been made. However, Reclamation doesn't control all of the gages on CDEC so this request may take some time to complete.

2011 Interim Flows

Dave Mooney provided an overview of the 2011 Interim Flows. Reclamation is still releasing flood flows (as indicated in the hydrographs included in the presentation). Discussion about the current flood flow releases included information about:

- The group noted that the Kings River is still influencing the amount of flows in the system. Groundwater tables are high and above existing thresholds.
- Interim flows will be held below thresholds. When other sources of water exceed the threshold, interim flows will be held to no flow in that reach. When the other sources of water cease, interim flows will be held to a level that allows drainage. There was discussion about whether 50 cfs below Sack Dam would be low enough to keep groundwater levels below the threshold.
- It was noted that flows in the Eastside Bypass are higher than flows at Sack Dam as other local streams are providing inflow.
- The question of whether the Restoration Administrator or Army Corps of Engineers flow requirements prevailed during the period of higher flows was raised. The Army Corps of Engineers controls flood releases.
- It was noted that the San Luis Canal Company will require a period of no flows in order to implement needed repairs at Sack Dam.
- A landowner asked if Reclamation has enough monitoring wells installed to start mapping lines of equal elevation to compare the east and west sides on drainage to see what area will drain out fastest. This could help in the prioritization of seepage management projects.
- Katrina noted that a fifth round of monitoring well installation by Reclamation is slated to begin in the fall. Reclamation is collecting locations right now and is encouraging property owners that think they have a concern and are interested in a monitoring well to let Reclamation know.
- There was discussion about the need to find a careful balance during the transition from Flood Flows to Interim Flows. It would be a good idea to reinstate the weekly operator meetings in order to ensure careful coordination among affected agencies/water users.

Action Item (Dave): Restart weekly operators calls to discuss transition of flows

Parcel Groupings for Further Evaluation

Katrina Harrison led the group in a discussion to encourage input on the parcel groupings for further evaluation. Parcels were grouped based on ownership, topography, infrastructure, level of flow where impacts may occur, and soil texture.

The group walked through the river sections and discussed what was known about specific parcels. Some additional evaluation elements were suggested. They include:

- Crop type
- Evaluate monitoring wells near the older sloughs. Check the piping off of sloughs - water that is leaving the river and going down the old slough channel.

- Evaluate more restrictive thresholds for some wells
- Properties with known pending conversions to permanent crops

The information distributed at the meeting – the Book of Parcels - and future input that Reclamation hopes to gain will help to identify the sites of potential seepage projects. Data collected in the Book of Parcels includes location information, locations identified as historical seepage locations, groundwater monitoring data, seepage observed from 2011 floods, elevation analysis and 1D hydraulic modeling.

There was discussion regarding the availability of funding for these projects and the potential timing and sequence of the individual projects. These projects will likely not be put in any specific order because it is not known when specific projects may be ready to begin construction.

A meeting attendee asked if the parcel groupings have been tied to APN's yet. Reclamation hasn't tied the parcel groups to APNs yet, but can do so in the future.

Action Item: Add crop type to parcel criteria

Draft High Priority Project Locations

Katrina Harrison led a discussion soliciting input on the draft first tier priority locations that Reclamation has identified.

First tier priorities are parcels with observed surface ponding in the fields, observed historical seepage, and/or the nearest groundwater well with the shallowest groundwater well above 4 feet.

There was a question about whether or not landowners with property in the parcel groupings had been contacted yet. Landowners have not been contacted. This is a very preliminary draft and alterations will be made based on comments received.

Reclamation wants to know if there are other criteria for selecting priority parcel groups that should be considered in its evaluation. The group identified additional criteria. That criterion includes:

- Basic assessments of property values.
- Property ownership (district property, out of district property, private owners) will influence the data

Action Item: A list of landowners will be provided to RMC on July 29 prior to posting information on the website. If it is okay to post landowner information on the website, the complete data collected by Reclamation will be available. Comments are due back by August 12.

Information and Data Exchange

Dave led the discussion for this agenda item that 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.

During this session, there was a discussion about where seepage water would go once projects were installed. A strategy will be needed to address this issue and it will be important for the relevant stakeholders and agencies to have an agreement regarding disposition of seepage water before projects are built. During the discussion, it was noted that there have been a number of encroachment permits along the Kings River for interceptor drains. It would be helpful to have a general discussion with Regional Board staff for that area about what type of information they look for when granting such permits.

- *Action Item:* Sarge will have a general conversation with Kings River area Regional Board staff about what types of information they like to see on encroachment permits.

Next Steps and Follow-through

Next meeting will be Thursday, August 4, 2011 at 1pm at the San Luis Canal Company office located at 11704 Henry Miller Avenue, Dos Palos. The following meeting will be on Thursday, September 8, 2011 at 9 am.

Action Items:

- Restart weekly operators calls to discuss transition of flows
- Add crop type to parcel criteria
- A list of landowners will be provided to RMC on July 29 prior to posting information on the website. If it is okay to post landowner information on the website, complete data collected by Reclamation will be available. **Comments are due back by August 12.**
- Confirm times and locations of upcoming meetings
- Post deliverables from this meeting on website upon approval from landowners via RMC.
- Sarge will have a general conversation with Regional Board staff about what types of information they like to see on encroachment permits.