San Joaquin River Restoration Program
Seepage & Conveyance Technical Feedback Meeting
Thursday, February 10, 2011
San Luis Canal Company
11704 Henry Miller Avenue, Dos Palos

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Shelly Abajian	US Senator Diane Feinstein
Daniel Burns	Nickel Family LLC
Steve Chedester	Exchange Contractors
DeeDee D'Adamo	Office of Representative Dennis Cardoza
Ali Forsythe	Reclamation
Sarge Green	California Water Institute – RMC coordinator
Larry Harris	Wolfsen
Katrina Harrison	Reclamation
Steve Haugen	Mitigation Land Trust
Randy Houk	Columbia Canal Company
Chase Hurley	San Luis Canal Company
Stephen Lee	Reclamation
Bill Luce	Friant Water Authority
Mari Martin	SJR Resource Management Coalition
Palmer McCoy	HMRD
David Mooney	Reclamation
Craig Moyle	MWH
James Nickel	Nickel Family LLC
Patti Ransdell	Circlepoint
Paul Romero	DWR
Daniel Royer	Wolfsen
Monty Schmitt	Natural Resources Defense Council
Scott Skinner	Wolfsen
Chris White	Central California Irrigation District
Michael Willis	4W Ranch

Attendance via Conference Line:

Scott McBain	Technical Advisory Committee Member
Rod Meade	Restoration Administrator

Introductions, Meeting Objectives and Agenda
Charles Gardiner, facilitator, opened the meeting with introductions and the group reviewed the agenda. There were no comments from meeting attendees on the agenda or the purpose of the meeting.

Technical Feedback Group Purpose and Charter
Charles Gardiner provided an overview of the group's purpose and updated Charter. The discussion included information on process and decision making, the Seepage Management and Monitoring Plan, discussion topics for the meetings and upcoming milestones. Participants asked when the group would discuss the claims process and seepage avoidance projects. Charles Gardiner noted that the claims process is a topic for the February 22 meeting and the seepage avoidance projects process would be introduced in today's meeting with substantive discussions beginning in March.

Action Item Review and Update
Katrina Harrison provided an update on the status of action items.

Action Item #2 Cross Sections
The group agreed that slide #2 (Cross Sections) provided useful information. During the discussion of slide #2 it was noted that it would be useful to show the transect data from October 1, 2010. During the discussion of the transect data, Dave Mooney indicated that all transect data will be included in the Annual Technical Report.

Action Items #5-7 Well Atlas Data
Katrina Harrison reviewed the updated well atlas information. Updated well diagrams (through 4/2010) are available on the website. The screen depths may be missing from some CCID well data and from the wells installed in November 2010. That information will be added when the well atlas is updated.

The threshold data diagram from the well atlas was reviewed. There will be a longer discussion about thresholds at the next meeting.

Action Item #8 Priority Wells
There was further discussion about appropriate locations for priority wells. It was noted that Reach 3, on the west side of the "c" on slide #20 would be a good place for a priority well. There was discussion about adding a priority well on the Mike Willis property upstream of the Nickel Property.

Action Item #9 Profiles
It was suggested that date and flow rate information be added to the profile information in slide #22.

Action Item #10 Review and consider information in the UC IPM Report and update the root zone buffer
The Program team has the report and will address this action item in the next meeting.

Open action items

- Develop operating plan to incorporate impact of soil temperature on thresholds—The data specific to the impact of evaporation on crops is still under evaluation

- The raw data from the hand auger field work on the capillary fringe will be provided in late February or early March

- The work plan for the additional tensiometer work to develop more data on capillary fringe is still in development

- Survey crews are updating CCID well evaluations to tie them to a specific datum

Action Items
1. Add a priority well in Reach 3 (near the "c" in "Reach" on Slide #20) – Katrina
2. Discuss adding a well upstream or downstream of Nickel Farms with Chris White and Chase Hurley – Katrina, Chris, and Chase
3. Add date and flow rate to profile graphs (Slide #22) – Katrina
4. Provide Monty and Chris with the excel files that the graphs are based on – Katrina
5. Add river mile station to river profile to link wells to locations – Katrina

Recent High Flows
Stephen Lee reviewed the data collected during the recent high flows. The process for monitoring and reporting during the high flow period was discussed. There was a question about whether or not the rating curve for flow shifts will be updated.

Operating Criteria and Triggers
Dave Mooney and Katrina Harrison walked the group through the operating criteria for the interim flows and triggers for evaluation and actions. The group discussed the triggers Reclamation uses to evaluate flow impacts and the appropriate actions to be taken (flow bench evaluations, daily flow evaluations and seepage hotline calls). There was a brief discussion of what the claims process is expected to be. There will be further discussions on this topic at future meetings.

Flow Bench Evaluations
The flow bench evaluations appraise both flows and water surface elevations to predict any potential impact to thresholds before changing flows.

There was a discussion about the accuracy of the monitoring wells. The location of a well might not accurately reflect the true impact of the flows in the fields. Reclamation uses site visits to confirm actual field conditions.

Meeting attendees discussed their desire to see a reaction to specific seepage concerns immediately. They voiced a preference that Reclamation not rely only on reaching a pre-defined threshold. There were questions about what action would take place if a real time threshold was exceeded.

It was noted that it would be a good idea to contact specific landowners in case groundwater levels increase in a specific area. The landowner may be undertaking an action (e.g. pre-irrigating) that would raise the groundwater levels.

Meeting attendees asked what the basis would be to adjust the flow thresholds. Reclamation indicated that the threshold triggers would warrant a response and further evaluation.

It was suggested that simple metric be used to determine interim flow levels – set the river stage no higher than the elevation of the threshold at each priority well.

Seepage Hotline Process
It was suggested that Reclamation include an agronomist in any seepage hotline response and site visit.

Information & Data Exchange
The group discussed cropping patterns and irrigation practices. A participant noted that irrigation practices on private lands should not influence the thresholds. Cropping patterns change and vary – the thresholds should be protective of landowners' flexibility to plant different crops in response to market demands and pricing.

The locations of poorly drained soils are included in county soil survey data, which is available on the web. CCID (and other water districts) have crop and irrigation data for each field for each year.

It was recommended that Well 92 be replaced.

Seepage Avoidance Projects
Ali Forsythe reviewed the approach for evaluating and implementing potential seepage avoidance projects. The potential projects include both real estate actions and physical projects. There was a discussion about the different considerations for seepage avoidance projects. Projects will be built to handle full restoration flows. There are land side projects and in-river projects.

Meeting attendees were interested in the prioritization of these considerations. There was also a brief discussion on the potential impact the State Lands Commission process may have on the feasibility of certain projects. A participant noted that the operation and maintenance costs of

projects should also be considered. There was a discussion about the appropriate sequence of construction of projects and necessary infrastructure to support the projects.

The cost of obtaining environmental clearances was discussed. If Reclamation is paying for the project then they would assume the responsibility for the cost of obtaining the environmental clearances. It was brought to the group's attention that there is cultural resources survey work about to begin along 25 miles of the river channel. It was recommended that Reclamation explore partnering on that work to expand the scope to go out beyond the levee to collect information that would help evaluate projects. The cost would only be $8,000.

Action Item

1. 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 – Chris and Ali.

Next Steps

The next meetings are currently scheduled for:

February 22, 2011
8:30-12:30 at the San Luis Canal Company, 11704 Henry Miller Avenue, Dos Palos

March 23, 2011
8:30-12:30 at the San Luis Canal Company, 11704 Henry Miller Avenue, Dos Palos

Compiled Action Items

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5. Add river mile station to river profile to link wells to locations – Katrina
6. Explore partnering on the cultural resources survey work to expand the scope to go out beyond the levee to collect information that would help evaluate projects – Chris and Ali