

TEHAMA COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION
DISTRICT MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 26, 2005

Present: Directors': Charles Willard; Ross Turner; Ron Warner; Gregg Avilla. Absent: Director George Russell. Also present: Ernie Ohlin, Water Resources Manager; Mike Berry from Department of Fish & Game; Mary Marshall and Dave Gore, Bureau of Reclamation; Chip Stalica, PG&E; Larry Lucas, Sharon Gilmore and Toni Knight of the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy; Vickie Newlin, Bay-Delta Authority; and Eric Batton, concerned citizen/landowner.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Charles Willard at 8:29 a.m.
2. **APPROVAL OF JUNE 28, 2005 MINUTES:** Motion by Director Turner, Second by Director Warner and carried by those present to approve the June 28, 2005 minutes. 4-0 with 1 absent.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Burt Bundy announced the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum will hold a landowner incentive workshop on Thursday, July 28, 2005, in Willows at the Monday Afternoon Club from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Ernie Ohlin announced the Northern Sacramento Valley Water Forum will hold a workshop regarding the Lower Tuscan. The meeting will be held on September 29, 2005 in Chico at the Sierra Nevada Brewery.
4. **CLAIMS:** Motion by Director Turner, Second by Director Avilla to approve the claims in the amount of \$738.46. Carried 4-0 with 1 absent.
5. **LOS MOLINOS COMMUNITY SERVICE DISTRICT - AB3030 MOU:** Ernie Ohlin discussed that in the efforts for outreach on the AB3030 Groundwater Management Plan, staff met with Los Molinos Community Service District who agreed to become a signatory with the Tehama County AB3030 Groundwater Management Plan. Current agencies signed on to the Plan are: Corning Water District; El Camino Irrigation; Rio Alto Water District; Deer Creek Irrigation District; the City of Red Bluff; the City of Corning and City of Tehama.

6. **BATTLE CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT:** Ernie Ohlin reviewed that the Tehama County Board of Supervisors received a letter from the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy requesting support for the Battle Creek Restoration Project. Staff arranged with those involved to make a presentation to this Board regarding the project. At a future date, the Board of Supervisors will hear the matter for possible approval or recommendations.

Mike Berry, Senior Fish Biologist with Department of Fish & Game, presented information regarding the purpose of the Salmon and Steelhead restoration project, to show support for the project and prepare the Tehama County Supervisors for making a decision on the request for a letter of support.

The species most concerned with, Mr. Berry stated are federally threatened spring-run Chinook Salmon, State and Federally listed endangered winter-run Salmon and State listed threatened Steelhead. Currently, spring-run Steelhead occur in the drainage and with the cool spring year-round water, considered unique. The spring-run Chinook are there all summer and spawn in the fall. The Steelhead come in the winter and Battle Creek also has potential to restore winter-run, mainly on the north fork, because winter-run spawn during May thru August, and need the cool temperatures through the summer months. It is believed the only population of winter-run Chinook in the world is in the main-stem Sacramento River.

The project would allow improvements of fish populations through a series of removal of dams, addition of ladders and screens to prevent the young fish from going out into the diversions. The improvement of these populations would improve the reliability of the State and Federal water projects because they are confined when they may operate because of the endangered fish. The closer we come to de-listing these fish, the more reliable these projects will become. The purpose is to restore approximately 42 miles of habitat in Battle Creek and an additional 6 miles of tributaries while minimizing the loss of energy through the Hydroelectric Project.

The components are: removing five hydropower diversion dams; installation of screens and ladders; increase the base flow; dedication of water diversion rights for instream purposes at dam removal sites. It also eliminates the mixing between the North Fork Battle Creek and the South Fork Battle Creek which is important to winter-run.

Chip Stalica of PG&E, discussed the locations of the diversion dams to be removed and the flow release related to the project. PG&E was not going to lose any power houses, but the amount of water diverted to the powerhouse would reduce. Approximately 28% of power generation would be lost, but all powerhouses would remain in tact.

South Diversion Dam will be taken out and no longer divert water along the south canal. The canal will be either filled in or decommissioned. An important component is that the south powerhouse will still exist, but instead of dumping water back into the south fork of Battle Creek, a connector will be installed which will direct water into the downstream Inskip Canal. The water continues down the canal to Inskip powerhouse and that water will be intercepted and dumped into the Coleman Canal and no water will be put into south fork or Battle Creek. Continuing down stream, Coleman Dam goes away, so you have South Diversion, Coleman Diversion on the south fork, also a minor tributary of water we pick up from a spring at Soap Creek, which will go away also. Lower Ripley Creek feeder will go away too. On the north fork, the Wildcat Diversion Dam is the only dam to be removed up to Eagle Canyon. Eagle will be modified with a screen and ladder promoting passage to the fish. The North Battle Creek will remain in place, but receives a new screen and ladder.

Mr. Stalica reviewed the risks of not implementing the MOU Plan. Time is a key component. Battle Creek was chosen due to the cold spring water and the ability for fish to summer-over even during drought conditions assisting endangered species.

Mary Marshall, Bureau of Reclamation Project Manager, acknowledged Dave Gore, original Project Manager. Information on the project decision process was presented. Key goal was to restore Battle Creek to allow for endangered fish populations to increase and at the same time minimize the loss of hydropower production at the hydroelectric facilities.

Mary Marshall discussed the funding process. In 1999, after the MOU was signed, the Bureau received \$28 million in Federal funds. After design data collection, it was understood that more funding was needed. The California Bay Delta Authority (formally Calfed) wanted to review all information before providing additional funds. The final proposal submitted in March 2005 to the Ecosystem Restoration Program Selection Panel (ERP) to the California Bay Delta Authority will present a recommendation in September. If the decision is given for more money, the project implementation will be spring 2006 and completion is estimated in three years.

Sharon Gilmore, Watershed Coordinator with the Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy, informed the Director's that after issues have been resolved, the membership and the Conservancy Board voted to approve and support the project.

Larry Lucas, former Conservancy Board member, discussed issues that had been resolved, such as disease in the fish species, and felt the project should be supported. There are people that would like to see the eight-dam removal. If we had all the energy that is needed, it might be an alternative, but we do not have all the energy that we need. Opening up 48 miles of water to fish we don't have, our goal is to get the fish.

Director Avilla questioned the total cost of the project.

Mary Marshall answered that with PG&E contributing funds, in total approximately \$113 million.

Director Turner questioned if the diversion dam at Lake Red Bluff caused an obstacle for the fish in question, to pass, so as to get to Battle Creek.

Larry Lucas could not answer, but said there may be a delay.

Mike Berry added that of the primary species in Battle Creek focused on, since the re-operation of the Red Bluff diversion dam, about 100% of winter run are going above Red Bluff diversion dam. We are not really concerned about the winter run getting into Battle Creek if we know 100% are going above there.

Director Willard questioned that when PG&E takes up the energy generating position, how much is being paid for that?

Chip Stalica said, "Through this project, none." PG&E believes this is the best compromise to keep our hydroelectric facilities in tact. A penalty is paid by PG&E in the 28% reduction of power of a normal operating year, and funding is sought from another source, which is Calfed.

Vickie Newlin, Bay Delta Authority, commented that when this comes to the Authority, two issues need to be reviewed. The first is firming of the amount of monies requested. In their request they have requested between \$55 and \$65 million. We want a firm number before approving the project. The second issue is a finalized certified environmental document is needed. When these come back to the Authority in September or October, these issues will be reviewed before a decision is made.

Eric Batton, 4,000 acre landowner, presented a letter to the Board for review. As fishermen, he supports the return of Salmon and Steelhead and is happy his land can offer such a unique habitat for fish. But, there are aspects of the project hard to support. First of all, as has been highlighted, the project started at \$28 million. The new figure is \$90 million of taxpayer monies. Environmental damage is also a factor. 40% of the construction budget will be spent around the Inskip Dam, which is on our land. In the document, it states there is no need to address any more land. Most of the project will occur on PG&E land. However, that is not accurate. 25 acres of our land is proposed to be used. Some is to carve a road out of the canyon wall, which is above the best fishing area and directly across from our lodge, on our land. That involves explosive damage and excavation of approximately 600,000 square feet of material which will be dumped on our land. I believe we have spoken to the project people, mostly engineers and site inspection people, allowing them on our land, but never have we been consulted. The only way we have received specifics have been through documents which have been slow to come out. Response was given to the EIS/EIR, but the request for funding was submitted before that was even done. The \$90 million will likely grow due to not taking into considerations the impacts, such as environmental on our land. I guess what I would ask of you is to think about the waste in this project. I have looked at similar projects in Oregon and Montana. Fish ladders on similar flows cost as much as one-tenth to one-third less. The tunnel, for diversion of water, is not based on any scientific data that the north water mixing with south water will cause these fish to stray. The drought time is only once in every 100-years. There is a lot of waste involved.

Mr. Batton introduced his Branch Manager, Lannie Johnson, and invited parties to visit his site and see what the project entails.

Ms. Marshall discussed the previous two property owners were involved in the process and discussions prior to the project development plan. We are planning to meet with Val Vaden of the Oasis Springs Fly Fishing Lodge and others address their concerns. As I mentioned, Reclamation, the MOU Agencies, recognize that there is construction involved in this and we want to work together to develop equitable solutions and are committed to do that.

Vice Chairman Willard thanked the presenters and the public comment.

7. **TEHAMA COUNTY FLOOD MITIGATION PLAN**: Motion by Director Turner and Second by Director Avilla to authorize the Director of Public Works to sign and execute an agreement to have Wood Rodgers Incorporated conduct and prepare the Tehama County Flood Mitigation Plan. Motion carried 4-0 with 1 absent.
8. **SHASTA-TEHAMA WATER EDUCATION COALITION UPDATE**: This item will be carried over to the next meeting.
9. **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA WATER ASSOCIATION - MONTH IN REVIEW**: No Comments.
10. **ADJOURN**: With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.