

November 18, 2002

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Washington School located on Oakdale Rd., in Winton from 6:30 until 8:35 p.m. Approximately 20 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The sign in sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with Merced County Planning Department at 2222 M Street, Merced, CA.

Announcements:

1. There will be a Surface Water Monitoring Conference in Sacramento on Dec. 12-13 (see calendar) and the California Native Plant Society's Conservation Topics Website (<http://cnps.org/conservation/NCCP-HCPs.htm>) contains useful info on NCCPs and HCPs.
2. Randy Mager, DWR, announced that spawning just finished on the Lower Merced and that they have had good results on the new riffles on the Robinson Reach.
3. Lydia Miller mentioned that there is a new planning group to attend called the Partnership for Integrated Planning. She asked that meetings be posted on the MRS Website.

Meeting outcomes included:

- MRS Governance Committee: The Governance Committee presented a 2nd draft of a proposed mission and purpose and discussed miscellaneous work definitions/clarifications per the direction of the stakeholders at the last meeting. The Governance Committee was asked to bring back another draft with slightly altered wording in preparation for the next meeting in January.
 - The issue of voting was tabled for the current meeting;
 - Committee was asked to refine/and/or define the meanings of "restore," "environment," "resources," and "human interaction."
 - the words "we do not not own the environment, no one can," were removed; within the "in advance of resource degradation" section, the group removed "in a non-responsible manner," "final endorsement" was changed to "final recommendation," "key interests" was removed, and "commercial interests" and "stewardship" were found acceptable by the group (see [Gov. Committee 2nd draft](#) for context);
 - Jeff McLain will work with the Committee via email to accomplish the above and the Stakeholders will continue this agenda item at the next meeting;
- The next Merced River Stakeholders meeting will be held on January 27th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union.
- Snacks for our next meeting will be provided by Gwen Huff (coffee) and Terry Howard (snacks). Thanks!

October 21, 2002

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Washington School located on Oakdale Rd., in Winton from 6:30 until 8:35 p.m. Approximately 30 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The sign in sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with Merced County Planning Department at 2222 M Street, Merced, CA.

Announcements:

1. The East Merced Resource Conservation District (EMRCD) will be hiring another person to assume many of the programmed watershed coordinator tasks under their grant with the Department of Conservation. Teri Murrison will continue to facilitate the stakeholders group. A job description will be posted on the www.emrcd.org Website.
2. A list of potential Merced River monitoring sites for the Intensive Basin Monitoring program (set to begin this year) was distributed to stakeholders. Potential River sites include: Bagby, Barrett's Cove, Merced Falls, Snelling Rd., Oakdale Rd., and the George Hatfield State Recreational Area. Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback and/or suggest other sites for consideration. Input can be forwarded to Catherine Graham (SWRCB) at grahamc@rb5s.swrcb.ca.gov or 916-255-3088.
3. Merced Irrigation District has begun to release more water (in pulses) to facilitate the fall salmon spawning run on the Merced River. (Ted Selb)
4. CAFF will be hosting a representative from the State Water Resource Control Board to speak on Tuesday, October 29th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm regarding water quality on the Merced River. The meeting will be held at the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union (MSEFCU) in the R. Wayne Room, 1021 Olivewood Drive, Merced. More info can be obtained by contacting Gwen Huff at (559)497-5033 or gwen@caff.org.
5. Participating MRS members reported that little has happened with the NCCP/HCP stakeholder group process since our last meeting and no new meetings are currently scheduled for the NCCP/HCP stakeholders groups. The Scientific Advisory Panel's work is completed.

Meeting outcomes included:

- MRS Governance Committee report: a lengthy discussion was held regarding the [Governance Committee's recommendations](#) for potential MRS mission and purpose, goals and objectives decision-making process, frequency, purpose, and rules of regular meetings, and general membership definition. Stakeholders reviewed the recommendations and asked the committee to return to the next meeting with definitions and further explanations of identified terms that may have more than one interpretation. The committee will meet on November 6th at 2:30 at La Nita's Restaurant on 18th and T Streets in Merced to continue working on the draft. Anyone who would like to attend is encouraged to join them. Stakeholders will begin reviewing the responses at the next meeting in November. Stakeholders who weren't at the meeting are asked to review the draft document (at the above link or when they receive it via mail from Teri Murrison) and email comments/questions to Jeff McLain at jmclain@fws.gov or call him at (209)946-6400 x304.
- Madelyn Martinez - NOAA - has not received any new information from the GIS mapping folks so in the interest of time, work on the Group Inventory of Merced River Projects, etc. was postponed for a future meeting.

- Ted Selb gave a presentation on the Lower Merced River Watershed. He explained that the actual watershed does not include much land south of the Merced River and that the MID has just 3 canals that discharge into the Merced River. Turlock Irrigation District actually has more drainages into the River and should be involved in the the MRS process. Teri will work with Ted to contact the appropriate persons and invite them to the next meeting. Many drainages commonly thought to be part of the Merced River Watershed actually drain into the San Joaquin River. In light of this new information, stakeholders need to make a determination of our area of interest. Do we want to extend southward to cover Bear Creek, Owens Creek, and others or should efforts strictly focus on the Merced River. A number of people expressed interest in extending the group's boundaries, however others were concerned that the area would be so large as to render stakeholder efforts ineffective. Further, some pointed out that there are a number of watershed groups organized around the San Joaquin River, although no one knew of any that is focused on the eastern Merced County drainages. Ted was asked to provide paper maps of the watershed and Teri offered to distribute those maps along with the following list of issues identified for further discussion:
 - should focus be expanded upstream from Crocker-Huffman Diversion Dam to either Merced Falls, Merced/Mariposa County Line, or New Exchequer Dam;
 - should groundwater be an area of focus for Stakeholders;
 - what is the definition of groundwater as it applies to Stakeholder needs;
 - Because TID Lateral No. 5 and one other TID facility drains to the Merced River, a TID Representative should participate in the MRS group; and
 - If groundwater issues are to be taken up, should eastside water districts be invited to participate in the Stakeholder process?

Stakeholders will consider these and come to the next meeting prepared to discuss them at length.

- Stillwater Science's Pete Downs presented conceptual "framework" proposals for the 5 highest priority items in the Merced River Corridor. These included conceptual proposals for water quality monitoring (to complement SWRCB efforts), a plan (and its implementation) to control non-native invasive plant species, a biotechnical erosion control feasibility assessment and demonstration project, baseline biological monitoring, and riparian resource preservation easements. With his presentation, Stillwater has delivered its final product to the Merced River Stakeholders under the CALFED funding of the MRRP. Stillwater plans to be actively involved in identifying potential funding sources for these conceptual proposals and also in preparing funding applications on behalf of the stakeholders. Pete and/or Zooney Diggory will continue to attend stakeholder meetings in the meantime.

The next Merced River Stakeholders meeting will be held on November 18th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Washington School on Oakdale Rd. in Winton.. Aside from announcements, there will only be 2 items on the agenda:

- discussion of the Governance Committee's draft recommendations; and
- discussion of the stakeholders' desire to limit or expand their area of interest beyond the Merced River watershed

Snacks next time will be provided by Michelle Langmaid and Cindy Lashbrook. Thanks!

August 19, 2002

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Sam Pipes Room in Merced City Hall, 678 W. Main, Merced, Ca from 6:30 until 8:45 p.m. Approximately 40 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The sign in sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with Merced County Planning Department at 2222 M Street, Merced, CA.

Announcements:

1. The Merced Area Groundwater Pool Interest (MAGPI) technical group is being renamed and reconfigured to incorporate a broader range of interests and input. There will be a meeting of the newly-named Basin Advisory Panel (BAP) on Weds. the 28th of August from 2-4 pm in the 3rd floor conference room of the Merced Civic Center (Ted Selb).
2. Gwen Huff, Teri Murrison, Cindy Lashbrook, and Ted Selb are meeting to plan a Merced River Watershed waterways workshop to take place sometime this fall. (Ted Selb)
3. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has been renamed "NOAA Fisheries." (Madelyn Martinez)

Meeting outcomes included:

- Rhonda Reed was honored for her tireless efforts on behalf of the MRS and wished well in her new position with CALFED.
- Cathy Weber and others gave a brief update on the progress of the Governance Subcommittee and Pat Ferrigno asked landowners to participate in shaping this important issue.
- CAFF's CALFED Merced River Stewardship Project update: Gwen gave the group an update on the Dairy Workshops CAFF conducted in July. All Power Points from presenters will be posted on the Ecological Farming Website (contact [Gwen](#) for Website address) and discussed the upcoming Merced waterways workshop. She announced that a Watershed Fair will be held in April 2003 and will be open to the public. The initial survey conducted by CAFF is posted on the www.caff.org Website and landowner recruitment is beginning. She also talked about the water hyacinth hand removal demonstration. The stakeholders were asked if they wanted to officially incorporate the Merced River Water Hyacinth Task Force into the group and declined to do so. The group wants to be informed of the Task Force's activities, but remain distinct and separate.
- NCCP/HCP Stakeholders group participant reports: Several stakeholders reported on the July NCCP/HCP stakeholders meetings and the fact that stakeholder concerns had influenced the Board of Supervisors to delay a decision on the role and makeup of the Advisory Committee. MRS members were encouraged again to participate in the next round of Stakeholder meetings to be held on the 4th and 5th of September. See the [Calendar](#) page and also [What's New?](#) for more info and links to the official Website.
- Continued group inventory of Merced River: Madelyn Martinez will work with Jeff McLain to come up with a list of available and potentially available GIS layers to present to the group at its next meeting and will also work with Stillwater Sciences and Bill Nicholson (County Planning) to make sure that the existing data layers are current.
- Catherine Graham gave an update on the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board's Intensive Basin Monitoring program that is set to begin on the Merced River this year.

She stated that she will make existing data on water quality at the Hatfield monitoring site available to be posted on the MRS Website.

- Stillwater Science's Peter Downs was introduced and made a brief presentation on the current phase of the MRRP. He promised to come back to the next meeting with conceptual "framework" proposals for the 5 highest priority items in the Merced River Corridor. Peter will be the lead person on the MRRP, however Zooey Diggory will continue to be involved, as well.

The next Merced River Stakeholders meeting will be held on October 21st from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at a location to be arranged in Merced, CA. Items on the agenda will include: an update on the Merced River Stewardship Project (CAFF) activities (Gwen Huff), continuation of the Merced River Inventory by stakeholders (Jeff McLain and Madelyn Martinez), and a presentation of the conceptual funding proposals for the 5 MRRP priority projects (Stillwater Sciences).

Gwen Huff volunteered to bring "something healthy," the Bettencourts will bring drinks, and Cindy Lashbrook will bring homemade salsa and chips!

June 17, 2002

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the UC Agricultural Extension Bldg., classroom at 2145 Wardrobe Ave., Merced, Ca from 6:30 until 8:45 p.m. Approximately 25 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The sign in sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with Merced County Planning Department at 2222 M Street, Merced, CA.

Announcements:

1. MRS Group celebrated 3 years of achievements - see Power Point presentation [Stakeholder Accomplishments](#) (Teri Murrison)
2. [Water Hyacinth update](#) (Jill Ratzlaff, Joe Mitchell, Cindy Lashbrook, Mike Tanner, Madelyn Martinez): A [Water Hyacinth Task Force](#) has formed to work on this issue and to establish long term alternatives to chemical eradication. The task force will invite stakeholders and agencies to participate. Teri will notify the group via e-mail (and regular mail) when a meeting is set.

Meeting objectives and their outcomes included:

- CAFF's CALFED Merced River Stewardship Project update: Gwen provided information on the upcoming dairy producers workshops (see CAFF [Dairy Producer's Workshops](#)) to be held on July 10, 17, & 24th. Teri will distribute further info to stakeholders as it becomes available.
- NCCP/HCP Stakeholders group participant reports: Jeff McLain and Lydia Miller reported on the critical necessity of individual stakeholders participating in these stakeholder groups. Lydia noted that the next meetings will be held on July 17th and 24th. She asked that information about the meetings be posted on the Merced River Stakeholders' website. This information will be found in 2 places - on the [Calendar](#) page and also on [What's New?](#)
- Group inventory of history, existing projects, easements, land use, etc. on Merced River: Rhonda Reed distributed a graphic containing a list of projects and asked for input on the other types of information the group would like to see. The group indicated that a GIS format would be the best and asked for the following layers of information: easements, Water Hyacinth and other invasive species distribution, past and present mining operations, bridge projects (Shafer and Hwy 59), Williamson Act properties, mineral resource zones, land use, NCCP/HCP area, existing grants (including CAFF, watershed coordinator, etc.) Ag easements, riparian restoration projects, monitoring projects, degradation permit information, NPDES permits (with owners), bank restoration projects, NAWQA projects, types of Ag use, USGS projects, Caltrans projects, and complete and incomplete reclamation projects. Rhonda will work with Madelyn Martinez to see what layers are available and if a team from National Marine Fisheries Service is still available to take on this GIS project. The gentlemen from USGS offered to contribute their groundwater flow model and said they could assist in obtaining DWR's land use coverage layers. The group will give input at the next meeting.
- Joseph Domagalski (USGS) and his colleague made a presentation on their agency's water quality monitoring activities in the region and the upcoming Mustang Creek study.

The next Merced River Stakeholders meeting will be held on August 19th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Sam Pipes Room at the City of Merced, 678 W. 18th, Merced, CA. Items on the agenda will include: an update on the Merced River Stewardship Project (CAFF) activities (Gwen Huff),

continuation of the Merced River Inventory by stakeholders (Rhonda Reed), presentation on the upcoming Intensive Basin Program (Catherine Graham, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board), and another presentation on potential funding for implementation of prioritized projects in the Merced River Restoration Plan (Stillwater Sciences). Jeff McLain volunteered to bring cookies, Gwen Huff will bring "something healthy," and Madelyn Martinez will bring drinks!

May 20, 2002

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the UC Agricultural Extension Bldg., classroom at 2145 Wardrobe Ave., Merced, Ca from 6:30 until 8:45 p.m. Approximately 27 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The sign in sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with Merced County Planning Department at 2222 M Street, Merced, CA.

Announcements:

1. Working at a Watershed Level Conference upcoming June 3-7th in Fresno (Rhonda Reed, AFRP)
2. Group prioritized scheduling presentations as follows: June 17th - USGS upcoming Mustang Creek Study project and to be arranged - SWRCB's upcoming Intensive Basin Assessment Program, and Merced County's Wildlife & Rare Plant Ecology of East Merced's Vernal Pool Grasslands. (Teri Murrison, Facilitator)
3. "Water Hyacinth" update (Jeff McLain, USFWS)
4. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has stopped the use of tailings for CDFG spawning gravel from the Merced River pending receipt of further information regarding potential mercury contamination. (Bernie Wade, Upper Merced Property Owners Group) Rhonda Reed, AFRP, will look into this issue and report back to the group.
5. Merced Water Supply Plan is now posted on Merced Irrigation District's website at www.mercedid.org under "groundwater." (Ted Selb, MID)
6. Merced Sports Fishermen met with CDGF regarding steelhead in the Merced River. The group is currently working on points of agreement and will bring them back to the Stakeholders at a future date. (Al Delco, Merced Sports Fishermen)
7. The group decided that they only want to hear 1 major presentation at each meeting and that there should be time allowed for discussion of items not on the agenda. They also decided to schedule future meetings on the 3rd Mondays of months. They agreed that they would not expect to always have monthly meetings, but when they do, they will be held on 3rd Mondays.

The group affirmed the following ground rules:

- Meetings start and end on time;
- Keep to agenda/timetable;
- Stakeholders stand and identify selves (and official representation, if any) the first time they speak;
- Topics to be summarized before moving to new ones;
- Polite and disrespectful disagreements are ok;
- Everyone is entitled to their own opinions;
- No side conversations;
- One speaker at a time; and
- Coffee to be served.

Meeting objectives and their outcomes included:

- Lydia Miller spoke briefly to urge Merced River Stakeholder participation in all 4 groups of the NCCP/HCP Development/Business and Agriculture Stakeholder Group. She stated

that attendance at all 4 groups (also Municipal and Environmental) is critical. The group asked that the NCCP/HCP stakeholder group meetings be posted on the MRS Website.

- Merced River Stewardship Project update given by Gwen Huff, CAFF. Surveys were mailed out to landowners and CAFF is receiving responses. The results of survey will be presented at the next meeting. There will be a demonstration of hand harvesting Water Hyacinths to be put on by the Merced County Ag Commissioner and his staff on May 30th at the Ratzlaff's property. Space is limited, sign up if interested. CAFF is also working on an upcoming workshop series for dairy producers in July.
- Ezio Sansoni reported that the Stakeholder Governance Committee has met several times and will continue to work on role and function of MRS. Committee will report back to the whole group at the July meeting (originally June, however the group later advised that they want to wait for July).
- Due to insufficient time, the group decided to table until the scheduled group inventory of projects (grants, etc.) on the Merced River. They asked that this item be scheduled first.
- Jeff Hart, Habitat Assessment & Restoration Team, Inc., made a presentation on "Biotechnical Erosion Control" projects his company has done in the Bay Delta.

The next Merced River Stakeholders meeting will be held Monday June 17th 6:30 – 8:30, at location to be arranged.

April 22, 2002

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting
April 22, 2002

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Sam Pipes Room of the Merced City Civic Center at 678 West 18th Street, Merced, CA from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. Approximately 35 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, the press, and private, agency, and special interest groups. The sign in sheet is attached to the official minutes and is on file with Merced County Planning Department at 2222 M Street, Merced, CA.

Announcements:

1. MID plans to post the Merced Water Supply Plan on its Website (Teri Murrison, per Ted Selb)
2. Santa Fe Aggregates expansion site tour to be held on Friday, April 26th (Michelle Langmaid)
3. East Merced Resource Conservation District has received verbal notification of 18 month extension of watershed coordinator grant (from Department of Conservation) primarily to facilitate and coordinate the MRS stakeholder group (Teri Murrison)
4. Water Hyacinth encroachment worsening exponentially on River. Merced County Agricultural Commissioner unable to spray to contain it until July due to biological opinion from USFWS. Jeff McLain, USFW, offered to investigate situation and report back to Teri Murrison within 1 week. Teri Murrison to report to Stakeholders in a week on his efforts. (Jill Ratzlaff)
5. Working at a Watershed Level Conference upcoming June 3-7th in Fresno. Limited amount of scholarships are available. For more information, contact Rhonda Reed, AFRP.

Meeting objectives and their outcomes included:

- Receive an update on Community Alliance of Family Farmer's (CAFF) Merced River Stewardship Project progress – Received update and heard upcoming plans for water quality/educational workshops, survey mailed out to landowners on River;
- Discuss and possibly vote on selection of representative MRS participants to Merced County's Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) stakeholder and advisory committees – While the group was not comfortable with designating representatives, they noted that the following people will be attending and may be willing to report back to the group: Agriculture group – Cindy Lashbrook, Kus Porter, Joe Mitchell, Charlie Magneson, Lydia Miller, Environmental group – Sally Magneson, Cathy Weber, Charlie Magneson, Joe Mitchell, Kus Porter, Lydia Miller; Land Development/Business group – Kus Porter, Joe Mitchell, Bernie Wade, Michelle Langmaid; and Municipal group – Joe Mitchell, Bill Nicholson, Lydia Miller, and Pat Ferrigno. The group tabled the question of designating "formal" representatives until the May 22nd meeting.
- Determine if existing stakeholder mission, goals, & objectives are still applicable and if they need to be updated – pending, see next objective;
- Understand various ways the stakeholders could choose to govern themselves and whether or not stakeholders want to implement governance procedures – a

subcommittee was formed to review the existing mission statement and draft a revision, if necessary, and to review possible organizational structures for the MRS group. Volunteers to the committee included: Cathy Weber, Karen Brown, Pat Ferrigno, Ezio Sansoni, and Cindy Lashbrook. Rhonda will coordinate the group and will also invite Lydia Miller to participate.

- Begin to generate an inventory of history, existing grants, projects easements, land use, etc. on the Merced River – this item was carried over to the May 20th meeting due to lack of time.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 20th, 2002, at a location to be arranged.

March 11, 2002

Meeting Minutes

The Stakeholder Group meeting was held at the Sam Pipes room of the Merced City Civic Center at 678 West 18th Street, Merced from 6:30 until 9:00 p.m. Approximately 35 stakeholders attended the meeting, The sign-up sheet for the meeting is attached to the official meeting minutes.

The objectives of the meeting were to: (1) Receive an update on the Community Alliance with Family Farmers' (CAFF) CALFED Merced River Stewardship Project; (2) discuss the possibility of posting the Merced Water Supply Plan on the MRS Website; (3) revisit the decision by Stakeholders in November to form small issues-related work groups and determine Stakeholder preferred course of action for future efforts; and (4) Discuss the status of the Lower Merced River Restoration Plan and Prioritization of Recommended actions.

Introductions and Announcements

Teri Murrison (EMRCD) opened the meeting and the following items were announced:

- A volunteer is needed to scan some slides of the Merced River for the Website (Rhonda Reed and Jeff McLain of AFRP volunteered);
- Bruce Orr, Stillwater Sciences, announced that the final Merced River Restoration Plan is available for distribution in CD ROM format. Copies can be obtained by contacting: Zoey Diggory, 2532 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702, (510) 848-8098 x 106 or Zoey@stillwatersci.com;
- Rhonda Reed announced that the UC Merced planning process will host a public workshop on March 23 at the UC Cooperative Extension classroom, on Wardrobe Avenue. Those interested in possible connections between our planning for the river and the UC planning should attend.
- Charlie Magnuson, public stakeholder, noted that a Planning Commission hearing on the Mineral Resource Zone will be held March 13, 2002, on amending the General Plan by modifying and adding policies regarding mineral resources and mining. For more information, go to: www.co.merced.ca.us/planning or call 385-7654.
- Ted Selb, MID, announced that the Merced River flow will be increasing due to fish studies being conducted in April and mid-May;
- Michelle Langmaid, Santa Fe Aggregates, announced that her company is offering site tours of the existing and proposed Bettencourt Ranch expansion. She circulated a sign up sheet for those interested in touring the proposed project;

Ground rules:

The stakeholders approved the following ground rules to govern this and future meetings (they will be reaffirmed or revised at the beginning of each meeting):

- Meetings start and finish on time;
- Keep to agenda and timetable;
- Stakeholders will stand to speak, identify themselves, and identify if they are representing themselves, a group or other affiliation;
- Someone will summarize before we move on to a new topic;

- It's ok to disagree or have another opinion;
- No side conversations;
- Respect others – everyone is equal here;
- One speaker at a time; and
- Coffee should be served.

1. Possible posting of Merced Water Supply Plan on Merced River Stakeholders Website, Lydia Miller

Lydia Miller brought up the possibility of posting the Merced Water Supply Plan (MSWP) on the Merced River Stakeholders' Website since it is not currently available on the Internet and she noted that the public should have access to the document and those other documents it sites. Ted Selb, MID, said that MID's counsel felt that since the document is in the public domain, there would be no problem with the stakeholders posting the document as long as they don't charge for it. He noted that the MWSP was also produced by the City of Merced (City Engineer Dave Tucker was also in attendance). Teri Murrison informed the group that in order to post the MWSP, the PDF file would have to be reduced to facilitate downloading and that it had cost the stakeholders approximately \$240 to reduce the size of the Merced River Restoration Plan's Vol. I, Vol. II, and Drafts. She asked Ted if MID would consider posting it on their Website and he agreed to check with his board and advise the stakeholders. Teri will let the stakeholders know the disposition of his inquiry.

2. Merced River Stewardship Project, Gwen Huff & Mark Cady, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF):

Gwen Huff reviewed the discussion from the Jan. 7th meeting, re-stating CAFF's intent for the project. She explained that rather than focus on a small subset within the watershed, the project has been expanded to include the Lower Merced River and will target landowners specifically and the public, in general. She reviewed CAFF's history in the region and beyond, educational materials produced, and the successful BIOS project (Biologically Integrated Orchard Systems). She explained that the Merced and Solano River Stewardship projects will be entirely voluntary and that there will be workshops, watershed fairs, as well as one-on-one work with individual landowners. She explained that CAFF is in the draft stage of preparing a baseline confidential survey asking landowners about their familiarity, use, and interest in certain farming practices (obtained from NRCS) and will soon be circulating this voluntary survey to area landowners. A second survey will be distributed at the end of the project to determine progress. The surveys will cover sediment, nutrients, pest management practices, innovative practices, stream bank management, and habitat improvement. She stated that the draft survey can be reviewed by contacting her at gwen@caff.org or calling 209.345.4695.

She asked the stakeholders how they might like to participate in the project. A lengthy discussion ensued and the following comments were expressed:

From various attendees: The MRS group has a broad representation of others besides landowners and while it would be a good group to keep informed, there are landowner groups that would be better sources of partners (UMPOG, etc.); CAFF should assume that everyone is interested in what is being done; MRS' value is that it is diverse; CAFF should work with MRS to post its progress and activities on the MRS Website; the entire MRS mailing list should be kept apprised of CAFF progress; landowners have had little first-hand knowledge of CAFF –let's get to know each other first; asked for more information on CAFF such as who its members are and what CAFF's goals are, few landowners are familiar with or have good impressions of CAFF at this point and it would be far too early to commit to participating in the project as

a partner or even cosponsor of an event; CAFF should provide basic information about itself and its members (goals, demographics, etc.) and clarify its positions on things like public access, etc.; CAFF's CALFED grant proposal should be posted on the MRS Website; some stakeholders asked to receive copies of CAFF's grant reports and information on their outreach, contacts, etc.; some stakeholders said they were unaware of the level of distrust expressed; Cindy Lashbrook and Sally Magneson, both CAFF members and public stakeholders, spoke on behalf of CAFF's past efforts, supporting the organization's previous work in the region.

For the present, Gwen will continue attending MRS meetings to update the stakeholders on CAFF activities and will also provide information to the stakeholders via their Website, e-mail, and mail outreach. Mark Cady agreed to provide the Stakeholders with summaries of CAFF's quarterly reports (the full reports are quite lengthy). Campbell Ingram, CALFED, informed the group that the grant application is on the CALFED Website – he will e-mail the link to Teri and she will distribute it to the stakeholders.

3. Stakeholder Discussion/Decision on Future Course of Action, Teri Murrison, Watershed Coordinator

Teri gave a brief background of the process that led to the formation of interest/issues-based work groups (handouts on previous stakeholder decisions - minutes, approved budgets, etc. to be attached to meeting minutes and filed with the MRS "official" meeting minutes file at the office of Merced County Planning). She discussed the lack of attendance by stakeholders and scheduling concerns that led to cancellation of further work group meetings and opened the discussion on future direction of the group to stakeholders.

Stakeholders made the following comments:

The small group issue should be continued to a future group meeting; ad-hoc groups are good – to break down and get work done; a number of people expressed that they were overwhelmed by the number of meetings scheduled in 4 weeks since they were interested in attending all of the meetings; there is an advantage to small groups in being able to better focus on projects and get more accomplished; a suggestion was made that instead of small groups, stakeholders focus on 1 issue per meeting; a group of people should come up with ideas on how subcommittees could be formed and report back to the whole group on that process – how the group makes decisions and communicates, how to make decisions representative of the whole group; the whole group could break up into subgroups at their meetings and then come back together and report; the subgroups that happened weren't the intent of the whole group in making the decision to have small groups, subgroups can't go anywhere, the MRS doesn't have any formal role or "authority" and shouldn't – there are existing nonprofits already in place to take that role, stakeholders can't agree on basic issues – how can we move beyond that?, stakeholders need to get educated on what's out there (existing grants - CAFF, Watershed Coordinator, restoration projects, etc.) to see how they all fit together, we need understanding on how we are going to operate, the stakeholders aren't ready for small groups – first we need to address what is working and not working, get stakeholders acquainted with what is in place within the watershed corridor – we need to be clear what is involved and the history of what has happened; meetings shouldn't be limited to 4 per year – we should expand, limit discussion and present what has been done (studies, hard copy info), meetings should target subgroup topics and draw everything together at the end of the year; the monthly meetings should be for information only and make decisions quarterly; we need info on land use planning, not just grants – this should be ongoing at every meeting; At an earlier meeting Stillwater and the planning committee developed a graphic of on-going actions that could be brought to the next meeting and everyone can record their knowledge on it – that graphic should be brought to every meeting (Rhonda Reed and Bruce Orr will work on getting this for the next meeting); there should be a mechanism for voting; the group needs structure before it can authorize a voting procedure; we need to decide how we vote – consensus? Majority? Who votes?;

What is the group's vision, mission, objectives?; we need bylaws; the mailing list needs to be expanded to cover more than just the River – there are more who have a stake in what happens that aren't being notified; the group should remain ad-hoc and pull together to educate itself, bylaws are exclusive, we need a mechanism of support; we should revisit goals and objectives from the past; put plans in place for moving into different place; need to review, renew, and revisit; use the tax role to identify landowners; the cost of the meetings is a concern – we should understand the existing grants to utilize those mechanisms, use what is in place, why duplicate?; publicize meetings in Turlock Journal and Modesto Bee; our next meeting should include an inventory of projects, look for holes and fill them in, review and revise our Mission statement, if necessary, and discuss possible means of group governance.

The group decided that the next meeting should focus on revisiting its mission, potential forms of group governance, and creating an inventory of projects, grants, plans on the River that may overlap.

4. Status of Restoration Plan and Prioritization of Recommended Actions, Bruce Orr, Stillwater Sciences

Bruce reviewed the prioritization votes taken by the stakeholders at the last meeting (Jan. 7th) and discussed funding options for the top projects:

1. Preserve existing floodplain and riparian vegetation resources, establish riparian buffers/corridors (river wide);
2. Document baseline fish and macroinvertebrate communities in the river and wildlife in the riparian zone;
3. Develop an understanding of water quality in the river;
4. Biotechnical erosion control demonstration project (gravel mining 2 reach or encroached and confluence reaches);
5. Control non-native, invasive plant species throughout the river corridor.

He also presented a draft concept proposal prepared on behalf of priority 1: Preserve existing floodplain and riparian vegetation resources, establish riparian buffers/corridors (river wide). He stated that there were not sufficient funds for Stillwater to write a grant application, but that this draft could be utilized by the stakeholders in preparing their own application.

Stakeholders interested in commenting on the funding sources or draft proposal presented can contact Zooey Diggory at: 510-848-8098 x 106 or Zooey@stillwatersci.com. Stakeholders can also give written feedback to Bruce at the next MRS meeting on April 22nd.

Wrap-up and Schedule for Upcoming Meetings

Rhonda Reed and Bruce Orr will review and adapt existing graphics that can be used to plot out known information about grants, history, projects, etc. on the River. Rhonda Reed will contact Chris Robinson to set up a MRS field trip to the Robinson Restoration Project. Teri will work with Mike and Francis McCauley to make sure Dry Creek area landowners are added to the mailing list for MRS meetings and expand the current mailing list. Teri will also add a prominent link to the AFRP Website on the MRS Website.

The next Stakeholder Group meeting will be held in the Sam Pipes Room of the Merced City Civic Center at 678 West 18th Street, Merced, on April 22nd, from 6:30–9:00 p.m.

The Agenda for next meeting will include:

1. Group Inventory of history and existing grants, projects on Merced River;
2. Review/Revision of Existing Stakeholder Mission, Goals, & Objectives; and
3. Examine Existing Stakeholder Governance Models for Applicability to MRS.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Work Group Meetings

- February 13, 2002 [Communication & Education Work Group Meeting Minutes](#)
- February 12, 2002 [Avian, Aquatic, & Terrestrial Plants & Animals Work Group Minutes](#)

January 7, 2002

Meeting Minutes

The Stakeholder Group meeting was held at the Sam Pipes room of the Merced City Civic Center at 678 West 18th Street, Merced from 6:30 until 9:00 p.m. Approximately 50 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the Merced River Landowners' Group, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Merced Irrigation District, individual landowners and other interested parties. The sign-up sheet for the meeting is attached.

The objectives of the meeting were to: (1) receive an briefing from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board on the TMDL program, water quality monitoring on the Merced River (including the Comprehensive Basin Study), and Prop 13 funding; (2) learn about CAFF's Dry Creek Project; (3) learn about new Weed Management Areas; (4) Identify Issues of Interest/Concern in the watershed for the formation of small issues-based work groups; and (5) continue prioritizing restoration actions included in the Draft Restoration Plan.

Introductions and Announcements

Teri Murrison (EMRCD) opened the meeting and announced:

- that the MRS Website is up at www.mercedriverstakeholders.org;
- Supervisor Deidre Kelsey is holding a Community River meeting in Stevinson in February and has asked if anyone from the group would be willing to come and talk about what's going on on the Merced River (MRS activities including MRRP and future activities, agency projects, regulatory monitoring activities, etc.). Volunteers included Pat Ferrigno and Jeff McLain. Teri will coordinate with Supervisor Kelsey and the volunteers;
- that last year's Merced River Town Hall Meetings grant (prepared, but unsubmitted to CALFED) could possibly be submitted for funding. After a brief overview of that application, the stakeholders authorized submitting it to whatever grant programs are relevant. Last year's application authors, Pat Ferrigno, Lydia Miller, and Rhonda Reed volunteered to work on a new grant application with Teri.

1. Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Briefing:

Jeanne Chilcott, Chief of the San Joaquin Watershed Unit, and Abigail Smith, Environmental Specialist, gave a brief explanation of the role, authority and responsibility of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (at the national and regional level). They noted that the agency seeks to protect beneficial uses of surface and groundwater bodies. They set agency standards to regulate point and non point source discharges and develop plans to achieve those standards. Their authority is derived from the Federal Clean Water Act.

They explained the TMDL (total management daily load) program's purpose (to limit the amount of specific pollutants to maintain water quality standards in impaired water bodies under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Attached is a list of pollutants they are specifically monitoring on the Lower San Joaquin River. They include Selenium, Salt, Boron, Organophosphates, pesticides such as Diazinon. The Lower Merced River will be monitored in 2006 by the TMDL program. The Water Quality Control Board is also going

to be increasingly monitoring in all water bodies for pathogens that affect drinking water quality (fecal coliform, etc.)

In response to a question on TMDL priorities and timeline, Jeannie Chilcott stated that basin planning from the public and the Board determines the priorities and timeline.

She also discussed SWAMP (Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program), a statewide legislative mechanism approved in July of 2000 to identify when a water body that was impaired has improved sufficiently to be taken off the list. SWAMP makes \$3 million available each year allocated to regional boards in California and they must make summary reports to the legislature each year. The San Joaquin Watershed Unit receives approximately \$3-400,000 per year for their coordinated study effort. Currently, they are working with USGS on a national ambient water quality assessment, monitoring bacteria levels at 56 sites in the region. The Merced River only has one monitoring site at Hatfield Park

(see summary table, attached). Site selection is based on public access and the existence of citizen monitoring sites. The program is not operated on all rivers every year and will be focusing on the Merced River in Oct. 2002. That is not for certain - SWAMP is presently subject to budget cuts.

Prop 13's first round of funding was completed last year. This year's round, Phase 2, has a total of \$20 million available for watershed programs (\$10 million each for CALFED and the State Water Resources Control Board - SWRCB). It also has \$22 million for SWRCB's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program and \$30 million for the Coastal Nonpoint Source Control Program, and \$10 million for CALFED's Drinking Water Quality Program. A large share of the total available funds has been designated for 5 Southern California counties.

CALFED's \$10 million Watershed Program is focused on implementation of watershed plans this year with much of it likely to be targeted to the Central Valley. Concept applications are due Feb. 1st, 2000. Successful proposers will be invited to submit a full proposal due in May. More information on Prop 13 grants is available on the Web at www.swrcb.ca.gov/prop13/index.html. There will be a CALFED workshop on January 15, 2002 at 10:00 a.m., UC Cooperative Extension, Harvest Hall Room, 3800 Cornucopia Way in Modesto.

What reviewers are looking for, said Chilcott, is that projects are eligible, have defined targets, moving towards establishing something, support local community efforts, and that stakeholders are involved in the process. The long-term benefit and goal is protecting ecosystems. She also suggested stakeholders investigate the Adopt a Watershed Program.

2. CAFF's Merced River Project (Gwen Huff, Community Alliance with Family Farmers - CAFF)

Gwen Huff informed the stakeholders that CAFF is beginning work in Solano and Merced Counties on a watershed education project funded by CALFED. Modeled on CAFF's successful peer education BIOS Program, the project will provide technical assistance to farmers and landowners located in the Merced River watershed in areas that have potential to improve the water quality. The project will feature public informational workshops, some will target the general public and others, more technical in nature, will be geared to farmers and landowners. Additionally, a technical advisory team, composed

of experts in various areas of farming and river restoration, will be available to assist 8 to 10 landowners who would like to try new practices or techniques.

The grant proposal was written in such a way as to provide a degree of flexibility as to exactly what technical assistance would be offered. This was to allow for information gathering on where the effort would best be spent. After the grant was awarded, CAFF consulted with Jen Vick of Stillwater Sciences and it was noted that Eucalyptus growth and sedimentation coming out of Dry Creek were areas that needed attention. A tentative decision was reached for CAFF to focus this new grant project in these areas.

However, when this concept of the project was presented to the Merced River Stakeholders, there was significant concern that there had not been any outreach to either Dry Creek landowners or Merced River Stakeholders when the project was conceptualized. Other stakeholders were comfortable with the project as proposed, but also noted the need for potential project proposers to contact stakeholders and landowners prior to submitting applications for funding.

Gwen stated that the project didn't necessarily have to be conducted on Dry Creek and that she would like to meet with concerned stakeholders to discuss options further. Teri Murrison stated that she would arrange a meeting and notify stakeholders when and where it will be held. In the interest of time, comments were cut short, but Teri noted that a later item involved the identification of issues of concern. She asked anyone who would like to work with Gwen on redefining the proposed project to so note on the Issues Survey. Gwen will return to the March 11th meeting of the Merced River Stakeholders to present the revisions on the project, based upon input from interested stakeholders.

3. Weed Management Areas (Rhonda Reed, Anadromous Fish Restoration Project – AFRP)

Rhonda spoke briefly about the establishment of new weed management areas to address invasive plants like yellow star thistle in Merced County. Since time constraints necessitated brevity, she will present this item in greater depth at the next meeting.

4. Issues Survey (Teri Murrison, Watershed Coordinator, EMRCD)

Teri handed out a survey form that asked stakeholders to identify issues of concern that they want to work on in small groups. With the change in meeting format from monthly to quarterly meetings, the small groups will be interest based and allow stakeholders to focus on those issues identified. Each small group will make a presentation to the whole group at the quarterly meetings and decisions will be made by the whole group. She will tabulate the results and notify stakeholders of the results. Everyone will be notified of small group meetings (beginning in February) and will be able to attend them all, if they so desire. Quarterly meetings will also feature a presentation by an expert on topics of interest to the stakeholders.

She also noted that the survey form is posted on the Website and encouraged stakeholders to tell others where they can access it (www.mercedriverstakeholders.org).

5. Prioritization of Recommended Actions, Jennifer Vick, Stillwater Sciences

At the November meeting Jen Vick reviewed the filters and project selection criteria developed by the Technical Advisory Committee and the Stakeholder Group added several criteria to the list (see previous minutes). The final restoration plan will be available in 2 weeks. People interested in obtaining the document can request it on CD or

via hardcopy, upon request (copies may be requested from Zooey Diggory of Stillwater Sciences at (510) 848-8098 x106 or zooey@stillwatersci.com).

With the completion of the Restoration plan, proposed projects must be prioritized based on criteria developed through stakeholder discussions previously. Those highest priority projects will be pursued for funding. Stillwater has approximately \$ 25,000 to begin working on seeking funding and asked the stakeholders for guidance on which projects to pursue.

Jen handed out 2 memos: proposed riverwide projects (see attached) and reach specific actions (dredger tailings reach, gravel mining 1 reach, encroached and confluence reaches – also attached). This list was developed by the stakeholders over the past year: they worked together developing ideas to start selecting projects and developed a list of things to determine what is important (see handout). The stakeholders initially considered 24 projects (see handout). The first cut lumped projects into 3 major categories (see handout on categories and priorities). This meeting's goal was to identify/prioritize 5 projects to evaluate for feasibility and utilize the \$25,000 remaining in funds for project planning.

Some of the projects previously recommended by Jen have been undertaken by CDF&G and she recommended that the stakeholders delay consideration of those projects.

John Hardin asked about the Robinson Restoration Project. He owns Dredger's Inn and customers are always asking about what's going on at the project site. Rhonda Reed offered to supply information/project briefing sheets to Dredger's Inn and other Snelling locations to pass on to their customers.

A total of 10 projects were put forth for prioritization.

1. Preserve existing floodplain and riparian vegetation resources, establish riparian buffers/corridors (riverwide);
2. Control non-native, invasive plant species (riverwide);
3. Develop understanding of water quality (riverwide)
4. Reduce sand supply from Dry Creek watershed (gravel mining 2 reach);
5. Biotechnical erosion control demonstration project (gravel mining 2 reach);
6. Biotechnical erosion control demonstration project (encroached and confluence reaches);
7. Document baseline fish and wildlife communities (riverwide);
8. Fund and hire a river-keeper to monitor the river (riverwide);
9. Control spread of eucalyptus (gravel mining 1 reach);
10. Control spread of eucalyptus (gravel mining 2 reach).

After initial discussion it was decided to combine projects 5 and 6 (so there would be a single biotechnical erosion control demonstration project) and 9 and 10 (into a single eucalyptus control project). The revised list of 8 projects (below) was then discussed and a vote taken to determine priorities (Stillwater plans to start developing draft proposals for some of the top priority projects).

1. Preserve existing floodplain and riparian vegetation resources, establish riparian buffers/corridors (riverwide);
2. Control non-native, invasive plant species (riverwide);
3. Develop understanding of water quality (riverwide)

4. Reduce sand supply from Dry Creek watershed (gravel mining 2 reach);
5. Biotechnical erosion control demonstration project (gravel mining 2 reach and encroached and confluence reaches);
6. Document baseline fish and wildlife communities (riverwide);
7. Fund and hire a river-keeper to monitor the river (riverwide);
8. Control spread of eucalyptus (gravel mining 1 reach and gravel mining 2 reach).

Stakeholders made the following comments about the proposed projects:

Regarding #6: (baseline just on fish) suggested monitoring being done on more than just fish. Jen stated there are other organisms to look at range rather than a single organism. Fish had been proposed as the highest priority, but an inventory of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates found in the riparian zone is still needed. Suggestion that other mammals be grouped together. Identify keystone species, mammals, fish, base that on what they would be indicators of. Expand out so it is just not fish. But still narrow it down (can't afford to study everything).

In response to discussion about how to define the riparian zone to be inventoried, Bruce Orr, Stillwater Sci. stated that the first thing to do is collect baseline data for a few years along the river and the immediately adjacent riparian habitats, then we can start asking broader questions on where wide-ranging birds and mammals come from. But first need additional baseline data and a focus on a narrow riparian quarter to help keep cost down. Separate river-riparian. Define extent of survey area, look at species as indicators of riparian health. Identify people to bring together.

The group briefly discussed the idea of hiring a river-keeper to monitor needs/conditions on the Merced River. The group noted that there are different ways of being a "river-keeper" and different perspectives. Rhonda Reed noted that everyone at the meeting is a river-keeper in one way or another. In the interest of time, it was suggested that the stakeholders consider this issue at a future time.

Water Quality, work see what are key constituents to monitor. Regional Board will not be in area on consistent basis. Be there for year to monitor than out of the area next year. Is there anything on list that people don't agree with being a high priority? #7, comment a lot people don't want someone. Vote from 1-8 which 2 projects to identify priority for getting funding, #1-22 #2-5 #3-9 #4-3 #5-10 #6-13 #7-0/table #8-1 push for #1 and #6.

Projects were prioritized as follows:

1. Preserve existing floodplain and riparian vegetation resources, establish riparian buffers/corridors (riverwide);
2. Document baseline fish and macroinvertebrate communities in the river and wildlife in the riparian zone;
3. Develop an understanding of water quality in the river;
4. Biotechnical erosion control demonstration project (gravel mining 2 reach or encroached and confluence reaches);
5. Control non-native, invasive plant species throughout the river corridor.

Jen proposed that Stillwater identifies potential funding sources and start drafting proposals for one or two projects and bring back to next meeting. The Regional Board's program will tie into #3 for water quality monitoring, starting in October and working with the stakeholders on this project/priority.

6. Ken Jensen asked the stakeholders for a show of support for the Merced Fly Fishing Club's letter to the Department of Fish and Game requesting a meeting to promote the restoration of a sport fishery on the Merced River. The stakeholders overwhelmingly supported his request.

Wrap-up and Schedule for Upcoming Meetings

The next Stakeholder Group meeting will be held in the Sam Pipes Room of the Merced City Civic Center at 678 West 18th Street, Merced, on March 11th from 6:30–9:00 p.m.

The Agenda for next meeting will include:

1. Small group reports;
2. New Weed Management Areas
3. Report on grants applied for the Merced River Town Hall meetings series;
4. CAFF's CALFED Merced County Project;
5. Stillwater's Progress in identifying funding for proposals #1 #6; and
6. An informational presentation on biological erosion control.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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