

December 15, 2003

Draft KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Tri-College Center, Tri-College Center Drive, Merced, CA. Approximately 25 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The attendance sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with East Merced Resource Conservation District, 2135 Wardrobe, Merced, CA.

Meeting outcomes included:

Merced Irrigation District Update: Ted Selb

Merced County Planning Update: Bill Nicholson provided a summary of current Merced County Community Planning efforts. The Planada Community Plan Update was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 9th and the Delhi Community Plan should be completed in draft form this spring. The Delhi Plan maintains its southern boundary at August Road so the community is not growing towards the Merced River. Bill indicated that except for Snelling and Cressey, there are no unincorporated urban areas next to the Merced River designated in the County General Plan. Bill also mentioned that the appeal to the Bettencourt/Santa Fe mine Conditional Use Permit application would be heard by the Board of Supervisors on January 27th.

Request from Tom Harmon, UC Merced, for letters in support of their grant proposal: "Planning a Sensor Network to Monitor, Manage, and Forecast a CLEANER California Watershed" In Mr. Harmon's absence to present his request, stakeholders declined to indicate support for the grant. They asked that he attend the next meeting of the East Merced RCD Board of Directors to make a presentation and formal request. Stakeholders commented that any future requests for support be presented in person and that they be presented far enough in advance for stakeholders to investigate the issues and see the final proposals before submission.

Update on the Ag Waiver Program and East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition efforts : Dan Cismowski, Merced County Ag Commissioner's Office

Watershed Coordinator Interim Funding Update: Cindy Lashbrook, East Merced RCD and Madelyn Martinez, NOAA. Gave report on committee's meeting in early Dec. Lydia Miller and Joe Mitchell asked why option to have East Merced RCD's EPA 3 grant refocused to fund watershed coordinator wasn't considered as they had proposed at the last meeting. After discussion with 2 RCD directors present (Glenn Anderson and Cindy Lashbrook), stakeholders decided to fax letters requesting this action to the RCD Board for consideration at its next meeting.

Merced River Ranch Project Update, Pete Downs, Stillwater Sciences

Announcements:

1. David Hu, US Fish & Wildlife Service, attended the meeting and announced that he will be working on the Merced River with Jeff McLain and will be assuming a number of Jeff's responsibilities.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 23, 2003. The next meeting will be held at the Merced Tri-College Board Room or other available classroom. Dave Hu will bring snacks and Dan Cismowski will bring drinks.

Potential agenda items:

- UC, Merced grant proposal: “Planning a Sensor Network to Monitor, Manage, and Forecast a CLEANER California Watershed,” Tom Harmon;
- Water Hyacinth Situation on Lower Merced River, NOAA biologist who writes the biological opinion annually;
- Watershed Coordinator funding and Prop 13 Grant Application Update;
- Stakeholder assessment of Merced River Restoration Plan: how is it being used, is it still relevant, etc.? Teri to assemble panel for discussion (to be held at April meeting);

For more information, contact Teri Murrison at 209-852-0112 or info@mercedriverstakeholders.org.

October 20, 2003

Draft KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the USDA/Ag Extension Classroom Building, 2145 Wardrobe, Merced, CA. Approximately 30 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The attendance sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with East Merced Resource Conservation District, 2135 Wardrobe, Merced, CA.

Meeting outcomes included:

1. Update on the Ag Waiver Program: Annee Ferranti, CVRWQCB, gave an update on the latest information available about the requirements and Dan Cismowski spoke about current efforts to form a local watershed coalition group. Teri said she would email an announcement about a pending watershed coalition meeting to the group directly after the meeting.
2. Watershed Coordinator Update: Teri Murrison, facilitator, gave an update on the submission of the Prop 13 Merced River Alliance Project grant. Pete Downs, Stillwater Sciences, and Nancy McConnell, Upper Merced River Watershed Council, also spoke about the grant application. If successful, the grant funds will likely not be distributed until Jan. 2005 at the earliest. Teri also briefed the group about EMRCD's pending application to the Department of Conservation' Watershed Coordinator Grant Program. If this application is funded, the EMRCD will have a watershed coordinator for 3 years. It is likely that there will be a funding gap of at least several months between the end date of the current grant and the beginning date for the next grant. The MRS decided to form a work group to come up with interim funding to cover the gap period. The following persons volunteered for the work group: Pete Downs, Jeff McLain, Madelyn Martinez, Cindy Lashbrook, and Glenn Anderson. (*Subsequent to the meeting, Pat Ferrigno, Terry Howard, Mike Bettencourt, and Michelle Langmaid indicated they would participate, as well*). The group will meet and report back to the MRS at the next meeting scheduled for December 15, 2003.
3. Merced Irrigation District: Ted Selb gave the group an update on projected water flow in the Merced River in preparation for the fall salmon spawning run.
4. Merced County Planning: Bill Nicholson gave the group an update on planning projects pending in the watershed corridor, including the recently approved 75-acre Hardin Project and the upcoming hearing on the Bettencourt Ranch Project application.
5. Merced River Inventory: Stakeholders previewed the Merced River Inventory layers and made final edits to hard copy maps. Madelyn Martinez will take comments back to NOAA staff and the maps will be revised. She indicated that NOAA needs to pass responsibility for maintaining the GIS on to another agency.

Announcements:

1. Cathy Weber informed the group about the Merced River Education Initiative, a forming local nonprofit organization dedicated to watershed education in the schools.
2. Dan Cismowski gave a recap of the Merced County Agricultural Commission's efforts to address the proliferation of Water Hyacinth in the Merced River. Madelyn Martinez, NOAA, will determine her agency's authorization to spray earlier in the year was and is a single year exclusion or multi-year.
3. Cathy Weber will be assisting Teri in distributing water quality monitoring kits and setting up trainings for MRS participants.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 15, 2003. Stakeholders requested to hold it at the USDA Ag Extension Classroom. Teri will check for availability and book it, if possible. [Please note: *It is not available. Instead, the next meeting will be held at the Merced Tri-College Board Room, located off of North G Street.*] Stakeholders will bring snacks for this holiday-season meeting.

For more information, contact Teri Murrison at 209-852-0112 or info@mercedriverstakeholders.org.

August 18, 2003

Draft KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the USDA/Ag Extension Classroom Building, 2145 Wardrobe, Merced, CA. Approximately 25 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The attendance sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with East Merced Resource Conservation District, 2135 Wardrobe, Merced, CA.

Meeting outcomes included:

1. Merced River Inventory: Stakeholders reviewed hard copy maps with layers for accuracy and to make sure requested layers were included. Madelyn Martinez will take comments back to NOAA staff and the maps will be revised.
2. Invasives on the Lower Merced: Roger Buttermore, USFWS, made a presentation on species problematic on the Merced.
3. Update on the Ag Waiver Program: Annee Ferranti, CVRWQCB, gave a presentation on the latest information available about the requirements and watershed coalition groups. Ted Selb, MID, informed the group that MID is reevaluating its plan to coordinate a local watershed coalition due to concerns about the regulations' burden and effects on Ag landowners and costs. Madelyn Martinez told the group about a landowner initiated water quality monitoring group on the Mokelumne River. Teri will contact John Brodie, watershed coordinator on the Mokelumne, to discuss this and determine if he is available to speak to stakeholders at the next meeting. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the Ag Waiver Program, she will also contact Bill Croyle, SWRCB Ag Waiver staff, to arrange for a followup presentation at the next meeting.
4. Announcements:
 - a. Water quality test kits will be distributed shortly and individual training provided; a meeting will be held to work on conceptualizing projects for funding in the near future; Teri recently returned from Adopt a Watershed Leadership Institute training and will begin working with watershed schools to implement watershed-based curriculum; Prop 13 concept proposal submission results haven't yet been announced, but will be in the next few days. Teri will contact stakeholders to invite them to participate in a planning session should the EMRCD be invited to submit full proposals.
 - b. Pat Ferrigno introduced Lee Neves, candidate for Merced County District 4 Supervisor.
5. Next Meeting: Monday, October 20, 2003. Stakeholders requested to hold it at the USDA Ag Extension Classroom. Teri will check for availability and book it, if possible. Ted Selb offered to bring cookies and Cathy Weber to bring beverages. Pat Ferrigno will do an icebreaker.

For more information, contact Teri Murrison at 209-852-0112 or info@mercedriverstakeholders.org.

June 16, 2003

Draft KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union on Olivewood Drive in Merced from 6:30 until 8:40 p.m. Approximately 20 stakeholders attended the meeting, including representatives of the public, landowners, agency, and special interest groups. The attendance sheet will be attached to the Key Outcomes Memorandum and placed on file with Merced County Planning Department at 2222 M Street, Merced, CA.

Meeting outcomes included:

1. Madelyn Martinez (NOAA) was unable to attend the meeting but will demonstrate the River Inventory GIS layers at the next meeting.
2. Stakeholders received a briefing on the CALFED Phase IV Dredger Tailings Reach project from Pete Downs, Stillwater Sciences.
3. Teri Murrison and Pete Downs briefed the stakeholders on Merced River (lower and upper) Prop 13 concept proposals submitted by the East Merced RCD, Mariposa County RCD, and Sustainable Conservation. Teri asked for volunteers to assist EMRCD and Stillwater in “fleshing out proposals” should EMRCD be invited to submit a full proposal in mid to late summer. Stakeholders volunteered to provide input on proposals as noted. The proposals are:
 - a. Building a Sustainable Upper Merced River Watershed Organization (Mariposa County RCD only);
 - b. Merced River Alliance for a Coordinated Watershed, Citizen Monitoring, and Education Program (East Merced RCD – applicant, Mariposa County RCD partner) Stakeholders to assist: Glenn Anderson, Joe Mitchell, Lydia Miller, Ted Selb, and Pat Ferrigno;
 - c. Bank Stabilization Feasibility Assessment, Demonstration Project, and Landowner Outreach on the Lower Merced River (East Merced River – applicant, Stillwater Sciences and CAFF, partners) Stakeholders to assist: Glenn Anderson, Joe Mitchell, Lydia Miller, Cindy Lashbrook, and Joe Mendez (not present, but suggested);
 - d. Proposal for Baseline Biological Monitoring on the Merced River (East Merced RCD – applicant, Stillwater Sciences and Mariposa County RCD, partners) Stakeholders to assist: Glenn Anderson, Joe Mitchell, Lydia Miller, Cathy Weber, Ted Selb, Joe Domagalski, and Mike Bettencourt (not present, but suggested); and
 - e. Central Valley Training for BMP related Permit Coordination in Priority Watersheds (Sustainable Conservation – applicant, East Merced RCD, partner).
4. Teri discussed the formation of a group to work on an ongoing basis to prioritize and develop projects and keep track of funding opportunities so that the group can be ready to submit funding proposals. This group will be composed of whatever stakeholders want to participate: from both the lower and upper watershed, agencies, landowners, interest groups, and the general public. Cindy Lashbrook, Jeff McLain, Cathy Weber, Pat Ferrigno, Gwen Huff, Lydia Miller, Glenn Anderson, Joe Mitchell, Ted Selb, and Zoey Diggory/Pete Downs volunteered to participate. The group will have its first meeting after the results of the Prop 13 concept proposal submissions are announced in August.
5. The group discussed several potential speakers they would like to invite to upcoming meetings. They were: the head of the Ag Waiver Program (SWRCB) and representatives from the Upper Merced River Watershed Council.

6. Announcements:

- a. Teri announced that the CALFED Working Landscapes subcommittee is meeting monthly and will be releasing an RFP for projects in the coming months for projects. She urged stakeholders to get involved in this committee as a strategy to participate in the formation of program guidelines and goals. For more information, the Website is located at:
<http://calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/subcommittee>.
- b. The official MRS stakeholder meeting file is currently being organized into binders. Teri has it and will be returning it to Merced County Planning as soon as she is finished compiling the binders.
- c. Roger Buttermore, USFWS from the Stockton office, spoke about the invasives program and his tasks to coordinate with and assist stakeholder groups to address non-native noxious and invasive plant species, create a data base with the distribution of species, and catalog samples of each. Teri announced that he will participate in a Lower Merced River tour on June 26th or July 14th when they will visit a number of sites on the River. Cindy Lashbrook, Pat Ferrigno, Joe Mitchell indicated interest in participating and Cindy suggested the ranger at McConnell Park also be contacted to participate. Teri will nail down the date and advise.
- d. Gwen Huff, CAFF, showed a binder of photos from the Merced River Watershed Fair and thanked stakeholder participants;
- e. Joe Domagalski, USGS, announced that they have received funding for their study of the transport of Ag chemicals via groundwater in the Mustang Creek area.
- f. Jeff McLain, USFWS, announced that the next CALFED funding phase will include the Ecosystem Restoration Program (funding only existing projects) and the Science Program (PSP due out in October approximately. The Science Program will have a monitoring focus. Further, the AFRP has been awarded funding to conduct a spawning study on the Robinson project. He informed the group that he and Roger Buttermore are working on the water hyacinth issue again. The exemption obtained from NOAA last year allowing spraying before July 1st was a one-time exemption and the County Ag Commissioner's office has been unable to spray early enough to keep control of the weeds. Consequently, they will be much more difficult to deal with next year. Jeff and Roger will keep the stakeholders up to date on their progress.
- g. The Governance Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, July 15th at 2:00 pm at Calaveras Materials' facility near Snelling. For more information, contact Teri.
- h. The next MRS meeting will be held on August 18th from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Pete Downs will be responsible for the ice breaker, Gwen Huff will bring snacks, and Pat Ferrigno will bring beverages.
- i.

The tentative agenda may include:

Martinez

Update, Teri Murrison

recommendations

Program

- i. River Inventory, Madelyn
- ii. Prop 13 Concept Proposal
- iii. Governance Committee
- iv. Update on Ag Waiver

[TOP](#)

April 21, 2003

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union on Olivewood Drive in Merced from 6:30 until 8:40 p.m. Approximately 26 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.

Meeting outcomes included:

1. Teri Murrison asked for input on a brochure to be used for general information about the MRS. Recommendations were received and will be incorporated into the final brochure for use at the Merced River Fair.
2. The East Merced Resource Conservation District plans to work with Stillwater Sciences to submit at least 2 concept proposals for Prop 13 funds (applications due May 9th). Both proposals will implement stakeholder-prioritized restoration actions. Zooey Diggory will provide a copy of the Stillwater table completed in 2002 that lists potential funding sources for the 5 prioritized restoration actions from the Merced River Restoration Plan. It will be distributed at the next MRS meeting.
 1. The first proposal focuses on streambank stabilization projects and will obtain permits on the Lower (and Upper) Merced River for streambank stabilization and other similar projects. If successful, this will allow landowners who want to do such projects to get just 1 permit versus dealing with multiple agencies.
 2. The second proposal will establish baseline fish, macroinvertebrate, and wildlife populations on the Merced River.
3. Madelyn Martinez (NOAA) discussed the Merced River Inventory project and showed the layers of data currently input by the NOAA GIS department. Stakeholders identified additional layers and asked Teri to supply Madelyn with a list of requested layers compiled in 2002.
4. The Governance Committee gave a report in which they stated that they are not in agreement that a formalized voting mechanism is necessary to conduct stakeholder meetings. After some discussion, committee members asked Teri to research minutes from the MRRP process to determine if voting methods are described. Teri was also asked to post these minutes on the Website.
5. Announcements:
 - a. Ted Selb, MID:
 - i. Flow in the Merced River will be higher than usual through May 12, 2003 as a result of releases (pulses) for fish studies being conducted on the San Joaquin River, its tributaries and the Delta;
 - ii. Riparian Water Issue - A State Water Board water right audit on the Merced River has created a potential problem for riparians diverting water from the River under a 1926 Adjudicated Settlement known as the Cowell Agreement. According to the State Water Board, when there is not enough inflow into Lake McClure in dry years, water may not be diverted from Lake McClure storage to meet Cowell Agreement diverter demands between July - September.

- b. Randy Mager, DWR: DWR and CDFG are now working on the last phase of design for the salmon enhancement project.
- c. Gwen Huff (CAFF): The Merced River Watershed Fair will be held on May 10th at Henderson Park in Snelling. Participants will include: Natural Resource Conservation Service, East Merced Resource Conservation District, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Chaffee Zoological Gardens, Merced River Stakeholders, The Upper Merced Property Owners Group, Merced Fly Fishing Club, Department of Water Resources, Santa Fe Aggregates, Stillwater Sciences, Natural Resource Scientists, The Great Valley Museum, Merced Irrigation District, Merced Junior College Biology Dept., Sierra Club, California Dept. of Fish & Game, Snelling Court House Historical group, and CAFF. There will be displays, speakers, and tours.
- d. Cathy Weber (MRS): asked for volunteers to help put together the MRS table at the Watershed Fair.

February 24, 2003

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union on Olivewood Drive in Merced from 6:30 until 8:40 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.

Meeting outcomes included:

1. The stakeholders requested that we begin working on the Merced River Inventory again next meeting. Teri will contact Madelyn Martinez and ask her to come prepared for this discussion at the next meeting.
2. Ezio Sansoni reported that the Governance Committee is still struggling with the issue of whether and how to vote and is not prepared to make a unified recommendation at this point. The stakeholders provided the following input to help focus the discussion and asked the Committee to re-convene to come up with some definite recommendations at the next meeting (April 21).
3. The following stakeholder accomplishments were recorded to date:
 - Merced River Restoration Plan
 - Plan Goal (Develop a publicly supported, scientifically sound restoration plan for the Merced River Corridor from the Crocker-Huffman Dam to the confluence of the San Joaquin River) and objectives
 - Pursued and got funding for Phases I (Central Valley Project Improvement Act – funding to AFRP), II, and III (CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program – funding to AFRP), and Phases I-III (Stakeholders Coordination & Facilitation from USFWS, CVPIA/AFRP, Dept. of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Program – funding to EMRCD)
 - Have met semi-monthly since 1999
 - Held public workshops to inform public and seek input on project (including presentation of conceptual restoration strategies for all 5 reaches, draft restoration plan, and final plan)
 - Organized and allowed access to private property for baseline studies
 - Review, comment, and release of final EDAW baseline study (analysis of social, institutional, and infrastructural opportunities and constraints to restoration)
 - Release of final Geomorphic & Riparian Vegetation Investigations Report
 - Participated (planning and implementation) of Wild on Watersheds tour
 - Supported Stillwater application for CALFED Phase IV project (proposed Dredger Tailings Reach project)
 - Advocated for landowners to halt proliferation of Water Hyacinths last summer
 - Decided to work with EMRCD to investigate implementing Adopt a Watershed Program in local school(s)
 - Water quality training workshops
 - Forum for networking
 - Ratzlaff restoration task force inquiry
 - Approved Mission and Purpose, Goals and Objectives, format for Ad Hoc Committees, Regular Meetings, and definitions of such key terms as:
 - Stewardship
 - In advance of Habitat Degradation

- Restored
- Human Interaction
- Commercial Interests

Stakeholders identified issues to consider and possibly vote on, reasons why it would be beneficial to have a formal voting procedure, and reasons why it wouldn't. **Please note, every issue and reason mentioned was written down as it was proposed. No issue or reason below was endorsed by the stakeholder group. These reflect individual opinions, only.**

Issues to possibly (1) consider, and (2) decide by some sort of vote:
 education/outreach (includes PR on the restoration plan - reaches and info)
 events (clean up of river, etc.)
 sponsor or co-sponsorship of projects (i.e. CAFF Watershed Stewardship Project)
 grant application endorsement
 landuse
 easements
 level of community involvement
 conservation advocacy
 "utilization" of the restoration plan
 fact-finding
 ad-hoc relation to larger group
 river tender
 flyovers/data inventory
 contact list/clearinghouse of opportunities, regulations, requirements
 MRS is not an enforcement entity (non-regulatory)
 non-threatening tone
 red-tape cutters
 MRS pursue grants
 definition of scope of interest - geographical area of interest
 oral history
 Reasons voting would be beneficial:
 funding
 consolidated clout/influence
 efficiency in decision-making
 control
 networking/info exchange
 continuity/long-term existence of the group
 credibility
 clarity of purpose
 stewardship
 momentum/action
 project endorsement/action
 indicate individual or special interest approval or disapproval of issue
 quickly make decisions
 Reasons voting would not be beneficial:
 control
 stakeholder group could get used
 project endorsement/lack of endorsement
 cause group conflict

Announcements:

1. The following meetings and workshops (click on each to see more information) are coming up in March and April:

[Partnership for Integrated Planning Meetings](#), various dates

[SWRCB Ag Waiver EIR Scoping Meeting, March 5](#)

[Wild on Wetlands, Los Banos, March 7, 8](#)

[MRS water quality testing training, March 15, 16](#)

[CAFF Streambank Stabilization Workshop, March 17](#)

[DOC Permitting & Cost Share Workshop, March 18](#)

[CAFF Farmscaping to Attract Beneficials & Wildlife, March 18](#)

[Merced Area Groundwater Pool Interests \(MAGPI\), March 20](#)

[MAGPI, April 17](#)

[Heartland Sustainable Ag Conference, May 4](#)

[CAFF Merced River Watershed Fair, May10](#)

2. Jeff McLain, USFWS, brought an educational display for teaching about salmonids. He said that it (the "fin bin") is available to be used for stakeholder outreach activities and will temporarily be kept by Teri Murrison to be used at the May 10th Watershed Fair.
3. Bernie Wade and Glenn Anderson volunteered to bring snacks to the next meeting and Jeff McLain volunteered to bring beverages (including coffee).

January 27, 2003

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM
Merced River Stakeholders Meeting

The Stakeholder group meeting was held at the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union on Olivewood Drive in Merced 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. Adopt A Watershed (Teri Murrison): The East Merced Resource Conservation District (EMRCD) plans to put a team together (community organizer, teachers, education administrator, academician, etc.) to attend the 2003 Adopt a Watershed Leadership Institute with the goal of working with local educators to implement watershed based curriculum in one or more classrooms in or adjacent to the Merced River Watershed area. EMRCD asked for interested stakeholders who would like to participate. Cathy Weber, Cindy Lashbrook, and Pat Ferrigno volunteered to participate. Cindy Lashbrook suggested that Maynard Medefin (science teacher at Atwater High School) be invited to participate. Teri will contact him and other potential team members to set up a meeting regarding this.
2. Voluntary Water Quality Monitoring Project (Teri Murrison): Teri announced that Erick Burres of the SWRCB Clean Water Team will be coming to conduct a 2-day training (1st day – water quality, 2nd day – macroinvertebrate identification as method to determine water quality) at Henderson Park in Snelling. The training will provide interested MRS members with the skills and equipment necessary to participate in the Department of Conservation-funded Watershed Coordinator grant task to conduct an educational, voluntary, and individual water quality testing program. The USFWS has offered to buy test kits for participating stakeholders. The MRS will be joined by the Upper Merced River Steering Committee at the 2-day training. The group asked that the training be scheduled for March 15th and 16th.
3. MID/Department of Fish and Game Agreement Signed (Ted Selb) – The Merced Irrigation District has recently signed an MOU with the CDFG after lengthy negotiations. The MOU establishes a 10-year salmonid biological study and establishes a flow regime for migratory salmon on the Merced River.
4. Merced Area Groundwater Pool Interests (MAGPI) Basin Advisory Panel (Russ Grimes, Saracino, Kirby, and Snow, consultants to DWR) – Russ Grimes made a short presentation on the MAGPI BAP, explaining the authority and purpose of the group and encouraged Stakeholders to participate in the MAGPI stakeholder group. The next meeting of the BAP will be held on February 20th from 2-4 p.m. at the Merced City Civic Center's 3rd floor conference room, 678 W. 18th, Merced.
5. Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) Merced River Watershed Stewardship Project (Gwen Huff) – Gwen reported that CAFF will be putting on a series of workshops: March 17 Bank Stabilization will cover permitting issues, soil stabilization, products, and more; March 26 Habitat and Hedgerows on farms at the San Felipe Ranch near Merced; the week of April 21st (day tba) Soil Erosion workshop possibly to be held on Dry Creek; and a Watershed Fair on May 10th at Henderson Park. The Watershed Fair will target the public and the MRS agreed to have an informational table there. Cathy Weber and Sally Magnuson offered to work on a slide show presentation on the River. Glenn Anderson will also assist and the stakeholders will attempt to get some of the Stillwater exhibits that were used in a public hearing in 2001. Teri will check to see if she has those materials and will also participate in planning for the event and MRS table.

6. Cindy Lashbrook told the group that the Merced County Courthouse Museum currently has a good exhibit of historical Merced County family farm photographs.

Meeting outcomes included:

MRS Governance Committee: The Governance Committee presented their final revisions of the proposed mission and purpose discussed at the November 18th meeting. The following decisions were made by the MRS group:

Merced River Stakeholder Group Charter

Items appearing in black were approved by Stakeholders at the meeting on January 27, 2003. *Items in red italics indicate Stakeholder-requested revisions completed by Jeff McLain, USFWS, on Tuesday, January 28, 2003 . Please note: Items appearing in red italics have not yet been reviewed or approved by the Stakeholders.*

Mission and Purpose

Provide a collaborative forum for coordination, and gathering and sharing of information about the Merced River watershed. Protect and enhance the lower Merced River Watershed such that the natural processes, ecosystems, and its unique characteristics are conserved and restored. Foster voluntary stewardship in advance of habitat degradation and regulatory action. Strive for a balanced level of human interaction within the watershed.

Goals and Objectives

Educate the public about the Merced River watershed and its importance. Foster and improve communication among affected private individuals, interested citizens, commercial interests, educational institutes, and representatives of local, state and federal agencies.

Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees relating to the mission and purpose of the Merced River Stakeholder Group will be established to address topic related issues. All Stakeholder members are welcome to serve on committees or attend committee meetings when possible. Committees must reflect broadest sense of Merced River Stakeholder Group interests. Committees review topics pertinent to their specific purpose (grants, studies, ideas, etc.) and inform the Merced Stakeholder Group.

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings are those in which the time is regularly scheduled. All regular meetings are open to the public and will be announced through the MRstakeholders.org website and by mail to individuals by request. Meeting conduct shall be respectful and administered under the direction of the facilitator/group leader. Each meeting shall begin with a standing self-introduction of all present. Each person shall indicate if they represent any other individuals or organizations.

General Membership Definition

The Merced River Stakeholders Group will strive for a membership that reflects the broadest practicable representation of vested interests within the watershed: local citizenry, government agencies (local, state, and federal), and organizations. A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest in or is affected by what happens in the watershed.

Key Term Definitions

“Stewardship” – Careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one’s care (Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary).

“In advance of habitat degradation” – Before natural processes and ecosystems are degraded or damaged.

“Restored” – A reestablishment of the structure, function, and processes of an ecosystem, including its natural diversity (Reference: Watershed Restoration: Principles and Practices, Williams, Wood, and Dombeck, editors).

“Human interaction” – All human behavior, actions, and activities in the watershed.

“Commercial interests” – Any economic activity occurring in the watershed.

“Lower Merced River” – The Merced River from the confluence with the San Joaquin River upstream to McSwain Dam.

The next Merced River Stakeholders meeting will be held on February 24th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Merced School Employees Federal Credit Union. The group agreed to meet on a monthly basis for a time since it is difficult for many to attend during harvest. Tentative Agenda items include:

1. MRS Decision-making process
 - a. Report/recommendation from Governance Committee
 - b. What has group accomplished to date (milestones) and how have decisions been made?
 - c. Reasons to define a decision-making process
 - d. Reasons not to define a decision-making process
 - e. Types of things to vote/make decisions on
 - f. Potential decision-making models
 - g. Organizational relationships (i.e. ad hoc to larger group, etc.)

Terry Howard asked that Teri (as facilitator) strictly enforces a 5 minute time limit on announcements to ensure adequate time remains for agenda items. The group decided that this is a good idea with some flexibility for items they decide they want to spend more time on. Further, they decided:

1. Announcements be submitted to Teri outlined and written at least one week prior to the meeting; and
2. Time be built into the beginning of each meeting for an “ice breaker” activity to be spontaneously contributed by any stakeholder who wishes to do so.

Treats for the next meeting will be provided by Ezio Sansoni (coffee) and Sally Magneson (snacks). Thanks!

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