

Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Restoration Planning Process Plan for Stakeholder Engagement

Introduction

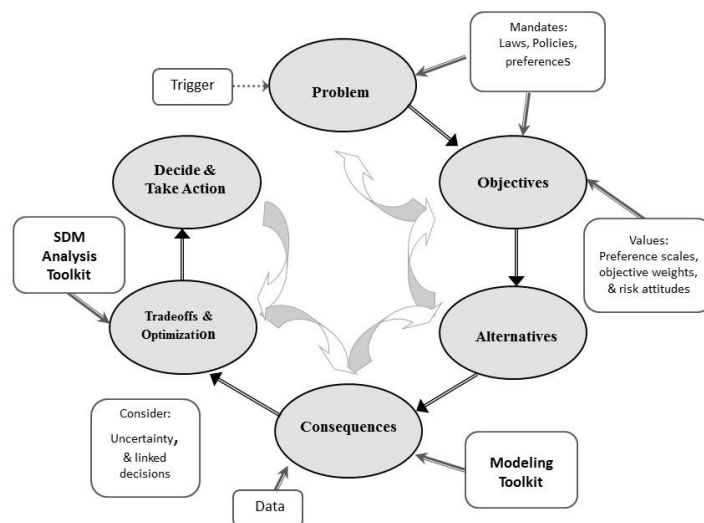
The following outlines a proposed Process Plan for engaging stakeholders in a planning and structured decision-making process for the development of a conceptual anadromous fish habitat restoration plan for the Lower Sutter Bypass. The Process Plan follows a standard Structured Decision Making (SDM) framework, as described below, and focuses on two primary forums for stakeholder engagement:

1. A Core Working Group comprised of landowners, reclamation districts and resource agency representatives that will guide project planning and decision making; and
2. A series of topically focused workshops that will provide opportunities for a broader range of interested parties to engage and provide input to the process.

Both the Core Working Group and the topical workshops will be facilitated by an independent, professional Project Facilitator. The proposed SDM process is outlined below, followed by a more detailed description of the proposed Core Working Group (including composition, role and planned level of engagement), topical workshops and engagement with the Technical Team. A proposed schedule for engagement activities is presented at the end of the document.

Structured Decision-Making Process

Structured Decision-Making (SDM) is a commonly used process to guide planning projects and facilitate transparent decisions. As shown in the figure below, the process typically involves six key steps beginning with the clear articulation of the problem (sometimes referred to as the decision context) and definition of project objectives. The process then involves identifying alternatives for achieving the project objectives, followed by analysis of the consequences and trade-offs of each alternative (often formulated into a consequences matrix). Based on the results of the trade-off analysis, decisions are made on appropriate actions (in this case a preferred conceptual habitat restoration plan).



Source: Jean Fitts Cochrane

As described in more detail below, stakeholders will be engaged (via the Core Working Group and topical workshops) at each step of the SDM process with the intent of building a foundation of information, mutual understanding and buy-in along the way. The development of the restoration plan and project alternatives will be provided by a Technical Team retained by River Partners to support the project. Technical work, such as modeling to support the consequences and trade-off analyses, will be provided by a Technical Team retained through parallel planning and modeling efforts in the region. The development of the problem statement, objectives and alternatives will be done collectively by the Core Working Group with support from River Partners and the Project Facilitator.

Core Working Group

The Core Working Group will be comprised of a small group (5-10 individuals) representing key stakeholders, including:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- Central Valley Flood Protection Board;
- Department of Water Resources;
- Goose Club;
- Dos Rios Ranch; and
- relevant Reclamation Districts.

River Partners will work with the entities listed above to identify specific representatives. Core Working Group representatives should be decision makers within their respective organization and should be available to commit to a minimum of two hours a month over a 12-month period for Core Working Group engagement.

The primary role of the Core Working Group will be to help guide the project and engage on technical issues. The Core Working Group will also be responsible for articulating a problem statement and objectives, defining alternatives and making a decision on a final concept plan.

Seven Core Working Group meetings are proposed over the course of the project. Core Working Group meetings will be scheduled to coincide with key project milestones and decision points, as outlined in the schedule section at the end of this Process Plan. In the near-term, all meetings will be virtual.

The Project Facilitator, working with River Partners will develop a draft charter which will outline the Core Working Group's shared goals, roles and responsibilities, and ground rules. The Core Working Group will review and approve the charter before proceeding to more technical topics.

Topical Workshops

A series of five stakeholder workshops will be planned to inform the local community and provide opportunities for input on specific issues related to restoration in the Lower Sutter Bypass including, fish ecology, agricultural production, flood management and project alternatives. The Project Facilitator, working with River Partners and the Technical Team will design and facilitate the workshops. To the extent possible, workshops will be incorporated with other community meetings to make them more convenient for stakeholders.

River Partners and the Project Facilitator will leverage previous work in the Lower Sutter Bypass and in the Central Valley to build a stakeholder list and coordinate outreach through known organizations including, but not limited to: Reclamation Districts 1001 and 108, Yuba Water Agency, the Farm Bureau, Sacramento River Settlement Contractors, and the North Sacramento Valley IRWM.

The Project Facilitator will produce workshop summaries and provide input back to the Core Working Group.

Engagement with Technical Team

River Partners will be retaining a Technical Team to provide technical assistance in the development of the conceptual anadromous fish habitat restoration plan for the Lower Sutter Bypass. At the direction of River Partners, the Technical Team will engage with the Core Working Group at select Core Working Group meetings to provide information and updates. The Technical Team will also assist in preparing and presenting materials for the topical workshops, and will be available to help answer stakeholder questions at the workshops.

Schedule

The following outlines a proposed schedule for stakeholder engagement, including targets for Core Working Group meetings and topical workshops. Specific meeting and workshop dates will be identified with stakeholders based on availability and other community meetings to avoid conflicts and maximize leveraging opportunities.

Stakeholder Engagement	Topic	Timeframe
Individual Stakeholder Meetings	Project Organization, Charter	November 2020
Workshop #1	Project Initiation	January 25, 2021
Core Working Group #1	Charter, Schedule and Existing Knowledge Base	March 4, 2021
Workshop #2	Fish Ecology	March 15, 2021
Core Working Group #2	Project Alternatives and Analytical Tools	April 21, 2021
Workshop #3	Ag Production	May 3, 2021
Core Working Group #3	Modeling Results/Consequences	June 22, 2021
Workshop #4	Flood Management	June 28, 2021
Core Working Group #4	Develop Conceptual Alternatives	August 25, 2021
Core Working Group #5	Alternatives Analysis and Trade-offs	October 26, 2021
Workshop #5	Alternatives and Conceptual Plan	November 15, 2021
Core Working Group #6	Refinement of Conceptual Plan	December 15, 2021
Core Working Group #7	Finalize Conceptual Plan	February 23, 2022