

OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM

TO: Core Working Group
RE: **March 4, 2021 Core Working Group Meeting #1**

Meeting Attendees:

Colin Purdy, CDFW

Andrea Buckley, CVFPB

Greg Harvey, CVFPB

Jesus Esparza, DWR

David Martasian, DWR

David Pesavento, DWR

Maya Kepner, Dos Rios Norte

John Brennan, Goose Club

Dane Lowry, Goose Club

Maria Rea, NMFS

Brian Ellrott, NMFS

Julie Retner, River Partners

Helen Swagarty, River Partners

Rene Henery, Trout Unlimited

Jacob Katz, Trout Unlimited

Consultant Team

Chris Bowles, CBEC

Chris Campbell, CBEC

Bruce DiGennaro, Essex Partnership

Terra Alpaugh, Kearns & West

Decisions:

1. If there are parties outside the CWG who could provide useful insight/expertise on specific agenda topics, CWG members can propose adding them to the agenda for that meeting.

Action Items:

1. Kearns & West will reach out to test the proposed meeting dates with CWG members and send out meeting invitations.
2. Plan for a conversation about how fish are moving in and out of the bypass at the next meeting.
3. River Partners and Consultants to finalize an agenda for Workshop #2 on March 15.

Discussion Highlights:

1. Role of Core Working Group (CWG)
 - a. River Partners has circulated the revised charter and stakeholder engagement plan, which outline objectives and roles and responsibilities of the CWG. The CWG will articulate the problem statement, objectives, and project alternatives, as well as collectively making recommendations on the final conceptual proposal.
 - b. CWG meetings will be 1-2 hours depending on the content. Members should plan to attend each meeting. If a member can't attend, they can appoint an alternate **[Action Item]** Kearns & West will reach out to test the proposed CWG dates and send out meeting invitations.

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- c. There is an expectation that CWG members will participate in document review and agreement-building throughout the year – and will ensure any broader review needed within their agencies/organizations occurs in tandem.
- d. Suggestion to add a member of the research community currently working in the Sutter-Bypass (e.g., Carson Jeffries, Flora Cordoleani, Rachel Johnson) to the CWG since they are most familiar with on-the-ground conditions and latest research results.
 - i. River Partners described their desire to keep the CWG small; current membership is limited to landowners and agencies that would issue a permit.
 - ii. NMFS noted that SWFSC staff are their primary science advisors, so they coordinate closely.
 - iii. **Decision:** If there are parties outside the CWG who would be able to provide useful insight/expertise on specific agenda topics, CWG members can propose adding them to the agenda for that meeting.

2. Existing Knowledge Base

- a. The consultants are starting to compile a resource library of existing information (on fish, birds, O&M, etc.) and develop working maps which will ultimately be available on the website.
- b. This effort will be informed and cross-pollinated by the Sutter-Tisdale Bypass Management Plan process which is occurring concurrently; the team is updating the hydrologic model from Tisdale to better reflect infrastructure and inundation and analyze hydrologic variability; it will contain 22 years of hydrologic data.
 - i. CalTrout suggested gathering drone videos of flood patterns to display alongside the hydrology.
- c. CWG emphasized the need for fish data in addition to hydrologic data. Suggestions included:
 - i. *CDFW wire trap data, DWR's Feather River Rotary Screw Trap (RST) data, YCWA's RST data.* These would provide timing and size class data of fish moving through the Feather and Butte Creek side of the system but be less informative for the Sacramento River fish.
 - ii. *CDFW RST data*, in which the fish were collected as they were moving from the foothills and then recaptured in the lower Sutter Bypass. This coded data could be used to make inferences about when fish are rearing.
 - iii. *CDFW-SWFSC acoustic tagging data tracking juvenile movement through the Butte Sink into the Sutter Bypass.* This data tracks a larger size class of juveniles, because they must be large enough to accommodate a tag. This data has suggested some relationship between the Butte Slough Outfall Gates and fish movement; there are a portion of the fish that are not attracted into the Lower Sutter Bypass, possibly due to low flows or something about the movement at the gates.
 - iv. *Carson Jeffries' genetic analysis data*, which provide information on which

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- runs are utilizing which areas and which fish have better survival
- v. *CDFW Tisdale and Knights Landing RST data on the mainstem Sacramento*; CDFW staff have looked at the proportion of fish attracted into Sutter through Tisdale in an overtopping event.
 - vi. *CDFW fish rescue data at Tisdale*, which can provide information on the number of adults of different species entering Lower Sutter Bypass through Tisdale or getting washed in from the Sacramento in high water years.
 - vii. *Data on adults who return to Butte Creek using the Lower Sutter Bypass as a migratory corridor*.
- d. CalTrout suggested that the CWG organize their thinking around three primary inputs: fish use of the Bypass (including ingress and egress); water on the Bypass; and fish food on the Bypass. In terms of fish movement onto and off of the Bypass, CalTrout mentioned three specific areas: (1) fish coming down the west of the Bypass, (2) fish entering from the Feather River via the farm berm, and (3) fish coming up from the Sacramento via Sacramento Slough. The CWG should establish a framework to inform the information they need before collecting any-and-all Lower Sutter Bypass related data.
- [Action Item]** The facilitator suggested having a more focused conversation about how fish are moving in and out of the bypass at the next meeting.

3. Planning for Workshop #2

- a. River Partners described their objective for the workshop as providing stakeholders with a common understanding of the system and potential restoration interventions that could be applied in the Lower Sutter Bypass, so that everyone can imagine what the project area could look like with conditions optimized for salmon rearing and passage. This workshop will deliberately set aside flood and agricultural interests and constraints for later discussion. With this in mind, River Partners proposed four topics for the Workshop:
 - i. Physical constraints, hydrology, and existing habitat conditions
 - ii. Connectivity opportunities (i.e., how to get flows into the Sutter Bypass); this could include a presentation by the Fremont Notch team
 - iii. Carson Jeffries on food production on floodplains
 - iv. Cramer Fish Sciences on creating a conceptual fish model for this area
- b. CWG suggestions on the agenda included:
 - i. CDFW voiced interest in a better understanding of what CVFPB could approve in terms of structures and riparian changes in the Bypass.
 - ii. CalTrout suggested that discussing constraints is not as useful without a clear understanding of the objective end conditions. They illustrated their approach via two questions: (1) what are the range of conditions that fish see on the floodplains and for how long, and (2) what are the mechanisms to achieve those conditions?

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1. Therefore, (iii) fish use of the floodplains should be the first topic, followed by (i) conditions that could be remediated.
- iii. Dos Rios suggested looking at the various land types in the project area – public or private—and the conditions of that land and how that would impact available opportunities.
- iv. River Partners pointed out that there are many ideas to improve connectivity but that they will need a way to determine the tradeoffs between approaches. The Fremont Notch presentation could inform the CWG on the decision-making frames they used to evaluate notch alternatives.
 1. CDFW liked the idea and noted that DWR and CDFW learned a lot in the Fremont process.
 2. CalTrout suggested that a Fremont presentation will be useful but premature. First, the CWG needs to establish what physical conditions they want on the floodplain in order to provoke fish responses.