

## OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Core Working Group

**RE:** August 25, 2021 Core Working Group Meeting #4

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### Meeting Attendees

Jacob Katz, Cal Trout  
Morgan Kilgour, CDFW  
Bjarni Serup, CDFW  
Megan Giglini, CVFPB  
Maya Kepner, Dos Rios Norte  
Jesus Esparza, DWR  
David Martasian, DWR  
Lori Price, DWR  
Eric Ginney, ESA  
John Brennan, Goose Club  
Dane Lowry, Goose Club  
Elizabeth Beckensten, KSN  
Barry O'Regan, KSN  
Julie Rentner, River Partners  
Anna Schwyter, River Partners  
Helen Swagerty, River Partners  
Rene Henery, Trout Unlimited

### Consultant Team

Chris Bowles, cbec  
Chris Campbell, cbec  
Greg Kamman, cbec  
Steve Zeug, Cramer Fish Sciences  
Mark Henderson, USGS  
Bruce DiGennaro, Essex Partnership  
Terra Alpaugh, Kearns & West  
Sharon Hu, Kearns & West

### **Action Items:**

- Fish Subteam to schedule follow up meeting ahead of CWG Meeting #5 (October 26).
- Greg/cbec to share updated Table of Contents, Chapters 2 through 4 with the CWG.

### **Discussion Highlights:**

1. Update on CWG and Subteam Activity
  - a. The Fish Subteam met on July 15 and will be convening again prior to CWG Meeting #5 (October 26).
  - b. The Ag Subteam met on August 4. The technical team is in the process of meeting with landowners to discuss land use patterns separately.
2. Conceptual Plan Sections
  - a. cbec reviewed the Draft Table of Contents for the Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Management Plan.
    - i. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will be drafted and ready to share with the CWG the week of August 30.
  - b.
3. Workplan for Plan Completion and Future Meeting Dates

## Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Management Planning Project

- a. cbec reviewed the Technical Team Workplan and upcoming meeting dates.
  - i. The Draft Conceptual Restoration Plan will be available for CWG review in early November. The technical team will share chapters in advance as they become available.

### 4. Conceptual Alternatives

- a. cbec noted that the technical team will be referencing modeling from the Sutter/Tisdale Management Plan to evaluate one conceptual alternative, rather than three to four conceptual alternatives.
- b. River Partners asked the technical team to discuss objective setting in the context of the structured decisionmaking (SDM) process.
  - i. The SDM lead noted that the purpose of structured decisionmaking is to compare different approaches. Traditionally, multiple alternatives are evaluated based on their ability to meet the objectives. In this instance, the technical team will provide two approaches for comparison, the existing conditions and the alternative.
- c. River Partners asked if it is feasible to evaluate more than one alternative by scaling back on the level of detail in the modeling scenarios.
  - i. cbec noted that the modeling effort for the Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Management Plan will be carried forward into the modeling scenarios for the Sutter/Tisdale Management Plan, which is a larger landscape-level effort. While the Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Management Plan has limited funding for modeling and post processing, other options can be considered more qualitatively.
  - ii. River Partners noted that it would be helpful to include qualitative evaluations to examine project objectives with project components.
- d. CWG members discussed concepts for Dos Rios Norte project components (see Appendix A)
  - i. Dos Rios Norte: Dos Rios Norte is interested in ways to achieve long-term conservation goals, including annual incentives and agricultural conservation easements. Project proposals were developed based on CDFW and DWR criteria and include salmon easements and other minor improvements. Dos Rios Norte is waiting for feedback on these proposals from resource agencies.
  - ii. cbec: If there is more frequent inundation of the West Borrow Canal, then the existing irrigation/drainage canals on the property can provide additional passage as part of a comprehensive project for passage of fish off of the floodplain. Existing perimeter berms and outlet structures on the rice fields can be improved to prolong inundation and enhance habitat conditions for juvenile salmon and allow for volitional passage on the

## Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Management Planning Project

- floodplain.
- iii. River Partners: Has cbec considered whether there should be connectivity on the Feather River side?
    - 1. cbec: Connecting to the Feather River is a possibility. Some considerations for this connection include frequency and management of sedimentation on the right bank of the Feather River.
  - iv. Cal Trout: The current physical conditions and hydrologic regime meet the needs of these fish. We want to preserve this habitat and discuss management actions and investments to enhance and increase these areas. We know that Dos Rios gets wet earliest and stays wet the longest, so we should consider ways to get this habitat wet earlier, in a way that still meets agricultural and flood considerations, so that fish can experience greater benefits.
  - v. CDFW: CDFW is not able to provide specific detail of confidential review panel processes.
  - vi. River Partners: Regarding boundary conditions, have the challenges around upstream decisions impacting downstream property owners and inundation been described?
    - 1. cbec: Agricultural impacts still need to be considered, but habitat enhancements and benefits from increased frequency of inundation can be achieved over a broad range of hydrologic conditions.
  - e. CWG members discussed concepts for Goose Club project components.
    - i. Goose Club shared the “Dos Gansos” proposal (see Appendix A).
      - 1. The purpose of the proposal is to increase frequency and flood five lower fields and lower river levels.
      - 2. North-south bidirectional exchange in waters should be aligned with Dos Rios concerns around connectivity and controlling erosion by slowing sediment before water enters the bypass.
    - ii. River Partners noted that the pathway to the north of the flood control structure by the Nelson Slough Wildlife Area could provide connectivity to the Feather River if there are more flows across the Wildlife Area into what is currently a culvert at the highest end.
      - 1. Goose Club: This is a historic area where breaks happen on the Feather River. Fish and water can be brought down on the east side. The Feather River connections would allow for pre-flood pressure releases. It would be better to have several connections.
    - iii. Cal Trout noted that Dos Rios proposal contains opportunities for creating the biophysical conditions in normal to low water years that benefit fish and increase volitional passage to wetlands. There is a benefit to having

## Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Management Planning Project

- fields already flooded when water with strong scouring potential enters the field.
- iv. River Partners asked if engineering the bend in the river by the Nelson Slough Wildlife Area/Goose Club so that there is overtopping into the habitat area would help improve stability in the sedimented areas (shaded in red labeled with 4a, 4b, and 4c).
    - 1. Goose Club and Cal Trout replied that the Feather River flows contain a lot of sediment and engineered overtopping would be not feasible unless there is a way for sediment to settle upstream.
  - f. CWG members discussed concepts for the CDFW project components:
    - i. CDFW noted that their goal is to minimize the amount of managed infrastructure and maximize riparian habitat for fish. Without modeling concepts for flow, building connectivity, and moving more fish and water into the Sutter Bypass, it would be difficult to make an informed decision.
    - ii. Cal Trout and Trout Unlimited expressed their support for proposing concepts for hydrology modeling.
    - iii. Trout Unlimited suggested that cbec combine the conceptual proposals provided by the landowners and develop them iteratively with the CWG.
5. Planning for CWG Meeting #5
- a. The modeling team will use quantitative tools to explore alternatives so that the CWG can consider alternatives that can achieve the means objectives.
    - i. Trout Unlimited noted that alternatives should be evaluated on the basis of how well they achieve the final objective, rather than the means objectives.
    - ii. Cal Trout suggested that the quantitative modeling include a range of potential hydrologic scenarios, such as water years, to pre-screen options.
  - b. The Fish Subteam will schedule a follow-up meeting prior to the next CWG Meeting on October 26, 2021.

Lower Sutter Bypass Anadromous Fish Habitat Management Planning Project

