

CVFMP Lower San Joaquin Regional Forum Summary Modesto, CA – June 4, 2009

OVERVIEW

The FloodSAFE program of Department of Water Resources (DWR) is introducing the Central Valley Flood Management Planning (CVFMP) programs with five (5) regional Forums throughout the Central Valley – in Chico, Modesto, Walnut Grove, Las Banos, and West Sacramento. The Forums will present the same information and provide the same discussion opportunities at each location.

Each Forum consists of an initial presentation describing the key elements of FloodSAFE and the CVFMP program. The remainder of the time was dedicated to breakout sessions relating to four CVMFP topic areas. The first Regional Forum was held on June 3, 2009 in Chico, CA for the Upper Sacramento Region. Copies of the Forum presentations, handouts, and materials are available on the CVFMP website at www.water.ca.gov/cvfmp.

A brief recap of the presentations is provided in the following paragraphs and the remainder of this document provides a summary of the small group discussions. Flip charts and worksheets were used to record ideas generated during the discussions and transcripts of the recorded results are incorporated into the summary.

Gary Hester, CVFMP Program Manager, welcomed Regional Forum participants and reviewed the agenda before introducing Ken Kirby (title). Ken provided an overview of FloodSAFE, which is an initiative to (1) improve flood management systems and (2) operations and maintenance, as well as (3) inform and assist the public in flood awareness and (4) improve emergency response. The CVFMP program is a significant FloodSAFE component and Mr. Kirby described the goals, study area, and major products for the CVFMP.

Important CVFMP activities will be to identify and assess the current status of the flood protection system and then develop the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) to improve integrated flood management - for those areas protected by facilities of the State-Federal flood protection system in the Central Valley. The CVFPP will be developed through a broad outreach and engagement process. Options for participating in the CVFPP process include:

- Regional and Valley-wide **Forums** for information sharing and high-level discussions
- Regional and Topic-based **Work Groups** to help develop content for the Plan
- **Outreach, Briefings, and Coordination** with partners, interest groups, and related project, programs, and plans.

After a short question-and-answer period, participants were invited to join a breakout session. The first concurrent sessions addressed either the Regional Conditions Summary Report or the Planning and Engagement Process. The second concurrent sessions focused on Environmental Stewardship or Non-Urban Levee Evaluations.

A summary of the breakout session presentations follows:

- Regional Conditions Summary Report: Gary Hester outlined this report which will describe regional resource conditions. These conditions include: current regional conditions and challenges; flood management needs; and ecosystem conditions. This report will also define goals and objectives for the CVFPP. Content for the report will be developed through a work group, relying on existing information.

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- **Planning and Engagement Approach:** Chris McCready, FloodSAFE Communication Lead, described the proposed CVFMP outreach approach. This involves the Forums, Work Groups, and Outreach, Briefings, and Coordination mentioned in the initial presentation. Another component will be development of the CVFMP website and distribution of information and updates through email and other communication options.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Dale Hoffman-Floerke, Office Chief for Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources, provided a working definition for the concept of Environmental Stewardship along with goals for a stewardship approach. A work group will be convened to help identify how Environmental Stewardship will be incorporated into the Regional Conditions Summary Report, the CVFPP itself, and the multi-species and floodplain conservation strategy (a CVFPP component).
- **Non-Urban Levee Evaluation:** Mike Inamine, Office Chief for Levee Repairs and Floodplain Management, described the proposal and timeline for conducting physical levee inspections for non-urban levees. The next activities, for 2009, would consist of crest explorations for project (and associated non-project) levees that protect communities of 5,000 people or more. In 2010, crest and toe borings (where needed) would be undertaken on the remaining levees that protect communities of 1,000 or more people. Additional exploration locations would be identified on the basis of criteria – for example, levees that protect critical infrastructure or small legacy communities, or levees with damage sites.

After the breakout sessions concluded, participants reconvened to hear next steps and closing remarks. Those who are interested in serving on either a regional or topic-based workgroup were encouraged to contact (provide contact information here).

Following the dinner break, the initial presentation was repeated during an evening session – to maximize participation opportunities for those who could not attend the afternoon session.

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OVERVIEW PRESENTATION (AFTERNOON SESSION) – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What would the lower San Joaquin study include? Would it include the Tulare Basin?

A: No, the study would not include the Tulare Basin; it would be from the Stanislaus confluence in San Joaquin down to the Delta. The Corps feasibility study has an existing agreement and DWR is a signatory. The study is currently underway.

Q: Are there any plans to include the Tulare Basin because there are a lot of levees?

A: That is not the focus of today; but there will be opportunities to look statewide. There is an element of statewide flood planning that will go into effect in the summer.

A: Response (David, Army Corp of Engineers) I would be happy to talk about any questions regarding current projects going on in this region. We are still figuring out what the needs are.

Q: You made comment that legal delta not included: Why is that?

A: When we draw the study area boundary, the legal Delta is not included legal delta. The Delta is part of the CVFMP process, which focuses on federal levees but could have impacts on upstream areas

Q: What about the hundreds of miles of state levees?

A: The boundaries should include the State-Federal levee system.

Q: What is the need for 200-year flood protection?

A: The 2007 legislation requires a minimum level of 200-year flood protection, in areas with populations at or approaching over 10,000 to approve development.

Q: In lessening the impacts of floods, concerned about water quality protection during floods.

A: There will be opportunities to talk about details on water quality during work group. We hope those who are interested will become involved.

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: REGIONAL CONDITIONS SUMMARY REPORT

Q: As we are reacting to statute passed in 2007, but only have a few months to develop the report. There is a propensity to rush to judgment and to a predetermined goal, despite criticism by local experts. Not sure if there is an open minded outcome. We've been told for months and months there will be opportunities for input, but now this is rushed and deadline driven. What assurances do we have that our input is valuable? How real is the deadline?

A: DWR understands that this is a tight timeframe. The groundwork is provided by substantial amount of information already existing in documents and reports. There are concerns that time commitments may be for naught, if there is already a conclusion. Really, these are 5-year cycles. This first report is trying to identify and understand the problems. Given the complexity, the report won't resolve everything – but should capture the differences and continue to work on those in this planning process in the years to come. DWR is trying not to come in with a predetermined outcome. Yesterday, comments from the flip side said that DWR should provide more of a framework before bringing this to the public. We are trying to find the find balance. This must be an open process to be successful. We are legislatively required to do this. There are many problems that will take longer to solve.

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Thoughts and comments on the Scope of Work

- Seems like there is a need to categorize problems conditions, by physical, data needs, legislative, permitting, environmental. Seems like bullet points are too broad
- The terms are a little vague. Phrases like “current conditions” and “challenges” could use some clarification.
- The whole discussion needs to be better defined. There are a lot of different aspects that need to be addressed (physical, logistical, financial, governance, regulatory, etc). Also, some of the data that we identify won’t be available or complete, this process may have be updated regularly based on new data. It would not be great to base local land use rules on this data.
- The Conditions Report could include opportunities and future challenges.
- The scope of work is awfully broad, and there are concerns with reliance on “existing” information. Broad consensus with affected stakeholders.

Comment: Other projects have different time constraints than the CVFPP, think about to map this process in terms of local planning. At what point does the design get locked in? Projects can move forward if things are always changing.

Comment: Conditions will always evolve. If funding is being spent to get new models, it would seem that this plan should find a way to incorporate existing information.

Response: If information comes forward on a timely basis, that data will make it into the plan; other wise, data will roll forward into later plans. The CVFMP process will try to coordinate information from different programs.

Q. How are you going to pay for all of this? Huge programmatic issues need to be identified. There are huge logistical problems that need to be addressed.

A: The first phase will try to capture issues but these may not be resolved by 2012. The first plan will not address all the issues. The 2017 update will have additional information plan and some aspects will be a lot further along. Right now, it’s important that everyone understand the issues.

Q: If levees need to withstand a 200-year event, the existing system is not anywhere near that. It seems like huge gap to get there.

A: There are huge gaps and we are still in the process of defining what the 200-year level is. The team is currently working to update flood models. The 200-year level of protection is required by 2025. We need to be working towards that once those studies have some certainty. Climate change also needs to be considered, and that will be a challenge. The Climate Change work group will start up this summer, meeting for no more than 6 months, and will draw on existing efforts and knowledge.

Q. Are we going to break it down geographically?

A: Yes, there are 5 subgroups, including a lower San Joaquin regional conditions group

Q. What will “current conditions” address? Recovery is very expensive.

A: Current conditions will focus on the state-federal flood control system. Levees will be evaluated in a number of ways: ability to handle original design flows and ability to handle current development. We will look at what we know about how things have changed in the recent past? The category is open-ended. It’s not meant to be vague, but rather open enough to include different elements from local perspectives.

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- Q. Many problems extend beyond the physical boundaries of the five regional areas. Wouldn't it make sense to pull everyone together to solve those problems?
- A: There needs to be a way to break the effort down to manageable chunks. We know that cost-sharing needs to be determined. Setting up system-wide forums will help look at where need policy changes are needed to support the overall system.

Written comments received at the end of the breakout session:

- we know more about system hydraulics and hydrology now
- interconnection between land use decisions and flood system (e.g. increased runoff)
- look at local impacts on broader regional system (e.g. detention, groundwater recharge)
- can't afford to just keep making the system bigger
- In this area, decisions about flood risk may be used to justify conveyance, which will utterly change the Delta.
- Current conditions should assemble past work (primarily technical facts) and synthesize it in a straightforward, unbiased way.
 - revisit COMP study (which is correct) 1998-2002 (simplify presentation)
 - levees not constructed to current Corps standards
 - conflicts in maintenance standards
 - channel capacity
- Section on future challenges should include:
 - population and economic growth
 - land use
 - seismic activity/characteristics
 - sea-level rise and tidal influence will affect some, but not all, issues
- Future opportunities:
 - bypass/development of offstream wetland floodplains
- What signals work group success?
 - peer review of work group products (need quality control)
 - balanced work group composition
 - who controls decisions? (need adequate direction on the end goal so that work group outputs are relevant and useful)
- channel capacity, especially for the San Joaquin
- levee standards to assess local levees
- level of economic analysis used to evaluate project (system-wide? local? different for ag. v. urban?)
- risk analysis → is higher risk acceptable for agriculture?
- who will coordinate water supply and flood management; needs interface with water delivery system
- suggestions:
 - compile data and information that is known, see if people concur or not, add additional information as needed
 - on your website, post 1) the information you have and are using and 2) the basic assumptions or perspectives you will/will not be incorporating into your plan – so folks don't have to wonder how their input will be incorporated...to know that you already know that and are addressing it
 - engage experts – contract with firm that have been doing the studies and who have the holistic approaches and tools to do what you are trying to do
 -
- the scope is so vague as to be useless

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- presentations are too complex, need to simplify
- need to look upstream for solutions
- State needs to assess whether it is capable of being the flood control cop
- public/local involvement must be part of the process from the beginning and must have some control (overcome distrust)
- use past studies and also present something different from past studies
- past studies must be references
- Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Delta are all different – how to address as one?
- capacity is a big issue for San Joaquin
- how is “risk” defined? through technical, social, economic, etc.
- are 200-year events the appropriate standard?
- should floodplain development be allowed to continue? will it add to risk? increase potential losses?
- what is on the floodplain that we are seeking to protect?
- why do a new effort if we have many past efforts with no effect?
- is public input “valuable”? is it actually used?
- “detention” might be an acceptable land use → CVFMP should consider land use options
- regional self-sufficiency and interconnection with water supply
- public should have decision-making role, as well as input of perspectives and ideas
- goals and objectives for 2012 CVFPP:
 - development of a 200-year WSEL
 - coordination with land use staff
 - respect for/use local knowledge
- confused on content of Regional Reports :
 - a lot more than land use conditions only?
 - flood management
 - land use conditions of floodplains
 - consequence of eco-system
- governance issues – multiple jurisdictions, no single entity to control water issues, no single water master
- need to involve the Sacramento River group and Alex Hildebrand and the San Joaquin River group
- if you want the public to participate, you must value and include local input
- are you working with local land use agencies – SB 5
- need a broad scope, including land use
- what is the context for the report? regional conditions, ecosystem conditions, other conditions/uses of existing systems
- break the report into San Joaquin and Sacramento watersheds
- How does this get applied? Will it help projects move forward? Any plan should be developed for assistance, not hindrance. Reasonable and doable objectives should be at the forefront. Resources should be available to move forward.
- Communication is key and consensus building (willing to give/take)
- balance of concerns: urban v. rural (funding availability)
- commitment by participants (willingness to keep commitment)

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BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: PLANNING AND ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Q: What is meant by management actions? Or compare potential management actions.

A: The management actions would be, as an example, creating specific new floodplains or making decisions about how we develop floodplains. We can also work to define that in the workgroups and the forums. It essentially means anything that we can do to address the problems that exists and can come from any source

Thoughts and comments on key aspects for Planning and Engagement

- The process looks pretty comprehensive on a lot of different levels. It looks like a realistic timeline, it is an aggressive undertaking.
- Looking at a public safety standpoint, there is an elaborate plan for mitigation based on environmental factors – where is the emergency mitigation aspect going to fall into place?
- For the engagement I would be more interested in seeing what needs to be done in terms of nuts and bolts like flood mapping. What is the level of detail like for progression maps?
- How will the regions be prioritized?
- Cal FIRE is interested in how the plan will be used to address public safety aspects. It is our job to come in after the flood has already happened, but there needs to be something done to educate community on public safety. You need to know ahead of time if a certain road is unusable, then you will have to reroute it. It needs to be considered- what your rings of evacuation zones are going to be,
- Is it possible to develop goals and objectives if we don't have a plan?
- There is a Central Valley flood control group that meets on a somewhat regular basis. We will do whatever we can to make this resource available to you. Some of the people involved will be in the regional work group.

Comment: There are some issues regarding the general public and the people that have the time to attend these meetings. Key people may not be represented and that needs to be considered. Department of Fish and Game needs to participate.

Response: Interest based groups will be identified that will include a lot of people that are not represented here today.

Comment: Participation should include elected officials and representatives from local jurisdictions. DWR needs to make presentations to these people so that they can become a part of the planning process.

Response: DWR is looking at when in the process to actually go and make this type of outreach. At what phase is that most valuable? When local opinion leaders start talking about this, the elected officials will take notice. Right now, it's too early – there are not any deliverables to show local officials.

Comment: DWR needs to make sure that legislation is being implemented and it needs to be clear what the legislation is needed.

Comment: Within the plan management, where can CalEMA play a planning role for what should be included in a mitigation plan for flood events. Taking charge of emergency management is a huge task for local providers.

Response: We need to get other state agencies involved with this. That would include executive-level outreach to some of our sister agencies. It would be great to have CalEMA involved early on in the process and participating in the work groups.

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Comment: There was a little concern that people on the working groups be qualified.

Response: There is a simple application that people can fill out to serve on a work group. We are taking nominations. The goal is to make sure that the people on the workgroups are qualified.

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Q: Is there a plan to do an EIR on this?

A: We are in discussion on this now. DWR will present the draft plan in January to the Flood Board which will have 6 months to adopt the plan. This will likely not have site-specific project details, but we will likely do a programmatic EIR.

Discussion on definition of Environmental Stewardship

- Need to add the commitment to fund it (rather than just manage it) to address the additional cost and ongoing maintenance.
- Say a responsibility to manage (remove commitment)
- Revised the first part to read: “A responsibility to fund, manage and protect....”
- No, should just say “A responsibility to manage...”
- Recreation?

Discussion on scope of work for Environmental Stewardship

- What Guiding Principles should apply?
 - Reference and consider existing environmental requirements
 - Adhere to existing environmental laws
- What are Measures of Success? (i.e. How will we know if Environmental Stewardship principles were successfully incorporated throughout the plan?)
 - The Work Group will need to help review the process.
 - The results were endorsed by the organizations that were represented.
 - Ecosystem restoration (rather than mitigation) is incorporated throughout the plan.
 - Ecosystem restoration will be included in criteria.
 - What about integration with existing environmental habitat restoration activities? There are lots of Habitat Conservation Plans already out there.
 - Integration could be more part of multi species conservation.
- What key Environmental Stewardship topics need to be addressed?
 - conservation goals, strategic conservation goals (some of the topic areas that could be in the plan)
- What Goals and Objectives should be included in the plan?
 - Work group will help identify goals and objectives – such as, promote recovery of native species and biodiversity.
 - Is there a place in here for non-native species that we like (striped bass)?
 - One of the goals for sustainability is also environmental education for long-term stewardship.
 - Need to change name of regional summary report if includes data from all areas. If this will contain goals and objectives for the whole process, it should be called a scoping report or something similar

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Suggested Contacts: [delete contact info before posting to website]

- Mike Selling: mselling@sjgov.org
- Mark Hopkins: 209.468.3085
- Barbara Barrigan-Parilla: 209.479.2053

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: NON-URBAN LEVEE EVALUATION

Q: You touched on some repair criteria. I am familiar for the criteria for urban levees, is there different criteria for non urban levees

A: No, it is the same criteria that we have been using since 2006. When the Governor came out with this he said go out and take care of the visible deficiency. To develop those repairs and to understand those repairs required an understanding- other types of repairs are now being identified, and they have been targeted with the erosion repair and other repairs that need to be done in fast order. But no- the criteria is the same

Q: We had some erosions that we thought were pretty substantial but they are in the upper reaches of the system and since they were not in the urban regions they were not considered critical.

A: There were many damaged non-urban levees that we did not repair because they were not a critical risk when looking at benefit-cost ratios. We are still looking at them and categorizing them and we are going through a round of non-urban repairs

Q: Are you open for further input for repairs?

A: Absolutely, our best information comes from local inquires like this. The best way is to go through Scott Woodling - he is the regional coordinator.

Thoughts and comments on scope of work for Non-Urban Levee Evaluation

- For the various issues for this geographic region, we are encouraging individuals and local officials to write as many white papers to capture the issues. Specifically we were talking about the Gomes Lake pumping issue.
- The Delta is different, it does not fit the river cookie cutter. If you get to the Delta, to the urban fringe, you can have a non-populated place. There needs to be a special set of rules for the delta.
- The performance of the system depends of which levees will fail under any given storm event and what impact those failures have on adjacent levees. Focusing on population being protected may miss these potential impacts and not provide the data needed for a comprehensive plan of Flood Control.
- This is a good start. There can be revisions as this moves forward. Other considerations can be defined in terms of “economic impact.”
- We should also look at who is still with the Reclamation Districts and work with their information.

Q. What criteria are used to determine a cost-benefit ratio?

A: For federal programs, that is a well defined process. The CVFMP will look at things that are not sometimes considered in federal programs. We look at land value and roads, but for the most part we use the federal guidelines because when we work with the Feds we need to stay close to the guidelines to be eligible for any funding.

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Response: We are not looking at cost-benefit ratios to conduct the exploration. The broader idea of cost-benefit is something that we are looking at within the program right now.

Q: Do you have to be concerned about ecosystem values?

A: Yes, we are very concerned with ecosystem values. Most of what we are trying to do is not prevent them from getting wet; and to allow them to get wet.

Q: One concern that we had is that if one levee is protecting less than 1000 people there could still be a domino effect. Are we going to miss that because it only affects 300 people?

A: In regards to the domino effect, we have talked about that lot internally. In the Delta, you can get wake wash that can wipe out things down wind. But for now we are just looking at the project levees. But we would love your input as what you think those effects would be and what levees we should be looking at in 2010.

Q: What is an appropriate level of investment to protect people?

A: We don't have the funding to protect everyone, so we are targeting the money to the places that we know need help and are trying to make decisions about the unknown levees.

Q: It seems that nothing in the Lower san Joaquin that will meet the criteria so why would anyone want to participate in this process if they aren't going to meet the criteria?

A: We are doing an evaluation, the caveat is that we have a lot of time before next season to determine where we should be looking. In many instances, we have been told where there could be problems.

Written comments received at the end of the breakout session:

Question 1: Is the proposed approach for specific site selection this summer clear?

- start earlier than the end of August
- yes
- consider critical infrastructure
- don't see large agriculture
- glad to see <10,000 considered
- public safety near water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, etc.
- what is the purpose/basis of criteria?
- share with Reclamation Districts (the plan, method of rankings, standards of protection)
- so far, very easy for lay people to reasonably follow and understand

Question 2: Is the proposed approach for specific site selection on target? Do you have comments or suggestions?

- for non-urban, non-project levees – use sampling to get good information on some lengths of levees
- adjacent to critical infrastructure, propose or planned development (River Island, Bishop, Atlas, Shimas tract) – doesn't address agriculture
- infrastructure for major metropolitan area could present a greater public health and safety issue in the event of a levee breach
- yes, this segment of DWR is on target and moving forward at a good pace with viable completion measurements.
- utilities
- DRMS – Delta full of critical infrastructure, is this to be abandoned because of low population numbers?

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- population approach is a good start, but should not be the only criteria or “decision tree”
- Does NULE support Delta Vision’s Strategic Plan? Is that its purpose?
- North Delta C.A.R.E.S
- Is it just another proposal to support destruction of the Delta by allowing flooding in non-urban areas?
- Are levees standards in urban and non-urban areas clearly defined? It was presented that non-urban levees would be maintained as closely as possible to Corps standards and then assessed on a levee by levee basis, but what is that criteria? And will that criteria be made open for public consumption and comment?
- What are the priorities? And how are they ordered? By what criteria? What standard?
 - emergency response
 - public safety
 - water quality
 - economic (what, who does it serve?)
 - agricultural interests
 - etc.
- public health and safety would be greater than 5,000?
- emergency response time with population criteria
- Delta Vision with levee breach, decide on case-by-case basis
- what about results of Corps system evaluation from 1990s? will results influence exploration plan?
- who determines critical infrastructure?
- don’t all levees have critical infrastructure?
- will levees for agriculture and areas with less than 1,000 be studied?
- how is data to be used, public safety?
- population check school and emergency services are located on islands
- Sherman and protection of water quality and supply
- type of crops – vines, trees
- the Delta as it currently exists has been created and is sustained by levees; with respect to the Delta, what assurance would we have that attention would not focus on levees that protect water quality for export?
- consider specific critical infrastructure (STP, gas storage, transportation)
- what specific criteria will be used to determine if a 5,000 population levees would outrank one for strategic infrastructure? or even a levee that handles water quality?
- begin to build consensus and trust with local landowners – show decisions and matrix of levee choices, and funding
- levees adjacent to utilities, critical infrastructure (relates to DRMS) – oil/water lines, transmission lines, communication

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ATTENDANCE

Les Barrigar, Turlock Irrigation District
Lynne Baumgras, AMEC
Frank Bean, Kleinfelder
Dylan Blackshear, AMEC
James Bogetti, Mapes Ranch
Gary Cathcart, City of Stockton
Chris Christopherson, Cal FIRE
Katina Conn, San Joaquin County
Joe Deery, HNTB
Susan Dell'Oso, RD 2062
Eric Elias, City of Stockton
Ted Frink, DWR
Steve Horton, Tulare County Redevelopment Agency
Teresa Kinney, U.S. Representative Cardoza's Office
Patti Kroen, DHCCP
Steve Lawshe, CalFIRE
Bob Lyons, Mapes Ranch
Gregg Meissner, City of Stockton
Barry O'Regan, PBI
Frank Ploof
Pani Ramalingam, HDR
Tony Fefuerzo, Stanislaus County
Julie Retner, River Partners
Vincent Rodriguez, DWR
John Shelton, DFG
Jim Stone, City of Manteca
Joe Tootle, ENGEO
Anne Wein, USGS
Steve Winkler, San Joaquin County Public Works