

Draft Meeting Notes
LCR MSCP Steering Committee
October 24, 2018

Attending

Perri Benemelis
Arien Chavez
Jayne Harkins
Bill Lamb
Terry Murphy
Peggy Roefer
Laura Simonek
Laura Vecerina

Dee Bradshaw
Andi Finnegan
Mike Hulin
Kara Mathews
Jessica Neuwerth
Carrie Ronning
Jim Stolberg
Marc Wicke

Tom Chart
Jess Gwinn
Jimmy Knowles
Jennifer McCloskey
Wade Noble
Seth Shanahan
John Swett

Attending Via Conference Call

Bert Bell
Eric Hill
Stevie Sharp
David Vigil

Linda Carbone
Ned Hyduke
Jon Sjoberg
Marc Wicke

Chris Harris
Jamie Kelley
Linda Sullivan
Doyle Wilson

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Introductions

The meeting was convened at 9:30 a.m. by John Swett. There were self-introductions of all attending. Perri Benemelis chaired the meeting.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Public Comments

No public comments were offered.

Approve June 27, 2018 Meeting Notes

The June 27, 2018 meeting notes were approved. (Moved by Jessica Neuwerth, seconded by Bill Lamb and adopted by consensus).

Jayne Harkins noted she will be leaving the Colorado River Commission to become the Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission. She will therefore be resigning as vice-chair of the Steering Committee. She said that she will provide a letter of resignation before she leaves. John Swett noted that the Steering Committee By-Laws state that if the chair or vice-chair resigns that the vacancy shall be filled at the next regular Steering Committee meeting. Since we normally elect the chair and vice-chair at the April Steering Committee meeting, a replacement for Jayne will be elected as part of that process.

DENNIS UNDERWOOD CONSERVATION AREA LAND AND WATER

John Swett reviewed the proposed land and water acquisition for the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area. He noted that Reclamation is proposing to enter into an easement for Conservation purposes with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) for 635 acres of land, which includes 575 water toll acres. The easement will be permanent. The cost for securing the land and water through the easement is \$9,730,000, which was determined through the federal appraisal process. John noted that comparable sales in the area ranged from \$14,824 to \$30,000 per water toll acre. The \$15,322 per water toll acre for the Dennis Underwood site is at the low end of the comparable sales.

Kara Mathews noted that MWD is working on board approval for the easement and that the NEPA/CEQA document is out for review with comments due November 9th. MWD is planning on approving the easement in January 2019. Reclamation will be sending the Restoration Development and Monitoring plan to CDFW for approval. Construction at the site is expected to start February 2019.

Program Decision Document 19-001 “Land and Water Approval Dennis Underwood Conservation Area”

The Steering Committee approves, by consensus, Reclamation entering into a permanent easement for conservation purposes with The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) for \$9,730,000 to secure 635 acres of land and associated water rights for the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area, subject to completion of National Environmental Policy Act/California Environmental Quality Act Compliance and MWD Board approval. (Moved by Chris Harris, seconded by Jon Sjoberg, and approved by consensus).

WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

John reviewed the LCR MSCP Fiscal Year 2019 Funding Schedule. He noted that first quarter contributions had been received and that the San Diego County Water Authority is still using their fiscal credits for their yearly contribution. John noted that with the approval of the land and water acquisition for the Dennis Underwood easement that the Steering Committee will need to increase the approved FY19 Work Plan and Budget funding amount at the next Steering Committee meeting.

PROCESS/PROGRAM UPDATES

Increasing Change-In-Flow Coverage: John Swett reviewed the existing change in flow coverage provided under the LCR MSCP. Coverage is provided for a 845,000 afy reduction in flow below Hoover Dam, a 860,000 afy reduction in flow before Davis Dam, and a 1,574,000 afy reduction in flow between Parker and Imperial Dams. John noted that there are a number of possible future river management actions which could focus on storing additional water in Lake Mead. He noted that there was interest in exploring increasing the change in flow coverage and recommended that a subcommittee be formed to explore the need for and options to moving forward with this concept. It was noted that it would be helpful to have agency lawyers involved in the discussions. John said that if any Steering Committee members were interested in participating on the subcommittee to let him know.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Razorback Sucker Five Year Species Status Assessment and Recommendation: Tom Chart from the Service gave a power point presentation which provided an overview of the process the Service goes through to review the status of an endangered species, which is required every 5 years. He then summarized the options that were analyzed and the results from the species status review that was conducted for the razorback sucker. The analysis showed that that there were more than 50,000 hatchery produced adults in 8 population centers and that the hatchery produced adults were long lived, occupying habitat in lakes and rivers far from stocking locations. It was acknowledged that recruitment was extremely rare. The review noted that all populations were highly dependent on sustained management of the fish, which species experts felt was the most likely future scenario. Tom Chart stated that that Service concluded that the razorback sucker does not meet the definition of an endangered species and that it will be moving forward with proposing a rule to reclassify the razorback sucker as threatened. He noted that the public will be able to provide comments on the proposed change and that a final rule will consider all information.

Western Distinct Population Segment Yellow-billed Cuckoo Delisting: Jess Gwinn provided an update on the potential delisting of the Yellow-billed cuckoo. She noted that the Service had received a delisting petition from American Stewards of Liberty on May 4, 2017. On June 27, 2019, the Service made a 90-day finding concluding that the delisting petition presented substantial scientific and commercial information that the Yellow-billed cuckoo uses additional habitats, which indicates that the species' delisting may be warranted. Jess noted that with this preliminary positive finding, the Service will now conduct a species status review and will seek additional information from the public.

Five Year Monitoring and Research Priorities Report 2018-2022: Jimmy Knowles provided an overview of the draft Five Year Monitoring and Research Priorities Report. He noted that this report lays out the strategies for monitoring and research for the 2018 – 2022 time period. The draft report was sent out to the Steering Committee for review on October 17, 2018. Written comments are due by November 9th and can be sent to either Jimmy or Laura Vecerina.

LCR MSCP Website Redesign: Jimmy Knowles noted that the current LCR MSCP website is over 10 years old. With the current website design it is hard to find specific items and difficult to revise with new information. He is currently working with a firm to develop a new updated website. He would like to get input from the Steering Committee and is looking for volunteers. A strategy planning workshop will be scheduled in November or December. He asked that if anyone was interested in attending to please let him know.

STEERING COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Laura Vecerina noted that the Steering Committee schedule is included in the meeting packet. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2019. She noted that a work group meeting may be scheduled a month before. Seth Shanahan said that he would provide dates for other meetings in spring so there would not be meeting date conflicts.

GENERAL

Laura Vecerina stated that the current Steering Committee voting list was included with the meeting materials. Any changes or updates should be sent to her.

SUMMARY AND ACTION ITEMS

The Steering Committee took action on one item.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am