

Final Report
Lower Butte Creek Facilitation/Coordination
FY 1999 FWS Contract # 113329-J003
May 1, 1999 to September 30, 2000

PROJECT FACILITATION:

Project Description: The Lower Butte Creek Project is best described as an affiliation of many groups including landowners, agricultural and wetland managers, irrigation/drainage districts, state and federal agencies and non-profits that are working to upgrade and revitalize numerous water control structures, water systems and diversions to meet fish passage requirements of recently listed anadromous fish species. This group of players require constant updates, conferences, consensus building meetings and technical support to reach decisions on how to best improve the Lower Butte Creek system to meet the needs of the anadromous fish populations. Ducks Unlimited and California Waterfowl Association as co-sponsors have taken on this responsibility and have worked to maintain positive momentum in each of the regional areas and the project area as a whole. Listed below by each of the action committee areas is a summary of the issues discussed and resolved during the Grant period. Copies of meeting minutes are available for review at the Ducks Unlimited Office.

Butte Sink Facilitation Meetings: California Waterfowl's efforts to date have focused on the Butte Sink and lands immediately west of the Butte Sink. In cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, CWA developed Requests for Proposals for Engineering, Design and Permitting of the North and End Weirs in the Butte Sink, and for the White Mallard Dam and Associated Diversions just west of Butte Creek. Meetings were held with stakeholders and regulating agencies to choose contractors, and negotiations and contracts completed in order to begin survey work during summer, 2000. Copies of meeting minutes are on file and available for review. Three meetings were held to decide how endangered species compliance for the major structures will be accomplished. Discussions centered on the degree to which the operation of the structures would be included in the Biological Assessment and how much protection against regulatory action this consultation would afford the operators.

By December 1999, CWA had brought together stakeholders to begin planning the construction of the Drumheller Slough and White Mallard Outfalls. Meetings on December 6, 1999 and December 15, 1999 resulted in the contracting with Ensign and Buckley Consulting Engineers to design and build these structures. Additional effort by CWA was expended to secure access agreements with John Baber, District 1004, and the White Mallard Club. Meeting minutes and Access Agreements are on file and available for review. Construction on this project began in August, 2000 and CWA provided on-site supervision and permitting compliance oversight until its completion in early December, 2000.

Butte Slough Facilitation Meetings: Butte Slough is defined as that area lying between the Butte Slough Outfall gates on the west, the Colusa Shooting/Tarke Weir on the north and the East-West Diversion Weir on the south. Butte Slough supplies the connectivity between each of the Project regions and contains 26 small pump operators along its length. Until September 2000, this area was combined with the west side of the Sutter Bypass. As a result of further analysis, the Project management determined that this area was a stand-alone area and had more in common with the east side of the Sutter Bypass than the west side. A meeting was held with two of the areas leaders, Sib Fedora and Fred Tarke to plan for CY 2001 activities including an analysis of water license information, an initial look at environmental issues and the collection of some of the physical attributes of the pumping plant sites. An AFRP grant was obtained to complete this work during the 2001 calendar year.

Sutter Bypass Facilitation Meetings: The Sutter Bypass is comprised of two distinct operational units, the east side and west side channels. The east side is comprised of many (approximately 43) small pump operators and its water control structures are operated by the California Department of Water Resources. The west side is comprised of two major gravity flow diversions and two small pump operators. Four of the five weirs located on the west side are privately owned and operated, the fifth weir, currently is owned and operated by the Sutter National Wildlife Refuge. Many meetings were held with both groups during the Grant period. One joint meeting was held with both groups to discuss a regional approach to environmental issues. Listed below by area is a description of the various meetings:

East Side Sutter Bypass: With the completion of the Phase I(b) studies, the Sutter Bypass East Side committee chose to pursue a bifurcated path toward the resolution of their fish passage issues. The paths were 1) a complete study of the small pumping plants located within the east side area in preparation of a full out screening program, and 2) a programmatic regulatory approach whereby the east borrow channel would be isolated, studied and a program developed which screened certain large diversions while granting incidental take authority to the smaller diversions.

As part of the first option, funds were granted by AFRP to study each of the small pumping plant sites and develop drawings of the physical attributes. A coordination meeting was held with California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the landowners to divide the responsibility between the public and privately held structures. DWR agreed to complete the studies on the publicly held structures. In pursuing the second option, three meetings were held with the regulatory agencies and

tentative agreement reached to initiate discussions with the east side stakeholders on a regional approach to their environmental compliance issues.

West Side Sutter Bypass: The west side of the Sutter Bypass can be divided into two groups, the Butte Slough Irrigation Company (BSIC) who own and operate the E-W Diversion Weir, Weir #5 and Weir #3 and the Guisti/Sutter Refuge Group (Guisti) who own and operate the Guisti Weir and Weir #1.

The BSIC group moved right ahead after the Phase I(b) studies determined that the upgrade of their existing structures was the best alternative. A RFP process was initiated and the firm of Montgomery Watson was chosen to design the weir upgrades and complete the environmental compliance documents and permitting. As a result of the design and environmental effort, there have been three meetings to discuss preliminary plans and one meeting to discuss environmental compliance issues. Final plans and environmental documents are now complete and are out for review. The Guisti Group is still working on resolving their issues.

PROJECT COORDINATION

Lower Butte Creek Steering Committee Meetings: As part of the Lower Butte Creek Project, Jones and Stokes, Lower Butte Creek Project Consultants are charged with hosting a Steering Committee meeting. The Steering Committee is comprised of the Consultant Team, the Stakeholder Leadership Team, and representatives from each of the agencies that are active in the Project and deals with project-wide issues. There were two Steering Committee meetings held during the term of the Project

Funding meetings: In an attempt to coordinate funding to fit the project needs, two meetings were held with various funding agencies. Attending were representatives from AFRP, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Water Resources, Tracy Mitigation Fund, Bureau of Reclamation and CALFED. As a result of the funding meetings, funding was obtained to complete the final design, environmental compliance documentation and permitting for all proposed Lower Butte Creek construction projects. Individual funding meetings were also held with CDFG and AFRP to coordinate funding levels and availability. As part of an on-going funding effort, a field day was held in late June, 2000 to educate the funding leaders on the benefits and attributes of the Project.

Funding proposals: Proposals were written to CALFED fund for three projects including Butte Sink, Sanborn Slough Bifurcation, and West of Butte Sink. Three proposals were written to AFRP to fund continuing Facilitation/Coordination, Sutter Bypass East Side Small pump Analysis and Butte Slough Small Pump Analysis. Requests for contingency funding were submitted to Bureau of Reclamation and the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. Tracy Mitigation funding requests were coordinated with CDFG and DWR.

Requests for Proposals - Engineering and Environmental Compliance (RFP):

RFP for Butte Sink: Two requests for proposal were written for the Butte Sink. The upper Butte Sink comprised of the North Weir and the End Weir was developed and distributed by California Waterfowl Association. The lower Butte Sink, comprised of the Morton Weir Complex, the Driver's Cut Outfall and the Tarke Weir Outfall was developed and distributed by Ducks Unlimited. The solicitation was handled jointly, both in the pre bid events and the evaluation processes. A field day was held and the proponents were shown the prospective construction projects. The successful bidder was chosen from four proposals. The successful bidder was Borcalli & Associates, using Jones & Stokes as their environmental consultants.

RFP for West of Butte Creek: California Waterfowl Association developed and distributed an RFP for West of Butte Creek including the White Mallard Weir and its associated diversions. Three proposals were received and the firm of Ensign & Buckley was chosen to complete the work.

RFP for Sutter Bypass West Side: Ducks Unlimited developed and distributed an RFP for the Sutter Bypass West Side planning effort including the East-West Weir, Weir #5, Weir #3, Guisti Weir and Weir #1. Three proposals were received with the winning bid going to Montgomery Watson.

Project Management: Microsoft Project Management is being used to track the multiple facets of the Lower Butte Creek Project. Due to the various funding sources, contractors, stakeholder groups and agencies, a system to track Project progress was needed. This program allows project managers to instantly check to determine the progress and status of each of the four regional restoration efforts. A copy of the December 31, 2000 printout is attached as part of this report.