

FINAL
Approved by Advisory Committee on August 26, 2025
Meeting Summary
Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion Multi-benefit Project
Advisory Committee Meeting
July 1, 2024 | 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Committee Members (Present):

John Herrick, South Delta Water Agency
Sarah Puckett, American Rivers
Nick Mussi, Reclamation District 1, 2, 544, 2089
Bob Pombo, Reclamation District 2095
Ilene MacIntire, City of Tracy
Chris Elias, SJAFCA
Jesus Esperanza, DWR (non-voting)
Ruth Darling, CVFPB (non-voting)

Committee Members (Absent):

Susan Dell'Osso
Alexis Stevens

Other Attendees:

Dominick Gulli, Reclamation District 1007
Glenn Prasad, SJAFCA
Leanne Randall, SJAFCA
Kalani Adams, SJAFCA
Sylvia Razniak, SJAFCA
Artie Valencia, Restore the Delta
David Weisenberger, Banta-Carbona Irrigation District
Steve Sinnock, KSN
Melissa Weymiller, LWA
Ric Reinhardt, Wood Rogers
Mitch Berggren, Wood Rodgers
Jafar Faghih, HDR
Kenric Jameson, HDR
Natalie Bogan, HDR
Danaka DeBow, Consero Solutions
Laura Duffy, Consero Solutions

1. Administrative Matters

- J. Herrick confirmed the quorum for the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:38 am. He initiated a roll call / round of introductions for attendees.
- Approval of meeting minutes
 - Motion: Adopt the April 2, 2024 Advisory Committee meeting minutes
 - Moved by: S. Puckett, seconded by I. Macintire
 - Vote: Motion carried 7-0
 - Yes: J. Herrick, S. Puckett, B. Pombo, C. Elias, I. MacIntire, N. Mussi
 - Absent: S. Dell'Osso, A. Stevens
- Adoption of agenda
 - Motion: Adopt the July 1, 2024 Advisory Committee meeting agenda
 - Moved by: I. MacIntire, seconded by S. Puckett
 - Vote: Motion carried 7-0
 - Yes: J. Herrick, S. Puckett, B. Pombo, C. Elias, I. MacIntire, N. Mussi
 - Absent: Susan Dell'Osso, A. Stevens
- The group discussed identifying alternates for all Advisory Committee members. B. Pombo said Ron Michando would be his alternate moving forward. N. Mussi said he has not yet identified an alternate. All other members have alternates identified.

2. Scoping Discussions

- G. Prasad opened the discussion noting in April of this year, SJAFCA staff brought forth recommendations for consultant contracts for the Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion Multi-benefit Project (Project) to the Advisory Committee and SJAFCA Board of Directors. He said during May and June, SJAFCA worked with the consultants to align scopes of work; SJAFCA now has executed contracts with LWA, Wood Rodgers and Consero Solutions. He said for Wood Rodgers to move forward with the feasibility study, they are soliciting feedback from this Advisory Committee regarding key critical issues. He handed the discussion to R. Reinhardt with Wood Rodgers.
- R. Reinhardt said many of the partners who worked on the project during Phase 1 and Phase 2 are part of the new team working on the feasibility study in Phase 3. He said over the last three weeks, Wood Rodgers is learning about the previous phases, including interviews with key partners. He said the team's main concern is understanding the critical issues that will make or break feasibility of the project. He said the no action alternative in the feasibility study is urban areas will reach the 200-year flood protection through the Mossdale Tract Urban Flood Risk Reduction Project. He said the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, however, has a goal of achieving a greater than 200-year level of flood protection for urban areas.
- R. Reinhardt also noted the South Delta is filling with sediment and the Project seeks to address this issue through channel restoration. Overall, he noted the Project provides ample opportunity for improved water supply, flood protection, and ecological enhancement. J. Herrick noted channel geometry and improved water temperatures as additional channel restoration benefits.
- R. Reinhardt reviewed the Project alternatives identified in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project including the 2017 CVFPP Update Option M-ag ("CVFPP"); the 2019 Conceptual Design alternatives: CVFPP with Dredging, Modified CVFPP, Minimum Viable Project, Potential Maximum Project; and the alternative from the 2021 Anchor Report which adds additional miles of channel restoration to the Minimum Viable Project alternative. J. Herrick noted a dairy closed since the 2019 alternatives were developed, so conditions are different now. Regarding the Modified CVFPP alternative, B. Pombo asked R. Reinhardt it would result in an increase in flood stage by 3.5 inches. R. Reinhardt confirmed it would. Regarding the Modified CVFPP, D. Gulli asked about where dredging would occur and whether Grant Line canal would be included. The group discussed and agreed there would be some channel restoration there, but there is already depth in that canal. R. Reinhardt says the channel restoration is a key component impacting the feasibility and affordability of the project.
- R. Reinhardt discussed the critical feasibility issues on which Wood Rodgers is currently focusing and asked the Advisory Committee for their input. He began with discussion of conflicts with existing easements and land acquisition. He said he spoke to John Cain and Bill Eisenstein from River Partners, and they felt they had previously determined existing easements can be condemned, which is promising for a path forward. Wood Rodgers intends to vet and confirm this information.
- He then discussed the extent and cost of channel restoration and noted it is linked to the extent and cost of downstream hydraulic mitigation. He said Wood Rodgers needs to better understand whether channel restoration falls under a state or federal requirement or if channel restoration is a component desired by downstream interests. He said studies

indicate channel restoration will not increase stage elevation but will improve water supply. S. Puckett said dredging should be viewed through the lens of mitigation for overall project impacts. J. Herrick said channel restoration will increase stage and flow in certain areas but will even out due to the tide regardless of depth, so it cannot be described as only mitigation. R. Reinhardt said the Advisory Committee will weigh in on how the goals and objectives of the project, including channel restoration, are described in the study.

- C. Elias asked if the 25 miles of channel restoration for 6-8 feet is historical. J. Herrick said it is from channel studies since the 1920s and is a range of historical numbers, but not a minimum or maximum. R. Reinhardt noted the channels in the 1920s and 1930s were geared towards reclamation and may not have been ideal ecologically. The goal is to improve the environment over what is there today and what was there historically. A. Valencia noted the importance of using tribal knowledge to fill the gaps in historical context.
- R. Reinhardt discussed the cost and feasibility of railroad bridge expansion. He said this is a very difficult topic because it is difficult to get anything done that impacts rail traffic patterns. B. Pombo asked if the project can happen without the railroad expansion and noted it seemed unlikely to him. R. Reinhardt says he is not sure and they are trying to understand if there may be other options. D. Gulli asked about inverted siphons along the railroad bridge and R. Reinhardt said the volume is too significant for inverted siphons.
- R. Reinhardt briefly discussed juvenile fish migration over the expanded weir. He said J. Cain and B. Eisenstein from River Partners said based on previous U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service discussions, this may not be a big concern due to the infrequency of the activation of the bypass.
- R. Reinhardt briefly discussed maintenance of the Project, noting the feasibility study will need to determine who will pay for operations and maintenance including that of the new levees and ongoing channel restoration. J. Herrick said attorneys have been concerned with the condition of old levees due to federal obligations to maintain them. R. Reinhardt said there are some examples in the system of including “training levees” that become part of the system as additional flood protection.
- D. Gulli noted RD 1007 is concerned with velocity increases because their velocity is not stage, their banks are steep and get damaged, and any increase in velocity will increase the erosion they already experience. R. Reinhardt said ESA looked at velocity and Wood Rodgers will look the increase in velocity and how it impacts soil type.
- D. Gulli asked if the hydraulic model would be looked at anymore since it was based on historical depths, which have increased. He said RD 1007 has seen water higher than what the FEMA model shows. R. Reinhardt said hydraulic models are never done and can always be updated. He said his team is going to collect more bathymetric and topographic information, but there is not enough budget to update the model. Instead the 10% design scope will include updating the model. J. Herrick said at the end of 2022, SDWA and DWR did bathymetric investigations and SDWA did Middle River and additional investigations this year. He said he will coordinate with Wood Rodgers on whether additional sounding is helpful between now and December. R. Reinhardt said the more information to fill gaps, the better.
- R. Reinhardt said Wood Rodgers will further discuss these topics at the August 26 meeting.

3. Funding for Next Phase

- G. Prasad said fundability of the whole project is an additional key critical issue. The group discussed DWR's \$10 million in funding, which has been tentatively moved to a different program but the group understands the funding may come through the climate action bond instead. R. Reinhardt noted the climate action bond has significantly less funding for flood projects than what was originally asked for. G. Prasad said integrating other elements such as climate resiliency and restoration may increase the attractiveness to funding agencies. R. Reinhardt said showing feasibility of the project in the coming months will be important for securing additional funding.
- J. Esperanza said he does not have additional information to share. He emphasized that the original \$3 million for the project is still there.
- G. Prasad said the team may consider a more robust funding strategy and continued advocacy is important. J. Herrick said the South Delta Water Agency would like SJAFCA and Consero to provide advice on how to spend \$30,000 on lobbying on behalf of the project.

4. Meeting Scheduling, Reoccurrence, and Location

- The group agreed it will need a new conference room to meet for future Advisory Committee meetings. G. Prasad said Consero will find a new place for Advisory Committee meetings noting the Roberts-Union Center or City of Lathrop may be options. I. McIntire said the City of Tracy may be able to accommodate the meetings in the future. G. Prasad said the engagement strategy will include logistics of the meetings.
- M. Weymiller said due to Labor Day weekend, SJAFCA and the consultant team is proposing consolidating the August and September Advisory Committee meetings to one meeting on August 26. The group agreed this is appropriate.

5. Governance Charter & Engagement Strategy

- D. DeBow informed the group Consero will be coordinating and facilitating all Advisory Committee meetings moving forward. She said Consero is currently working with LWA and SJAFCA on the governance charter, which will outline roles and responsibilities and decision-making processes for the project. She said the Paradise Cut Management Team ("PCMT") will review the governance charter at the August 1 meeting and bring it to the Advisory Committee on August 26. The intention is for the Advisory Committee to approve the governance charter at this meeting or approve pending edits, which Consero would make within one week.
- D. DeBow said Consero is also working on the engagement strategy for the project. She said Consero is currently working with Wood Rodgers to better understand how to engage interested and affected parties regarding the critical issues previously discussed by R. Reinhardt. Then, Consero will discuss the engagement strategy goals and objects with the PCMT at their August 1 meeting, provide a draft for review two weeks later, and discuss at the August 22 PCMT meeting before sending to the Advisory Committee for review at its August 26 meeting. The intention is for the Advisory Committee to approve the engagement strategy at this meeting or approve pending edits, which Consero would make within one week.

- The group had no questions regarding this topic.

6. State Updates

- R. Darling said she had no updates other than the CVFPB has a new member, Betty Andrews.

7. Advisory Committee Comments/Items for Future Agenda

- J. Herrick noted there will be a Delta Conservancy site visit of the Paradise Cut project site on July 11, which Consero is coordinating and the PCMT is invited to. The focus of the site visit is a funding closeout for the Delta Conservancy [note: the site visit was later moved to July 15].
- G. Prasad said there will also be a CVFPB legislative office and Department of Finance field trip on August 14, for which Paradise Cut will be one of many stops.
- S. Puckett said during American Rivers' February trip to DC, they discussed doing a tour for federal legislators and their staff during the August recess.
- S. Puckett said she submitted an abstract on the Paradise Cut project the Flood Management Association Conference in September in Las Vegas, NV, which was accepted. She said she would like to talk to this group about her presentation prior to the conference.

8. Public Comment

- There was no public comment at this time.

9. Adjournment

- J. Herrick adjourned the meeting at 1:30 pm.