

Tuolumne River Technical Advisory Committee

Don Pedro Project – FERC License 2299

Modesto Irrigation District
Turlock Irrigation District
City & County of San Francisco
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TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

11 MARCH 2020 AT 9:30 AM

VIA ZOOM

SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Participants made self-introductions

2. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

- Review/revise agenda – No changes.
- Approved notes from December 2020 meeting
- Items since last meeting –
 - Gretchen – The FRGP Grant solicitation notice has gone out and Suzanne will be running a workshop on March 16th from 1:00-3:00 via Teams.
 - Bernard – Announced he is trying to put together a meeting next week with RCD regarding some restoration work on the Tuolumne in La Grange. Working with Rocko and Trina from RCD. Discussion ensued. They hired a new biologist and we're going to get to meet him.
 - Patrick - Article on car tires and mortality to be posted to the TRTAC site.
 - Gretchen – Merced is not experiencing mortality. They experienced the lowest number of Vitamin B issues among all of the central valley hatcheries.

3. MONITORING/REPORTS:

- Discussion held on splitting up of the Interpolation volume to provide a winter storm pulse as well as additional water for the spring pulse.
- The flow group consensus was that, fish that came in early laid down eggs that hatched earlier than the bulk of the run. The thought was that we can move some of those fish down into the system that are ready & willing to go early on. There weren't a lot of fish this year & we were hopeful that we could move some of them down into the San Joaquin system if they were ready. The remaining interpolation water will be utilized by the end of day on April 14th.
- Discussion held on poor run numbers this year. Gretchen indicated that she had heard through the grapevine that there were low returns everywhere in the valley this year, including the San Joaquin basin.
- Weir update - We did have a single Steelhead passage this spring.
- RST update - Waterford where we typically see plenty of fish has slowed down recently and Grayson has no catch. The few fish that were at Waterford are not making it to Grayson. Similar story for Modesto, Vernalis.

- Wayne – We're on schedule for the FERC report. We're compiling some of the data for the appendices and then we will put together a brief summary of it and attach the annual monitoring report. I will be able to get the submittal in by the end of the month.
- Noah – Are the Fishbio reports in hand?
- Wayne – We have one of them.
- Patrick – I will contact Chrissy.
- Noah – There was a suspension of sampling last March.
- Stacey – I just wanted to point out that the language in the Fishbio report that suggests that the Steelhead may be a resident is not a valuable guess because looking at the quality of that picture, it's not discernable. It's also not helpful based on its size. I think that the language should be that it's an O. mykiss & its size. I think the other is a conjecture that is confusing especially for filings associated with FERC record.
- Wayne – I'm assuming the snorkel survey will take place again the 3rd week of July. We also plan to download the thermograph once the spring pulse flows are done.

4. FLOW OPERATIONS:

- Last February we released a portion of the interpolation water and the other half of that water will be released by April 14th. We have a mock schedule of it. Snow course reading data not looking very good. The graph is both LIDAR & station data.
- Discussion held on the ASO, snow pillow and snow course measurement discrepancies.
- Watershed status- Looks like we are heading for one of the driest years ever. We had 7" between Dec. & Jan. Not looking good. We are at about 50% or less. 14.9" or 56.0% for this time period. Based on the DWR forecast we are looking at a critical or below normal year where we will run a minimum flow of 94,000 AF and possibly up to 113,239 AF if we get to the average scenario. If we were to get into the wet scenario, we would have a minimum flow requirement of 155,300 AF. There will be interpolation water available. The 113,239 AF critical & the 155,300 AF below normal, include the interpolation water.
To clarify, if it ends up @ critical & below, we don't get interpolation water, correct?
That's correct, conservation in drought time.
- Spring Flow Schedule – Spreadsheet proposal shows that we have interpolation water still available that must be used by April 14th. Chris Diviney put together a mock scenario indicating similar numbers that I have rearranged because we have spring pulse water that we can back right up to that and I'd like to get a huge volume going on the initial pulse up to 2500 cfs. We need to spill over the dam this year in order to drain the canal and tunnel. The TID tunnel coming out of La Grange needs to be inspected. It's an annual inspection that hasn't occurred in 5 years. If we lose that tunnel, we lose all of our irrigation and flood control capability. My proposal is that we run the 2500 cfs on April 15th. We lead into it with the interpolation water then switch over to pulse water, bring it up to 2500 cfs so they can do the inspection on the 15th and then rapidly ramp it back down & then continue in the pulse faction. We bring it up to 826 cfs & then down to 300 cfs, up to 717 cfs, up to 1144 cfs and then down to 655 cfs. Went over hourly flow charts. In order to meet our pulse flows that we want to flood the river with & close that tunnel, we have to spill over the dam. We're going to bring the water up in La Grange, spill over the dam so we can close the gates on the tunnel and dry it out completely. We don't have the ability to run water through the tunnel and down the tailrace right outside of the La Grange powerhouse while we're doing that so what we have to do is spill over the dam & have that water come over the center island in front of the powerhouse and flood the tailrace channel so it doesn't dry out.
- Question to Chris Guptill: What happens at 3,000-4,000 cfs?
- Chris – The trails & the recreation that we have developed along Gateway Park & the Tuolumne River Regional Park become inundated with water and then debris & sand will flood in there. Repairing the 5 miles of trail that runs along there becomes super challenging. We have dealt with that for 3 straight years with a really high flow. It just damages what people are using as a river park. It doesn't do major damage to infrastructure or things like that but it does get up high enough that it brings in debris and it makes the trail system unusable, and for Modesto that's not good when we can't use the trail. We have other problems that go into that.

- Infiltration Galleries & SRWA progress – Bill Penney, the TID Engineer working on the SRWA project updated us yesterday. The water quality studies that they were conducting lasted one year and have been completed. They began work at the site last fall & conveyance pipes are being installed under TID laterals today. They will begin mass grading of the treatment facility site this spring. The pump station is scheduled to be built within the next two years, at least they will break ground. Water is expected to be conveyed to the cities by 2023. Conversation below.

5. AGENCY/NGO UPDATES:

- Patrick – Chris has been mapping out some of the storm drains. I'd like to get to that this summer in the upper river. I think the best way is to review some city maps & then do 5 mile reaches in a kayak and go out & photograph & take a look at the drains. It would be nice to put them on the map that Noah's putting together. This is a good segue into what you have going on there Noah as far as revising the river mile map & marrying the two maps together.
- Noah – We have just gotten underway on that & Gretchen shared the recent DFW files on the use for the spawning surveys & spawning maps. Stillwater has an older, I guess the original files dating back to the early 2000's time frame for the DFW & then Stillwater's for the late 2000's. During the relicensing there was a rectification of the low flow channel boundaries. There is a little bit of misalignment with some of the riffle locations & habitat units but we tried to sort that through as best we can. We're mostly like name features and the river mile system between the two. We're just getting on that to try to marry the two together. Our thought was that we would heap the world in a shape file system for updates over time but essentially process that & then share it out as a KMZ to anyone that wants to use it. That is easily importable back into GIS & so on. Then it can be emailed and you're not dependent on the imagery. You can use the Google Earth imagery which is probably the most useful tool that people can use it with.
- Patrick – I'm looking forward to a day when we have a single map that everyone agrees to on river miles. We've got our habitat units mapped out, maybe our culverts to the river from our problem neighbors. All of the projects that have been done in the past, all future projects, all in one map & everyone can download a KMZ if they need a particular piece of it. That would be great.
- Noah – Let's start with the beginning to get the basic habitat & then we can add on. You've probably got layers on existing infrastructure but even the project history, probably do layers on terms of that.
- J.D. – This is a great 1st step. If you're going to be out there surveying every inch of the river, let's not just stop at inflows from sewer drains or whatever. Let's make sure we identify all of the places where we are sucking water out of the river and any kind of features in the river that are unnatural or worth of note. It would be a shame to need that info in the future & have had the opportunity to collect it but failed to do so.
- Gretchen – About 10 years ago there was work into identifying all of the riparian diversions & there was a report that came out. I can try to track down anything on that if we need it eventually. I know it exists, I don't know if I can get a hold of base files or anything.
- J.D. – It would be helpful to note any changes to that. There's also the PAD data base that I think may catalog some of those features as well. It would be good if we were able to verify some of the existing data when we go out & do these things.
- Patrick – The campground at Turlock Lake State Recreation Area has lost its funding. American Land & Leisure was managing that. TID has now inherited management & we haven't decided what our best avenue is to manage the campground. They are working on it. Tristan Higgins, our Survey/Right of Way manager is in charge of it. He has been meeting with upper management occasionally to try to figure out what is the best way to proceed. For now, anyone in this group that needs access to do their studies or look at a portion of the river, pull in & pull out in a kayak, having done some recon, please get a hold of me if you need access there & I can facilitate that. The agencies & I think the consultants are already able to get in and out of the locked gate.
- Allison – This issue came up years ago and there was thought that the county might be the appropriate management for at least the lake, I'm not sure about the campground. At that time, we weighed in that the county might not be the best management agency, they aren't always good at

enforcement. I don't know what the options are but we are concerned if the leaning is toward having Stanislaus County Parks manage it.

- Patrick – I think enforcement is a big problem out there. It has reared its ugly head numerous times in the last 3 years with jet skiers dousing shoreline visitors, creating a mess out of the inlet at high speeds, breaking of the gate by folks who want to launch boats early in the morning. I haven't heard of many problems in the campgrounds other than the bathrooms being trashed but that gets expensive. During the 2017 flood, quite a few concrete fire pits with iron grates as well as tables were destroyed by the flooding. The boat launch was damaged & the signage was damaged. It's an expense to somebody. Vandalism & lawlessness is rampant out that way.
- Gretchen – It would be really unfortunate to lose that as an access point though because the Tuolumne doesn't have a lot of boat launches or access points & it really limits recreational use even more if that doesn't get reopened.
- Alison – I think the issue usually is just that the county doesn't have the manpower or the finances to do a good job. I believe that most of the complaints about the county management were on the lake itself, over where the duck hunters & boats would go in that the county didn't maintain that area. Like any situation, once it starts getting trashed & damaged, it's an invitation for more of the same and the county wasn't able to even make a dent in the problems when they were managing that area.
- Patrick – I believe that TID is aware of most of those problems in the past and are really concerned about a budget for running something like that and if you're going to generate enough revenue to make it worthwhile to even make repairs & that sort of thing. That's all being weighed at this time.
- Chris – The storm drains are easy to identify because they spew garbage into the river non-stop at every point. I've sent some photos to you so you've seen that. It's really pervasive right in the corridor of where I work from around 9th St., 7th St. & Hwy 99. There are multiple drains there and every single one of them has no mitigation to getting anything into the river. At 7th St. there's a little bit of a gunited entry into the river & there is no filtering through any kind of soil or vegetation, this is a direct dump into the river. You are going to see that all over through town in Modesto and I'm assuming there are plenty of other places. I'd say the biggest culprits right now are 9th St. & 7th St. Every time it rains you're dealing with plastic, styrofoam, cigarette butts & everything you don't want in the river, directly discharged right into it. There are a lot of them, a lot more than I thought but when it does rain, they pop up pretty clearly.
- Patrick – have you put together a map of sorts?
- Chris – I haven't but I can put together a rough one using Google Maps. I can put together some spots where I know they exist and I can at least map the stuff that's here in Modesto.
- Patrick – That would be great. I'll be working on the same this summer in the upper river.
- Chris – The other thing you said about complaints & whatever, we do have some really good conditions in town. Pat, you know because you came out in September & things were awful along the river and I would just like to report that things are not awful along the river in Modesto. There currently is very little illegal camping of any kind going on in the area that we work on. It has moved down stream & more south of Modesto, there are some issues there. The issue doesn't go away but in the area that we worked so hard on, has been replaced by people recreating like crazy. We have 100's of people out on a weekend and on any given day we have families walking, kids walking dogs.
- Patrick – I was looking for a great way to end this meeting with some happy stuff & Chris, you just brought it on, thank you.
- Chris – We do have another river clean up in the part of the Tuolumne River Regional Park that we don't work on very often that's a complete disaster. We're going to work on chipping away at that this Saturday. We've got some good news on the trajectory we're on, trying to create a recreation space for people in Modesto, Stanislaus County & the region. We're working with the Nor Cal Mountain Bike Racing League & NICA to bring an event to our park where there might be a race next year on the calendar which would be an awesome score for what we're trying to do to reactivate the space down there. There's been a lot of ups & downs with all of this, there's been terrible times, but we're at one of those high points again and I always like to point out that with

the complaining all the time of how bad it is, that we're doing really well in some ways down here and our efforts are paying off. Just wanted to share that.

- Patrick – That's fantastic to hear Chris, thank you.
- Allison – What do you know about the guy that's planting 100's of acorns?
- Chris – I know that he's planting acorns. He gathers them from around the park area and has been planting them. He's retired & he's just trying to spruce up the park. Do you have concerns on that?
- Allison – No, I'm hoping someone's going to help protect them until their big enough to be seen that's all. I thought it was kind of a nice volunteer activity.
- Chris – It is. Art is the only neighbor on the river. He is the only person that can say he lives on the river and means that in the right way. He's trying to plant 100 a year for 10 years. He has his methodology he uses and he's trying to get them going & started. The trouble with anything out there is if you're too overt about it, some folks like to come along and wreck things. Since he lives really close by, he's going to be tending to them & caring for them. He has a plan laid out. It's just him volunteering to try to help. I suspect that if we don't get too much damage from fires, which shouldn't be a big issue going forward, if we can hold onto the situation I think it's going to be a net benefit that there's going to be oak trees in the ground in a large enough number that they might start to populate the park.
- Allison – Is there some way he's going to be able to water them a little bit if we have a couple of years of drought? It helps to water them for 2 or 3 years.
- Chris – Yes, he has a plan for that too. He's got it set up where he can do some watering. He has a little thing that he puts water into that slowly releases it there. Since he lives there & he's retired, he doesn't anticipate being gone for long stretches of time. I'd be willing to help him & so would others in being able to get water to them. He has a game plan that I think is going to work. I think the only thing that would get in the way is vandalism & fire.
- Allison – That's really good. Thank him when you see him.
- Chris – I will do that.
- Peter – Is he planting acorns or seedlings?
- Chris – He gathers the acorns & waits until they sprout a little bit, and then he plants those. That's the most I know about it. He's not just sticking an acorn in the ground. He uses acorns from around the area, he doesn't bring them in from other places. He somehow gets them to start to grow and then that's what he plants in the ground.
- Allison – Peter, they are planted when they're barely sprouted so it's probably an effective way to do it. He feels comfortable knowing then that they're going to sprout.
- Peter – Probably less predation from squirrels.
- Allison – Well it might just be a marker for the scrub jays though. But it looks like its effective.
- Chris – It sets the kind of positive sign that other people want to see these things happen. There are other folks who volunteer their time. They want the park to be what it's supposed to be & they're finding ways to chip in where they can. We're doing well now & we've dealt with many, many setbacks. Right now things are going well. We do have projects coming on. We have the boat launch coming on board this summer & fall if flows hold up which it looks like they will. That boat launch won't help with anything in the upper water shed but we do have terrible access to the river. The boat launch in Ceres is coming along & I haven't seen it myself but I heard that's going to be a good one. The other one in Modesto by Legion is a joke, it's not even a boat launch. This one will become a real launch & a real access point. It's mostly going to be a takeout point rather than a departure point but it is going to change things I think and add another layer of recreation that's really going to help us move thing forward. I'm excited to see it come in.
- Gretchen – Where will that launch be?
- Chris – There's an open space of land in the Tuolumne River Regional Park that hasn't been developed yet & it will be in between John Thurman Field & Dryden Golf Course's driving range. It will be the next game changer for the river, I hope.
- Patrick – We will get Nathan back in, his presentation is phenomenal. I think it will impress everybody with how much work the city has done & are planning on doing.
- Allison – Peter, do you have an update about the Carpenter Rd. grant that the trust worked on with the city?

- Peter – I don't have an update. I haven't been very engaged in that but my understanding is that we're still figuring out the next step & still need to raise some money.
 - Allison – I heard they were moving garbage.
 - Peter – That's a good sign.
 - Allison – It would have been good if they would have moved it all the way out but at least they've started.
 - Chris – Right now the Carpenter Rd. effort is trying to reach out to the West Side Community specifically to see what they want. It's in the planning stages. The garbage removal project should wrap up here really soon. They moved the garbage from the east side & topped it on top of the west side. I agree Allison, I wish they would have gotten rid of all of it. They capped it with dirt right before our last big heavy rain & it completely eroded so much that they had to go back & rework on the cap. They just finished that up yesterday & then they're going to hydro seed that. I'm hoping that project will end because it has had a big impact on the trail out there & getting to the end. That work has been done and they are moving the final pieces of dirt to finish it off. They will hydro seed it & then they should be out of there. I don't know exactly when but I'm hoping in a matter of a few weeks maybe.
 - ?? – I hope they're hydro seeding with native seed.
 - Chris – I would guess they are, I could ask specifically what they are using. Generally speaking, all of the open ground in trip is completely covered in Russian thistle, star thistle & just all kinds of nastiness. There are very few places that have natural vegetation, one of them is Gateway Park. Basically the ground gets disked because that's all they can do & afford for maintenance & for fire purposes. Those areas are just overrun with invasives that are nasty & look terrible. I don't know what they're going to put in but those things take over no matter what. There haven't been any hydro seeded places that I've seen that stay as nice as the area in Gateway. It has some wild flowers & some natural vegetation. It just seems to get taken over very quickly.
 - Patrick – Chris, thank you very much. I'm really pleased that you're having so much success right now.
 - ?? – If you have documented examples of discharge of waste you can probably complain to the Central Valley Water Board & they can look into those discharges.
 - Chris – Are you referring to the outfalls that we were talking about earlier?
 - ?? – Yes, the storm water discharge
 - Chris – And who is that group?
 - ?? – The Central Valley Water Board
 - Chris – Are they located in Sacramento?
 - ?? – In Rancho Cordova
6. ADDITIONAL ITEMS:
7. NEXT MEETING DATE: JUNE 10, 2021

TRTAC Meeting Attendees

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1.	Patrick Maloney	TID
2.	Dana Ortolan	TID
3.	Michael Cooke	TID
4.	Roger Masuda	TID
5.	Gretchen Murphey	CDFW
6.	Bernard Aguilar	CDFW
7.	Peter Drekeimer	TRT
8.	J.D. Wikert	USFWS

9.	Allison Boucher	TRC
10.	Raquel	DWR
11.	Stacey Smith	NOAA
12.	Ruth Goodfield	NOAA
13.	Suzanne	
14.	Emily	River Partners
15.	Noah Hume	SWS
16.	Wayne Swaney	SWS
17.	Jeff Borum	ESRCD
18.	Gordon Enas	MID
19.	Michael Caine	CA State Parks Div of Boating & Waterways
20.	Chris Gupstill	9 2 99 Group
21.	Steve Louie	Waterboard
22.	Monica Gutierrez	Fishery Service
23.	Fred Meir	McBain & Associates
24.	Tim Caldwell	McBain & Associates
25.	Dana Harrison	McBain & Associates
26.	Kathleen	Fish & Wildlife Service