



## MEETING NOTES

<b>Project Name:</b>	<u>Lower San Joaquin/Delta South RFMP</u>	<b>Date:</b>	<u>9/11/14 9:00-noon</u>
<b>Meeting Subject:</b>	<u>Paradise Cut Symposium No. 2</u>	<b>Project No.:</b>	<u></u>
<b>Location:</b>	<u>Stockton Ag Center, 2010 E Earhart, Stockton</u>	<b>Page:</b>	<u>1/4</u>
<b>Notes by:</b>	<u>Loren Bottorff</u>		

<b>Attendees:</b>	<u>See sign-in sheet</u>	<u>Susan Dell'Osso</u>	<u>Glenn Gebhardt</u>	<u>John Cain</u>
	<u>Jim Giottonini</u>	<u>Roger Churchwell</u>	<u>Gemma Biscocho</u>	<u>John Maguire</u>
	<u>Steve Schoenberg</u>	<u>Dante Nomellini</u>	<u>Eric Tsai</u>	<u>Dave Peterson</u>
	<u>Loren Bottorff</u>	<u>Mike Archer</u>	<u>Kim Floyd</u>	<u>Bill Edgar</u>

### Purpose:

1. Summarize the rationale for expanding the Paradise Cut bypass and summarize key findings of previous Paradise Cut modeling analysis
2. Explore local acceptability for a range of Paradise Cut alignments and configurations
3. Provide a forum for local residents and landowners to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions regarding a proposal to expand Paradise Cut
4. Preliminarily identify a list of unresolved issues and identify next steps

### Introductions and Welcome – by Kim Floyd

### Overview – by Loren Bottorff (see PowerPoint slides)

- Two parts to an expansion of Paradise Cut; 1) “base case” expansion on the north side as part of the River Islands development, and 2) potential expansion to the south, the primary subject of this symposium.
- During 14 small group meetings with stakeholders to identify project, participants were asked about their support for a Paradise Cut expansion. Received a range of input from positive to general concern, but heard no major opposition except for the concept of new flood storage on Fabian Tract. However, no one stepped forward as a champion to lead the expansion forward.
- The Lower San Joaquin/Delta South Regional Flood Management Plan (RFMP) provides no specifics on the size or footprint of a Paradise Cut expansion, but generally supports the concept of an expansion beyond the base case. The RFMP stakeholders never identified specific objectives that would result in specific sizes. The RFMP supports weir widening, set back levees to the south, breaching existing levees, new levee designed to USACE/DWR standards, no new downstream flood storage, and no weir lowering. RFMP includes a cost allotment for the expansion as a place holder.
- Provided example water surface profile of the San Joaquin River along RD 17 to show that Paradise Cut would not be needed with current hydrology for freeboard reasons.
- First symposium in December 2013 was very technically oriented – want this symposium to be less technical.
- May modify the concepts in the RFMP based on discussions today. Feedback will also inform future discussions. Made the point that there are currently no specific proposals for an expansion



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### Discussion:

- A comment noted that while the RD 17 water surface plot shows adequate freeboard, that the opposite side of the river or other locations may benefit from an expansion. Yes, the plot is just one example.

### **Rationale for Expanding Paradise Cut – by Susan Dellosso (see PowerPoint slides)**

- Paradise Cut diverts water away from urbanized areas and lowers water surface in San Joaquin River. Reviewed that there could be a base case (to the north) and further expansion (to the south).
- Reviewed the parts of the base case improvements on Stewart Tract; no weir widening, excavating the bench downstream from weir, new setback levees, leaving existing breached levee in place, provisions incase RD 2107 floods, etc. Increases flows in Paradise Cut, but not quite back to design capacity. May cost about \$50 million. Waiting for EIS by the end of the year.
- Described the potential southern improvements. Concept resulted from legal settlement and builds on the base case. May extend weir length from 180 feet to 400 feet and could add another 500 feet of weir further upstream. Could result in San Joaquin River at Mossdale stage decrease by about 20 inches, and minimal stage increases downstream. Could provide rationale for levee improvements downstream. Could provide additional habitat depending on landowner willingness.

### Discussion:

- Pombo mentioned that choke point is the RR tracks. The 1997 flood was 1-foot above the low cord of the bridge. Can't expand Paradise Cut without tackling this.

### **Rationale for Expanding Paradise Cut (cont.) – by John Cain (see PowerPoint slides)**

- An expansion of Paradise Cut would provide flexibility and resiliency for future flood management, reduce long-term conflicts with the ecosystem, protect agricultural land, provide habitat for riparian brush rabbit and Swainsons hawk, and fish.
- Several State plans and legislation call for investigation, and in some cases expansion, of Paradise Cut – SB 5, Delta Plan, 2012 CVFPP.
- Previous studies and concepts date back about 20 years.
- Reviewed results of previous studies (stage reduction on San Joaquin River at all frequencies, minimal downstream stage increases, significant benefits for terrestrial species, uncertain for fish. An expanded Paradise Cut would carry water in the wettest 20 percent of years.
- Due to development in surrounding areas, the path through Paradise Cut is the only remaining undeveloped area through to the south Delta. Mentioned that public safety is first, but that there are other benefits.

### Discussion:

- USACE eliminated an expansion of Paradise Cut from their Lower San Joaquin River Feasibility Study. Eric Tsai mentioned that DWR is considering a broader range of benefits than the USACE. Eric mentioned that no DWR study has concluded that an expansion of Paradise Cut is not cost effective. Joe Countryman seemed to remember differently from the first symposium.
- Can farmers and environmentalists agree to thin the vegetation in the existing bypass? Potentially, but could be a problem with the regulators. There would be more potential to



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agree on future thinning with an expanded Paradise Cut since there would be a management plan that could include that. John Cain said he thought that thinning would provide a marginal benefit and he thinks the expansion can provide significant benefits.

- Some discussion on how farming within the bypass could be impacted. Farming already takes place in portions of Paradise Cut. There was a suggestion to arrange a meeting with farmers in the Yolo Bypass to learn from their experiences. Basically, do farmers find it economical to farm in a floodway that is inundated 20% of years?
- Have the impacts on the districts south (i.e. RD 2095) of Paradise Cut been evaluated? No specifics yet, but a new levee should be significantly better than the existing levees. The question is for those that will farm within the bypass.

### **Key Findings of Previous Modeling Studies** – by Mike Archer (see PowerPoint slides)

- Provided overview of modeling (2008 vintage) for the River Islands-NRDC Settlement. Several alternatives to investigate what hydraulic benefits and impacts could be expected. Used a 50 year flood because most upstream flows are not complicated by levee breaches and represents approximate original design flow.
- Presented graphics to show hydraulic changes that various alternatives could provide.

#### Discussion:

- Can the model be run with new hydrology? Yes, but model is not current (2006 vintage).
- Need active sediment management
- The levees can jog around improvements, need not follow what was modeled at recon level conducted to just to see what happens.
- Need discussions with property owners on alignments, easements, fee title, or whatever.

### **Potential Alignment and Configuration of Expanded Paradise Cut** – by Glen Gephardt (see PowerPoint slides)

- Reinforced that have not yet determined optimal footprint or configuration
- Future studies will need to engage affected landowners
- High probability that farming in the expanded bypass can continue
- Large number of landowners north of I5 and smaller number south of I5.
- Showed a potential size of Paradise Cut based on the Lower San Joaquin Floodplain Bypass Proposal in the Delta Plan Policy RP4.
- Reviewed alternative scenarios used in the above modeling.
- Presented conceptual footprints in comparison with that in Policy RP4
- New weir south of existing weir could provide significant stage benefits

#### Discussion:

- Money from settlement could be used to secure land options as development occurs
- Timeline for implementation is long, maybe 15 years or more.

### **Unresolved Issues** – by Loren Bottorff – (see PowerPoint slide)

- Showed the slide, but did not go through it as discussion started.

#### Discussion:



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- Should not postpone discussion with landowners – schedule additional meetings to talk about more specifics
- Landowners feel shut down because this meeting does not provide enough detail for them to react. Don't see need for a lot of meetings until there are more specifics to discuss. Bring real possibilities to landowners to discuss. Levee locations can be moved to accommodate landowner wishes. From RFMP standpoint, we decided to begin discussions with landowners early, even though we didn't have specifics – better to be too early in discussions rather than too late.
- Suggestion about talking about the certainty concept – flood at a predictable and controlled manner rather than being surprised by a flood. Part of design will be to figure out how the system works in a controlled way.
- Wouldn't new weir to the south significantly increase flooding in those areas? Levees would contain the channel
- Need evaluation of what happens along the San Joaquin River upstream from Mossdale.

### Next Steps – by Loren Bottorff

- Meetings notes posted on SJAFCA web page
- Didn't hear suggestions today that would modify the Paradise Cut concept in the RFMP
- Regions would like to stay involved in continuing studies (DWR's BWFS for examples)
- Reconsider with new climate change hydrology when available
- River Islands, American Rivers, and others will consider developing more specifics for discussion with landowners. SJAFCA may be able to help.

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