

Butte Landowner Meeting

July 19, 2022, 9:30 am – 11:30 am

RD 108 office, 975 Wilson Bend Rd, Grimes, CA 95950

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide an overview of Floodplains Reimagined
- Determine interests and concerns landowners may have regarding implementation
- Discuss which activities and incentives are viable in the region
- Determine next steps

Action Items

1. Roger Swanson (Swanson), Wild Goose Club – Engage with his contacts to ascertain interest in discussing technical assistance opportunities in the Butte subregion for advancing Floodplains Reimagined Program objectives.
2. Barry O'Regan (O'Regan), KSN – Schedule a meeting with Roger Swanson, his contacts and the signatories to the Butte Sink Agreement to explore interest in shallow winter inundation incentive programs.

Welcome and Introductions

Lewis Bair (Bair), RD 108, and Karis Johnston (Johnston), Kearns & West, welcomed all attendees and facilitated introductions for Program Team members and Butte landowner participants.

Floodplains Reimagined Overview

Bair gave an overview of the Floodplains Reimagined Program.

- Floodplains Reimagined is a healthy river program to restore rivers in the valley by reconnecting rivers to floodplains.
- The Floodplains Reimagined Program is a voluntary initiative distinct from the State Board process of controlling water rights.
- State funding is available through the Program to provide technical support for structures on landowner properties and other requested and approved solutions that support Floodplains Reimagined Program objectives.
- The timing of the proposed shallow winter-time floodplain inundation on wetlands, preserves, and ricelands would be approximately November through March to avoid disruption of harvest and planting seasons.

Landowner Interests & Concerns

Participants discussed their Interests, Concerns, Recommendations, and Observations.

- Swanson, Wild Goose Club – Interest and Recommendation
 - Interest: Protect Butte Sink Agreement signatories' water
 - Additional water users have attempted to divert water designated for the ten hunting clubs that are signatories to the 1922 Butte Sink Agreement with Western Canal Water District.
 - Water is difficult to obtain in the drier months; DWR provides some water during the fall/winter/early spring months.

- Recommendation: Add infrastructure that would allow non-signatory water users to pump groundwater rather than pull surface water from the signatories.
- Swanson, Wild Goose Club – Interest
 - Protection of hunting club mallard prey populations based on current concentration of habitat in existing winter-time inundation areas.
 - Concerned that reconnecting the river to the floodplain to create additional shallow winter-time inundation could create additional mallard habitat that draws mallards away from their existing habitat at hunting clubs. Competing habitats is a priority concern. Complete flooding of the whole region could spread out the mallard rearing habitat and could decrease the availability of mallards in existing habitat on hunting club lands.
 - Reproductive rates of mallards are already a concern among the duck clubs. There was a stark decrease in the mallard population over the past year.
 - Hen house installation did not alleviate the issue. Birds did not use them due to a lack of water.
- Denise Carter, landowner – Interest
 - Protect or improve road access during winter-time inundation.
 - Road access is an issue with winter-time inundation. If the road is flooded, the Carters must use boats to reach the back of the ranch.
- Swanson, Wild Goose Club – Observation
 - Adult salmon in the Butte region have challenges to migration and survival. In 2022, there was a fish kill of adult spring-run Chinook in the Butte region, across from the White Mallard Club. Swanson hypothesized that large log jams in Butte Creek may have contributed to the fish kill.

Project Development

Participants discussed project ideas to meet Floodplains Reimagined objectives:

- Increase flow-through of water. It won't negatively impact the duck clubs; water depth is their bigger concern.
- Target the west side of the Sacramento River for Floodplains Reimagined shallow-winter-time inundation.
- Open the Moulton Weir to flow through the sanctuary.
- Notch the Colusa Weir.
- Install fish ladders for the adult fish and a fish screen by the main drain at Butte Lodge Outing Club.
- Plant and dry farm vetch for mallard consumption and habitat creation.
- Add infrastructure that would allow non-signatory water users to pump groundwater rather than pull surface water from the signatories.

Subregional Landowner Process

Participants discussed the next steps for the Butte Subregional Group and outreach to other Butte landowners through the Butte Sink Waterfowl Association.

- Butte Subregional Meetings

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- Format: Zoom meeting is acceptable for convening next and may be the most neutral option. Many Butte landowners do not live in the Butte Sink. The RD 108 office is not convenient location to many Butte landowners.
- Timing:
 - Swanson, Wild Goose Club – Unavailable the third Tuesday of each month due to Board meetings.
- Outreach:
 - Swanson will speak with his contacts to gauge interest
 - O’Regan and Swanson will collaborate to set up a meeting with interested parties.
- The Butte Sink Waterfowl Association – Floodplains Reimagined Program presentation
 - Objective: Share information on Floodplains Reimagined and the Technical Assistance Program. Address concerns and provide detailed scientific explanations.
 - Timing: Annual meeting in December.
 - Membership: signatory and non-signatory members
 - Audience Concerns:
 - Attendees will want to know how their concerns will be addressed. Approachability is of higher importance than getting into very detailed, scientific explanations.
 - Craig Houk, President, Butte Sink Waterfowl Association – shares concerns of competing habitat and Yolo Bypass.

Adjourn

Johnston and the Program and Technical Teams thanked attendees for their time and participation and adjourned the meeting.

Meeting Attendees

The following people were in attendance:

Participants

Name	Affiliation
Andy Duffey	Butte Slough Irrigation District / Tisdale Irrigation District / RD 70 & 1660
Dan Gibson	Sacramento Outing Farms, Inc.
Denise Carter	Colusa County Board of Directors / Colusa Groundwater Authority / Mid-Upper Sacramento Regional Flood Management Plan
Roger Swanson	Wild Goose Club

Program and Technical Team

Name	Affiliation
Barry O’Regan	KSN
Bethany Taylor	Kearns & West
Chris Campbell	cbec
Eric Nagy	LWA
Karis Johnston	Kearns & West

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Lewis Bair	RD 108
Mark Cowan	LWA