

**Joint Meeting
Bear River Watershed Group &
Yuba-Bear Watershed Council
Thursday, January 28, 2010
1:30 p.m.**

**Nevada Irrigation District Office
1036 W Main Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945**

The meeting was called to order by Lesa Osterholm at 1:35 p.m.

1. Welcome and Self-Introductions:

Present: Lesa Osterholm, Bear River Watershed Coordinator; Jan Blake, Nevada County Resource Conservation District; Tim Crough, Nevada Irrigation District; Mike Nichol, Placer County Water Agency; Mike Thornton, Sierra Fund; Pat Malberg, Placer County Board of Supervisors; John Rapphahn, Bureau of Land Management; Kathy Van Zuuk, Tahoe National Forest; Justin Wages, Placer Land Trust; John Taylor, Nevada County Land Trust; Joanne Drummond, Nevada County Fire Safe Council; Brian Bisnett, Excelsior Foundation; Jason Rainey, SYRCL; Nancy Webber, NID; Don Wight, NID; Lynn Campbell, Rorie Gotham, Dan Chaplin, Rick Bergquist, Maureen Necochea and Derek Hitchcock.

2. Watershed Coordinator Update- Lesa Osterholm: Lesa said there are three Watershed Coordinator positions funded by the Department of Conservation; one for the Nevada County Resource Conservation District, one for SYRCL and one for Friends of Deer Creek. Due to status of the funding being suspended then started again, it has been a roller coaster for the coordinators adhering to their work plans. Jason Rainey from SYRCL said they have not identified a new watershed coordinator yet. No one knew who the coordinator was from Friends of Deer Creek. The Watershed Coordinators received the go ahead in July 2009.

In addition to coordinating the Bear River Watershed Group and the Yuba-Bear Watershed Council meetings, Lesa is working on the following Bear River watershed projects:

NID regarding mercury removal at Lake Combie; the Nevada County Community Shaded Fuelbreak which began in 2004 and presently has 35 landowners signed up for work along Red Dog and Hwy 20 at Conservation Camp areas; meadow restoration project grant through National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), to produce a video and brochure; a pilot project involving boat inspections in the Truckee area; the annual Arbor Day native plant give away; working with Bats International on a presentation and possible bat viewing plus building wildlife ramps as part of a watershed or community project; partnering with Sierra Foothills Audubon chapter to provide wildlife nesting boxes for distribution; the Scotch Broom Challenge; control of invasive Class B Purple Loosestrife with Ed King at the Ag Commissioner's office, which has been sited at more and more spots in the past years along Wolf Creek and the Bear River; Nevada County waster water treatment plant at Lake of the Pines to use the bio-solids on mine reclamation on Forest Service sites, to name a few.

Rorie Gotham asked about the status of the South Yuba River Management Plan and who was working on the follow through and updates. Kathy Van Zuuk said it had been discussed at previous meetings. Dan Chaplin said it had been a long time since there was a review meeting and he would be interested in helping to schedule one. Lesa recommended that he contact CA State Parks and SYRCL and we could put it on the next agenda.

3. Presentation by Tim Crough, NID: Tim Crough, Assistant General Manager with NID showed a new video regarding the Combie Reservoir Sediment and Mercury Removal project. He said they were in the fourth year of the 3-5 year planning portion of the project. He stated that sediment removed from the reservoir along the Bear contained mercury due to mining operations 150 years ago. The project's goals are to restore water storage capacity in the reservoir, remove accumulated mercury and improve recreational activities. 200,000 tons of sediment will be dredged and removed from the area. Some of the materials will be used by the Idaho-Maryland Mining Company ceramics project.

He is working with Senator Feinstein and Congressman McClintock for support of this project. It had been thought that the mercury build up behind dams stayed there. The Combie Reservoir project will test and analyze the water that flows from Rollins to Combie.

4. Discussion of mercury and safe eating guidelines: Tim Crough said that mercury is a hazard in the food chain, not drinking water. Crops such as oranges, rice, etc. that are irrigated are not a danger. The danger is in the fish from these areas that are caught and consumed.

Lesia said she brought booklets regarding safe fish eating guidelines. Mike Thornton said there wasn't any posting along the rivers regarding mercury contamination in fish, although Camp Far West and Scotts Flat is posted. He recommended the OEHHA website for list of fish advisories, but cautioned that some bodies of water had been left off the list due to lack of samples of fish tissue tested.

5. FERC update: Tim Crough said that the process is heavily involved in environmental studies and analysis. NID is posting technical memos from the studies soon. Also, NID is evaluating hydro-generating improvements for the Rollins Reservoir plant.

6. Scotch Broom Challenge update: Joanne Drummond said that the Scotch Broom Challenge is in the third year. This year there will be seven sites from March 20th to April 24th to include Wolf Creek at Wolf Road, Champion Mine Road, Rough & Ready Hwy, Gracie & Clay Streets, Hilltop Drive and Oak Tree Road.

7. Stakeholder projects and updates:

TNF, Kathy Van Zook discussed the motorized vehicle route project; a rare plant and fungi hike with CNPS; and the Nixon Mine clean up in Sierra County.

Placer Land Trust, Justin Wages said they were working on the Bruin Ranch acquisition with a benefit planned and a video.

Excelsior Foundation, Brian Bisnett said they are a new 501 (c) 3 working on acquiring the Excelsior Ranch between Englebright and Clarks Bar. It is an old mine site and they are working with property owners to conserve the natural resources and history on the site.

BLM, John Rapphahn said they were doing trail work at Round Mountain and American River trails connecting Coloma to Sacramento, working on Purdon Crossing signage and installing a kiosk at Edwards Crossing.

FSCNC, Joanne Drummond said the chipping program would be running on one route instead of two; she has submitted a Biomass Utilization grant to treat Forest Service land in the area of the NCRCD fuelbreak.

SYRCL, Jason Rainey said the Great River Clean-up for 2009 had over 700 participants; they are in their tenth year of monitoring the Yuba River; working on a salmon restoration project; engaged in FERC relicensing for the Yuba Basin and the film festival was a success.

Friends of Purdon Crossing, Dan Chaplin said there was a need for river advocacy; they have installed a kiosk for educational materials.

Rorie Gotham reiterated the need for restroom facilities along South Yuba and complained about out-of-towners trashing the river areas in Washington; private landowners suffer.

NCLT, John Taylor said that the red-legged frog was found at only one site in Nevada County.

PCWA, Mike Nichol said that due to the recent storms, the snow pack was at 124% of normal.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.

The next BRWG meeting will be **February 25, 2010 at 1:30 pm at CDF Higgins Corner.**

The next BRWG & Y-BWC joint meeting will be **March 17, 2010 at 10:00 am at NID.**