

Central Valley Flood Protection Board Meeting
June 27, 2014

INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING

LOWER FEATHER RIVER CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

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BRIEFING SUMMARY

Overview

The Lower Feather River Corridor Management Plan (LFRCMP) describes a long-term vision and multi-objective strategy for managing the 20-mile-long Feather River corridor between the Marysville and Yuba City urban areas in the north and the Sutter Bypass in the south. The LFRCMP provides a vision for how flood system maintenance and habitat enhancement can be integrated under long-term programmatic permits, as well as recommendations for optimizing future management, restoration, and maintenance of the corridor. It was developed by a Work Group of knowledgeable stakeholders that includes representatives from State, federal, and local agencies, including maintenance districts; nongovernmental organizations; agricultural interests; and elected officials. It provides a planning tool and informational resource for flood managers at DWR and Local Maintaining Agencies, as well as resource agencies, environmental and recreation advocates, farmers, and the general public.

The LFRCMP offers an approach that:

- Protects public safety by facilitating maintenance of flood control facilities.
- Conserves, enhances, and restores habitat and ecosystem functions.
- Supports agricultural productivity.
- Promotes economic sustainability and land use compatibility.
- Improves recreational opportunities.

Proposed Management Goals

The Work Group developed new management approaches for the LFRCMP study area by assessing existing channel habitat and ecological conditions, geomorphology, flood hydraulics and hydrology. Based on that assessment and the Work Group's knowledge of constraints and opportunities in the LFRCMP study area, the group proposed an array of conceptual future scenarios that would improve floodway management for public safety and ecosystem function.

DWR and the Work Group established goals and objectives for the LFRCMP, which include:

- **Flood Management:** minimize floodway maintenance costs, ensure conveyance capacity, improve sediment management, and prevent processes that adversely affect levee integrity, such as erosion and animal burrows.

- **Ecosystem and Habitat Enhancement:** increase the extent and connectivity of riparian and upland habitat, restore fish and wildlife habitat, and contribute to the conservation and recovery of special status species.
- **River Recreation:** improve public access for compatible recreational uses and maintain and improve opportunities for hiking, hunting and fishing.
- **Agriculture:** conserve agriculture and supporting infrastructure, and promote integration of agricultural sustainability and ecosystem benefits.

Proposed Management Actions

Modeling results were used to develop proposed management actions, which include:

- **Flood Management Actions:** modify the topography of the floodplain to maintain flood conveyance and sediment transport, improve drainage of levee borrow ditches, incorporate invasive plant control best management practices into routine maintenance, and continue periodic levee integrity inspections.
- **Ecosystem Management Actions:** increase floodplain inundation by restoring flows to the old river channels, creating swales, and lowering the floodplain; create shaded riverine aquatic habitat and mosaics of riparian/upland forest; create high-ground flood refugia for wildlife; and reduce fish entrapment and entrainment.
- **Recreation Management Actions:** create additional trails, river access points, boat ramps, and hiking trail networks and expand nature and equestrian trails in selected locations.
- **Agricultural Management Actions:** designate agricultural conservation areas; relocate low-lying, flood-prone orchards; offer extended leases to orchards; and implement wildlife-friendly practices.

Next Steps and Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Integration

The LFRCMP will be finalized in June 2014. DWR developed the LFRCMP in coordination with a much larger systemwide plan, the *Central Valley Flood Protection Plan* (CVFPP). Key elements of DWR's CVFPP include the Conservation Strategy, which seeks to integrate environmental stewardship into flood management activities, and Regional Flood Management Planning (RFMP), a program that helps local agencies develop long-term regional flood management plans. The LFRCMP study area falls within the Conservation Strategy's Feather River Conservation Planning Area (FRCPA) and the Feather River RFMP area.

Conservation Strategy efforts in the FRCPA will seek to integrate LFRCMP-proposed management actions into regional permitting, and coordinate with the Feather River RFMP. The Conservation Strategy will benefit LFRCMP implementation by enabling programmatic permitting for flood system maintenance and ecosystem enhancement actions. Proposed enhancement actions are expected to more than offset the anticipated adverse environmental effects of flood facility construction and maintenance actions within the LFRCMP study area.