

APPENDIX B

SACRAMENTO RIVER CONSERVATION AREA FORUM, GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

BOARD POLICY

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Adopted June 19, 2003

GENERAL POLICY

It is the policy of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF) Board of Directors that every reasonable attempt be made to prevent any harm or loss to any person or to any private or public entity from land management activities occurring within the SRCA. It is also a fundamental policy that the Board of Directors will address promptly and resolve to the best of its ability, any loss or harm that may result from activities within the SRCA.

NEED FOR A GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

The SRCAF Board of Directors supports management of the water and land resources that is consistent with the overall goals of the SRCAF. However, to accomplish these goals, the Board recognizes that historic uses and concerns must be respected.

The Board appreciates the value of the Sacramento River as a vital habitat area for fish and wildlife and supports the overall goal of the SRCAF to preserve remaining riparian habitat and to reestablish a riparian ecosystem along the Sacramento River between Redding and Chico, and to reestablish riparian vegetation along the river from Chico to Verona. The Board also appreciates the agricultural heritage of the Sacramento Valley as an important part of the Sacramento River's history, and much of the land within the SRCA has been in agricultural use for more than a century. In addition, the SRCA extends through seven rural counties with numerous communities that rely on agriculture as their economic base. Agriculture is an essential life sustaining industry on which many local landowners rely for their livelihood; therefore protection of agricultural land is a high priority. The SRCAF Board of Directors also recognizes the importance of the Sacramento River as a water supply for the local agricultural economic base and as a public recreation resource. Moreover, flood control for the local citizens, communities and agricultural lands is also a concern. Therefore, all activities within the SRCA must demonstrate planning and management that is sensitive to agricultural needs, public safety, public recreation, flood control, and fish and wildlife and their habitat.

Unique differences between riparian habitat and farmland are more readily recognized than commonalities. Generally, habitat restoration seeks to enhance the living conditions of wildlife and native flora and fauna. Most managers and operators of neighboring farmlands consider some wildlife and native flora and fauna that move from riparian habitat on to farmlands as pests, predators, or competitors with their crops and production. Lack of assurances concerning incidental take of endangered and threatened species on neighboring farmlands, seepage from riparian habitat into neighboring farmlands, and protection of irrigation pumping plants and fish screens critical for the diversion of irrigation water supplies are also possible major points of conflict. Conversely, movement of crop protection products, nutrients, and sediments from farmlands into riparian habitat may affect species, habitat and water quality.

While the differences between riparian habitat and farming exist, commonalities are apparent and may offer opportunities upon which to build. Most agricultural landowners are conservation minded and can appreciate habitat on neighboring lands, if the habitat and its inhabitants do not have serious negative offsite impacts. Likewise, farming is likely to be a more compatible land use than urban and industrial development on lands adjacent to habitat, especially if offsite impacts to both can be minimized. The challenge is to understand the various land uses to the extent that each can be managed to remove or minimize the negative impact on the others. In situations where conflicts and harm are unavoidable, there should be a mechanism established to determine the extent of impacts. In addition, resources must be available to promptly compensate the affected parties or to assist in finding mutually acceptable solutions to the impacts.

The SRCAF Good Neighbor Policy is set forth to outline an approach that all landowners¹ (new, existing and absentee) should follow in order to comply with the intent and spirit of the SRCAF Handbook. The goal of the SRCAF Good Neighbor Policy is to avoid negative impacts, address and resolve unavoidable impacts, and foster good communication among neighbors and communities. The SRCAF Good Neighbor Policy should apply to all land use changes, including changes in land use where habitat is actively developed, where habitat develops naturally, and where habitat is converted to agricultural or other uses.

The Good Neighbor Policy envisions landowners being good stewards of the land, understanding the issues facing their neighbors and the implications of land use practices on the neighbors and community. Only with this understanding can one avoid negative impacts. Open and honest communication is a very important tool in being a good neighbor.

POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON NEIGHBORING LANDOWNERS

Landowners often experience stress and anxiety when other land use activities occur near their land because such activities may affect their agricultural operations, habitat management, flood control, recreational, or other uses of the land. Some of the possible impacts on neighboring landowners and communities are:

1. Impaired drainage of both flood water and surface (irrigation) water due to discontinued maintenance of drainage or flood control structures.
2. Farming delays and crop loss resulting from seepage and flooding.
3. Increased maintenance of hard points (ex: pumping plants, fish screens, bridges, boat landing/ramps) and facilities/infrastructure (ex: ditches, pipelines, fences, roads, parks and recreation resources) due to siltation, erosion, woody debris, and river meander.
4. Crop depredation from wildlife.
5. Migration of invasive and noxious weeds.
6. Curtailment of normally accepted agricultural practices (ex: aerial spraying and baiting) resulting in higher production costs and possible crop loss.
7. Abnormal changes in local ground water aquifers.
8. Migration of present or future endangered/threatened species stopping any or all agricultural activities.
9. Increased trespass.

¹ For the purposes of this document, the term "landowner" is to apply to private and public entities and their day- to-day operating agents (e.g. managers, lessees, tenants, etc.)

10. Increased fire risk due to build up of vegetation and forests and possible increased public access and use.
11. Closure of newly acquired public lands and loss of public use.
12. Loss of revenue to counties and special districts (ex: fire, irrigation and mosquito abatement) due to removal of property from local tax rolls.
13. Increased local government operation and maintenance costs such as fire protection, law enforcement.
14. De-stabilization of rural, agricultural-based economies resulting from removal of land from production and from the implementation of the federal and state Endangered Species Acts.
15. The increased cost or inability to perform operation and maintenance or repairs of flood control projects.
16. The increased cost or inability to provide flood fight response or implement federal or state public safety programs (PL84-99 or USACE projects).
17. The increased cost or inability to maintain, modify, or expand the existing design function (i.e. flow splits at weirs) and actual carrying capacities of flood control projects.
18. Harm to habitat and species from toxic substances.
19. Harm to habitat and species from nutrients (ex: fertilizers and amendments) entering habitat from adjacent properties.
20. Harm to habitat and species from sediment runoff, noise and dust from adjacent property.
21. Loss of wildlife that wanders onto adjacent lands
22. Loss or disturbance of nesting or rearing habitat.
23. Loss due to trespass from adjacent land.
24. Loss of wildlife and habitat caused by feral or domestic animals or livestock.

POLICY ACTIONS

The SRCA Board of Directors resolves to take the following actions to address the potential impacts discussed above:

1. The SRCAF Board of Directors recommends that all landowners representing or implementing (flood control, habitat, agriculture, recreation) or other uses within the SRCA be considerate of, and communicate with all neighbors potentially affected by land use practices or land use changes. Where possible, all potentially affected neighbors should be contacted prior to initiating any actions to anticipate and avoid negative impacts.
2. The SRCA Board of Directors recommends that the following items be incorporated into all habitat restoration proposals and project plans prior to beginning any physical changes to the property to help avoid many of these negative impacts.
 - a. Proposals and plans should emphasize proactive communication with neighbors and community. While developing proposals and plans, project proponents should introduce themselves to all potentially affected landowners. The project proponents should describe to nearby landowners the anticipated project and the desired outcome of the project. The project proponents should attempt to anticipate potential impacts and incorporate appropriate plans to avoid impacts to their neighbors. Project proponents should solicit input from nearby landowners and incorporate that input, where practicable, to minimize

impacts for property owners. Their proposals and plans should describe the activities they've undertaken to initiate proactive communication and should further describe their plans to continue communication through the completion of their project.

- b. Project proponents should follow the local process for land use changes to include as applicable, county and public review of proposed land use, change in zoning, and, if applicable, environmental analysis that conforms to the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.
- c. The proposals and plans should designate a local contact person for the project. This individual should be readily known by neighboring landowners and county officials and should be empowered to the maximum extent possible to address questions and problems relating to the management of the property. This person should also make every reasonable effort to meet the adjacent landowners and discuss any issues that may be of concern.
- d. To the extent feasible, the project proponents should provide a series of baseline studies of the land targeted for restoration or conversion and of neighboring lands (with landowners' permission) that could potentially be impacted prior to any change in land use. In particular, the SRCAF Board of Directors recommends that where public funds or permits are required for restoration activities that social, cultural, biologic, topographic, hydrologic, and geomorphic studies where applicable be available for public review. The baseline data should serve as a reference to demonstrate measurable benefit of the restoration project (ex: changes to target species' land-use patterns or local population numbers). It should also serve as a reference point to measure any negative impact on neighboring landowners. Project proponents should conduct the baseline assessment in a manner likely to yield fair and objective determinations. Independent review is recommended.
- e. The proposal or plan should describe in detail the infrastructure that will be created to manage access in and out of the project area and prevent trespass on adjacent landowner property.
- f. Project proponents should consider incorporating buffer zones on the project property as part of the development plans to minimize negative impacts to adjacent landowners. The goal of a buffer zone is to provide a zone of land between habitat and farmlands or other land uses that prevent damage to neighboring lands and assist with a successful transition between types of land use. There is no set protocol for developing an effective buffer zone; each project may require a unique buffer zone with different features based on the setting.
- g. Project proponents should consider incorporating construction of barriers or fences on the project property as part of the development plans if appropriate to minimize negative impacts to adjacent landowners.