

McArthur Swamp Public Planning Workshop
Lions Hall - McArthur, CA
September 11, 2008 - 3:00 to 6:00pm

A public planning workshop for the McArthur Swamp pilot project was hosted by the Stewardship Council on September 11, 2008, in McArthur, California. A total of 32 individuals attended and participated in the workshop, representing a wide variety of interests, including local, state, federal, and tribal governments; community organizations; and local businesses. The primary purpose of this workshop was to solicit input from the public on the development of a Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (LCCP) to preserve and enhance McArthur Swamp. The Stewardship Council will consider all input received from the public.

During the meeting, a break-out session was held in which the workshop attendees were randomly divided into two groups consisting of 15-18 people. Discussions were guided by staff and focused on two topics: important qualifications of future land owners and conservation easements holders, and importance/priority of the 23 potential measures recommended for McArthur Swamp. Notes from each group were recorded on flip-charts and key discussion points were reported back to the larger group at the end of the workshop by a community member. Below is a compilation of the notes from each group according to color assignments.

Blue Group Breakout Session Notes

Topic #1: Qualifications of future landowners and conservation easement holders.

- Donees should be here in perpetuity.
- Donees should be local, within the intermountain area.
- Donees should have a track record of conservation management experience.
- Donees should be inclusive of local interests, a consortium potentially.
- Donees should have experience in all aspects of managing land (e.g., grazing, noxious weeds, etc.).
- Donees should have the financial capabilities to manage the land.
- Economic and social benefits should be returned to the local community. Economic benefits should not be taken away from the community.
- There should be local oversight over the monitoring.
- Some participants suggested looking at fee title and conservation easement holder qualifications separately.

Easement holder qualifications:

- A local organization should hold the easement.
- The easement holders should be a professional organization.
- Both the easement holder as well as the fee title holder should have strong local ties.
- They should have community support.
- The easement holder should have a track record of community outreach.
- Should protect cultural resources.
- The easement holder should bring grant money or have the capability of getting grant money.
- Should have past experience.

Fee title holder qualifications:

- The fee title holder should have “deep pockets.”
- The fee title holder should be around in perpetuity.
- Both the fee title holder and the easement holder have responsibilities to the greater California community in addition to the local community.
- The fee title and easement holders should have good coordination and communication skills.
- The fee title holder and the easement holder should get along well together.

Although the group wanted to separate out the qualifications for the fee and easement holders, they also observed by the end of the breakout group session that many of these qualifications were the same.

Topic #2: Important/priority of potential measures to preserve/enhance BPVs.

- Do not repeat habitat measures that have already been done in the past. Only do new items.
- The possibility should remain open for farming crops in the future that will help sustain land and bring revenue to the area.
- Crops complement the wildlife and habitat plan.
- Enhancements need to be protected and enforced.
- Recreation measures should be a priority.
- Need a revenue stream to complete the recreation measures.
- A boat dock is not a priority. It may attract larger boats.
- Interpretive signage is a medium priority.
- Recreational uses need to be separated from economic uses.
- A kiosk and signage can add revenue.
- Crayfish are not a priority because they are not located near land that will be donated.
- A youth program could be designed that would contribute enhancements (e.g., construct bird boxes) to the area and then study their relationship to enhancing habitat.
- The levee could provide a walking trail. The boardwalk is not needed.
- Shasta County Agriculture Department, the Pit River Tribe, BLM, USFS, and Modoc RCD were suggested to be on the milfoil eradication/noxious weed team.

Other comments:

- Is there any recourse to change donees?
- What are the reporting requirements for conservation easement holders? Where do the reports go?
- Is there potential to sell the easement?
- What about water rights? Groundwater rights? Some of the potential measures may require water.
- PG&E should transfer their water rights with the land.

Red Group Breakout Session Notes

Topic #1: Qualifications of future landowners and conservation easement holders.

- Locally based
- Coordinate management with land owners
- Financial ability to accomplish goal
- Stability (experience)
- Range management expertise
- Wetland habitat management experience (does for a living)
- Fee title holder must be able to accept conservation easement
- Diverse management experience
- Staying power
- Open communication with tribe
- Cost effectiveness and timeliness (private vs. public)
- Coordination between entities – ability
- Diverse organization
- Must allow for BPVs (applies mainly to conservation easement holder)
- Does not need to be local (applies mainly to conservation easement holder)

Topic #2: Importance/priority of potential measures to preserve/enhance BPVs.

- Concern – management of milfoil (outside of FERC boundaries)
- Extend noxious weed management
- Establish eastern Shasta program to manage weeds
- Priority to maintain local grazing potential for off-site ecological damage
- Honor existing economic uses
- Limit boat-launch use to small outboards
- Need for recreational birders to have a place
- Boat dock – ambivalent response – could relieve congestion
- Greater agricultural intensity (wild rice farming)
- Heavily surveyed – may not need new ones
- Noxious weeds high on list
- Muskrat management
- Support for hunting infrastructure (blinds)
- Should be a portion on ATV use – open certain areas
- Have a facility (building envelope) for management