

MIDDLE SANTA ANA RIVER WATERSHED
SANTA ANA SUCKER CONSERVATION TEAM
MEETING NOTES

April 21, 2011

PARTICIPANTS

David Garcia
Max Rasouli
Lisa Cibellis
Kerwin Russell

Bonnie Nash
Brett Mills
Heather Dyer
Mark Horne
Bobby Gustafson

Melody Aimar
Jennifer Shepardson

Valerie Housel

Dick Zembal
Danielle Maurizio
Jonathan N. Baskin
Giovanni Arechavaleta
Jim Van Haun (by phone)
Sam Fuller (by phone)
Dan Bott
Jeff Beehler

REPRESENTATIVE

Riverside Public Utilities
Riverside Public Utilities
Orange County Public Works
Riverside/Corona Resource Conservation
District
Orange County Water District
Santa Ana Watershed Association
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Cardno Entrix
San Bernardino Municipal
Water Department
Santa Ana Watershed Association
San Bernardino Municipal
Water Department
San Bernardino Municipal
Water Department
OCWD/SAWA
Chino Basin Watermaster
San Marino Environmental Associates
Santa Ana Water Associates
Consultant
San Bernardino Valley Water District
Orange County Water District
SAWPA

1. Introductions and Announcements: The Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Jeff Beehler at the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) located at 11615 Sterling Avenue, Riverside, CA 92503.

- a. H.R. 1042- Proposed Amendment to the ESA
Information on H.R. 1042 introduced by Congressman Baca to amend the Endangered Species Act was distributed to the group. The legislation is primarily aimed at Delhi flower-loving sand fly, but has implications for all listed species.
- b. Critical Habitat: Possible Litigation
A number of upper wash agencies have given the US Fish and Wildlife Service a 60 day notice of litigation concerning the recent listing of critical habitat for the Santa Ana sucker. Notice does not imply that litigation is certain, only that the potential litigants are reserving the right to challenge the listing of Critical Habitat. Several recent newsletters were distributed.

2. Agreements

- a. Conservation Team Agreement
 - i. Team Structure and Activity

The Conservation Team agreement was approved by the SAWPA Commission on April 19. The San Bernardino Valley Water District also approved entering into the Conservation Team Agreement on April 19. The final Agreement will be posted on the SAWPA website. Those attending the meeting are asked to review the agreement and notify Jeff Beehler by May 1 if they attend to participate.

ii. Participants

Participants of the Santa Ana Sucker Conservation Team will be setting a budget and developing a scope of work for next year. Those not participating in the agreement will be welcome continue to participate and comment on Conservation Team activities, however they will not be involved in scope and budget decisions.

b. Corps 404 Maintenance Permit

i. Selection of Dates and Schedule for FWS Discussion

Heather Dyer is reviewing the Biological Opinion for the draft 404 permit developed several years ago. She is also reviewing potential impacts based on Conservation Team annual reports. FWS will set up times for people to fine tune impact estimates at a later date.

ii. Permit Strategy

The new Corps permit will be streamlined compared to the last draft and will be tiered. Most covered activities will be considered “tier 1” and will have minimal notification requirements. The “tier 2” and “tier 3” requirements will require more notification with “tier 3” activities requiring notification prior to action. It is important to note that these activities are still allowed under the permit.

Dick Zembal discussed developing “banking” opportunities with SAWA to mitigate for vegetation management activities. SAWA currently manages large riparian areas in the river and can develop a reporting mechanism that is acceptable to the resource agencies.

The permit will require that those choosing to use it are active participants in the Conservation Team. As with any Regional General Permit, agencies may develop individual permits to cover activities.

3. Biology/Ecology Updates

a. Seven Oaks Dam Test/Habitat Survey

The City of Riverside and FWS is preparing a report and will provide it to the group at the next meeting.

b. Sunnyslope Creek Restoration

Brett Mills and Bonnie Nash presented a report on the Sunnyslope Creek restoration project. The Conservation Team funded a restoration feasibility study. SAWA worked with the FWS and DFG to develop a strategy that was immediately implementable. The strategy relied on hand labor and the removal of “vegetation plugs” in the creek. The creek is now open from the mouth to the river. The project required 1,000 linear feet of hand clearing. Brett reported that the creek will require on-going adaptive management to remain open to the river. The group discussed whether this maintenance could serve as a mitigation opportunity.

c. Sucker Breeding Activity

Jonathan Baskin reported that he had found suckers in a middle section of the restoration area on Sunnyslope. He also reported that suckers appear ready (tuberculated) to breed. He will give a full report at the next meeting.

4. Adjournment Next Meeting (May 19, 2011