

Dates of Activity: July 2008 through September 2008
Seed Grant: Integrating Land and Water Solutions in Tulare Lake Basin
Grantee Organization: Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP)
Contact Person: Carole Combs, Executive Director, Grant/Project Manager
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Description of Activity by Goal and Objective:

Activities during this reporting period are presented here roughly in chronological order, because they cross-section the following Partnership Strategic Action Plan Proposal Goals and Objectives: Goal 1 (Objectives A & B), Goal 4 (Objective A), Goal 5 (Objective A), Goal 7 (Objectives B and C) of the Land Use, Agriculture, and Housing Work Group (Proposal pp. 49-53). They further Goal 1 (Objectives A and B), Goal 2 (Objective A), Goal 3 (Objectives B and C), Goal 4 (Objective A) and Goal 5 (Objective A) of the Water Quality, Supply and Reliability Work Group (Proposal pp. 62-64); and they support Goal 6 (Objective C) of the Air Quality Work Group (Proposal, pp. 59-60).

- July 1, submitted \$100,000 project proposal Deer Creek/Friant Kern Canal Basin Modification and Environmental Groundwater Banking Project: Phase 1 to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), Mid-Pacific Region, and South Central California Area Office-Fresno (award and contract agreement were finalized on 2). The Deer Creek & Tule River Authority collaboration with the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners (TBWP) is the first such TBWP project intended to serve as a model or demonstration project for TBWP collaboration with Tulare Basin IRWMP sub-region groups. The project will have four phases and is an example of "an integrated land and water solution" that combines habitat restoration with conjunctive use groundwater banking improvements on Deer Creek in Tulare County.
- July 1, TBWP Board President Rob Hansen received notice that the Kern County Board of Supervisors would not be able to consider the TBWP's \$66,000 request for a Kern County/Tulare Basin Hydrological Unit Riparian-Wildlife Corridor Study due to severe budget constraints in that County.
- July 17, TBWP board president attended a meeting of the Kings County Fish and Game Advisory Committee to appeal previous decline of \$37,200 funding request for a Kings County Riparian-Wildlife Corridor Survey similar to the ones TBWP has undertaken in Tulare and Fresno Counties (Tulare Basin Hydrological Unit only); the appeal was denied, but the TBWP was encouraged to apply formally for a \$15,000 grant for this purpose instead. (This application was submitted in early September and will be reviewed and voted upon on Oct. 16 by the Committee.)
- July 29, TBWP and UC Merced representatives met with Paramount Farming Co. Vice President William Phillimore to discuss Resnick Family Foundation funding to launch the proposed Tulare Basin UC Natural Reserve System Field Station (proposed location: BLM Atwell Island Project). (Request declined due to upcoming \$45M donation to Los Angeles Art Museum new building; advised TBWP to try Resources Legacy Fund Foundation/Western Conservation Program and pursue partnership support of Conservation International).
- August 4, submitted final \$88,000 project proposal to Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF) / Western Conservation Program "Tulare Basin Conservation Plan Water Supply Strategies," a TBWP-Provost & Pritchard Engineering collaboration due for completion at March 31, 2009. (Request approved at RLFF Sept. 30, 2008, board meeting).
- August 13, TBWP board president presented Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners' program and projects to Central Valley Joint Venture (CVJV) Board; TBWP executive director and Board Secretary Carole Combs received CVJV first-ever Conservation Leadership Award (a wood carving of a fulvous whistling duck--the TBWP logo duck, carved by Chuck Solomon, retired USBR Central Valley Project Conservation Program Manager).
- August 20, received confirmation from Tulare County Association of Governments that additional help from the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners for the Conservation Banking Site Recommendations submitted on Dec. 17, 2007, a Seed Grant deliverable, will not be needed during the time frame remaining under this grant.
- August 22, arranged and facilitated presentation by Brian Leahy, California Department of Conservation Assistant Director, regarding Department of Conservation Watershed Coordinator Program funding opportunities for Tulare Basin-wide Joint Powers Agreement.

- August 22, submitted \$66,000 funding request to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Wetlands Biologist for assistance to TBWP Riparian-Wildlife Corridor Conservation Plan efforts in Kern County and to generally allow the TBWP to complete the Corridor survey for California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and make recommendations to NRCS and other agencies regarding habitat restoration and water supply opportunities. (This grant assistance was approved and commenced on Sept. 1, 2008).
- August 28, submitted TBWP Tulare Basin Project Area Map (Tulare Basin Hydrological Unit per TBWP biologist team, prepared by NRCS-Visalia) to California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) Land Use, Agriculture and Housing Work Group per its request.
- Continued work on Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF)-funded Tulare Basin Region Wildlife-Riparian Corridor Conservation Plan for DFG Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP), due for completion Dec. 31, 2008 (with field survey work in Kings County and planned for Oct. 4-5 in Kern County)
- Continued representation at Tulare Basin IRWM sub-region IRWM(P) group meetings to present opportunities for conjunctive use collaborative habitat restoration and water supply improvement projects; requested and was granted "interested party" affiliation with Upper Kings Basin Water Forum.
- Maintained outreach to Tulare Lake Basin Working Group (TLBWG participants) through notice of upcoming meeting scheduled for Oct. 31, 2008, at which the TLBWG will discuss its next stage evolution to become an even more useful forum for habitat restoration and conjunctive use water supply projects, by developing an annual symposium ("Innovative Ideas Forum") to ensure increased and more effective outreach to the general public.
- Continued strong client relationship with Conservation Strategy Group to represent Tulare Basin habitat and water supply interests in the state Capitol, with some notable successes in spite of the difficulties experienced with the state budget and state Legislature during its session just adjourned.
- Continued development of TBWP Web site (www.tularebasinwildlifepartners.org), due for completion Oct. 31, 2008, and a completed fundraising campaign piece design, for use in year-end major fundraising solicitations per TBWP Integrated Outreach and Fundraising Plan (a deliverable previously submitted to the Partnership with January 2008 Quarterly Report).
- September 3, submitted Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners' Fresno County Measure C Riparian-Wildlife Corridor Report to Council of Fresno County Governments (Fresno COG). (Note: the report was tabled by the Fresno COG Transportation Technical Team for further internal review at Oct. 8 meeting, before proceeding to Fresno COG Policy Advisory Committee or Fresno COG board review; therefore, final adoption is still pending.)
- September 5, TBWP President Rob Hansen met with DFG and Wildlife Conservation Board representatives to provide information and facilitate progress, as required due to TBWP's role as recipient of USBR Central Valley Project Conservation Program grant to launch the acquisition of Goose Lake Bottoms property as a new DFG Wildlife Management Area.
- During September, TBWP Executive Director Carole Combs arranged for TBWP participation in the Safe Passages Forum that will be held at UC Davis on Nov. 17; this forum is an adjunct to the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project (first meeting Oct. 7; agencies were invited only; but the results of TBWP's conservation plans were represented by DFG Central Valley Region represented by Jeff Single at that meeting).

Planned Activities by Goal and Objective (for next 3-6 months):

Referencing the same cross-section of activities under the Goals and Objectives listed above, in the next three months, the TBWP will continue to focus on partnership activities with federal, state, and county agencies, waters districts, Tulare Basin IRWM sub-regions and Tulare Basin-wide IRWM JPA as it has in recent reporting periods. In particular, the TBWP plans to accomplish the following during the final three months of this grant:

- Complete the RLFF-funded Tulare Basin Wildlife-Riparian Corridor Conservation Plan for DFG CAPP and make recommendations to DFG and NRCS regarding restoration opportunities therein;

- Convene Tulare Lake Basin Working Group meeting on Oct. 31 (more than 71 participating agencies and non-government organizations) with primary focus on year 2009 evolution to two meetings per year and adding a new public outreach symposium;
- Commence work under the \$100,000 USBR Grant for Deer Creek/Friant Kern Canal Basin Modification and Environmental Groundwater Banking Project, Phase 1;
- Submit a grant request to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) Central Valley Project Conservation Program – Habitat Restoration Program for Phase 2 of the above project;
- Commence work under the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation (RLFF)-funded “Tulare Basin Conservation Plan Water Supply Strategies” grant;
- Continue work on the Goose Lake Bottoms acquisition grant (for DFG Wildlife Management Area) and begin to plan protection and restoration efforts (easements or acquisitions) for parcels surrounding the core California Department of Fish and Game (DFG)-proposed acquisition area;
- Work with Conservation Strategy Group to plan consulting and lobbying activities for 2009, including long-term Watershed Coordinator funding and new Partnership legislation to replace 2008 Parra legislation which failed;
- Complete launch of TBWP Web site;
- Develop 2009 Goals, Objectives, Work Plan and Budget for TBWP Board and TBWP Planning and Project Implementation Team, including a goal to raise at least \$110,000 in unrestricted funds to enable the TBWP to build capacity and continue the opportunity-leveraging work that the Partnership Seed Grant has made possible;
- Implement fundraising component of TBWP Integrated Outreach and Fundraising Plan through use of campaign piece and carefully tailored funding requests, attempt to raise at least \$100,000-\$200,000 toward TBWP projected unrestricted funding needs for 2009;
- Submit a final Seed Grant budget adjustment in November to prepare for year-end grant completion within budget and provide accurate basis for final financial report due in January.

Challenges/Problems/Bottlenecks/Feedback:

There were a few problems or disappointments during the July-September reporting period, as follows:

- Due to the statewide budget crisis, the delay in receiving Partnership Seed Grant reimbursement checks (in spite of the greatly appreciated best efforts of Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency staff) resulted in a slow down in development of the TBWP campaign piece and in launch of the Web site.
- This crisis also precluded funding for the proposed TBWP Kern County Corridor Study and made such funding more difficult to obtain in Kings County.
- The Fresno COG Transportation Technical Review Committee decision to table the TBWP Measure C Riparian – Wildlife Corridor Report pending further internal review presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The TBWP is committed to working with Fresno COG staff to ensure Fresno COG Transportation Technical Team, Policy Advisory Committee, and Board acceptance of the report and its findings as soon as possible.
- The failure of Assemblymember Parra’s effort to establish the Partnership on a permanent basis through new legislation in 2008 was disappointing but also presents a challenge and an opportunity. (TBWP will continue to work with Conservation Strategy Group on such legislation in 2009, and/or we hope to support the Partnership board and California State University, Fresno, efforts to achieve success with such legislation in 2009.)

If you have coordinated any outreach, please describe briefly:

All of the activities described above have involved strong, coordinated outreach efforts, orchestrated by TBWP executive director, president, other members of the board of directors, and the Planning and Project Implementation Team.