

Dates of Activity: April 2008 through June 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
Phone: 559.799.7204
Email: ccombs@thegrid.net

Description of Activity by Goal and Objective:

The highlights of TBWP activities during this reporting period are presented here roughly in chronological order, because they cross-sect the following Partnership Strategic Action Plan Goals and Objectives: Goal 1 (Objectives A and 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). In addition, 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).

- April 14 –TBWP Executive Director Carole Combs, who also is coordinator of the Tulare Lake Basin Working Group (TLBWG), held a quarterly TLBWG meeting to continue information-sharing, collaboration, and consensus-building efforts among multiple partners (*Attachment 1 & 2*);
- April 28 – TBWP President Rob Hansen and executive director presented TBWP Tulare Basin planning and implementation vision to high-ranking USFWS, USBR, DWR and DFG officials in Sacramento, organized by California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) Seed Grantees at the California Water Institute (San Joaquin Valley Integrated Watershed Management Plan) to continue support-building efforts for TBWP land use planning and project implementation activities (*Attachment 3*);
- April 28 –TBWP President and Executive Director met with Assemblymember Nicole Parra and staff in Sacramento to discuss assistance to AB 2342, with Conservation Strategy Group staff;
- April-June – TBWP Planning and Project Implementation Team (PPIT) (*Attachment 4*) continued work on Council of Fresno County Governments Measure C Riparian-Wildlife Corridor Survey and Report under \$32,700 grant funding provided by that entity in February, leveraged by this Seed Grant;
- April-June – TBWP PPIT continued efforts to secure funding for Tulare Basin hydrological area riparian and wildlife corridor surveys/reports in Kings (\$32,700 request) and Kern counties (\$66,000 request), to leverage land use planning opportunities encouraged under the terms of its Partnership Seed Grant;
- April-June – TBWP PPIT planned and began work under the \$70K grant award (January 2008) from the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation Preserving Wild California Program to complete its fourth and final Tulare Basin Regional Conservation Plan – the Tulare Basin Regional Wildlife-Riparian Corridor Plan for Department of Fish and Game Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP);
- April-June – TBWP PPIT worked together, under the leadership of Johanna Kamansky, Big Trees Marketing, to launch Phase 1 of its new Web site, at www.tularebasinwildlifepartners.org.
- April-June – TBWP obtained private source support to continue funding of full client relationship with Conservation Strategy Group (Joe Caves, Leslie Friedman Johnson, and staff) in order to maximize TBWP results under the Seed Grant and ensure state legislative and high level official support for TBWP activities under the Seed Grant;
- April-June – TBWP Executive Director, and whenever possible the TBWP President, attended Tulare Basin Integrated Regional Watershed Management Planning and Implementation (IRWMP) subgroup meetings (Poso Creek, Kaweah Basin, Deer Creek andTule River Water Authority, Southern Sierra IRWM exploratory initiative, Upper Kings Basin IRWM Authority, Kern County IRWMP initiative and Tulare County Water Commission) and provided strategic support to the budding Tulare Basin IRWM Joint Powers Authority through its relationship with Conservation Strategy Group;
- April 15 – TBWP President and Executive Director contributed to Tulare County Blueprint visioning session at Visalia Convention Center;
- May 5 – TBWP President and Executive Director met with Tulare County Supervisor Mike Ennis and Tulare County Association of Governments staff to determine follow-up to specific landowner needs resulting from TBWP Tulare County Measure R Riparian-Wildlife Corridor Report (completed February 2008, also leveraged by the TBWP Seed Grant);
- May 19 – TBWP President presented TBWP Proposed Natural Resource Conservation and Restoration Scoring Criteria at the Kaweah Basin IRWMP meeting, designed for general Tulare Basin IRWM use in scoring projects for Prop 84 IRWM applications (*Attachment 5*); these scoring criteria were presented to DWR at the April 28 meeting at USFWS in Sacramento and submitted by Conservation Strategy Group to DWR in May on behalf of the TBWP as well;

- June 9 – TBWP President, Executive Director and PPIT member Steve Laymon met with California State Parks Planning staff and California State Parks Tehachapi District staff at the BLM Atwell Island Project Headquarters in Alpaugh to discuss State Parks Central Valley site opportunities in Tulare Basin, followed by a tour of selected site opportunities on that same day and on the following day;
- June 13 – TBWP Executive Director submitted a comment letter (prepared with the assistance of Conservation Strategy Group staff) to DWR re: Prop 84 IRWM guidelines, representing the views of several of the Tulare Basin IRWM subregion groups (*Attachment 6*);
- June 27 – TBWP President and Executive Director met with Department of Fish and Game Central Valley Region senior staff and members of the Goose Lake Holding Company board of directors at the office of the Buttonwillow Land and Cattle Company in Buttonwillow to advance the acquisition of sensitive and threatened species upland habitat and important wetland habitat in Goose Lake, as a result of a \$265K landscape scale project launch grant provided to the TBWP in 2006 by the Central Valley Project Conservation Program – Habitat Restoration Program (USBR-USFWS, CVP CP-HRP); the meeting was successful and resulted in agreement to proceed to collaborative parcel appraisal with Wildlife Conservation Board and U. S. Bureau of Reclamation officials;
- April-June – TBWP President, Vice President (Richard Moss), and Executive Director pursued the development of a collaborative water conservation and habitat restoration project with the Deer Creek and Tule River Water Authority, and with Senior Planning staff of the US Bureau of Reclamation - Fresno, resulting in submission of a proposal, “Deer Creek/Friant Kern Canal Basin Modification and Environmental Groundwater Banking Project: Phase I, and subsequent award of a \$100,000 contract agreement for this project, scheduled to commence in October; this project will serve as a model for TBWP engagement with water districts and Tulare Basin IRWM subregion groups (as well as the Tulare Basin IRWM JPA) going forward;
- April-June – TBWP Executive Director worked with California Department of Conservation Assistant Director Brian Leahy to provide information about Williamson Act and Super Williamson Act relationships to major habitat restoration opportunities in Tulare, Kings and Kern counties; she also arranged for Mr. Leahy to attend a meeting of the Tulare Basin IRWM JPA in late August to discuss and determine the interface of the Prop 84 IRWM and DOC Watershed Programs in Tulare Basin.

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-to-six months, the TBWP will continue to focus on partnership activities with federal, state, county agencies, water districts, Tulare Basin IRWM subregions and Tulare Basin IRWM JPA as it has during the April-June reporting period. In particular, the TBWP hopes to accomplish the following in the next six months:

- Complete the launch of the redeveloped TBWP Web site;
- Complete the Measure C Council of Fresno County Governments Riparian-Wildlife Corridor Survey Report;
- Secure funding to complete surveys/reports in Kings and Kern counties similar to the completed Tulare County and Fresno County (in progress) survey/report projects;
- Complete the Tulare Basin Regional Wildlife-Riparian Corridor Conservation Plan, for Department of Fish and Game CAPP;
- Complete initial 80-acre parcel acquisition under USBR CVP CP-HRP grant to launch landscape scale conservation and habitat restoration project in Goose Lake and assist DFG and WCB in their acquisition efforts for the core project parcels;
- Launch the Deer Creek and Tulare River Authority collaborative project with \$100,000 in USBR funding as a model for TBWP engagement with Tulare Basin IRWM subregion groups and the Tulare Basin IRWM JPA;
- Continue to work successfully with Tulare Basin IRWM subregion groups and with the San Joaquin Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan proponents, building strong stakeholder relationships;
- Secure \$ 150K-\$200K in private, unrestricted funding as indicated in its Integrated Outreach and Fundraising Plan (January 2008) toward the TBWP 2009 annual operating budget; identify and pursue major funding sources to continue and strengthen the efforts begun under this Seed Grant;
- Assist in securing a portion of the \$2M in Prop 84 funding for the DOC Watershed Program for Tulare Basin IRWM operations;
- Proceed strategically with implementation of selected projects (including addition of new projects) listed in April 2008 Conservation Priority List, through outreach and funding strategies presented in the TBWP’s Integrated Outreach and Fundraising Plan;
- Work with key TLBWG partner agencies and NGOs to take the TLBWG to the next level of effectiveness, in a meeting now planned for Oct. 31, 2008.

Challenges/Problems/Bottlenecks/Feedback

Due to the statewide budget crisis, our contacts in Kings and Kern counties are struggling to identify funding for our wildlife-riparian corridor surveys in those counties. We are working as creatively as possible to come up with solutions or alternatives.

If you have coordinated any outreach, please describe briefly.

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

The following attachments may be downloaded from the [Land Use, Agriculture and Housing Work Group Document Library](#) located on the Partnership Web site:

1. Tulare Basin Work Group Meeting – Agenda April 14, 2008
2. Participating Organizations
3. Conservation Priorities
4. Planning & Project Implementation Team Key Personnel
5. Proposed IRWMP Natural Resource Conservation and Restoration Scoring Criteria
6. IRWMP Guidelines, Comment Letter