

**Team Arundo del Norte
Steering Committee Meeting
September 14, 2006**

Minutes

Present: Mark Newhouser, SEC; David Spencer, USDA; Frank Wallace, Lower American River; Kasey Allen, SEC; Bob Hass, SEC; Ryan Navratil, San Francisquito Creek; Bryan Sesser, SEC; Susan Strachan, Lindo Channel; Sharon Weaver, San Joaquin River; Rob Hill, Gray Lodge Wildlife Area; Eric Htain, EDAW.

Program Updates and Discussion

Quarterly report is due from partners by October 5, 2006. Include not only what you have been doing, but what you anticipate doing in the next quarter.

We are pushing to get all partners to complete their eradication plan packets by the end of September.

CBDA Monitoring and Evaluation Proposal

This proposal to secure additional money to support monitoring protocol development is still pending.

Amendment Request

Just finished second submission requesting additional year of administration and implementation of AECF—eradication and monitoring. If approved, will provide new partners a full three years to complete work, rather than just two. A workshop will be held in late November to consider our amendment request.

Data Coordination and Mapping Tasks

WIMS3 Beta Training Update

For partners who Kasey has not yet visited for WIMS training—he is still available to visit your site and provide training. Please contact him if interested. In future trainings, it was recommended that part of it be conducted in the field with actual Arundo infestations.

A bug was found in WIMS. If partners email their database to Kasey, he can fix it.

Data Collection Protocol

The goal is to highlight a few of the data elements in WIMS and point out specific ways to collect the data. (Kasey handed out hard copies of the protocol, but will also be sending them to all partners electronically.) WIMS contains five components: area, area survey, weed occurrence, weed assessment, and weed treatment.

Area: It is suggested that partners create a “master project area” that includes all the polygons.

Area Survey: The data it provides helps to answer two of the program hypotheses (2 and 3): #2: Native riparian vegetation increases after Arundo removal, and #3: Many eradication sites will revegetate on their own.

Photodocumentation: Other than storing the location, azimuth, and notes, WIMS 3 beta does not offer too much help in managing photographs. The partners are on their own as far as managing the photographs. It is recommended that the next version of WIMS use translation software so can transfer PDA photos into WIMS so they are linked. Also recommend that the program provide guidelines now for partners on managing photos with WIMS and add these to the current protocol.

Mapping Update and Data Sharing

Contains 1) catalog of current maps, 2) current distribution map, and 3) create an eradication priority map. Followed up with all organizations who volunteered their Arundo data during Phase 1. About 85% done gathering data for Arundo infestations around SF Bay Estuary and Delta. Next year will work on San Joaquin and Sacramento River drainages. Partners were requested to send Bryan current mapping data on Arundo gathered previously (not under AECP) so we will know where it is.

What happens next in AECP: In next few months will make data known to research and eradication community by adding a catalog record posted on CERES. Will be fields there that partners can fill in.

Current Arundo Distribution Map: Building consolidated data set using NAWMA standard data fields. Will include data from all available sources in CALFED area. Partners may be able to add data on other weeds on CRISIS Maps of California Information Node of NBII.

Experimental Design, David Spencer, USDA

David was able to visit 8 partner sites since last TAdN meeting. He has tentative plans to do experimental research work at 5 of them. Took some preliminary measurements, i.e., conducted vegetation transects through and outside Arundo clumps. Thanks to all who helped.

Time allotted to do these experiments: We hoped to treat Arundo at different months to determine optimal time of year to make treatments. We have also set up an alternative experiment (not in field) as well. Have been growing some Arundo plants in large containers outside (as opposed to growing in the field). If AECP receives a one-year extension, this will be very helpful, since the original proposal provided three years of time to conduct and evaluate the experiments in the field.

Programmatic Permitting, Eric Htain, EDAW

Have successfully coordinated with Corps of Engineers and Regional Board, who have indicated no permits are needed for any partner activities. Regarding F&G in Central Valley, received word that 1602 Stream Alteration Agreements are not needed. For Bay Area partners (Sonoma, San Francisco), the plan is to amend existing F&G permits. There is a \$500 permit fee per partner which EDAW will cover. It is likely partners will have amendments before the end of the year. Napa is in a different situation. The amendment for Napa will be worked out between Todd Adams and EDAW.

The program decided to focus on partners who needed permits for this eradication season (Central Valley partners). Reclamation Board encroachment permits—who needs these? Central Valley partners/ status? Expect to receive Reclamation Board permits for Lindo Channel and San Joaquin River within next few weeks. Regarding FESA, received letter from NOAA Fisheries. Regarding FWS, can't issue letter of technical assistance, but will issue letter of "not likely to adversely affect..." This letter will authorize partner activities in project areas (same as letter of technical assistance but requires a different protocol to get it). FWS felt it did not have sufficient localized information to make a determination of technical assistance. Hoping to get letter of concurrence from FWS soon.

Next Meeting: Friday, December 1, 2006, 10-12 noon, USDA Building, Room 125, 430 G Street, Davis, CA.