

February 21, 2007

To: David Scheuring, Chair, Water Resources Association of Yolo County and
Members of the WRA
Jacques DeBra and the Members of the WRA Technical Committee

From: Cache Creek Integrated Project “team” (Yolo County Flood Control and Water
Conservation District, City of Woodland, Yolo County)

**Subject: Yolo County Integrated Water Resources Management Plan:
Cache Creek Integrated Project**

Introduction and Purpose

This memo responds to a request made by David Scheuring and the WRA on November 21, 2006 for more information regarding the Cache Creek Integrated Project. Specifically, the WRA asked the team to determine if additional priority setting was warranted for the list of potential actions and, if so, to work with stakeholders to refine project priorities and further define the issue of project integration. This memo documents the process and decisions made by the Cache Creek Integrated Project team. The team met on several occasions to discuss these issues including an interactive meeting with local stakeholders.

It is important to recognize that there is a separate process occurring to develop, review, refine and evaluate potential flood management actions in the watershed. The team believes that these flood management actions are the highest priority of all of the potential Cache Creek watershed projects. As these actions become more fully developed, the WRA will continue to consider how they could integrate with other Cache Creek actions to form the basis for integrated solutions. Because of the separate process for the flood management actions, they are not further addressed in this memo.

It is also important to recognize that this continued process of integration and prioritization builds on the previous work presented in the draft IRWMP document of October 2006. Integration of the Cache Creek project was explained in section 5.4 “Integrated Actions” (see pages 6-24 to 6-36). Figure 6-6 of the Draft IRWMP graphically explains the relationship between the prerequisite tasks and each component action in the Cache Creek Integrated Project. A preliminary budget and 5 year timeline for the 30 prerequisite tasks needing completion before start of the Cache Creek Integrated Project are presented in Figure 6-7. Previous work on prioritization is also summarized in various sections of the draft IRWMP document (Oct 2006). Foundational Actions (Section 5.2) are a high priority simply because these actions must be completed regardless of any other specific action. Prioritization of the remaining actions, based on State-wide water resource priorities, is explained in pages 5-26 to 5-31. Prioritization based on Objectives and Issues, as defined by the Yolo WRA, is explained in section 5.5.2 (page 5-27) and depicted graphically in Table 5-7.

The IRWMP (and the Cache Creek projects) are subject to continual collaboration and evaluation. The IRWMP should be an evolving document that is managed adaptively as new information becomes available, as projects become “ready,” and as priorities and needs shift.

Approach to Integration

The team examined the idea of integration of actions and determined that there were at least two levels on which integration occurs: *general* and *specific*.

(1) At the **general level**, all of the Cache Creek projects share common traits and features and demonstrate some level of integration. First, they are all part of the same watershed and contribute to the long-term economic health and ecological benefits of Cache Creek. They all involve collaboration between multiple agencies and jurisdictions in terms of project support and implementation. All of the projects have potential to contribute to the education of the community about the watershed and its values and functions, and each of the projects is designed to connect to and involve various stakeholders. The stakeholders vary substantially for each project, but include Yolo County, the Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the Resource Conservation District, local municipalities, land owners, recreation advocates, environmental advocates, and the agricultural community. Each of the projects is also designed to provide multiple benefits to the community. For some, the benefits include flood control, habitat enhancement, ground water recharge and recreation. For other projects, the benefits might include water supply reliability, water quality benefit and habitat protection. But, in all cases, multiple regional benefits have been built into the projects.

(2) At a more **specific level**, the various project “clusters” also demonstrate additional levels of integration. Three types of integration are identified: cornerstone actions; logical clusters of projects in which economic efficiencies are gained by combining projects; and logical geographic clusters in which projects within close proximity in the watershed provide benefits and synergies to each other.

- Those actions that are “cornerstones” are projects which facilitate and enable other activities to occur. For example, structural improvements to the Capay Diversion Dam will allow for other projects to be viable including conjunctive use of ground water and surface water and restoration of flows for fisheries enhancements.
- Other actions demonstrate a high level of integration because they can be more efficiently and effectively completed as a package or in conjunction with each other. The recreational and access improvement projects along Cache Creek are an example of actions that could be planned, designed and implemented together to save costs and make more efficient administration.
- Other actions demonstrate additional levels of integration because of their geographic proximity within the watershed and their similarity in objectives and

benefits. Examples include Cache Creek Regional Campground Habitat Enhancement Project, Camp Haswell Renovation Project, Otis Ranch and Camp Haswell public access improvements. These projects all provide habitat enhancement and water-dependent recreation.

Approach to Setting Priorities

The team has been clear and consistent that all of the Cache Creek actions listed in the IRWMP are important to the watershed and should ultimately be reviewed and considered for funding and development. Each of the actions provides substantial community benefits; either economic, ecological, social, recreational or a combination. Each of the actions is inter-connected in some way, and all contribute to the health and function of the watershed. It is also clear that the action “list” and the IRWMP are dynamic, and need to be continually re-evaluated. Priorities may shift over time. Some actions may be ready sooner than others; some actions may be able to receive opportunity funding and move ahead of others; some may become more highly favored as a result of a change in the environment (such as a major flood year) or a change in decision-maker priorities. The IRWMP will undergo a continual process of adaptive management to reassess priorities and assist in decision-making.

Despite the flexible nature of the list, the team believes it is necessary to establish a basic priority structure so that stakeholders and decision-makers can make judgments about where to put effort and local funds. The team developed the following approach and criteria to set those priorities.

First Priority: The highest priority actions were those that demonstrated a high level of *public health and safety benefits*. These actions might also offer other community and environmental benefits, and allow for a series of integrated actions to occur. The cluster of Cache Creek flood management projects are considered the highest priority. Examples of these projects are set-back levees and other flood risk reduction efforts use specific examples from the list. These are being considered as part of the separate Cache Creek Flood Management public process, currently being developed by the WRA.

Second Priority: Those projects that are *cornerstone* activities supporting other actions and projects in the watershed were determined to be the next level of priority. These are projects or actions without which other activities can not take place or would be done with inadequate data and planning. The following projects fit in this category:

- Capay Dam Reliability/Restoration Project (WS13)
- Comprehensive Conjunctive Water Use Program (WS16)
- Cache Creek – Yolo Bypass Anadromous Fish Passage Reintroduction/Introduction Study (AR8, AR46)

Third Priority: The next tier includes projects that demonstrate a high level of *integration* because of geographic proximity or economic efficiencies to be planned, designed and implemented together. These project “clusters” are:

- Economic Efficiency: Cache Creek Trail Nodes Program (R3), Camp Haswell Renovation Project (R6), and Camp Haswell/Otis Ranch Improvement Project (R8)
- Economic Efficiency: Cache Creek Regional Park Improvement Project (R15), Lower Cache Creek Parkway Access Project (R29), Cache Creek Regional Campground Habitat Enhancement Project (AR 18), Putah Creek and Cache Creek Exotic and Invasive Species Removal Project (AR7), and Cache Creek Riparian Habitat Enhancement Program (AR 24)
- Geographic: Cache Creek Regional Campground Habitat Enhancement Project (AR 18), Camp Haswell Renovation Project (R6), Camp Haswell/Otis Ranch Improvement Project (R8), and Cache Creek Regional Park Improvement Project (R15).

Fourth Priority: The remaining projects/actions are not unimportant, and should not be viewed as low priority. They are *individual actions or projects* in the watershed. Many may still be proposed and funded (even before others) because they are ready to implement or because of local needs, funding availability or other criteria. These projects include the following;

- Corell-Rogers Wetlands Project (AR 21), Grube-Payne Habitat Restoration Project (AR 22), Capay Dam to Moore Siphon Riparian Flow Program (AR35), and Cache Creek infrastructure protection and habitat enhancement (AR), Off-Highway Vehicle and Access Control Program (R4); Nichols Park Improvement Project (R20), Recreational Opportunities on Public Lands (R22), Cache Creek Mercury Remediation Project (WQ 1), Esparto and Madison Wastewater Recycling Projects (WQ 2.3 and 2.4), Moore Siphon Reliability/Restoration Project (WS 14), Colusa Basin Drain Water Supply Project (WS 22), County Road 19 Water Storage Project (WS 3.1), Esparto and Madison Water Supply Projects (WS 4, WS 5).

A final note on this list. Projects on the list may “rise or fall” depending on specific funding opportunities, timing or need. For example, certain funding sources or local match requirements may favor one action over another, regardless of where it falls in the priority list.

Project “readiness” may suggest that one or several actions should be proposed and funded earlier. Some of the projects (such as the flood management actions) are at an early stage of planning, while others such as the grouping of recreational projects (e.g. Cache Creek Regional Campground, Camp Haswell, Otis Ranch, etc.) are well along in their planning and design and ready for construction funds. This list is meant to be dynamic and adaptive. The WRA will provide for regular periodic review of the IRWMP in order to maintain the appropriate understanding of priority and readiness of these projects.