

Chapter 7 Coordination and Public Involvement

Communication and engagement efforts with the public, Federally recognized Indian Tribes, Native American groups, public agencies, and other stakeholders is an important component of the SLWRI. Through periodic and proactive outreach activities, the SLWRI has kept stakeholders up-to-date with the progress, accomplishments and next steps of the investigation. These efforts are guided by the *Strategic Agency and Public Involvement Plan* (Reclamation 2003a), and include a broad range of activities designed to accomplish official and supplementary outreach goals.

In addition to ongoing public and stakeholder outreach, the Project Coordination Team (PCT) continues to facilitate participation by the SLWRI's numerous cooperating agencies.

This chapter describes the outreach and coordination approach for the SLWRI, progress of the investigation in executing the public involvement plan, and continuing PCT activities throughout the investigation in coordinating with stakeholders, Federally recognized Indian Tribes, Native American groups, and cooperating agencies. Cooperating agencies for the SLWRI, pursuant to NEPA, include USFS, Colusa Indian Community Council of the Cachil Dehe Band of Wintun Indians, USACE, and U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Strategic Agency and Public Involvement Plan

The *Strategic Agency and Public Involvement Plan* (Reclamation 2003a) was designed to help the PCT effectively communicate with individuals, groups, and agencies that are affected by, or could benefit from, enlarging or modifying Shasta Dam and Reservoir. While the document is updated periodically to reflect the needs and objectives of the investigation, its critical components are compliance with the requirements of NEPA, Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations), and President Clinton's memorandum regarding the engagement of Federally recognized tribal governments (*Presidential Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Subject: Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments*, published in the *Federal Register*, Vol. 59, No. 85, April 29, 1994).

The four objectives of the *Strategic Agency and Public Involvement Plan* are as follows:

- **Stakeholder Identification** – Identifying and involving individuals, groups, and other entities that have an expressed or implied interest in the SLWRI.
- **Project Transparency** – Informing stakeholders and the public of study results in a timely, unbiased fashion through a variety of methods, including stakeholder and/or public meetings, Web postings, and mailings.
- **Issues and Concerns Resolution** – Gaining awareness of the issues and concerns of stakeholders and the public early in the process, and responding to these issues in an effective and timely manner.
- **Project Implementation** – Assisting policy-makers in understanding project purposes and benefits, and demonstrating that the project has met all necessary requirements to be implemented.

The plan has two primary themes, outreach and information, as discussed in the following sections.

Outreach

The *Strategic Agency and Public Involvement Plan* has five main outreach elements to assist in coordinating SLWRI efforts: (1) stakeholder and public meetings and workshops, (2) tribal coordination, (3) environmental justice, (4) Technical Working Group (TWG) coordination, and (5) PCT and Study Management Team (SMT) activities. In response to study data needs and requests from reservoir area landowners, a sixth outreach element was added to the effort: Surveys and Site Investigation Coordination. These outreach elements are described as follows:

- **Stakeholder/Public Meetings/Workshops** – Stakeholder and public meetings and workshops are important not only to enable the overall SLWRI to satisfy the public involvement requirements of NEPA and CEQA, but to afford stakeholders and the public the opportunity to effectively participate in development of the investigation. Specific outreach activities oriented toward stakeholders and the public are discussed later in this chapter.
- **Tribal Coordination** – The plan describes the intent of the SLWRI to consult with Federally recognized tribal governments, and outlines the investigation's overall strategy for communicating with Federally recognized Indian Tribes and Native American groups. Specific outreach activities oriented toward tribal groups are discussed later in this chapter.
- **Environmental Justice** – Consistent with Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations), Reclamation has actively

engaged minority populations and low-income populations in planning and developing the SLWRI. Outreach efforts for this component mirrored outreach efforts developed under the plan, and were modified to meet any specific communication needs necessary to effectively communicate with minority populations.

- **Technical Working Groups** – The TWGs provided critical support in defining and clarifying comprehensive alternative plans. Resource areas of importance include water supply reliability, ecosystems and ecosystem restoration and enhancement, water marketing and exchange, water policy and legislation, local land and property rights, regional economic impacts, environmental justice, and recreation.
- **Project Coordination Team and Study Management Team Activities** – The PCT includes the Reclamation Project Manager and technical experts from various disciplines and organizations, while the SMT comprises key policy and decision makers with direct influence over policy guidance for the study. The SMT provides overall guidance, suggestions, and comments for the study, representing viewpoints from all participating agencies.
- **Surveys and Site Investigation Coordination** – In support SLWRI, field surveys and investigations were conducted on private and public property to gather data for engineering and cost estimation purposes and to respond to landowner requests for site-specific data. These activities included, in part, biological, geotechnical and topographical surveys. Details of these surveys are discussed later in this chapter.

Information Dissemination

For project transparency and to inform stakeholders and the public, study-related information was disseminated in a number of ways:

- **Project Updates** – Project update notices were developed at major study milestones to keep stakeholders advised of the SLWRI status. The purpose of the updates was to inform stakeholders and the public of study progress and alert them to major upcoming events.
- **Project Information Papers** – Two project information papers have been prepared. One supported outreach efforts for the 2003 *Mission Statement Milestone Report* (Reclamation 2003b) and the second was released in summer 2004 to support the *Initial Alternatives Information Report* (Reclamation 2004a).
- **Field Survey Information Materials and Signage** – As part of engineering and cost estimation activities, Reclamation conducted geologic, topographic and other surveys in the reservoir area since 2007. These activities were supported, where appropriate, with door hangers, road signs, letters to landowners and information sheets.

- **Web Site** – A comprehensive project Web site was created to provide information about stakeholder functions and project information. Located at www.usbr.gov/mp/slwr (Reclamation 2011g), the Web site provides electronic copies of major project milestone documents and reports, a site elevation tool to determine a percent chance of inundation, a method to submit comments or join the project contact database, contact information for key project leads, and serves as a vehicle to announce project meetings and distribute collateral materials provided during project meetings.
- **Media Relations** – Media relations for the SLWRI have included distribution of news releases, media advisories and calendar advisories in advance of the release of major project documents, reports and public meetings. Associated with this activity has been response to requests for interviews with print, radio and television media outlets. The media relations effort is flexible to facilitate prompt responses to comments, questions, or information regarding the study.
- **Stakeholder and Agency Briefings** – The SLWRI has employed speakers from the PCT at the request of stakeholder groups and agencies to present information on study topics of interest. Numerous presentations have been made by the Reclamation Project Manager and others to date on various topics, including presentations to the California Water Commission in 2010 and 2011. The stakeholder briefing program will continue to serve as an outreach mechanism for disseminating information and gathering comments and providing responses.
- **Elected Official Briefings and Engagement** – Early in the planning process, Reclamation initiated a series of briefings for elected officials and their aides to disseminate project information and its direction. These 2003 briefings by the Project Manager and PCT served to support on-going attendance at various outreach meetings by elected officials and their aides. Reclamation continues to hold briefings with Federal and state elected officials upon request.

Agency Coordination

The SLWRI study management structure includes the active participation of numerous cooperating agencies and other stakeholders, involving representatives from resources agencies in the PCT, SMT, and TWGs. Cooperating agencies for the SLWRI, pursuant to NEPA, include USFS, Colusa Indian Community Council of the Cachil Dehe Band of Wintun Indians, USACE, and U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Other participants in the PCT include USFWS, NMFS, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and other Federal and State agencies.

These groups were active contributors to development and/or review of the comprehensive plans. Key elements of these coordination activities are the *Planning Aid Memorandum* and *Coordination Act Report*, documents issued by USFWS.

Stakeholder Outreach

Meetings and workshops with the stakeholder community play a major role in the SLWRI's overall study process. Each meeting or workshop has been scheduled at critical milestones of the investigation. However, between milestones, the PCT continues to conduct numerous focused meetings and presentations aimed at maintaining frequent stakeholder communication regarding study status, results to date, and direction.

Initial Stakeholder Engagement

One of the SLWRI's consistent activities is to conduct stakeholder briefings at various intervals during the investigation with groups ranging from governmental agencies to nongovernmental groups and coalitions.

Early in the SLWRI's development, a series of meetings was held with stakeholders and the public to provide information on the SLWRI and to support the completion and release of two documents: the *Mission Statement Milestone Report* (Reclamation 2003b) and the *Initial Alternatives Information Report* (Reclamation 2004a).

In fall 2003, six stakeholder and tribal briefings were held:

- **Congressional Briefing** – This briefing was held on October 15, 2003, at the State Capitol Building in Sacramento, and focused on providing Federal and State legislators and their aides information about the SLWRI and its direction.
- **Local Elected Officials Briefing** – This briefing was held on October 16, 2003, in Redding and focused on providing information about the study to State, local, city, and county government representatives of Northern California.
- **Tribal Briefing** – This briefing was held on October 17, 2003, also in Redding, and focused on providing study information to representatives from local tribes.
- **Immediate Study Area Interests Briefing** – This briefing was held on October 22, 2003, at Shasta Lake. The goal of the meeting was to inform individuals, businesses, and groups around Shasta Lake about the study and its direction.

- **Water and Hydropower Interests Briefing** – This briefing was held on October 24, 2003, at the Reclamation office in Sacramento and focused on describing the SLWRI to representatives of water and hydropower interests.
- **Environmental Interests Briefing** – This briefing was held on November 5, 2004, in Willows with representatives from various Federal, State, and local environmental groups to inform them about the SLWRI feasibility study and future efforts.

Additionally, two stakeholder workshops were held to discuss results of SLWRI studies to date at that time, and gain input for future study efforts:

- **Workshop 1** – Held December 11, 2003, at the Red Bluff Community Center. The workshop presented information about the purpose and objectives of the SLWRI, status and current activities; identified water resources related problems and needs; and potential solutions to those problems. The workshop was also used to elicit input on management measures and review future actions and the SLWRI schedule.
- **Workshop 2** – Held August 11, 2004, at the Redding Convention Center. The primary purpose of the workshop was to coordinate with stakeholders on the status of the investigation, initial alternatives being considered, and next steps in the feasibility study.

Environmental Scoping

Scoping allows agencies, stakeholders, and interested parties the opportunity to identify or suggest resources to be evaluated, issues that may require environmental review, reasonable alternatives to consider, and potential mitigation if significant adverse effects of a planned action are identified.

Consistent with NEPA, Reclamation completed scoping for the SLWRI feasibility study in fall 2005, with public scoping meetings held in Sacramento, Fresno, Los Angeles, Concord, Dunsmuir, Redding, and Red Bluff during October and November. The resulting *Environmental Scoping Report* (Reclamation 2006) describes the scoping process, comments received during scoping, and how these comments would be addressed.

More detailed information on the environmental scoping process is provided in Chapter 27 of the Final EIS.

Ongoing Stakeholder and Agency Briefings

Outreach for the SLWRI has included Reclamation representatives attending public meetings at the request of agencies and stakeholder groups, including the California Water Commission, McCloud River Coordinated Resource Management Plan signatories, Shasta Lake Business Owners Association, City of Redding, City of Red Bluff, City of Shasta Lake, Lakehead Community

Development Association, Shasta Board of Realtors, and project area chapters of the Lion's Club, Rotary International, and League of Women Voters. Reclamation further has on-going coordination and briefings with the following Federal agencies: USFS, BLM, NMFS, USFWS, EPA, USACE, and BIA. On-going coordination with state agencies include California Water Commission, DWR, CalTrans, CDFW, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Resources Agency. Reclamation has also provided presentations/tours associated with the Investigation with the Association of California Water Agencies, the Water Education Foundation, and the Central Valley Project Water Users Conference. The purpose of the briefings is to update stakeholders on completed analyses and evaluations, upcoming efforts and studies, and overall project status and schedule. This briefings program also serves as a mechanism for gathering comments and providing responses to interested parties.

Field Surveys and Investigations

Reclamation conducted geologic, topographic and other surveys in the reservoir area between 2007 and 2012 to support engineering and cost estimation for the SLWRI. These activities resulted in the coordination with more than 450 landowners to obtain right-of-entry to conduct engineering, geologic, cultural, and biological studies, and identified costs for 228 non-federal parcels affected by inundation and/or reservoir area facility relocation.

- **Geologic Investigations** – In 2007 and 2008, Reclamation conducted a series of geologic borings and excavations in three reservoir areas for engineering and cost estimation. These sites included Bridge Bay, Lakeshore Drive and Shasta Dam. At each site, an a-frame informational sign was positioned to explain the activity and provide a point of contact to passing motorists and pedestrians. Where such activities were conducted in residential areas, Reclamation delivered letters to nearby landowners before the arrival of survey equipment and left informational door hangers at nearby homes.
- **Biological and Archeological Surveys** – In 2011, Reclamation contacted more than 450 reservoir area landowners to request right-of-entry to conduct biological and archeological surveys. These environmental studies around and near the existing reservoir shoreline sought to evaluate the presence of cultural resources and document existing wildlife and botanical conditions.
- **Topographic Surveys** – In 2012, property owners in the Lakehead area of Shasta Reservoir requested that Reclamation provide site-specific topographic data to illustrate the potential effect on structures under the various reservoir enlargement options. The request was submitted during a February 25, 2012, presentation to the Lakehead Community Development Association. Based on this request, Reclamation distributed right-of-entry request letters to landowners potentially

affected by the reservoir enlargement to authorize foundation surveys of structures on their property. Landowners who provided written permission received in November 2012 survey results that included an aerial view map of their property with contour lines that represented the likely water level under various enlargement options. Coordination with Tribal Governments and Native American Groups

Regular engagement and coordination with Indian Tribal governments and Native American groups is a vital component of the SLWRI. Guided by the SLWRI's *Strategic Agency and Public Involvement Plan* (Reclamation 2003a), this engagement has included coordination and government-to-government consultation with Indian Tribal governments in California, as well as coordination and engagement with Native American groups within the project area.

Indian tribal governments are American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entities registered with BIA as having a formal government-to-government relationship – inclusive of the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation – with the United States. This federal registration further recognizes the tribal government's possession of certain inherent rights of self-government (i.e., tribal sovereignty) and carries with it entitlements to certain federal benefits, services, and protections because of their special relationship with the United States.

A Native American group is comprised of individuals who self-identify as Native American, but have not been conferred formal tribal sovereignty by the United States. Native American groups/individuals are consulted with as “interested parties” under National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106. Under 36 CFR §800.4(3), Federal agencies seek information from these parties, who are identified as likely having knowledge of, or concerns with, historic properties in the area, and may identify issues related to potential effects.

Tribal Government Coordination

Consistent with a memorandum from the President on April 29, 1994, Reclamation will actively engage Federally recognized tribal governments in planning and developing the investigation, and will consult with each tribe on a government-to-government basis before taking actions that could affect such tribal governments. Under Federal Trust responsibility, Reclamation will provide full disclosure (benefits and negative impacts) of the project, allow time for tribal review/consultation, and receive comments and/or suggestions for alternatives.

The PCT held several coordination meetings with Federally recognized tribes during 2007 and 2008. Tribes were invited to an informal meeting held on April 4, 2007, in Redding, California. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the tribes with general information about the SLWRI, and to determine tribal

participation interests. Additionally, from August 2007 to November 2008, members of the PCT held six separate meetings with four Federally recognized tribes whose traditional territories overlap the SLWRI project area. The meetings were held to solicit, clarify, and document major concerns and issues regarding the SLWRI, and to establish a preferred method or approach for maintaining effective communication with each tribe during the remainder of the feasibility study and in future endeavors.

Native American Coordination

In accordance with Executive Order 12898, Native Americans — including Federally registered tribes and Native American groups — are considered minority populations, and are included as stakeholder groups. Several Native American groups, such as the Winnemem Wintu and Shasta Nation, have expressed significant interest in the SLWRI. In response, the PCT conducted — in addition to the six Tribal Government Coordination meetings — four meetings with Native American groups in 2007 and 2008. This engagement began with an informal meeting with Native American groups on April 4, 2007, to distribute general information about the SLWRI and to identify their interests for project participation. As with Federally registered tribes, the meetings held with Native American groups were to solicit, clarify, and document major concerns and issues regarding the SLWRI, and to establish each group's preferred method or approach for receiving communications about the SLWRI during the remainder of the study.

Public and Agency Review and Comment

Reclamation released the Draft Feasibility Report and Preliminary DEIS in February 2012. These documents were released to the public to share information generated since the completion of the SLWRI Plan Formulation Report in December 2007 and to provide additional opportunity for public and stakeholder input. The February 2012 release was followed by an October 2012 Reclamation news release requesting additional public comment on the Draft Feasibility Report for input on potential cost, benefits and impacts of enlarging Shasta Dam and Reservoir. The SLWRI DEIS was released for public and agency review and comment on July 1, 2013. As part of the release of the DEIS, a NEPA Notice of Availability was published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on July 1, 2013 for a 90-day public review and comment period that ended September 30, 2013.

During the DEIS public comment period, three public workshops and three public hearings were held in the communities of Los Banos, Redding and Sacramento to receive public input. The public workshops were held July 16-18, 2013, in Redding, Sacramento and Los Banos, respectively. The purpose of these workshops were to present updated information about the purpose and objectives of the SLWRI; status and current activities; identify water resources related problems and needs; and describe potential solutions to those problems.

The workshops provided an opportunity to elicit input on the draft EIS and to assist the public in reviewing the document. Three NEPA-compliant public hearings were held before the close of the public comment period on September 10-13, 2013, in Redding, Sacramento and Los Banos, respectively. Each hearing allowed the public to address the hearing officer and to make official public comment on the project for the record. A stenographer staffed each hearing to record public comments verbatim. More detailed information on the public workshops and the public hearings are provided in Chapter 27 of the accompanying Final EIS.

The Feasibility Report and accompanying Final EIS have been revised in consideration of public and agency comments. A Notice of Availability (NOA) was released for the Final EIS. Elected officials and representatives, government agencies, private organizations, businesses, and individual members of the public on the mailing list have received a copy of this document or a notification of document availability.

Major Topics of Interest

Members of the public, stakeholders, other Federal agencies, and state and local agencies identified several areas of concern during the SLWRI planning process. The focus of interest varied among participants, but a common theme centered on potential impacts in the Shasta Lake area that could result from enlarging the dam and reservoir. Key topics of concern include potential adverse effects on cultural resources in the Shasta Lake area; recreation and recreation providers in the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity NRA; special-status species around Shasta Lake, including terrestrial state-designated fully protected species and aquatic special-status species in the Sacramento River and Delta (including Delta smelt); the lower McCloud River and its special designation under California PRC Section 5093.542; Delta water quality; south Delta water levels; and potential effects on Central Valley hydrology below CVP and SWP reservoirs and related facilities and resulting effects on water supplies for water contractors and other water users. These topics are described in more detail in Section 1.6 of the Final EIS, “Areas of Controversy.”