

COLUSA SUBREACH PLANNING PROJECT LANDOWNER SURVEY

Prepared for the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum
by the Institute for Social Research at California State University, Sacramento

Carole Barnes, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate
Kristine Harris, Graduate Research Assistant
Sandra Sutherland, Research Specialist

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Institute for Social Research
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6101
(916) 278-5737 FAX (916) 278-5150



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Introduction

The Institute for Social Research at California State University, Sacramento was contracted to develop and execute a pair of surveys of landowners in the Colusa Subreach. The objective was to determine landowner perspectives regarding the restoration of riparian habitat in the subreach, their concerns regarding restoration, their expectations regarding the planning process prior to initiation of the Colusa Subreach Planning (CSP) Project and their views of the process following the project's completion. This report summarizes results of the follow-up survey and compares landowner perceptions at the beginning and end of this CalFED-sponsored project.

The project's overall goal was to:

Increase citizen stakeholder involvement in determining realistic conservation strategies and projects for protecting and restoring a continuous riparian corridor along the Sacramento River that address flood control and economic and environmental uses of the floodplain.ⁱ

The CSP project in particular focused on addressing landowner questions and developing plans for habitat restoration on approximately 400 acres of land inside the levee between Princeton and Colusa. All of this land had been acquired or optioned by public agencies or The Nature Conservancy prior to the project's initiation. The CSP project's responsibility was to determine how this land could be converted from agricultural uses to riparian habitat, taking into account the impact of this conversion on flood control, endangered species, and agricultural interests. The project also featured planning and research projects that were designed to address the questions and concerns of local landowners related to habitat restoration.

The CSP was organized under the auspices of the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (SRCAF or Forum), a non-profit organization with the goal of ensuring that wildlife habitat restoration along the Sacramento River is effective and sensitive to the needs of local communities. The Forum has two local representatives – one a landowner, the other a member of the County board of Supervisors – from each of seven counties (Shasta, Tehama, Glenn, Butte, Colusa, Sutter and Yolo). These 14 local representatives plus one person appointed by the California Secretary of Resources constitute the Board's voting members. Representatives of state and federal agencies, including the California Departments of Fish and Game, Water Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board.

The Forum partnered with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which was awarded a CalFED planning grant for subreach planning in the Princeton to Colusa area. Activities pursued under the grant had to conform to a grant agreement and existing state and federal statutes. An Advisory Workgroup made up of local city and county officials, landowners, business owners, and non-profit organizations interested in environmental and agricultural issues was established. The Workgroup's role was to provide input on the planning decisions to be made during the CSP project. During the project, they also contributed to planning for the Colusa/Sacramento River Recreation Area and a

recreation access plan for the Subreach as well as other research projects that addressed identified landowner questions and concerns.

The legal and procedural boundaries that framed these planning decisions – and the advisory role of the Workgroup -- may not have been clear to, or accepted by, all participants in the planning process. Many private landowners perceived conflicts between the requirements of state and federal Endangered Species Acts and the needs of agriculture. To address this issue a Forum committee had been working for several years on a “good neighbor policy.” The committee developed objectives that were called “landowner assurances.” These landowner assurances included:

- Authorization for incidental take of Threatened and Endangered Species
- Designation of the Conservation Area as a “self mitigating area” where project-specific mitigation for environmental impacts would not be required
- A simplified process for dispute resolution and landowner compensation

In late 2005 this committee process came to a head. State and federal regulatory agencies indicated that several of the proposed landowner assurances were in conflict with existing laws and procedures and could not be accepted. There was a negative response to this position, especially from Colusa County interests. The CSP project began in the midst of this ongoing discussion and related strong emotions. Its focus on habitat restoration hit squarely on private landowner concerns.

In February 2006, eight Colusa County members of the Advisory Workgroup resigned. This occurred shortly after the Forum’s Board failed to adopt a motion made by Colusa County representatives to oppose all ecosystem restoration projects until a Good Neighbor Policy was adopted that included the desired landowner assurances. In a letter explaining their resignation the members indicated that they were dissatisfied with the Colusa Subreach Planning process and felt that their voices were not being heard. In March 2006, the SRCAF Board adopted a Good Neighbor Policy as a “White Paper” but it did not include all of the desired landowner assurances. SRCAF representatives from Colusa County indicated that the adopted Good Neighbor Policy was not acceptable to them.

Thus, broad concerns over environmental regulations, acquisition of land for habitat conservation and restoration of wildlife habitat intensified during the term of Colusa Subreach Planning while local representatives withdrew from the subreach planning process. This background formed the context in which the two surveys – and particularly the follow-up survey – occurred.

Results of the pre-survey in 2005 were described in detail in a May 2005 report. The purpose of this report is to describe responses to the post-survey in Spring 2008 and to identify changes in the level of awareness of the planning effort and the agencies involved, confidence and trust in the agencies providing technical information, and beliefs about the likely outcomes of habitat restoration in the Colusa Subreach. Finally, changes in preferences for methods of receiving communications from the Forum and TNC were compared and methods used to communicate with the two organizations during the planning process are described.

Instrument Design

ISR was provided with a list of topics that the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum (referred to as SRCAF or the Forum) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) wanted to cover in the two telephone interviews with landowners in the Colusa Subreach. ISR also received the Handbook and other materials that described issues surrounding habitat restoration. Building on this information, ISR staff drafted an interview schedule that went through multiple revisions as a result of input from SRCAF and TNC staff and the Advisory Workgroup. A copy of the pre-survey was included with the May 2005 report. To facilitate comparisons, only minor changes were made to the post-survey. The most important changes included modifications to the tense in framing a question and rephrasing questions on exchanging information in order to evaluate different methods by which information was obtained or comments made. The final version has five sections, covering:

- Property characteristics
- Landowner awareness of SRCAF, the Colusa Subreach Planning effort, the Nature Conservancy and agencies involved in the project
- Confidence and trust in agencies providing technical information on the environmental impact of wildlife habitat restoration
- Beliefs about the likely outcomes of habitat restoration in the Colusa Subreach
- Evaluation of methods of receiving communication about the project and a description of methods used to communicate with the Forum and The Nature Conservancy about the planning process.

A copy of the interview schedule is included in Appendix I.

Data Collection Procedures

In December 2007, SRCAF/TNC provided ISR with information on 138 properties inside and adjoining the levee within the Colusa Subreach. Numbers for phone interviews were provided for 117 of these properties. (Table 1) In January 2008, the Forum sent a letter to landowners informing them that a telephone survey was going to be conducted starting in late January. The letter gave a broad overview of the content and purpose of the study in an effort to inform landowners about the phone survey before the initial phone calls. Interviewing began on January 24, 2008, and was completed on April 1, 2008.

Response rate. Contact information was ultimately available for 101 landowners, up from 96 in 2005. Interviews were completed with landowners from 47 properties, for a 2008 response rate of 51% (Table 2). The response rate for the earlier survey was noticeably higher at 64%. Several factors contributed to the lower response rate in the post-survey. Refusals were largely responsible for the lower response rate in the post-survey. Twenty-two private landowners declined to be interviewed – a refusal rate that was almost double that of the 2005 survey (24% vs. 13%). Another 24 private landowners could not be reached. However, this number was only slightly higher than the number that failed to respond to messages that were left in the pre-survey (24 in

2008 vs. 21 in 2005). All of the agency respondents who were reached completed the 2008 survey while 46% of the private landowners reached completed it. As a result, agency owners make up a slightly higher percentage of respondents in the 2008 data (17%) than they did in 2005 (10%). The two groups of owners are kept separate in the analysis. (Table 3)

Contact procedure. The ISR interviewer made five attempts to reach each landowner. If a request for a call back was received on the fifth attempt, the call was returned as requested. If the landowner was not available at the time of the call, messages were left on answering machines or with others in the household or office.

Interviewing protocol. Upon reaching the respondent, the interviewer identified herself by name and her affiliation with the Institute for Social Research at CSUS. She briefly described the purpose of the call and asked to speak with the landowner who is most familiar with the management and uses of the property. (Please see the script at the beginning of the interview schedule in Appendix I.) If the initial respondent referred the interviewer to a tenant, manager or co-owner, the phone number was obtained and a call was made to the person recommended. If the time of initial contact with a respondent was not convenient, a callback was scheduled at a more convenient time.

Disconnected or wrong numbers were reported to TNC. TNC then tried to provide new contact information whenever possible. There were twelve properties with incorrect or disconnected phone numbers for which no new contact information was available (Table 1). If land had been sold, the interviewer attempted to obtain the new landowner's name and phone number from the previous owner. When the attempt was unsuccessful, the sale was reported to TNC for their action. Although three properties were not included in the 2005 survey because they had been sold and the new owner could not be located, there were no sales reported in 2008.

Interview responses were recorded by hand, with extensive comments entered into the computer. Coded responses were entered into a data file for analysis.

Property Characteristics

In both years, over two-thirds (72% and 69% in 2005 and 2008) of properties in private hands were used for agricultural purposes. (Table 4) Over two-thirds (71% and 72%) also had some acreage in natural vegetation. Property size ranged from one acre (or less) to over 900 acres. Roughly a third of the properties are less than 10 acres, another third between 10 and 99 acres and a third 100 or more acres. The private landowners were asked if they farmed the land themselves and were given the option of having a tenant interviewed in their place. Somewhat more of the 2008 respondents farmed the land themselves (74% vs. 61% in 2005). Among the landowners who leased their property, most (87% and 71%) completed the interview instead of their tenant(s). Many respondents lived either on the property (43% and 38%) or elsewhere in Glenn and Colusa County (34% and 23%) with 22% and 36% living in a different California county. More of the 2008 respondents had owned the property along the river for over 25 years (51% vs. 36% in 2005). The remaining respondents in both

years were equally divided between less than 10 and 10 to 25 years. The differences in property characteristics between the two years were purely random.

Landowner Awareness of the Colusa Subreach Planning Effort

The Colusa Subreach Planning Project has succeeded in raising local awareness of the Forum and the Colusa Subreach planning effort. Recognition of SRCAF increased significantly from 57% in 2005 to 82% in 2008; comparable figures for the planning effort, also significant, were from 57% to 92%.¹ Awareness of TNC, which was not measured in 2005, was comparable (90%). More of the respondents who had heard of the Forum received its newsletter in 2008 (72% compared with 55% in 2005). (Table 5)

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall perception of the Forum on a scale from 1 (very negative) to 10 (very positive). The overall perception of the Forum did not change significantly among either private landowners or agency representatives. Means for private landowners declined from 4.77 to 4.1. Agency representatives were more positive in both years, varying randomly between 6.5 in 2005 to 6.13 in 2008. (Table 6) In 2005, landowners took a somewhat more neutral position with many commenting that, although they supported the general idea of the Forum, they felt that interference from government organizations was keeping it from meeting its goals. The overall perception of TNC in 2008 was somewhat lower than that of the Forum (3.49 vs. 4.1). By 2008, a lack of trust in the Forum and TNC was verbalized by eight respondents who feared a “slippery slope,” where some land would be converted now with more lost to agriculture in the future. A few who completed the survey expressed a feeling of frustration that the planning process went forward without landowner approval or participation while others cited this frustration as the reason for refusing to complete the interview.

Although most private landowners (92%) were aware of the Colusa Subreach planning project, only half (47%) correctly identified Princeton and Colusa as the project’s geographic boundaries (up from 29% in 2005). (Table 5) Another 8% of private landowners described the location less precisely, but with obvious knowledge of the project. These respondents defined the boundaries as “behind the State Park in Colusa,” a “big chunk of river property in Princeton” and “from Princeton to Grimes.” Fewer said they didn’t know what the boundaries were (19%, down from 39% in 2005). However, the difference in knowledge of the project’s geographic boundaries between the two years is not statistically significant. Three-fourths of agency representatives correctly identified the project’s location. The other two (25%) used less precise phrasing, defining the project as “north of the State Park” and “along the river and the Colusa basin.

When asked directly whether they knew if the planning effort involved land inside the levee, outside the levee, or both, there was a significant shift in the 2008 landowners’ response. A similar percentage (50% vs. 58% in 2005) correctly thought the planning effort involved only land inside the levees and fewer thought it involved both (22% vs.

¹ During the interviewing process, the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum was also referred to as the Forum.

35% in 2005). But more said they didn't know (28% vs. 0 in 2005). All of the respondents who had heard about the planning project in 2005 thought they knew the area involved. The fact that half of those surveyed in 2008 either didn't know that the project was restricted to areas inside the levee or believed erroneously that it involved land inside and outside the levee may help to explain the levels of frustration and fear expressed in the telephone interviews. Some respondents expressed concern that the project would eventually extend beyond the inner levee area. More of the agency personnel understood that the project was limited to land inside the levee, but there was no change in this understanding between the two surveys (83% in 2005 vs. 75% in 2008).

There were significant improvements among private landowners in their awareness of two agencies involved in the Colusa Subreach planning effort.ⁱⁱ (Table 7) Awareness of TNC's involvement increased from 23% in 2005 to 53% of private landowners in 2008. Significantly more private landowners also became aware of the Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR) involvement in the planning process (up from 0 in 2005 to 17% in 2008). The trend in increased recognition was upward for several other agencies but the changes were not significant. For example, awareness of the California Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) involvement increased from 29% to 50%. The proportion identifying the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) involvement increased from 13% to 33% while the proportion identifying the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) increased from 16% to 19%. The proportion of agency personnel that recognized agencies participating in the planning project increased noticeably for DFG (from 50% to 100%) and DWR (from 17% to 63%). Due to the small number of agency representatives, however, none of these changes were significant.

Agencies most commonly thought to be involved in the planning project were the same in both years: private landowners mentioned the DFG and TNC more often than other agencies. In 2005, DFG was identified by 29% of the respondents and TNC by 23%; by 2008, recognition levels had increased to 50% for DFG and 53% for TNC. By the time of the post survey, involvement of the remaining agencies was recognized by less than half of the private landowners. The proportions identifying each involved agency were, in order of frequency: DWR (33%), USFWS (19%), DPR (17%), local reclamation and flood control districts (14%), and the Forum (6%).

In both years, more of the agency respondents identified the agencies involved in the planning project. By the time of the post survey, agency respondents identified participating agencies in the following order: DFG (100%), DWR (63%), USFWS (63%), DPR (38%), TNC (38%), the Forum (13%) and local reclamation and flood control districts (13%).

In 2008, a few respondents in both groups erroneously thought that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was involved (19% among private landowners and 13% of agency respondents); and at least that many thought that cities and communities in the area (19% and 38% respectively) were involved as well. (Table 7a)

Respondents were also asked what agencies *should have been* involved in the planning effort. The only significant change in the respondents' view of the agencies that *should*

have been involved in planning for wildlife habitat restoration was a feeling among six respondents that local districts responsible for levees and reclamation, flood control and irrigation should have been included. Inclusion of these agencies did not occur to either private landowners or agency personnel in 2005. In the same vein, one private landowner identified the Forum as an agency that also *should* be involved. Finally, in 2005, half of the respondents listed entities such as local organizations, landowners, or concerned citizens as other groups that should be actively involved in the planning for habitat restoration. Less than half that number (22%) mentioned these groups in 2008. (Table 7b)

Confidence and Trust in Agencies Involved

Landowners were asked to indicate their level of confidence in the technical information provided by agencies. Using a one to ten scale where one is very little confidence and ten is a great deal of confidence, private landowners registered more confidence in information supplied by local irrigation and reclamation districts (ranked second in 2005 and first in 2008), the State Reclamation Board (SRB) (ranked third in 2005 and 2nd in 2008), and Colusa and Glenn County government, which dropped from first to third over the 3 year period. (Table 8) The change in trust levels for county government was the only one that was statistically significant. In 2008, respondents had above average (a mean of 5.5+) confidence in only two agencies: SRB (5.67) and local irrigation and reclamation districts (7.03). They were essentially neutral with respect to CDWR (5.36), USACE (5.06), USBR (4.89), CDFG (4.86), CDPR (4.8) and the USFWS (4.63). They had the least confidence in CalFED (3.35) and TNC (3.11).

The amount of confidence in information supplied by hydrologists, biologists and other scientists did not change significantly among either private landowners or agency personnel between 2005 and 2008. (Table 9) However, ten respondents commented that they had much less confidence in hydrologists than they did in biologists and other scientists. So, combining scientific specialties in this question obscured distinctions that were important to respondents.

Respondents were asked how objective they thought the planning effort would be in evaluating impacts of restoration on agriculture land. They used a 10 point scale with 1 being not at all objective and 10 being very objective. Neither group of respondents significantly changed their assessment of the Colusa Subreach Planning efforts' objectivity in evaluating the impacts of restoration on agricultural land – although the agency respondents' increased belief in its objectivity from 4.8 to 7.25 came close to significance ($p = .060$). Landowners were unwavering in their lack of confidence in the objectivity of the Colusa Subreach Planning effort in evaluating the impacts of restoration on agricultural land (4.58 in 2005 vs. 4.28 in 2008).

Respondents were also asked how much influence they believe local landowners had in the planning process. For this item they used a 10 point scale with 1 being no influence at all and 10 being a great deal of influence. Agency personnel thought that local landowners and other local interests had above average influence in the planning process for the Colusa Subreach (6.5 in 2008, up from 5.8 in 2005). Landowners, in contrast, were essentially neutral about their impact on the planning process in 2005,

declining significantly in that assessment by 2008 (3.42 in 2008, down from 4.73 in 2005). (Table 9)

This outcome is consistent with frequent comments made in the 2005 interviews that, although respondents were hopeful the project would be objective and allow landowners a great deal of influence, they doubted that it would happen. After the project's conclusion, during the 2008 survey, many respondents voiced strong opinions about the planning process. The most common was a feeling of futility in having any real input on the planning process (20 responses). Respondents said that critical voices were stifled during meetings and sometimes the meetings were cut short. Landowner concerns were not addressed. These respondents felt that there was no point in attending the meetings since nothing landowners did or said seemed to make a difference. They expressed anger towards TNC and the Forum for continuing the planning process without landowner approval and participation.

Opinions about Wildlife Habitat Restoration

Respondents were asked to describe their perceptions of the physical changes involved in wildlife habitat restoration. Roughly half (50% and 54%) of the landowners and most of the agency personnel (100% and 75%) were aware that planting native vegetation is part of habitat restoration (Table 10). Both groups of respondents were less aware that habitat restoration involved removing agricultural crops or orchards. The proportion of private landowners mentioning this feature of habitat restoration increased significantly from 19% in 2005 to 49% in 2008. The proportion of agency personnel mentioning this feature actually declined, from 40% to 25%. Many respondents (67% and 64% of landowners in 2005 and 2008 and 60% and 50% of agency personnel) described a number of other activities too diverse to categorize. These respondents may have misunderstood the question or were in general unaware of the activities involved. When respondents in 2005 were asked this question, many expressed the opinion that wildlife habitat restoration should not take place *at all*.

Respondents were asked about a variety of outcomes that might occur as a result of wildlife habitat restoration. (Table 11) In general, private landowners and agency personnel perceived different outcomes. The most likely expected outcomes for landowners tended to be the same in both years. Almost all landowners felt that there would be:

- increased involvement by state and federal agencies in the Colusa Subreach;
- reduced local control of agricultural-related activities;
- new regulations protecting endangered species and limiting agricultural activities.

Roughly three-fourths of all landowners thought that:

- tax income would decrease as private lands are purchased for public use
- wildlife population would increase
- deer and rodent damage to crops would increase
- more trespassing would occur
- increased public access would affect the privacy and safety of area residents.

Agency personnel tended to agree that wildlife habitat restoration will increase the involvement of state and federal agencies in the Colusa Subreach (100% in 2005 and 63% in 2008). They also agreed that tax income for local government would decrease (80% and 75% respectively), public access to land along the river would increase (100% and 63%), and the wildlife population would increase (100% in both years) as a result of habitat restoration.

Private landowners changed their minds about one possible outcome of habitat restoration. They were more apt to cite an increase in fish populations as a likely outcome in 2005 (49%) than they were in 2008 (21%). An increasing number said they wouldn't increase (47% in 2008 vs. 30% in 2005) or that it would depend (16% in 2008 vs. 4% in 2005).

Due to the small number of agency respondents, none of the changes in their perceptions of possible outcomes of habitat restoration were significant. However, agency respondents clearly tended to retreat from greater support of many outcomes in 2005 to greater uncertainty. On a number of outcomes, agency respondents moved from "yes" or "no" to a more nuanced "it depends" or "I don't know." For example, while 40% thought in 2005 that increased flooding would occur on private lands, none were of this opinion in 2008. Instead, half said that "it depends" while the other half said "no." In 2005, agency personnel thought that increased access would affect the safety of residents (80%); by 2008, 50% disagreed with this assessment and another 25% said "it depends." And while 60% of agency respondents thought in 2005 that species may be removed from the endangered list, only 25% thought that in 2008 and half said that "it depends." Finally, although a majority of agency respondents thought that the ability of farmers to take irrigation water from the river would not be negatively affected (60% and 63% said "no" in 2005 and 2008 respectively), fewer said "yes" and chose "it depends" or "I don't know" (13% each) instead. (Table 11)

During the course of the 2005 interviews, many respondents indicated that the potential outcomes of habitat restoration on agricultural land depend on the details of the restoration project. According to many respondents, restoration outcomes will depend on the types of vegetation that are planted, how close to crops they are planted, and how public lands are maintained. Many landowners commented that changes to public access would depend on whether conservancy groups allowed access to the land that is restored. There were also respondents who said that whether trespassing increases depends on how public lands are regulated. These questions prompted fewer responses in 2008. It is possible that those who would have made them were among those who refused to participate in the interview. The three respondents who elaborated on this series of outcomes expressed the feeling that the well being of local landowners and farmers should be considered before saving any more wildlife; a fear was expressed of intensifying the poverty level in this agricultural county. They also felt that agencies purchasing land to restore it disregarded assurances made to landowners and failed to maintain the property. Maintenance included removing snags from the river, cleaning fish screens, etc.

Methods of Receiving Information and Communicating Concerns

In 2005, respondents were asked about the possible usefulness of ways the Forum and Nature Conservancy could provide information about the planning process to landowners in the area. In 2008, the question asked how useful these methods actually were. (Table 12). In 2005, five methods were rated as potentially useful by more than 80% of respondents:

- Mailing brief, issue-specific flyers. According to more than half of the respondents (53%), mailing frequent, brief, issue-specific flyers would be a very useful way to communicate needed information. Almost a third (34%) of respondents thought that that this method would be somewhat useful. (Table 12)
- Attending general informational public meetings. Almost half (45%) thought that attending general informational public meetings would be somewhat helpful while another 35% thought it would be very helpful. (Table 12)
- Providing opportunities to question experts on wildlife habitat restoration. Respondents indicated that the opportunity to speak with experts would be useful; 44% said that it would be very useful and 37% thought it would be somewhat useful. (Table 14)
- Establishing a community liaison or ombudsman to field questions from landowners and provide information about the planning process. Almost half (49%) of respondents thought it would be somewhat useful to establish a community liaison and 36% thought it would be very useful. (Table 14)
- Providing opportunities for site visits. Over half (54%) thought it would be somewhat useful to provide opportunities for site visits while another 29% said it would be very useful. (Table 14)

In 2005, then, there was clear consensus that placing board meeting minutes and other documents in the local library would be the least useful strategy. (Table 12) Nearly six out of ten respondents said it would be either less useful or not at all useful.

Establishing a toll-free telephone information line was also seen as a relatively less useful method of communicating information to property owners (40%). (Table 14)

Five methods of communication remained the same on the 2005 and 2008 surveys. Two new methods were introduced after the first survey – attending a meeting for landowners whose property adjoined proposed restoration sites (Table 13); and four were not incorporated into the planning process – providing opportunities to question experts on wildlife habitat restoration, establishing a community liaison, providing opportunities for site visits and establishing a toll-free telephone information line (Table 14). Four of the five communication methods that were directly comparable between the two years showed a significant change in landowner assessment of their usefulness. In all four instances, methods thought to be somewhat or very useful at the

project's initiation were described as less or not at all useful at its conclusion. The four included:

- Attending general informational public meetings
- Attending issue-specific public meetings
- Receiving brief, meeting-specific flyers, and
- visiting the Colusa Subreach Planning website

Even the agency representatives agreed on the last item. While in 2005 100% of agency respondents thought that visiting the Colusa Subreach Planning website would be somewhat or very useful, 76% found in 2008 that this was less or not at all useful. However, agency personnel disagreed with landowners on the other three communication methods, with 63% to 88% finding them somewhat or very useful. Agency representatives also disagreed with landowners on the value of the newsletters. Between 50% and 63% found the two newsletters somewhat or very useful. (Table 12)

Landowners assessed newsletters in the same way they did the four communication methods summarized above. A test of significance was not computed because the 2005 statement asked about the usefulness of newsletters in general while the 2008 survey asked separately about the usefulness of receiving an annual Colusa Subreach Planning newsletter and a quarterly SRCAF newsletter. While 72% thought that newsletters would be somewhat or very useful in 2005, a similar percentage in 2008 found the two newsletters to be not at all or less useful. (Table 12)

A parallel situation occurred with respect to respondent assessments of the usefulness of placing Board minutes and other documents in the local library for easy public access. This general statement in the 2005 survey was separated into two in the 2008 survey, separating Board minutes from the Colusa Subreach Planning documents. While 40% of the landowners thought this might be somewhat or very useful in 2005, 95% felt that placing any documents in the library was not at all useful. Agency respondents were not enthusiastic about placing documents in libraries before or after the project. (Table 12)

Landowners differed in their assessment of the usefulness of the two methods of communication introduced after the 2005 survey. While most (87%) did not find attending Advisory Workgroup meetings useful, a third said that attending a meeting for landowners whose property adjoined the proposed restoration sites was somewhat or very useful. A little more than a third of agency personnel agreed with landowners on the value of this latter meeting. However, two-thirds also found that attending Advisory Workgroup meetings was useful – a view shared by only 13% of the landowners. (Table 13)

In 2005, respondents were also asked how likely they would be to use six different methods of relaying information to the Forum and Nature Conservancy. The least popular choices among private landowners were calling a toll-free number with comments and suggestions (46% thought it would be more or very likely) and submitting emailed comments (47% thought this more or very likely). (Table 15) The four

remaining methods of communicating with the Forum and Nature Conservancy were thought to be more or very likely by a majority of respondents:

- Participating in a community group to present landowner input. (68%)
- Making oral comments at public meetings. (57%)
- Submitting written comments. (55%)
- Participating in informal workshops sponsored by the Forum and Nature Conservancy (53%)

The four agency respondents were even less interested in calling a toll-free number – 100% said they were less likely to do so. Half of the agency respondents also indicated they were less likely to make comments at public meetings while most were comfortable with emailing comments. A majority agreed with private landowners on the remaining communication methods. (Table 15)

Table 16 summarizes the communication methods actually used by respondents during the course of the project. The most common methods utilized by private landowners were making oral comments at public meetings (46%) and participating in a community group to present landowner input (30%). Consistent with their professional affiliations, agency personnel were most apt to have submitted emailed comments (63%) or made oral comments at public meetings (63%). Private landowners and agency personnel differed significantly in their use of three methods of communicating with the Forum and Nature Conservancy. Agency personnel were much more likely than private landowners to have submitted emailed comments (63% vs. 8% among private landowners), submitted written comments (50% vs. 16%), and participated in informal workshops sponsored by the Forum and Nature Conservancy (50% vs. 14%).

ⁱ Public Outreach Plan, Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum, 9/15/04.

ⁱⁱ The agencies involved included: the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the California Department of Water Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, the Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum, and local districts responsible for levees, reclamation, flood control, and irrigation.

