

Meeting Highlights: June 30, 2010

Owens Lakebed Planning Committee

Prepared by the Center for Collaborative Policy
 With assistance from Maryann Thomas, MWH

Overview

The Planning Committee discussed its vision for the future of the lakebed. The Committee envisions the future lakebed as a mosaic of dust control, habitat, renewable energy, business, culture and education while integrating water efficiency. The lakebed will provide public access and interpretive education.

Each planning committee member has agreed to craft a plan that is as responsive as possible to each member's interests discussed during the meeting. Lastly, draft plan objectives are underway. These will be refined at a subsequent meeting.

A fact sheet and text for web sites or newsletters are available. In addition, the web site is under development <https://owenslakebed.pubspsvr.com>. Efforts are underway to be able to use www.owenslake.com.

Action Items

Hart	8/1/2010	Project Area: Look at county lands with springs on the east side of lakebed to confirm that county owns land as shown on landowner map
Hart	8/1/2010	Project Area: Identify private land owners within 3600 ft. line/historic lakebed boundary. Call landowners, if possible, about the planning process and see if they are interested in having their lands as part of the project boundary. Invite to August 11 planning committee meeting. If coming to PC meeting, Josh will notify Gina Bartlett.
Tammy Branston	8/1/2010	Provide briefing to Lahontan Water Board about project boundary
Brad Henderson	8/1/2010	Brief FWS about project boundary and discuss role in plan
Brian Tillemans	8/1/2010	Brief Army Corps about project boundary
Tillemans (lead) Colin Connor Grace Holder	8/1/2010	Coordinate mapping for consistency regarding wetlands, etc. Designate boundary lines at 3563 ft. & 3600 ft on the map Identify any springs or seeps outside of boundary.
Staff	8/1/2010	Develop "cartoon" map with landmarks, current land uses and region for widespread circulation and

		understanding
Web Site	underway	Add to Web Site DWP 2002 Wetland Habitat Function & Values Assessment Report DWP 2006 Wetland Mitigation & Monitoring Plan
Tammy Branston	underway	Share Google earth links on web site
Gina B	7/1/2010	Share Agency Forum meeting notes
Gina B	done	Develop a short paragraph / overview of project (goals & objectives, etc.)
Marina Brand	done	Share Public Trust overview document Public Trust Doctrine Presentation Public Trust Policy pdf format Word format Public Trust Doctrine pdf format Word format

Announcements and Updates

New Meeting Dates

September 15 (instead of Sept. 29—remove from calendar)

October 20 (instead of Oct. 13—remove from calendar)

Agency Forum Report

The Agency Forum met June 16. The forum was an opportunity for all the agency executives to share information and perspectives. Participants who attended were pleased with the discussion and felt the meeting was productive. The Agency Forum will meet again in late August or September.

Steve Herrera from the State Water Resources Control Board and Chuck Keene from the California Department of Water Resources participated. They talked about statewide water conservation efforts, the Delta, and beneficial use requirements. Fish & Game presented the possibility of a Natural Communities Conservation Plan as a planning tool.

Bill VanWagoner proposed that a small Planning Committee work group evaluate options for the planning framework. Everyone concurred and identified participants during the work group formation meeting segment.

Outreach Materials and Web Site

A fact sheet and text for stakeholder forum and planning committee members' web site or newsletter are available. The web site is under development. For now, the URL is: <https://owenslakebed.pubspsvr.com>. Efforts are underway to be able to use www.owenslake.com.

Vision

The Planning Committee envisions the future lakebed as a mosaic of dust control, habitat, renewable energy, business, culture and education integrating water efficiency. The lakebed would provide public access and interpretive education.

Stakeholder Interests

Each planning committee member shared his or her individual and organizational motivations for participating in the planning process. Now, the charge to the committee is to define a plan that reflects and is as responsive as possible to all stakeholder interests.

- Create a clear path forward for managing the lakebed
- Provide a healing environment
- Approach the master planning at the watershed level
- Expedite dust mitigation and set an example for others
- Achieve dust control objectives
- Water conservation / wise water use
- Reduce water required to meet dust reduction objectives
- Financial prudence and consideration in lakebed operations
- Agriculture and low impact grazing
- Reduce water use so more is available for agriculture and the Valley
- Keep the Owens Valley under-developed
- Consider the whole Owens Valley and its economy
- Consider the opportunities for solar and consider in the larger context if solar is considered as part of public lands.
- Create wildlife habitat, the hemispheric importance of the habitat; preservation in perpetuity; avoid harm to existing wetlands

**Owens Lakebed
Planning Committee Vision**

Dust & Testing

- Environmental health
- Public health
- CLEAN AIR
- Testing Measures
 - Keeler: testing area to reduce water
 - Identify area for testing
 - Experimentation
 - Brine pool

Habitat

- Diversity of habitat
- Explore Delta
- Funding supports large diverse habitat
- Native plants & alkaline
- Bird & animal resources, self supporting
- Concentrated habitat in the LORP & Delta
- Connectivity of wildlife areas
- Uplands & wetlands
- Salt cedar controlled

Water Conservation & Multiple Use

- Water conserved for Valley, State, and environment
- Save potable H2O
- Use water in different areas multiple times
- Use brine
- Explore groundwater
- River wells & alternative supplies

Solar

- Proactive planning
- New technology introduced
- Located in "moat & row" areas
- Electric vehicle charging stations

Mosaic

- Landscape planned
- Statewide & national significance
- Climate change mitigation
- Sustainable: efficiency of water & flexible (solar eg)
- Collaborative decision making historic
- NGO role in management & implementation
- Role of private landowners
- Binding Plan
 - Funded
 - Efficient
 - Transparent
 - Sustainable
 - Flexible into the future

Economic

- Mining
- County impacts addressed
- Eco-tourism tied to visitor center
- Lakebed leads to more robust economy
- Creates economic development

Cultural Resources

- Lakebed is a cultural resource
- Protect Tribal cultural resources
- Tribal involvement in construction
- Cultural sites monitored

Access

- Public access vital
- Public education (solar, habitat, air quality, etc.)
- Educational facility
- Birding as access recreation
- Engaging university students & scientists

Viewshed

- Viewshed humanized with landscape
- Natural looking lake
- integrated into landscape

Public Trust

- Public trust represented through wildlife

Planning Committee Charter

The final charter discussion item was back-up voting. Back-up voting would be used under the worst-case-scenario in which the planning committee, after repeated attempts, was unable to reach a satisfactory proposal using its consensus decision-making guidelines. The facilitator presented a straw proposal for back-up voting. After discussion and consideration, the committee decided that in situations in which it was unable to reach an agreement, the committee would ask the agency forum to develop a proposal for the full committee's consideration for inclusion in the plan. In other words, the agency forum would be asked to resolve the dispute.

Facilitator Gina Bartlett will write up the description of this for full Planning Committee review at its August 11 meeting. Once approved, the charter would be final.

Project Area

The project boundary will likely be the 3600-foot elevation above sea level: this is the historic lakebed. Cartago Springs, owned by Department of Fish & Game, and seeps and springs, owned by LA Department of Water & Power, will also be part of the project boundary. Most think that these are within the 3600-ft elevation line, but need to be confirmed. County-owned springs within the 3600-ft elevation will be part of the project area.

BLM owns a small section of the lakebed. Some of these parcels may be within the 3600-ft elevation. This needs to be revisited once boundary is placed on the map.

Bartlett Well: the water source is on private property and is within the 3600-ft elevation.

Brine Pool: The high water mark for the brine pool is 3563 feet. This is the project boundary for the federal agencies. The brine pool would be part of the master plan since it might be subject to future dust mitigation or part of resolving the overall planning goals.

Dirty Socks: This former county park is now private land.

Plan Objectives

[Discussed Draft June 17, 2010 (v3)]

The Planning Committee modified the draft plan objectives.

- Define public trust to specify habitat, view shed, and public access as the central components.
- Add language to demonstrate coordination on the Delta between the master plan and the Lower Owens River Project.
- Reflect opportunities and pursuits for science and research
- Create an objective that reflects the intent for public access, recreation, education and interpretation.
- Identify the location of seeps, springs and fresh water sources that feed into the project area and act to protect and enhance their functionality

- Define habitat values with some kind of specificity, such as density, diversity and population

The Committee was unable to resolve an issue for how to capture the county's proposed language on mitigating impacts and will continue the discussion at its next meeting. All planning committee members expressed support to avoid impacts to any local government activities and businesses. However, mitigation language in the objectives raised concerns about compensation requirements. For clarification, impacts would be evaluated and mitigation considered as part of the environmental review process.

Modified and tentatively accepted language: Protect and enhance local economic vitality. Avoid and address negative impacts to private lands, local government activities and business (mining, water bottling, etc.).

Additional proposed language: Mitigate impacts to local government services and/or businesses (e.g. mining operations on the lake, water bottling, etc.)

Public Trust

State Lands defines public trust for the lakebed as view shed, access and habitat. State Lands evaluates each project proposal individually for consistency with public trust doctrine. One Planning Committee member suggested that he would like public trust to be more in line with Lake Tahoe's concept of public trust. Colin Connor from State Lands stated that public trust doctrine is meant to be flexible; State Lands looks at each case on its own merits. State Lands will circulate a public trust white paper after the meeting.

Work Groups Forming

Work groups develop proposals for planning committee consideration. Work groups are open to participation outside of planning committee membership. Work groups are encouraged to have representation from different interest groups. The suggested process identified at the planning committee meeting for forming work groups is:

- Set up a **time and location** to gather those who signed up to participate in the work group.
- Once the work group has a date and time, **notify the whole planning committee** through Brian Tillemans. Brian will make arrangements to send the announcement to the planning committee.
- When group meets, define the purpose and timeline; some suggestions listed below.

Legal Framework

Product: Develop proposal or options for consideration at September 15 Planning Committee meeting.

Leads: Bill VanWagoner, Brad Henderson, Colin Connor

Karen Ferrell-Ingram

Chuck Holloway
Josh Hart
Mark Bagley
Pete Pumphrey

Habitat: Seeps & Springs

Product: To be defined

Leads: Brian Tillemans, Mike Prather, Tammy Branston

Karen Ferrell-Ingram
Richard Cervantes
Steve McLaughlin
Margot Griswold
Pete Pumphrey

Water Efficiency

Product: Identify measures to increase water efficiency; develop proposal for testing measures to include in plan implementation for consideration at October 20 Planning Committee meeting.

Leads: Bill VanWagoner, George Milovich, Mark Bagley

John Dickey
Scott Kemp
Margot Griswold

Solar

Product: Identify criteria that would assist in assigning areas of the lake that are opportune for solar by August 1, if possible.

Leads: Lisa Isaacs, Yamen Nanne

Jim Stroh
Chuck Holloway
Josh Hart

Economic Development

Product: To be defined

Leads: Richard Cervantes

Mike Prather