

NORTH AREA ROUND TABLE

BY: THE SACRAMENTO AREA FLOOD CONTROL AGENCY

WELCOME TO THE NORTH AREA ROUND TABLE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the North Area Round Table (NART) semi-annual newsletter. In each newsletter you will find updates on ongoing projects as well as information on new, developing projects occurring in the North Area of Sacramento. If there are projects that you would like to see addressed in our next newsletter(s), please contact me at (916) 874-6451 or crosbiel@saccounty.net. Lizette Crosbie, Facilitator (NART)

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MAY 2010

Special point of interest:

- * Hansen Ranch tree mitigation complete per compliance with the City of Sacramento Heritage Tree Ordinance

HANSEN RANCH TREE MITIGATION

In the late 1990's and early 2000's SAFCA completed numerous flood control measures under the North Area Local Project (NALP), in the North area of Sacramento. During construction of this Project, impacts to seven oak trees along Arcade Creek were unavoidable. Under the City of Sacramento Heritage Tree Ordinance, SAFCA was required to mitigate for these impacts. The City of Sacramento owned Hansen Ranch, previously used for cattle grazing, was identified as the preferred location for the mitigation. The northern portion of Hansen Ranch was planted with 343 trees by SAFCA's landscape maintenance contractor and volunteers. Deep-water wells were installed with each tree to encourage deep rooting and improved establishment, eliminating the need for a more costly installed irrigation system.

Since 1998, maintenance at the site has included irrigation, fire hazard and weed reduction by mowing and grazing, selective pruning, and trash and debris removal. Trees in the eastern and western grazing units were caged to allow cattle to graze the extensive herbaceous vegetation without damaging the planted trees. Prior to any mowing events, a SAFCA biologist surveyed the site for nesting birds and adjusted the mowing path as necessary to avoid impacts to nesting birds.

In order for these mitigation plantings to be considered successful, the following criteria were established: 1) the site must be monitored annually and 2) 90% of the 343 trees must be alive after the five year plant establishment period. The site was monitored through 2003, at which time the survival was 81%. With survival just below the required 90%, the site was monitored for an additional 5 years through 2008. With a survival ranging from 80%-82% from 2003-2008, the site was deemed successful and officially signed off by the City of Sacramento. This site is an excellent example of the diligent maintenance and monitoring efforts conducted by SAFCA to ensure the successful completion of mitigation.





Mission Statement

To reduce flood risk, thereby minimizing the impacts of floods on human safety, health, and welfare; and, consistent with these flood risk reduction goals, to preserve and enhance the environmental and aesthetic values that floodways and floodplains contribute to the quality of life in the Sacramento region.

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Bank Protection Project on the American River at CSU, Sacramento

HANSEN RANCH GRAZING PRACTICES

As managers of the City of Sacramento owned Hansen Ranch, SAFCA and the Preserve Manager (Charlotte Kimball of Kimball Neely Associates LLC) are responsible for implementing and monitoring good land management practices. These practices are meant to ensure the compatible use of the Ranch for creation, restoration and preservation of habitat, flood control, recreation and grazing. Governed by a Range Management Plan for grazing livestock on the approximately 260 acre property, Hansen Ranch was leased to Cub Coyle in 1981 (the previous grazer and adjacent land owner). The units south of the Dry Creek North Levee (North Levee) have since been grazed by cattle on a year-round, rotational basis. Units 1-3 of Hansen Ranch (north of the North Levee) were grazed from 2004-2006 but excluded from grazing from 2007-2009 to reduce grazing pressure on protected vernal pools. To reduce the fuel load during these years and thereby the threat of a potential fire, SAFCA maintained fire-breaks along Ascot Road by mowing. In an effort to reduce early establishing weeds in the vernal pools and reduce the total fuel load, in March 2010 approximately 20 head of cattle were rotated into Units 1-3. The cattle are actively foraging and trampling the vegetation as anticipated and are expected to remain in these units for approximately one month. This illustrates how grazing can be an inexpensive and beneficial tool in areas with multiple land management objectives.



**MOSQUITO ABATEMENT
ROBLA AND STEELHEAD CREEKS**

Since the summer of 2008, SAFCA, the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District (District), and Reclamation District 1000 (RD 1000) have coordinated efforts to facilitate water conveyance along Robla and Steelhead creeks. These efforts included beaver dam inspection and removal as well as SAFCA's removal of a large vegetated beaver dam at the confluence of the above mentioned creeks. In 2009 through a concerted effort by SAFCA and the District, two beaver pond levelers were installed into a large beaver dam at the confluence of Robla and Steelhead creeks to facilitate water conveyance and thus, decrease water surface elevations and mosquito habitat upstream of the dam. These pond levelers remained operational until winter when water surface elevations are commonly above the level of the dam.

While these efforts have made an improvement in the overall water conveyance at this location, they also prompted SAFCA to form the Water Conveyance Working Group (WCWG) made up of SAFCA, State of California Department of Water Resources, City of Sacramento, RD 1000, American River Flood Control District and the District. Major topics to be addressed by the WCWG include maintenance issues such as beaver dams and invasive plants, health issues such as mosquito habitat, habitat quality issues relating particularly to native salmon, and flood system performance.

