



August 9, 2010

To members of the Matilija Dam Design Oversight Group:

We are writing in follow up to the January 2010 meeting of the Design Oversight Group (DOG). As you know, one of the primary concerns associated with the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project is the design and cost for managing the approximate two million cubic yards of highly-concentrated fine sediment that has accumulated behind the dam. The Corps of Engineers has examined alternate proposals for the disposal of fine sediment in the last several years based on DOG input and feedback. To date, options presented have raised a number of stakeholder concerns without a definitive resolution.

To help resolve these concerns, the County Watershed Protection District (District) and the State Coastal Conservancy (Conservancy) have decided to convene a professional facilitator to help define what steps are needed to best resolve the fine sediment issue. The Corps of Engineers are amenable to this approach. The Conservancy has retained Mary Selkirk---a senior mediator and facilitator with the Center for Collaborative Policy at California State University, Sacramento (www.csus.edu/ccp) to lead this dialogue.

The facilitation process will consist of two phases. Over the next several weeks, Ms. Selkirk will interview a number of stakeholders representing different organizations and interests to assess their concerns about various options to manage the fine sediments. Following those interviews, the District and the Conservancy may then organize a sediment management study group composed of key stakeholders to engage in a collaborative problem-solving effort on this subject. If there is sufficient community support for convening such a study group, the group would begin meeting in late September or early October.

The initial objectives for organizing the study group would be to share information and stakeholder concerns, identify potential data gaps, and develop options and a potential action plan for resolving the issues surrounding management of the fine sediments.

We will keep you posted on the outcome of Ms. Selkirk's discussions with individual stakeholders, as well as our recommendations and decisions on formation of a study group. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this effort, please feel free to contact Norma Camacho, Director of the Watershed Protection District (norma.camacho@ventura.org) or Bob Thiel at the State Coastal Conservancy (bthiel@scc.ca.gov, 805-957-9299).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norma Camacho".

Norma Camacho
Director
Ventura County
Watershed Protection District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Thiel".

Bob Thiel
South Coast Program
State Coastal Conservancy