

CSAC Challenge Award Nomination
Executive Summary:
Cache Creek Resources Management Plan

Overview

Yolo County's Cache Creek Resources Management Plan establishes a policy and regulatory framework to improve, stabilize and maintain lower Cache Creek through adaptive management.

Challenge

Cache Creek provides voluminous, high quality gravel and rich wildlife habitat, both of which bring multiple benefits to Yolo County. But Cache Creek also flood and erodes, threatening nearby property and infrastructure. In the early 1990's these threats increased in severity as the balance between natural creek processes and gravel mining was upset. Something had to change. Yolo County recognized that Cache Creek would have to be managed differently heading into the future.

Innovation Solution

Yolo County's solution to the problem involved numerous steps that occurred over several years. First, the County collaborated with nearby landowners, the local aggregate industry, environmental groups, and other organizations to develop a novel adaptive management program. This program, called the Cache Creek Area Plan (CCAP), was adopted by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors in 1996. The CCAP consists of two distinct, but complementary plans, that govern different areas of the overall plan area. The Off-Channel Mining Plan moved gravel mining out of the lower Cache Creek channel and into the adjacent floodplain. The Cache Creek Resources Management Plan, the focus of this award nomination, initiated innovative monitoring approaches and restoration efforts to re-establish the balance between natural creek processes and gravel mining. This step was a major accomplishment and unique among California creek management efforts.

The early years of this program were challenged by a lack of technological tools needed to collect and rapidly interpret monitoring data and communicate findings and the need for actions to stakeholders. Yolo County's next step was to infuse the annual monitoring Creek Walk – the physical inspection of the creek channel – and the program's required annual reporting with the latest technological tools. After many years of marking up large, physical maps with observations, the County set up iPads with

mapping and data collection programs to allow the Cache Creek Technical Advisory Committee members to rapidly collect and store their monitoring observations. This greatly improved the efficiency of producing the annual report that includes recommended restoration and adaptive management actions to the Board of Supervisors for the coming year.

The final step Yolo County took was to create a web application (link can be found below) that compiles all of the Cache Creek monitoring data and provides free access to any interested party. At one click of the mouse, any member of the public or a representative from the local aggregate industry, a non-profit organization or regulatory agency can access the real-time data that is crucial to the program's implementation. This has greatly improved communication around program activities.

Originality

Nearly every County in California deals with creek management. This is a challenging undertaking because creeks are dynamic and provide multiple benefits as well as multiple challenges. No other County has managed to balance resource extraction and habitat restoration as collaboratively and transparently as Yolo County. Further, no other County has used technology as effectively as Yolo County to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of monitoring data for adaptive management.

Results

This program has built trust and a spirit of collaboration among previously competing interests and has begun to re-establish a more balanced creek system. Native vegetation in and along the channel has flourished and degraded reaches of the channel have filled back in with gravel. In general, Cache Creek is more uniformly providing the multiple benefits that Yolo County residents have enjoyed.

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Link to Web Application: <https://flowwest.shinyapps.io/cache-creek/>