From: Stuart Siegel <stuart@swampthing.org>
Subject: **Re: Suisun Tidal Restoration Map**
Date: May 14, 2015 1:51:35 PM PDT
To: John Sweeney <john@spinnerisland.com>
Cc: "Ben Wells (bwells@environmentalrg.com)" <bwells@environmentalrg.com>

John

It is not my position to make judgements on what levels of management or lack thereof took place or not. All I can do is describe the hydrology and geomorphology of the property at various points in time relative to industry standard methods. The ball resides in your court to present information about management to the regulatory agencies and negotiate their implications. My former GIS staff, Jake Schweitzer, developed maps at my direction following methods I described in my email last night. The fact that we did not make the determination but used that developed by SFEI that we reviewed from air photos and a boat visit plays large.

As I presented in my work proposal to Ben, I am able to develop a more rigorous historical hydrologic and geomorphic characterization for you. It has its limitations of available air photo timing and resolution but can be very informative. BCDC will accept my work whatever its findings are. Overlaying management history resides with you and information you gather from prior owners.

Thanks
Stuart

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> On May 14, 2015, at 10:36 AM, John Sweeney <john@spinnerisland.com> wrote:
>
> Stuart
>
> Thanks for your response. As you may know in 2004 a new owner bought Buckler to add to their hunting clubs. The family also owned Nine Lands near concord farms. They actively hunted the property until 2011 when the owner passed away.
>
> No ones arguing the different levee maintenance issues over the years. When the club plan was certified in 1984 the property was lacking water control too as it states. If you haven't read the club plan and its recommended levee and flood gate plans and recommendations it's spot on. Simply put the family who bought it in 2004 was never aware of any change in managed wetland status nor was I when I purchased it. I also spoke to Jim Taylor who owned and hunted it until 2003 he has never heard of this either he bought it in 1972.
>
> I hired an expert to walk the property with me to evaluate flood gates which there were three and review all the levees and ditches at purchase. The three small inlets to ponds had wood riser boards to trap water in. I simply drove my excavator around old levees and used the inside dredger ditch to rebuild the small levee system. As they sit today they are 3 feet in elevation. They are not there to keep water out but keep it in. The pump DWR put there in 92 is still on site. Jim Taylor rebuilt the entire levee system in 1992 as shown by SRCD permits. New flood gates and upon completion he received a diesel powered pump to help flood up island from DWR. It's elevation makes it impossible to hold water all winter without it. As maybe only you can understand you cannot drive an excavator across a tidal wetland. Buckler is high and dry.
>
> I've hunted an managed the property since I bought it in 2011. The assertion that the property stopped being managed is completely false. The levee system may not have always been like the days when Seeno owned it but that has no bearing on if it was still hunted and the water managed. It might have been managed poorly but managed never the less.
>
> Assuming it has always been managed my work is exactly as the club plan suggests. As a new buyer of any property the only thing that goes with each club and carries on to the new owner is the most current club plan. Maybe someone intended on contacting the two previous owners but no one ever has. Nothing's recorded or written in any file stating the clubs status was changed. I can assure you neither myself or the family before would by a duck club that couldn't be managed. Nor would I risk all this hassle when I have plenty of clubs.
>
> So that's the simple issue did someone stop managing water. I have letters from both previous owners stating they hunted and managed the property. As the club plan shown the levees historically have been hard to maintain. A property does not simply lose its managed status due to a levee failure. Maybe in San Souci case since the property is such a low elevation. There is no aerial photo showing any water on buckler. At least since Google earth. The 1948, 1958 and 1972 usgs shows ponds full and same levees.
>
> I think your map created an idea I destroyed a restored tidal wetland. At least that's what Steve stated in his emails and several BCDC folks. Maybe if someone had called owners and asked them or written them they would know it was still being managed. It's a unique place as all my other clubs need levees to not flood. This one just needs then to have excellent water retention.
>
> If you looked at my work under the club plan guidelines and under the best practices for waterfowl hunting stated by yourself and SRCD the club is now fully restored as per your guidelines. Actually I've read several of your studies which shows how to circulate and best management practices. My father in law Mike Frost can attest to the quality and practices I used in restoring buckler as he explained to me how to do it. I don't think many would argue aside from you he's the most knowledgeable person in the marsh on all things levee and flood gate based.