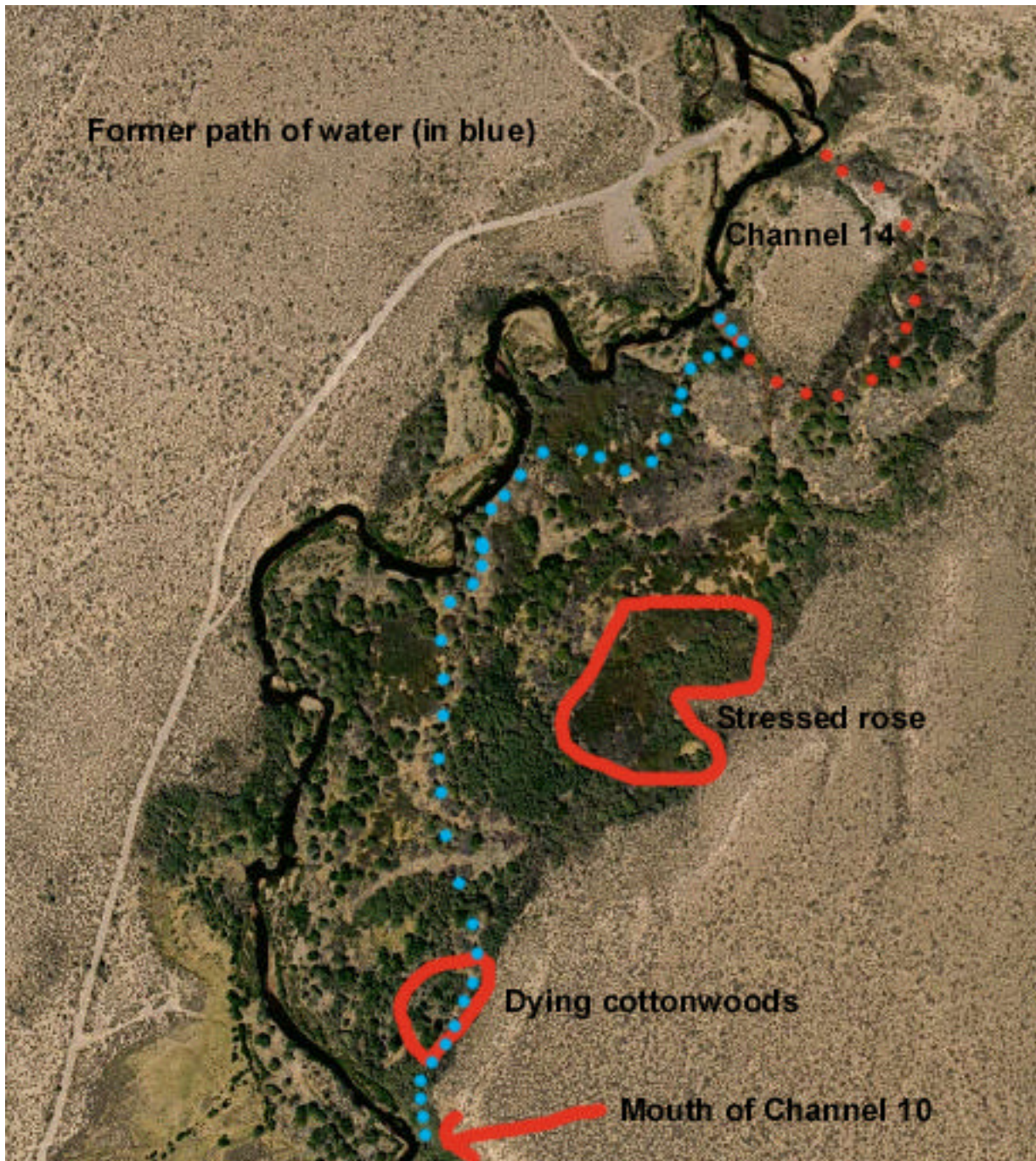


2004 Rush Creek Peak Flow and Channels Observations by Greg Reis

Channel 14

On Thursday, June 10th, when the flow in MGORD was about 240 cfs (275 cfs below narrows), I went to the Channel 14 area with Chris McCreedy (PRBO). He showed me the Willow Flycatcher nesting territories in the rose-fields in the area. I went out with him because he told me that the whole area seems dried-out this year and rose leaves are small. The lack of cover due to small leaves has allowed an increase in nest predation of yellow warblers.



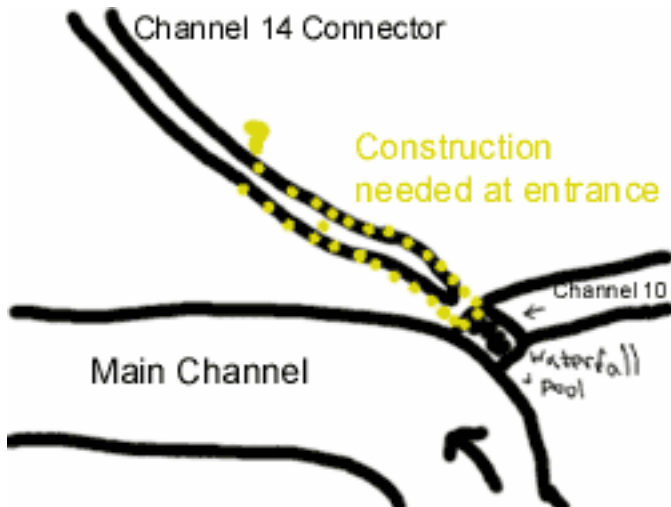
Sure enough, the roses look a bit stressed, as do the willows, and a couple of big old cottonwoods are dying back. No water is getting into the area from Channel 10 as in prior years. Low wet areas are now cracked earth and wetland plants are dead and dying.





The restoration order requires DWP to rewater the "former main channel" in reach 4C using the "the site that provides the easiest entrance and requires the least intervention". It has not been rewatered yet--since water from Channel 10 was getting into this area, everyone agreed not to touch anything. Now that this has changed, I think we should reevaluate this as ordered, although the ordered amount of 10 cfs could probably be reduced to 5 cfs if there are concerns about it cutting off to the main channel at some point.

The easiest place to rewater it (the least earth movement) would probably be just downstream of where Channel 10 empties into the main channel. An additional berm in Channel 14 would probably be needed to make the water go the right way, and maybe some hand-deepening of the connector channel in places where it threatens to jump back to the main channel.



The water surface elevation at this point on 6/27/04 (84 cfs Rush + Parker + Walker) was about 3-5 feet below the channel, and surveying would need to be done to determine what length of channel would have to be constructed. Equipment access would be easy following existing old roads and trails and would probably revegetate quickly. This area has dense vegetation and it would be good to minimize the length of channel constructed. Possibly it could be a high flow channel like Channel 8 if the low flows won't enter it without lots of construction. On the other hand, lack of construction would cause the death of far more vegetation than what would be directly removed through construction.

MGORD

On Friday afternoon (June 11th) at the height of the peak flow, I observed the return ditch. There was some erosion where the water was moving fastest at the top and at the bottom, but otherwise the water was moving slow and I didn't see any problems. Steve Yancy (DWP) said it looked fine too.





Channel 1A

At about 5pm I was in the bottomlands. I crossed at a point near the bottom of the 1A where a large log is in a channel getting surface flow. Water got halfway down before seeping in. The lower end was a backwater pool from the main channel. I presume that during the night water probably made it all the way down the channel before the flow was reduced.



Backwater pool at lower end



Extent of water down channel



Marzano Quarry

The reclaimed floodplain at the Marzano Gravel Pit.





4Bii Complex

I proceeded to the 4bii area, where water was flooding the meadows--there was water everywhere! The very dry area where sagebrush is dying had water in a channel, but I'm not sure it was enough for vegetation to respond during this short duration peak. The lower end probably had a little surface flow, and as of 6/22 had ponded water in low areas along with plenty of large woody debris. This area would benefit tremendously from year-round flow in this channel.









Section 6.4.1 of Water Rights Order 98-05 says: "The proposed settlement agreement provides that Los Angeles will carry out the reopening of Rush Creek channels as specified in its waterfowl habitat restoration plan. (R-DWP-68A, p. 12.) There was no evidence or argument presented in opposition to the proposed restoration of waterfowl habitat through reopening the Rush Creek distributaries. Based on the evidence before us, the SWRCB concludes that the proposal to rewater the Rush Creek distributaries as described in Los Angeles' waterfowl habitat restoration plan meets the requirements of Decision 1631 and should be implemented."



Channel 8

I think we now have some good information on the value of duration (previously the magnitude and timing of the peak were considered paramount). I next visited Channel 8, and someone had dug a trench at the entrance for 50 feet about a foot wide to allow water to flow into it. Water was making it to the first bend at about 6:30pm. The next day (June 12th) at about 11:30 am, with much lower flow (300 cfs), the soil was wet beyond that point but the water had receded a ways. If the 380 cfs flow had been held longer the entire Channel 8 area might have been recharged.





6:30 pm June 11, 2004 (380 cfs in MGORD)



11:30 am June 12, 2004 (300 cfs in MGORD)

Channel 10

I proceeded to the Channel 10 entrance channels. It was hard to tell what was different, but nothing looked very similar... more sediment and less LWD at the split, maybe. When the flows decrease we'll see things a little better. The million dollar bend was barely getting surface flow.



Million
Dollar
Bend

Channel 10 looked
fine

A little more water
spreading out in this cutoff

Hard to tell what changes were
to these channels

Channel 10



Million Dollar Bend (straight), cutoff (to right)

