

CALFED Workshop #4 - 12/4/95

Green Breakout Group Notes. - Morning Session

Facilitated by Rick Soehren. Recorded by Victor Pacheco. Notes by Craig Stevens

Gary Bobker
Alex Hildebrand
Bob Baiocchi - Plumas County
David Okita
Joe Miyamoto
Edy Zwierzycki
Roberta Borgonova
Russ Bowen
Bill Jacoby
Jason Peltier
Glenn Farell
Randelle
Chris Mobley
David Forkel (Delta Wetlands)
Karl Stinson
Kathy Kelley
Kurt Schmutte
Dennis Wescott?
Frank Wernette
Stein Buer
Leslie Friedman Johnson
Jeff Phipps
Brent Graham
Arthur Godwin
Randy Bailey
Amy Fowler
Steve Deverel
Randy Knauss??
Brad Shinn

Rick described the handouts available.

Rick selected Roberta Borgonova as the reporter for the green group.

Rick reviewed the agenda for the breakout group.

Sample preliminary boundary alternative - Conflict approaches

Fish Production (1A)

Modifications to Land Uses (2B)

Supply Enhancement (3B)

Inflow Quality (4A)

Gary suggested that including boundary alternatives including balanced approaches to solutions would be more efficient and inclusive.

Alex - the actions are still too general to know what their effects would be. Victor responded that we would be interested to know the details stakeholders think are important.

Kathy Kelley said that we could combine mins and maxs for each conflict.

Concern expressed that the conflict seems too oriented towards diversions as the cause of fisheries decline. It was explained that these were only selected approaches and that the whole suite of actions is available to choose from.

Brad - the X's don't seem to cover all of the effects of the actions.

Gary B - what do you hope to get from the group to help you develop alternatives? Rick responded that we are looking for info about what actions should be included and the rationales for the inclusion of each action. Also, we want to know what the stakeholders think a minimum alternative should be like. Also we may get an idea of what core actions should be included in every alternative.

Bob B - what happens if some actions are in violation of law? Rick responded that some of the actions being considered call for changes to state law, but we can't ignore current state law such as ESA.

A question was raised about what boundary there should be on the alternative. What is a minimum. Rick answered that we are looking for input on that matter.

Roberta - Do the X's represent conflicts that could be resolved by the action? Rick - Yes.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the preliminary boundary alternative.

Alex - what islands would be restored to tidal action? Which ones and where. Need this level of detail to evaluate. Stein responded that the areas on the periphery of the Delta with elevation between +5 and -5 feet. Actual experience says that big fish benefits would accrue.

Jeff - what fish species would benefit from diked wetlands?

Chris M - These wetlands provide food supply for fish species.

David - Construct new storage north of Delta - why? The answer was given, to resolve conflict #3

Karl Stimson - storage north of Delta doesn't help water supply unless you can move water across

the Delta. Need to combine storage with conveyance.

Alex- increasing upstream storage could be helpful to reduce flood flows and use water upstream without moving across Delta.

Chris M - Not yet clear what environmental benefits major flood events provide, and how much can be removed without hurting the ecosystem. We don't want to violate the principle of "No significant redirected impacts".

Gary B - even with a minimal alternative, a full range of habitats and their connectivity should be restored, not focus on selected habitats, or focus on selected species. Institutional actions should be included in minimal alternatives.

Amy- Where are some actions needed to resolve fisheries conflicts such as toxics, screening. It was pointed out that these are on the full list of actions.

P.M. Victor clarified that the group doesn't need to worry about boundary alternatives.

Stein - we need to include a flood control component (because the Delta is unstable).

Bob B - A lot of activity is happening that will provide more water for fish upstream (FERC + other processes). This should be included in the alternative.

Gary Bobker - The definition of the minimum is basically the Bay/Delta accord. We need to have a more aggressive minimum. We need to have a more viable ecosystem that functions. Thus you would need to have a more complete range of habitat restoration.

Chris - Can't focus on salmon and smelt and also have no new T&E species. IF you focus on the fish something else will go extinct.

Alex- need to restore existing riverine and shallow water habitat which have been degraded by introduced species.

Russ- Reducing regulatory uncertainty should include more than take limits. It should cover other uncertainties such as stricter water quality standards.

Roberta - The Bay-Delta program is based on an ecosystem approach, but the current alternative doesn't meet that, so we need to reconsider what the minimal approach means.

Brad - minimum means not going backwards. Doesn't want definition to be that the ecosystem is returned to its 1880 state.

Stein - introduced species choking Delta channels has negative impacts on recreation, flood control and ecosystem functioning. If we do nothing, the introduced species will reverse the gains we have made recently.

Bob B - Bay Delta is broken, need to go back to the level during the 70's, 60's or 50's.
Stein - flood control - specifically, ongoing maintenance of levees (SB34 level), sediment removal (dredging) to improve flood control capacity of channels and water transfer capacity as well.

Gary B - Should maintain only selected levees, because some changes to levee configuration should be considered. Existing levees could be modified to provide shallow water habitat. Upstream measures such as meander belts and increased connectivity to flood areas would reduce flooding in Delta, reduce sedimentation and provide some habitat.

Roberta - Its foolish to continue flood control practices that actually contribute to peak flows. Natural methods such as creating meander belts would be more beneficial.

Alex- don't confuse overflow and meander belts. Grasslands program would siphon off peak flows.

Chris- minimal alternative presents pollution control after it enters the waterway. It would be cheaper to control source of pollution rather than diluting with supply. Flood control is important, but should also select lands to be protected, while others would not be protected. This would reducing the cost of flood protection.

Upstream restoration (flows)

Bob B - He advocates upstream and watershed restoration above reservoirs to reduce sedimentation. Will result in slower snow melt and reduced sedimentation.

Chris - Flow decisions are usually based on IFIM methodology, but not necessarily what is needed from an ecosystem perspective, for instance to protect riparian habitat.

Jeff - flows are not the entire answer, habitat restoration and meander belts are also needed.

Roberta - flow and fishery needs re: diversions are very important. Flow is major point of conflict.

Gary - flow is integral and we should explore ways to allow it to happen.

Jason - flows upstream may have adverse effects downstream (by reducing availability of water for other uses at other times).

Habitats

Gary - Need a diversity of habitat types. Different species use different habitats at different life stages. Lack of access to move between habitats should be addressed by improving connectivity.

Edy - restoration of habitat for wildlife should be included.

Brad - Can Gary's ideas be implemented without adverse impacts on land uses, flood control?

Gary - all actions have potential redirected impacts, so the question is how can they implemented to reduce or eliminate them.

Protect Habitat from Exotic plants.

Russ - You should clean up and protect the habitat you have from invasion before adding new habitat.

Gary - restoring function may contribute to reducing invasions.

Randy - any alternative should deal with the control of introduced species because you would continue to upset the dynamics of the estuary if you don't decrease the rate of introduction.
Include all

Chris - hard to reduce introduced species. Maybe restoration of ecosystem function would be best bet. Action- modify habitat to favor native species.

Karl - New or expanded on-/off-stream storage should be included and a conveyance facility across the Delta should also be included, to make use of the supplies developed upstream of the Delta. Reduces conflicts between fish and diversions and helps water supply, and water quality and land use. There may be incidental flood control benefits.

Roberta - Need to emphasize demand management, because conveyance across the Delta does create impacts on ecosystem. Demand management avoids environmental impacts of storage and conveyance.

Chris - may be cheaper to reduce demand than increasing supply.

Karl - Demand management is O.K. but not enough to meet current or future demands.

Roberta - need to discuss demand management in some detail at a later time.

Gary - Ecosystem restoration is clearly a goal and there are processes in place to define exactly what is needed. Same is true of demand. We should define what demand CALFED is trying to meet.

Victor- program team is taking on that task.

Chris - Should increase fish screens where economically feasible to reduce entrainment.

Russ - We need to include fish migration improvements. It doesn't matter what we do upstream if they can't get through the estuary. That category could include a wider range of actions to address

more conflicts.

Kathy Kelley - didn't get a strong sense of accomplishing anything from the last two workshops. Are we closer to developing alternatives.

Randy - we should focus on which actions should be included in all alternatives.

We should set a definition of minimal, moderate and maximum levels of each objective and use to build alternatives.

Chris - should examine not individual actions, but how the whole package works.

BJ - Take two categories of actions, habitat restoration and demand management. Stipulate that all alternatives will have substantial programs for these. CALFED staff would then flesh out these two programs and see if they meet everyone's approval. Then see if any alternative is sensitive to these two programs. Then focus on issues where there is real controversy.

SUMMARY OF NOTES TAKEN BY VICTOR

GENERAL NOTES

Combining approaches to resolve conflicts.

Actions need better definition.

Why were conflicts defined as included in the packet (How did program define)?

How do alternatives address existing laws and regulations.

Detailed information is needed to evaluate actions.

Diked Wetlands

examples (Delta Wetlands, Suisun Bay, Prospect Island)

- Restore full natural tidal action

- Need to know which ones and where

- Need to know what species exist there

- Affect on stability of the Delta

- Impacts to agricultural uses

- Use lands on perimeter of the Delta (-5 to +5 foot elevation)

- What species will benefit

Storage

- How much can be added without taking away "erosion" of gravels, etc.

- Water released for fish available down-stream for other uses

Minimal currently describes what is happening now: we need to add environmental processes that protect species.
Focus on salmon and smelt will lead to other species becoming threatened and endangered
Alternative can't lead to new uncertainty
Not enough for ecosystem
Minimum may mean staying where we are, but even that takes money
Current conditions unacceptable to some
Source control cheaper than dilution
Habitat restoration may reduce maintenance costs
Flow alone can't be focus
How do you achieve more flow?
Tradeoffs: flow in one period makes less at other times
Will habitat restoration redirect impacts? Are these mitigable?
Ecosystem restoration needs more definition
What demand level are we trying to satisfy?

Demand Management

Can provide water for habitat

Conveyance Modifications

It was agreed that conveyance modifications through the Delta are needed
There wasn't any agreement on the specifics
How does it improve water quality and land use?

Conjunctive Use/Storage

Storage is good, but site and operations not agreed to by group.

Staff should provide an interim report to workshop participants prior to next workshop (a work in progress).

How are principles included in review of actions and alternatives?

ACTIONS/RATIONALE/CONFLICTS

The alternative doesn't address getting water across the Delta

It lacks storage south of the Delta (for example on the King's River)

It needs some level of implementation

It needs additional diversity of habitat restoration

It needs additional water management institutional actions

It needs a flood control component (Delta is unstable)

It needs upstream restoration (more flow will be in our "base case")

It needs to include some of each habitat type

It needs to include actions to recover and protect habitats from exotic plants and animals

Flood Control

Ongoing maintenance (e.g. SB 34) - a core action

Dredging to maintain flood control capacity

Could include change in levee configurations

Meander belts and connections to floodways

Watershed restoration above dams - a core action

Diversity of habitats (helps different species and different life stages) - a core action

Connectivity of habitats

Control of introduced species-all actions in this category (decreased rate of introduction to avoid continual perturbations of the Delta)

Conveyance across the Delta (helps fisheries, water supply, water quality, but may harm ecosystem) - a core action

Demand Management

Conservation - a core action

Reclamation - a core action

A good fit with the solution principles may not be enough.

Fish Screens

Aiding fish migration through the Delta