

**MEMO TO FILES****Robin Reynolds****Subject: CALFED Program****Date: January 7, 1997**

On January 6, 1997 I attended a meeting at the CALFED offices in the Resources Building. The meeting was at the request of CALFED staff member Jim Martin. At the January 3, 1997 CALFED working group meeting Jim suggested that we meet. In attendance were Jim Martin, Wendy Halverson, Terry Mills, Ray McDowall, Frank Wernette, and myself. The meeting lasted from 1:30 to 3:00 PM.

The subjects discussed mostly related to the impacts of the CALFED program on agriculture. There seemed to be general acceptance of the approach the CDFA has advocated. That is:

- Avoid impacts on prime farmland where feasible. This will entail siting CALFED works on land which does not have the productivity of prime farmland.
- Reduce impacts on farmland by joint use of land for agriculture and CALFED program goals, when feasible. Two possible examples were discussed. 1. Rotate land between agriculture and ecosystem restoration uses. This approach has particular merit for areas with subsiding peat soils. Ecosystem use could be viewed as a fallowing for soil building. Over time there would be a changing mosaic of uses. The timing of rotation would be determined by the underlying biological and physical process of the system. 2. Establish permanent agricultural zones among ecosystem restoration land uses. There is potential for mutual benefits, for example paying farmers for wildlife enhancing management practices.
- Mitigate unavoidable impacts. While creating new farmland is not likely to be feasible, there are other feasible measures which could replace lost agricultural productivity. We did not discuss specific mitigation measures at this meeting.

At this point in the CALFED process there is a lot of flexibility. As time passes this will change as more concrete implementation projects are developed. Therefore it is extremely important to set the policies and specific plans for managing impacts on agriculture now. This is especially important for impact avoidance and reduction measures, since these will impact the siting and configurations of ecosystem restoration implementation projects. A time frame of 2-3 months was mentioned.

I brought an example of a map from the Department of Conservation farmland mapping and monitoring program, and suggested using this geographic information system database to both plan program action to avoid impacts, and where impacts are unavoidable, to define the magnitude of the impacts

They talked about establishing an outreach program for agriculture. Their idea was to focus on the resource conservation districts in those geographic areas where CALFED is most likely to

have impacts on agriculture. We talked about how the outreach might work and I offered to look into the availability of CDFA mailing lists or other assistance we could provide to help them set up an effective effort.

I hand delivered the CDFA comments on the document entitled, "Preliminary Working Draft, CALFED Bay-Delta Program Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan. Implementation Objectives and Targets," dated November 15, 1996. They requested that I also fax them a copy to insure that it gets to the appropriate persons and files. I did this. They had a copy of the January 2, 1997 memo from me, but we did not discuss specific items in it.

The other significant item we discussed was exotic species programs. Exotic species exclusion and management are important elements in the long-term management of the Bay-Delta and tributary river systems. I proposed that CDFA and CALFED explore a joint approach, since we have successful, ongoing programs for exclusion, detection, and management of exotic pests. I suggested Nate Dechoretz as a contact person. I had previously discussed this with Valery Brown, and subsequently appraised Nate and Bob Roberson.

### Some observations on exotic species.

An effective exotic species management program must have three components: Exclusion, detection, and management. All of these components require planning and dedication of resources. The CDFA has determined that exotic pest introductions can be emergencies and thus exempt from CEQA. This has been supported by the courts, and thus rapid response is feasible.

The program needs to target specific organisms, pathways of introduction which represent the greatest risk, and advance planning of eradication and control responses. A first step is to identify those organisms which present the greatest potential risk to the system. There are several obvious candidates:

1. Zebra mussel, now present in the Great Lakes. This organism has been intercepted by CDFA on several occasions over the past year. The pathway of greatest risk appears to be the transportation of boats into California. Introduction into the Delta system will depend on human assisted movement, so long-term exclusion is possible. Given the biology of this organism, once introduced, eradication is unlikely to be feasible, unless the freshwater habitat is extremely isolated.
2. Purple loosestrife, a large and aggressive wetlands plant which out-competes vegetation such as cattails, and has very limited value for wildlife. It is now found in limited areas of Northern California. Eradication of the California populations may still be feasible. Although not a threat to agriculture, it would be disastrous for the CALFED efforts at ecosystem restoration involving creating and protecting emergent vegetation wetlands. An eradication program for this exotic would be a good candidate for early implementation.
3. Hydrilla, an aggressive aquatic plant. The CDFA is actively eradicating several infestations in California in cooperation with the Department of Water Resources, a CALFED member agency. Exclusion efforts have greatly reduced the introduction rate and CDFA programs have so far managed to keep this plant out of the Delta. Eradication appears feasible.