



Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group

**P. O. Box 1198
Cottonwood, CA 96022**

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June 26, 1998

Mr. Lester A. Snow, Executive Director
CALFED Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group response to the "Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR" of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

Dear Director Snow:

Our organization represents a coalition dedicated to safeguarding the continued use and future welfare of the entire Cottonwood Creek Watershed area located in western Shasta and Tehama Counties. This group is composed of local landowners, related businesses and concerned citizens with a common interest in the economical, ecological and geographic complexities of this substantial aquifer. The following are the primary issues we consider most significantly impacting the watershed, including the people and wildlife inhabiting the area, as outlined in the "Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR" of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. These issues include but, are not limited to:

- A. Ground water protection;**
- B. Surface water and "area of origin" management and protection;**
- C. Fisheries and general stream health;**
- D. Assurances of timely completion of the entire CALFED program project;**
- E. Acquisition of funds for administration and management of on-site watershed studies and projects.**

These issues currently provide the basis for the initial formation of this conservancy and its steady desire to initiate, plan and play a significant role in the management of any and all proposals that may concern or have an impact on the watershed. Each of these issues is presented as follows:

A. Ground Water Protection

This issue is of paramount importance to the group. Any and all proposals concerning the ground water contained within the Cottonwood Creek aquifer

must be consistent or in conformity with the ground water ordinances of Shasta and Tehama Counties. If for any reason ground water is removed and utilized in any area other than the Cottonwood Creek basin, assurances must be set in place. A guarantee that the exportation of the water is regulated and any subsequent drawdown to the aquifer is kept to an acceptable minimum. This would be a critical provision during times of drought or other low water condition when adequate and easily obtainable water must remain in the aquifer to be utilized by only indigenous users.

B. Surface Water and "Area of Origin" Management and Protection

A critical factor in the overall health and viability of the watershed is surface water management. It is suggested that off-stream water storage sites be given primary consideration to affect the following:

- 1) Divert and retain excess winter runoff for later beneficial use;
- 2) Reduce erosion and resulting turbidity thereby minimizing property loss and comply with "Clean Water Act" regulations. This is not to infer that certain flood stage flows are not considered desirable to provide for the natural flushing or cleaning of the streams.
- 3) Also Important is enhancement of riparian and riverine habitats to promote bank protection and general stream health. In addition, sustained management of the natural resources inherent to the watershed must adhere to proper forestry, range and land management principles.
- 4) Finally, it is important that the watershed's "area of origin" is protected. Practically speaking, due to the geography of the watershed the "area of origin" extends over most of the watershed.

C. Fisheries and General Stream Health

Our group understands the significance of these issues as a prime indicator of the overall viability and health of the watershed. Efforts must be directed at restoring and improving the riparian and riverine habitats for the benefit of fish and other dependent species by way of specific beneficially proven projects and mitigation of identified problems. The identification of relevant problems, subsequent analysis and solutions must be based on sound, scientific and economic principles. As well, these studies and their continued monitoring must be documented as unbiased, statistical data, not mere conjecture.

D. Assurances of Timely Completion of the Entire CALFED Program Project

This group recognizes the monumental task presented to the CALFED program. This may be the last chance to solve the broad spectrum of current and future water problems in our State. We wish to be a partner in providing a comprehensive solution to this ongoing calamity. In the spirit of bringing eventual closure to this program, this group will require assurance from the entire CALFED organization. An assurance that the approved and funded projects designed as a result of and for the Bay-Delta Program are carried to completion in a professional and expeditious manner.

E. Acquisition of Funds for Administration and Management of On-Site Watershed Studies and Projects

This group requires monetary funds to adequately administer and manage issues/problems and implement projects/solutions associated with the watershed. In addition, funding is required for the necessary time and materials needed to educate the individuals and entities interested in the watershed.

As of this date, concerned persons have donated their time and energy by participating in neighborhood meetings to establish this organization. We have provided CALFED with a synopsis of the primary issues, problems and concerns they feel are affecting or which have an impact on this watershed. A substantial amount of volunteer effort has been expended to accomplish the positive goals of this group. Although volunteerism will continue to play a major role in the future operation of this *grass roots* organization, certain monetary funds will be required for management and office expenses entailed in the course of its growth.

The Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group is seriously dedicated to the preservation, restoration and enhancement of all facets of the Cottonwood Creek stream system utilizing sound and proven scientific and economic principles to ensure that the future health, vitality and welfare of the watershed and its inhabitants remains the foremost priority of all those having an interest in it. As previously indicated, the foregoing issues are those which we consider at this time to be of primary importance to the group; but, are not necessarily limited to those in number or scope.

I trust this is satisfactory for your needs at this time. If you have any questions or desire further information please contact me or my representative at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,



G. Ivar Amen, Chairman of the Steering Committee
Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group

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VIA FROM: P.O. Box 1198
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TO MR. Lester A. Snow, Exec. Director
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Sacramento, CA. 95814

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