

# **DRAFT**

Date: May 18, 1999

To: Policy Group

From: Lester Snow

Subject: South Delta Improvements Decision

This memo seeks to document the decision made by the Policy Group on May 13, 1999 regarding south Delta improvements with sufficient specificity to guide subsequent staff work. In order to move forward with the planning process, further Policy Group will be required on specific implementation issues. These include decisions on how to bundle the agreed-upon actions for the purposes of preparing project level environmental documentation and on the approach to phased implementation of south Delta improvements. These issues are discussed in Attachment A. This attachment has been drafted without the opportunity for SDIT discussions, but is provided to initiate discussion and to seek preliminary policy guidance to expedite the program formulation process.

## ***The Decision***

Two alternative approaches to these concerns were considered: A single barrier approach and a multiple barrier approach. Both alternatives included a broad array of actions for the lower San Joaquin River and south Delta region to address ecosystem, water quality, and water supply availability concerns. The single barrier approach relied on summer flow increases, extensive channel dredging, and agricultural intake relocations to achieve regional water quality and water supply objectives. The multiple barrier approach relied on operable barriers in strategic locations to maintain adequate water quality and stages to facilitate local water supply availability.

The Policy Group decided to recommend the multiple barrier approach with some important modifications. This recommendation is not a final determination; it simply provides guidance to CALFED agency staffs as they work together to complete environmental documentation and supporting technical studies. A final decision to proceed with a specific mix of facilities, operational constraints, and other actions would be based on completed project-level environmental documentation, including the requisite EIR/EIS, Section 404 Alternatives Analysis, ESA Consultation, and CESA consultation, and all applicable permits.

### **The specific elements included in the recommended approach were:**

- 1) Determine appropriate approach to bundling environmental and water quality restoration actions for the purpose of developing environmental documentation,

# DRAFT

establishing Program assurances, facilitating financing and permitting, and implementation.

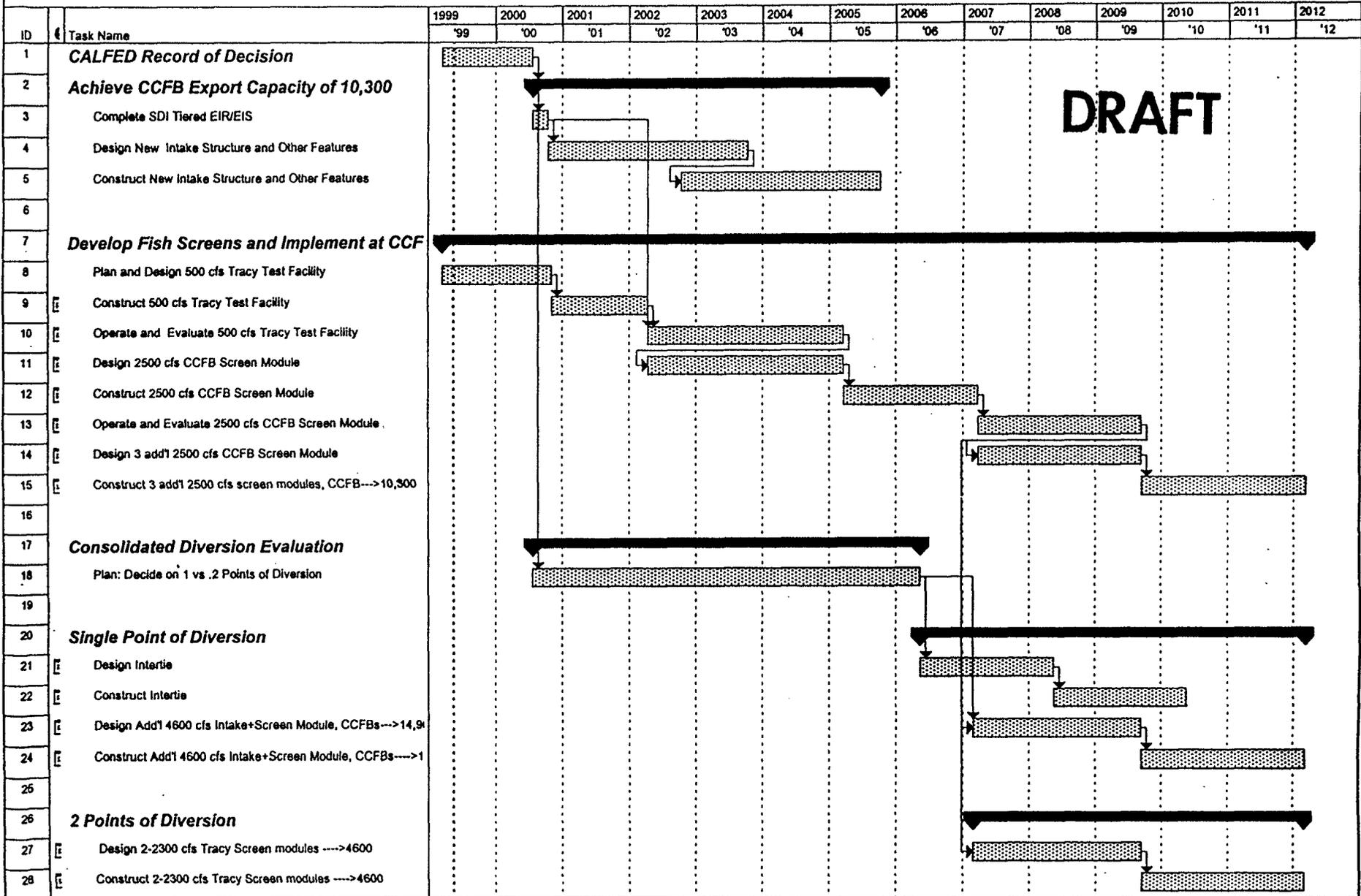
- 2) Implement Ecosystem Restoration: The regional ERP habitat targets provide broad guidelines; specific actions for early implementation need to be identified.
- 3) Consolidate and screen local agricultural diversions based on an appropriate priority and initiate a screen maintenance program.
- 4) Develop a strategy to resolve regional water quality problems. Among highest priority: Evaluate and implement appropriate actions to improve San Joaquin River dissolved oxygen conditions and San Joaquin River drainage as described in the CALFED Water Quality Program. Also evaluate, and if demonstrated to be feasible, implement release of accumulated salts during high flow periods. Evaluate the feasibility of recirculation of water pumped from the Delta by the CVP and SWP.
- 5) Implement the Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan. Include development of a long-term plan describing San Joaquin River Group actions to improve water management practices such as conservation and conjunctive use of surface and groundwater resources. The plan should describe how State and Federal funds provided as part of the VAMP agreement will be allocated to meet this objective.
- 6) Expedite completion of a 500 cfs test facility at the Tracy Pumping Plant to develop best available technology screening and salvage for the intakes to the SWP and CVP export facilities, and apply it to screening and fish salvage for the full diversion capacity of the SWP and CVP.
- 7) Construct a new intake for Clifton Court Forebay, most likely at a location on Old River on the southeast corner of Byron Tract. Construct fish screens for the intake in an incremental, modular approach to achieve the goal of screening the full export capacity of the SWP. Based on the outcome of (8), fish screening capacity could be increased to include the CVP also.
- 8) Evaluate and decide on whether to retain a separate CVP export facility or to consolidate with the SWP facility. Consolidation would include an intertie between the two pumping plants. Also evaluate and potentially implement a 400 cfs intertie between the projects downstream of the export pumps.
- 9) Obtain permits to use full SWP capacity of 10,300 cfs, consistent with all applicable operational constraints (including recommendations for interim operations), for water supply and environmental benefits. Facilitate permitting increased SWP export flexibility up to 8500 cfs, with appropriate interim constraints.
- 10) Expedite construction of permanent operable barriers at the Head of Old River, Old River at Tracy, and Middle River upstream from Victoria Canal. Phase out all temporary barrier installations as these three permanent barriers, dredging, and extension of local agricultural diversions are completed.
- 11) Dredge segments of south Delta channels to limit scour velocities induced by project export pumping, to facilitate adequate water supply for local agricultural intakes, and to address local navigation obstructions.
- 12) Extend and screen agricultural intakes, particularly in Grant Line Canal and the regions west of the proposed barrier locations.
- 13) Form a Barrier Operations Coordination Team, consisting of USFWS, NMFS, DFG, DWR, USBR, and stakeholder representatives to review operations and make recommendations on specific barrier operations in response to changing fish

# DRAFT

densities, flows, and water quality changes. BOCT would coordinate with the CALFED Ops Group, and employ the same established approach for elevating conflicts which might occur in the course of operations deliberations.

- 14) Monitor barrier effects on fish, stages, circulation, and water quality to support real-time barrier operations as well as gather information to support future planning and management decisions.
- 15) Apply adaptive management to all the structural and operational features listed above, in order to achieve the appropriate balance of operational goals.
- 16) Implement mitigation actions for direct and indirect project features and actions as through mitigation practices established in the CALFED Program.
- 17) Retain the potential future option of constructing a Grant Line Canal Barrier after BOCT operates and evaluates the three barriers included in the recommended alternative. Implementation of such an option would only be undertaken if the actions described above, including detailed field studies and analyses, fail to provide an appropriate balance of fisheries, water quality, and water supply availability benefits. Implementation of a GLC barrier would require separate project environmental documentation, tiered off the CALFED Programmatic EIR/EIS.

Draft Implementation Schedule, SWP and CVP Fish Screening Facilities



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