

CalFed Goals for Stage 1

CalFed intends, during Stage 1, to:

Provide conditions for substantial recovery of threatened and endangered species, which will involve a comprehensive program to address all important ecosystem problems, and

Achieve continuous improvement in water supply reliability and water quality.

The Operational Problem

A conflict arises because if traditional fishery protections are implemented, improvements in water supply and quality do not occur because these protections typically allocate water away from water users, and water users are not satisfied. On the other hand, if water users achieve the supply and quality benefits they desire, traditional environmental protections cannot be implemented, and fishery agencies and environmentalists are not satisfied.

The Solution, an Environmental Water Account Coupled with Measures to Increase Export Flexibility and Capability

CalFed has been working with stakeholders on a solution to the conflict. The solution under discussion is to create an Environmental Water Account, which would allow more flexible application of environmental requirements. Initially, the Environmental Water Account would include water stored in existing groundwater or surface water reservoirs. It could also include funds to purchase water or carry out other environmental improvements. This water could be moved using state or federal water project facilities. Other features could be added to the Environmental Water Account.

In addition, there is now general acceptance that the following measures would be implemented to provide for exporting more water for all uses:

Joint use of Banks and Tracy Pumping Plants (generally referred to as "Joint Point of Diversion")

Increased export capacity of Banks Pumping Plant, initially to 8,500 cfs and, later in Stage 1, to 10,300 cfs.

A 400cfs intertie between the California Aqueduct and the Delta-Mendota Canal.

Other facilities that may be added later in Stage 1.

Concerning the Environmental Water Account, the following points now have general acceptance among federal and state agencies and stakeholders:

An Environmental Water Account will be established.

The Environmental Water Account will begin operation on October 1, 1999.

The intent of operation using this account is to achieve continuous improvement in environmental protection and water supply/quality benefits satisfactory to the state and federal agencies and stakeholders.

A large-scale demonstration of an account will be implemented this water year (October 1, 1998 through September 30, 1999). Implementation discussions are under way.

Ultimate authority for decisions on how the Environmental Water Account is used will rest with the state and federal agencies whose legal authorities cover such decisions.

The Environmental Water Account will be used to achieve flexible operation of existing and proposed environmental protections.

Given the ultimate authority of state and federal agencies, a process will be established to achieve the following:

Coordination with operation of the state and federal water projects

Meaningful involvement of stakeholders with the intent of achieving consensus on decisions about how the Environmental Water Account is used.

Application of the current best information on relevant underlying science.

Water must be available from the account for environmental use on day 1 of Stage 1.

Funding must be assured through time and must be adequate to secure water needed through Stage 1.

To the extent that operation of the Environmental Water Account involves purchase of water, those purchases must be feasible and timely.

Decisions on the use of Environmental Water Account water will require monitoring and research.

The Advantages of the Environmental Water Account

[Use same language as in Dec 14 draft]

Conclusions: Implementing the Environmental Water Account

The following tasks must be carried out:

Secure initial Environmental Water Account resources, including

Amount of surface and groundwater storage

Agreements for the storage and wheeling of Environmental Water Account water

Water purchase options

Assurance of adequate funding and allocation of costs

Other options such as investments in efficiency measures

Determine mechanisms for increasing the size of the Environmental Water Account over time if necessary.

Obtain all necessary permits for operation of the Environmental Water Account and for export improvements.

Develop methods for accounting for Environmental Water Account water.

Assess water quality effects of Environmental Water Account operations and develop and carry out a plan to address these effects. Integrate this plan with the CalFed Water Quality Plan.

Define institutional control of the Environmental Water Account, including governance, public participation, linkages to The Comprehensive Monitoring, Assessment, and Research Program, and decision-making process.

Conduct a demonstration program of the Environmental Water Account during the 1999 water year.