

DRAFT
THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ACCOUNT
CONCLUSIONS TO DATE AND AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
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This report sets forth conclusions to date regarding creation of an Environmental Water Account. Important issues are identified. An approach for implementing the Environmental Water Account in year 200 is described.

CONCLUSIONS

The Environmental Water Account provides significant fishery improvements. (CAN WE BACK THIS UP?)

The Environmental Water Account provides these significant improvements using less water than the conventional approach consisting primarily of prescriptive requirements. (This is not to say that prescriptive requirements would not be more protective but that the prescriptive requirements would not be as efficient in terms of water required for a given amount of protection.)

Useful Environmental Water Account assets include surface storage capacity, groundwater storage, capacity in pumping plants and canals, funds that can be used to purchase water, including options for future purchase and efficiency or reuse measures by water users, and funds that can be used to purchase other environmental benefits.

“South Delta improvements,” consisting of increased permitted pumping capacity at the Banks Pumping Plant, and joint use of Banks and Tracy Pumping Plants would be key features of the Environmental Water Account.

Surface storage is more useful to the Environmental Water Account than groundwater storage.

Screened intakes remote from and directly connected to Delta pumping plants are especially useful.

In the early stages of the Environmental Water Account, funds to purchase water are essential.

Numerous innovative options for maximum use of Environmental Water Account assets have yet to be fully evaluated.

It is unlikely that enough Environmental Water Account assets will be available in Stage 1 provide the Delta fishery protections desired by environmental interests and fishery agencies and the water supply desired by agricultural and urban users of water exported from the Delta.

Considerable disagreement exists concerning the science on which existing and future environmental protections in the Delta and operation of the Environmental Water Account are based. However, these differences have been clearly described, and some of them could be analyzed within the next several months.

ISSUES

The following issues, stated in terms of tasks, are most important to implementing an Environmental Water Account.

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ACCOUNT ASSETS

The Environmental Water Account storage, pumping, and conveyance assets must be secured and agreements must be developed with the owners of those assets concerning payment for and operation of the assets.

The amount of funding for Environmental Water Account must be determined and those funds must be secured.

Agreements or contracts must be executed for water transfers (including options), efficiency, and reuse assets of the Environmental Water Account

The method by which Environmental Water Account contracts with owners of Environmental Water Account assets must be determined. In particular, the Environmental Water Account contracting entity must be identified. Its relationship to the governance structure must be spelled out.

Agreements must be developed and permits must be obtained for South Delta improvements.

If the Delta Wetlands project is to be part of Environmental Water Account, drinking water issues concerning that project must be resolved.

ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ACCOUNT GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

The structure for governing the Environmental Water Account must be developed. If existing agencies are going to govern, agreements must be negotiated between these agencies. If the contracting entity differs from the governance structure, an agreement must be negotiated between the governance structure and contracting entity.

The decision-making process for the Environmental Water Account must be developed, including the rules governing operation of the Environmental Water Account and the roles of various stakeholders, the water project operators, and the CalFed Ops Group.

The relationship between the Environmental Water Account and state and federal water project operation must be determined.

If there is to be an Environmental Water Account manager, this person's job description must be developed, this individual must be selected, and arrangements must be made for his or her employment.

If the Environmental Water Account uses both state and federal facilities, DWR and BuRec must develop an agreement on the sharing of those facilities and Environmental Water Account water supply effects.

THE ROLE AND EFFECT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ACCOUNT

For any given amount of Environmental Water Account assets, the desired Delta fishery protection requirements and the desired export water supply cannot both be provided. Some compromise between these two goals must be developed.

The degree to which operation of the Environmental Water Account satisfies existing and future regulatory requirements must be determined.

The effect of Environmental Water Account (and ERP and CVPIA) water transfer programs on other water transfers must be evaluated and, if this evaluation shows that problems will occur, those problems must be resolved.

The Environmental Water Account must be coordinated with the ERP. If attempts to develop this coordination reveal problems, these problems must be resolved.

IMPLEMENTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL WATER ACCOUNT

Implementing the Environmental Water Account consists largely of resolving the issues listed above and other important issues that might arise. These issues could be assigned to various individuals and teams, and a schedule could be developed for attacking the issues.

In addition, an overarching Environmental Water Account negotiating structure is needed to ensure that key agency and stakeholder representatives buy in to the Environmental Water Account. This negotiating structure could oversee the resolution of issues listed above and integrate the results into a coordinated Environmental Water Account package.