

Delta In-Channel Islands Workgroup

Workplan for 1996-1997

Background

The San Francisco Estuary Project's Implementation Committee established geographic subcommittees to set priorities in their regions for implementing the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The Delta Geographic Subcommittee members determined that there was not consensus on the management of Delta in-channel islands. The subcommittee facilitated a workshop to document the resource problem, institutional and physical impediments to and possible solutions for the preservation and enhancement of Delta in-channel islands. The workshop was held in February 1996 with over 60 attendees representing state/federal agencies, local government, landowners, reclamation/flood control districts, environmentalists, scientists, boaters, agricultural interests, and elected officials. Workshop participants agreed upon objectives and established a workgroup to carry them out. The Workgroup regularly reports its progress to Workshop participants, the Delta Geographic and Implementation Committees. The Workgroup's efforts are carrying out several actions in the CCMP's Aquatic Resources, Wildlife and Wetlands program areas.

In order to coordinate similar goals and objectives between the Workgroup and CALFED, the Workgroup will designate one of its members to be the liaison with CALFED's Levee and Channel Technical Team. Additionally, the Workgroup will provide its workplan to the Levee and Channel Technical Team.

Goals

- Establish a management strategy for protection and restoration of Delta in-channel islands that is ecosystem based, uses consensus decision-making and provides for voluntary participation.
- Develop a Delta In-Channel Islands Conservation Guidebook that establishes a program for immediate implementation: using site-specific criteria, sets priorities; uses adaptive management; describes regulatory process and possible funding sources; establishes a research and monitoring program; provides up-to-date bioengineering and ecological restoration techniques and land use management information; and provides for public education and outreach.
- Carry out a project on a site within the Delta to demonstrate voluntary, consensus-based agreement, up-to-date engineering and "soft" techniques/methods that increase, enhance and restore Delta in-channel island habitat.

- Support Delta in-channel islands management strategy by developing Guidebook and technical information and distribute to other entities for implementation of restoration and enhancement projects.

Timeline

March - June 1996 - Following Tasks Completed

- Begin developing an interest-based (public/private) management strategy for conservation and restoration of Delta In-channel islands
- Research obstacles for agreement
- Research funding possibilities for restoration/enhancement projects
- Research methods for regulatory relief in obtaining permits for restoration projects
- Begin data collection and literature search
- Research possible "lead" entities/agencies

July - September 1996 - Following Tasks Completed or Near Completion

- Research/technical Information
 - review literature search on available technical information
 - identify important information gaps
 - build inventory of technical methods for restoration work
- Seek consensus through MOU/agreement to gain necessary support to go forward
 - draft an interim framework agreement
- Continue to identify obstacles such as: loss of shallow water habitat, habitat tradeoffs, use of rip rap, endangered species protection
- Draft scope of work for a demonstration project
- Review and target identified funding sources
- Continue to research/contact possible lead agencies
- Seek cooperation from private land owners/possible site for demonstration project
- Contact CALFED staff/participants to coordinate in-channel islands efforts
- Develop outline for Guidebook

September - November 1996

- Seek signatures/endorsements for agreement
 - contact agencies, interest groups (environmentalists, recreational boaters, agriculture), private land owners, local jurisdictions, etc.
- Agree on site for demonstration project
 - arrange field trips to sites of completed projects and possible new sites
 - review/revise scope of work for demonstration project
 - identify lead entity
 - identify stakeholders and needs
 - gain buy-in for framework agreement
 - begin demonstration project
- Work with CALFED committees related to in-channel islands efforts to provide better coordination/communication and reduce possibilities for duplicating work
- Continue work on Guidebook
- Finalize funding source and begin research on in-channel islands habitat

December 1996 - February 1997

- Demonstration Project: provide necessary support to implement project and demonstrate permit streamlining process
- Continue to seek signatures for management strategy
- Continue work on Guidebook
- Continue to set priorities for filling data gaps and demonstrating restoration techniques; seek funds for carrying them out
- Evaluate progress from February 1996 and revise tasks/objectives accordingly