

Draft Meeting Notes
CALFED Bay-Delta Program Levees and Channels Technical Team
December 9, 1998 at 9:00 am in Room 1118-03 of the Resources Building

Attendance List:

Margit Aramburu, Delta Protection Commission
Bill Betchart, private consultant
John Cain, Natural Heritage Institute
Brian Campbell, East Bay Municipal Utilities District
Lori Clamurro, Delta Protection Commission
Robert Clark, CCV Flood Control Association
Rob Cooke, CALFED (Chair)
Mike Hardesty, Reclamation District 2068
Chuck Howard, US Bureau of Reclamation
Gil Labrie, DCC Engineering
Ed Littrell, Department of Fish and Game
Kenneth King, private consultant
Gwen Knittweis, CALFED
Christopher Neudeck, KSN Inc.
Lynn O'Leary, Corps of Engineers / CALFED
Michael Ramsbotham, Corps of Engineers / CALFED
Curt Schmutte, DWR Central District
Tom Zuckerman, Central Delta Water Agency

Introductions, Review, and Approval of October 27, 1998 Meeting Minutes: Rob Cooke convened the meeting and participants introduced themselves. The October 27, 1998 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with no comments.

Tom Zuckerman mentioned that he attended a meeting at Senator Diane Feinstein's office the day before, during which she asked Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt about the vulnerability of Delta levees to earthquakes. Tom suggested the group might want to draft a letter to her explaining what CALFED is doing with respect to seismic studies, etc. Tom added that, in response to someone at the meeting who said that a lot of state and federal money is going into the levee program, he had answered that currently federal assistance only comes in emergency situations, which was a surprise to Senator Feinstein and Secretary Babbitt. Babbitt is now interested in getting the Corps of Engineers to participate in funding the maintenance of Delta levees. Rob Cooke said he would give Tom the one-page write-up Rob sent in for the Phase II Report as part of a letter to Babbitt and Feinstein. Bill Betchart said he feels it is a mistake to let the impression that the CALFED levee program will take care of earthquake problems take root in high-level policy people such as Senator Feinstein and Secretary Babbitt.

Curt Schmutte said that DWR is hoping to hear on January 9, 1999, about a \$25 million budget change proposal (BCP). He said that there is \$2.3 million left over from FY 98, which will be accessible in FY 99. This money would go directly to the reclamation districts for levee maintenance.

Tom Zuckerman said that the Central Delta Water Agency met the day before, and is submitting legislation for the 1999-2000 legislative session.

Presentation of Emergency Response Report: Tom Zuckerman and Lynn O'Leary then presented the Delta Levee Emergency Management and Response Plan. Lynn said that the subteam who is working on this report agrees that CALFED won't be telling agencies what to do, but trying to find a way to contribute to the existing process.

Curt Schmutte said that regarding ensuring the availability of flood fight resources (pg. 5), DWR has been creating stockpiles of sandbags, plastic, and hand-power equipment, but would also like to address the transport of these materials to where they're most needed. Bill Betchart said that with an advance contract between the state and federal government (DWR and the Corps) and local groups, and funding for a standby agreement, there should be no problem utilizing equipment for immediate response. One agency should have that standby authority (the Corps, with DWR access in federal non-emergency cases). Curt Schmutte said that the cost of standby is expensive, and the contract would need to be superseded with the Corps/DWR access clause. Tom Zuckerman and Christopher Neudeck noted that local reclamation districts have an unwritten agreement where equipment is sent where it is needed.

Curt Schmutte said that regarding integrated response (pg. 6), in addition to the planning and documentation, a flexible and dynamic prearranged system is needed, and procedures under this system must be practiced through drills. Bill Betchart suggested 3 scenarios for the drills: a 50-year flood event, a major flood, and a major earthquake. Tom Zuckerman said that the report is meant to capture the major thrusts of the plan; it will be expanded with details later.

Christopher Neudeck and Curt Schmutte pointed out that FEMA and OES funding is after-the-fact; page 5 reads that DWR would come in immediately upon request, then be reimbursed with federal money when it's available. Rob Cooke said that CALFED is looking to have the \$10 million pot (under AB 2105, 1998) established ahead of time so that no one needs to be reimbursed. Christopher warned that we don't want FEMA to cut off federal disaster assistance for the Delta because it seems self-sufficient. He also suggested that DWR should define how "project" levees fit into the last paragraph under 2.b. (pg. 5).

Rob Cooke reminded the group that this report is a work in progress and will be taken back to the subteam for further discussion in response to comments; he added that he has been asked to expand the report to other contingencies in the Delta. Regarding opening the windows of construction, Rob said that if CALFED programs benefit species to a certain extent, construction windows will be opened.

Discussion of Subsidence Control and Update on Subsidence Report: A handout on the Subsidence Element of the Levee Program was circulated. Rob Cooke said that there are two reports in Appendix E: one on levee integrity and one on subsidence as it affects all CALFED objectives. Lynn O'Leary said that she would mail a copy to anyone who'd like one. Margit Aramburu asked if the Ecosystem Restoration or Water Quality work groups have seen these documents yet; Rob answered that they haven't.

Discussion of Special Improvement Projects: A draft memo on CALFED Special Improvement Projects was circulated. Rob Cooke said that he would like to get more stakeholder involvement on this. He mentioned that future implementation plans include establishing a Levee Implementation Group representing stakeholders and agencies. The group would have a 2-3 year window for looking at needs, and make proposals to the CALFED umbrella implementing entity (currently the Policy Group). Margit Aramburu asked who the stakeholders would be; Rob answered that the group's membership and representation is outlined in the Long Term Levee Protection Plan (LTLPP). All CALFED agencies would be represented, as well as agriculture (2 reps), urban (2 reps), environmental (2 reps), and one rep each for dischargers, business, and recreation. It was suggested that 2 reps from the Delta Protection Commission be included.

Discussion of Proposed Legislation: A handout on the legislation proposed for implementation of the Levee Program was circulated. Rob Cooke said that Dan McCarroll, CALFED's Legislative Coordinator, asked what legislation the programs needed for FY 2000 implementation. Dan would like input by the end of December, 1998; Gwen Knittweis is the levee team lead in putting together a package to present to Dan.

Curt Schmutte asked about inclusion of Suisun Marsh. Rob said that CALFED has adopted the Marsh as optional, but funding for marsh projects would not be taken out of Delta funds; a separate fund would be established.

Lynn O'Leary asked if the \$10 million revolving fund for the levee emergency management plan was enough. Tom Zuckerman said that this amount comes from Machado's AB 2105, which died in 1998. The funds would not cover administrative costs, just supplies. Curt Schmutte noted that when such a fund is established, and all of the money is not spent, there is a tendency for other entities to try to "raid" it. Curt suggested that clarification and designation of the funds could help avoid raiding, and Rob said that the money could be used to buy extra supplies. Margit Aramburu pointed out that the Department of Forestry operates on a deficit, and is reimbursed by the Legislature; perhaps the entity implementing the emergency management plan should seek the authority to do the same. Michael Ramsbotham added that the \$25 million BCP submitted by DWR could also be used for subventions and special projects.

Update on Seismic Report: Lynn O'Leary reported that the Seismic Report is on Les Harder's desk. The most recent draft needs to go to peer review; Bolt and Idriss will be reviewing the report along with the L&CTT.

Rob Cooke circulated a handout, requested by Steve Ritchie, on the proposed Phase II Report language on Delta levees risk assessment; Steve would like comments on this language submitted to Rob. Tom Zuckerman suggested that the first sentence be revised to read "... floods, seepage, subsidence, earthquakes, and other threats." He said that the language should also reference the description of efforts being undertaken (e.g., PL 84-99 standard). Margit Aramburu asked where invasive species would fit into this language, and noted that the list at the bottom of the page only addresses storage and conveyance components. The risk assessment assignment has been given to Les Harder, in addition to the seismic risk report. Bill Betchart suggested that because Les is so busy, it might be better to assign this report to Marty McCann.

Discussion of Permit Issues: Gwen Knittweis reported that the meeting with the Regional Board to discuss Brian Finlayson's Dredge Material Management Plan project was rescheduled. Tom Zuckerman suggested using Delta projects (such as Rhode Island) as sites for sediment studies. Tom and Margit noted some other Delta projects from which data could be used: Prospect, Tyler, Fern-Headreach, Franks Tract, and Sherman.

Gwen Knittweis circulated a handout on the Levee Program's common datum policy; she noted that there would be cost-sharing for recipients to tie in to the system. Curt Schmutte said that money is needed to lay the groundwork for the system of gauges, and that recipients should not be required to tie into the new system until it's ready. Gwen added that the request for directed funding for establishing a common datum was denied; they are thinking about submitting a Category III proposal.

Discussion of Mitten Crab: Rob Cooke reported that a video of the mitten crabs at the fish salvage facilities would be shown after the meeting. Ed Littrell asked about the request that came before the Fish and Game Commission recently for exportation of the mitten crabs; Margit Aramburu answered that the request was turned down pending further study, but will probably return again in February 1999. Lynn O'Leary asked about the potential impacts to levees; Margit answered that the crabs have burrowed up to 8-12" into levees in California. Tom Zuckerman stated that Contra Costa Water District has not encountered a single mitten crab, while the state and federal pumps are counting many, and wondered if their presence is flow/velocity related.

Other Issues: Ed Littrell pointed out an article in Outdoor California about abandoned vessels in the Delta.

In response to Margit's question on if the technical team will look at channels, Lynn O'Leary said that the Corps is putting together a channel surveying project. John Cain said that State Lands Commission has historical data. Tom Zuckerman suggested the group look at north and south Delta channel dredging.

Next Levees and Channels Technical Team Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 20, from 9 am to noon.