

Draft Meeting Notes
CALFED Bay-Delta Program Levee and Channel Technical Team
January 20, 1999 at 9:00 am in room 1142 of the Resources Building

Attendance List:

Margit Aramburu, Delta Protection Commission
Bill Betchart, private consultant
Rob Cooke, CALFED (chair)
Gil Cosio, Murray Burns and Kienlen
Ray Costa, Kleinfelder Consulting Engineers
Mike Driller, DWR Division of Engineering
Gwen Knittweis, CALFED
Gil Labrie, DCC Engineering
Dave Lawson, DWR Central District
Ed Littrell, Dept of Fish and Game
Ulrich Luscher, Woodward Clyde Consulting Engineers
Chris Neudeck, Kjeldsen Sinnock and Neudeck Inc.
Michael Norris, DWR Central District (minutes)
Lynn O'Leary, Corps of Engineers / CALFED
Michael Ramsbotham, Corps of Engineers / CALFED
Gary Tilkian, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Tom Zuckerman, Central Delta Water Agency

Rob Cooke convened the meeting and had the group introduce themselves. The meeting minutes from 12-9-98 CALFED Levee and Channel meeting were reviewed and approved with one change noted on behalf of Curt Schmutte. The paragraph entitled "Discussion of proposed Legislation" discusses that the recent budget change proposal for \$25 million could also be used for the Subventions and Special projects programs. It was noted that those funds were meant to be exclusively for the subventions / special projects programs and not for some other use.

The seismic report has been prepared and approximately 40 copies were available for the group to take. The report was prepared in December of 1998 by the seismic vulnerability sub-team and is entitled Seismic Vulnerability of the Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta Levees. The report will be undergoing a technical review by the seismic review group consisting of Bruce Bolt and I. M. Idriss.

Rob Cooke noted that the levee report would be published in two different formats. One will be a printed version with a short summary of the cost estimate. The second will be on CD, in PDF format, and have everything the printed format has plus a complete cost estimate including all cross-sections. Lynn O'Leary discussed some of the high points of the report. The most important comment is that the levee improvements that are presently occurring won't necessarily reduce seismic risk but Chris Neudeck noted they aren't designed to. Mike Driller noted most failures are from liquefaction.

Mike Driller discussed the amplification factor of 1.6 in the seismic report. It was noted that this was a “best guess” at the value and not necessarily an upward boundary.

Chris Neudeck thought the report should discuss what is clearly beyond the scope of the report such as setback levees.

Bill Betchart thought that significant widespread dampening might occur and he felt the report supported that. The amplitude might therefore go down from 1.6 to 1.0 as a result of this.

Lynn O’Leary noted she is taking down the group’s comments on the seismic report. However, the technical comments will be taken at the next CALFED Levee and Channel meeting when Ralph Torres and Les Harder can be there.

Bill Betchart liked the “Probability of Exceedance vs Number of Levee Breaks” graphics on page 26 of the report and felt that was useful information.

Lynn O’Leary led the discussion on the next agenda item dealing with a Channel Inventory. The Corps will be doing channel soundings and bathymetric surveys. Also, an environmental staff person will update the habitat on levees and there may be water quality testing as well. Margit Aramburu asked about the physical extent of the survey and Lynn replied that it was all of the Delta except the Sacramento Ship Channel, Discovery bay, the Stockton Deepwater Ship Channel, the Sacramento River north of Hood, and the Port of Stockton. Actual surveys would start next March. Lynn noted that CMARP has some channel surveys being planned but the Corps effort appears to be on a faster track. The Corps proposal has been submitted to CALFED for consideration for Category III grant funding.

Gwen Knittweis led the discussion on the next agenda item dealing with the Suisun Marsh levee investigation. Gwen reviewed a “Suisun Marsh Facts” sheet, which was a separate handout. Gwen noted that some configurations of levee improvements would result in improvements in water quality. Higher dimensional models will verify the DWRSIM one-dimensional salinity model used by the ESO office. Rob Cooke noted 22,000 acres of the marsh flooded in the 1998 flood event. Small breaks in the marsh should improve water quality in the central and south Delta according to the preliminary modeling whereas wide breaks are expected to degrade water quality. Tom Zuckerman had a question about the difference between flooding versus the managed conditions where the land is shallow flooded on purpose during the fall months. There was also discussion on the influence of “tidal excursion”.

Gwen noted that CALFED is looking at various configurations for the marsh from an ecosystem standpoint. Gwen named many of the people that are part of this CALFED Suisun Marsh Levee Investigation team and the various agencies they represent. The next step will be to match dollars to cost benefits.

Rob Cooke led the discussion on the next agenda item dealing with the Levee Outreach

Program. Rob noted the current mailing list is about 100 people and we could whittle that number down by asking people to return an interest flyer that was handed out. The flyer is addressed to CALFED and requests a persons name and address if they are interested in receiving materials from the Levees and Channels group. Rob is also trying to get more stakeholder representation at the meetings so the flyer could actually end up expanding the mailing list rather than reducing it.

Lynn O'Leary led the discussion on the next agenda item dealing with the Subsidence and Emergency Response investigation. A paragraph was added on the seepage topic. The subsidence report has not gone out for peer review yet. Lynn had a draft copy of the report but there were not enough copies to pass out. Lynn noted the subsidence sub-team elected to look at subsidence only as it affects levees, although CALFED as a whole is looking at both subsidence as it affects levees and the interior of Delta islands. Tom Zuckerman noted his disapproval of some of the conclusions of the CALFED Phase II report on subsidence. However, Rob noted this happened as part of last minute negotiations and not all sub-teams could get everything they wanted in the Phase II report.

For Emergency Response, not much has happened since the last meeting according to Lynn. Only a few sentences have been added to the prior work.

Gwen Knittweis led the discussion on the next agenda item dealing with Permit Issues. Gwen noted the one-page flyer at the back of the meeting packet handout. There has been a meeting with RWQCB staff to get their buy-in on this process. Gwen said the RWQCB is generally happy with the approach although they will put together a comprehensive list of things needed for a dredging permit. Gwen noted that this is a \$500,000 study so we don't want to put all this effort into the process if it doesn't get us a general permit.

Gwen noted that Jones and Stokes will be looking at strategic ways of bundling CALFED actions to get permitting to go as smoothly as possible. Ulrich Luscher asked about the schedule for the Jones and Stokes effort and Gwen thought the work might be completed. Margit Aramburu asked if the Jones and Stokes work product would be put out for review and Gwen wasn't sure if it was an internal document or if it would be distributed for review.

Rob Cooke led the discussion on the next agenda item dealing with the Funding Issue. There is \$2.3 million available for the Subventions / Special Projects Programs for fiscal year 1999-2000. The recent budget change proposal (BCP) request for \$25 million to continue the Subventions / Special Projects Programs was turned down. Rob suggested resubmitting the request and asking for \$12 million. Tom Zuckerman noted that everyone would like to see Corps participation in levee maintenance and, although we can't count on this happening, we shouldn't quit trying. Dave Lawson noted we are staffed through fiscal year 1999-2000 but there is no staff funding after that.

Ed Littrell asked for an update on proposed legislative changes and it was noted those proposed changes have been forwarded to CALFED staff Dan McCarroll.

Rob and Lynn briefly discussed the "Delta Special Study" that the Corps is doing. Lynn noted the study could come back with a low B/C ratio in which case there wouldn't be much hope for long-term funding. Lynn said the possibility of outages of export water was cranked into the analysis but not ecosystem benefits. When it comes to taking actions, Lynn noted that Congress can task the Corps to do something and then the Corps has to do it. In one case, the Corps was tasked by Congress to do something involving land acquisition, which the Corps can't do so the Corps had to figure out a creative way to do it involving a third party.

Bill Betchart thought one task for the Corps might be to designate all the levees in the Delta "project levees" but Rob Cooke thought this was a significant departure from the direction we're heading.

There was discussion of raising the local deduction for levee maintenance from \$1,000 per levee mile up to \$3,000 but Chris Neudeck, Gil Cosio, and Gil Labrie thought that would result in some districts declining to participate. Gil Cosio gave an example for Empire Tract where not enough dollars are generated by the district. Rob thought that the distribution of funds should be done fairly before we send this out. He thought we could be making a mistake by asking for less because he has talked to some people who are surprised the proposed local contribution is only 10 percent which they feel is too low. Regardless, some in the group felt that the proposed 10 percent plus the LERRDs (Lands/Easements/Relocations/Right of Ways/Disposal Areas) is too high for Delta farmers.

Rob suggested an "ability to pay" study. There was discussion of whether the CALFED Base Level funds should be prioritized. Rob thought these funds would be "first come - first serve" but Chris thought they should be prioritized. In addition, Chris thought the "ability to pay" provision should be rethought because it is subjective. Chris gave an example for Bishop Tract where \$12 million was spent and the district only got back a few hundred thousand from the Subventions Program so the rich district have not necessarily gotten the dollars. There was discussion of funding priorities with the Subventions Program and Dave Lawson gave a breakdown of this to the group.

When it comes to trying to get local interest in our process, Chris said that the "PL84-99" proposal for levee improvements is not enough of a carrot to get the locals interested but improved "emergency response" is enough of a carrot.

Rob scheduled the next two meetings of the CALFED Levee and Channel Technical Team for Wednesday February 24, 1999 and Wednesday March 31, 1999 from 9-12. Both meetings will be held in room 1142 of the Resources Building.

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