

Draft Meeting Notes
CALFED Bay-Delta Program Levee and Channel Technical Team
August 26, 1999 at 9:00 am in Room 1142 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
Steve Chappell, Suisun Resource Conservation District
Robert Clark, Central Valley Flood Control Association
Rob Cooke, CALFED (chair)
Gil Cosio, Murray Burns and Kienlen
Chris Enright, DWR Environmental Services Office
Dennis Fox, private citizen
Gwen Knittweis, CALFED
Gil Labrie, DCC Engineering
Ulrich Luscher, Woodward Clyde Engineering,
Marty McCann, Jack R. Benjamin Associates
Chris Neudeck, Kjeldsen Sinnock and Neudeck Inc.
Michael Norris, DWR Central District (minutes)
Michael Ramsbotham, Corps of Engineers / CALFED
Curt Schmutte, DWR Central District
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 6-10-99 CALFED Levee and Channel meeting were reviewed and approved with no changes. The Suisun Marsh and Twitchell Island discussion items were moved further up in the agenda.

Gwen Knittweis led the agenda item dealing with the Suisun Marsh levee investigation. There has been input from the various interests in the area. The group has recessed temporarily to await the results of modeling runs. The group will reconvene at the end of September to review the modeling results. Margit Aramburu asked about the Levee and Channel Technical Team's role in the Suisun Marsh issue and Rob Cooke replied that the role is to provide technical input. Gwen noted it will be several months before a summary report is prepared.

There was a slide presentation by Steve Chappell of a Suisun Marsh tour. The Suisun Marsh consists of 116,000 acres of which 52,000 acres is diked managed habitat. Steve noted that Bay levees are the most expensive to repair and some interior channel levees are not quite so expensive to repair. The Corps is doing a project on Wheeler Island as a result of the 1998 flood.

Chris Enright gave an update on the modeling efforts to date. Levee protection can sustain wetlands values and this is the goal of the CALFED Environmental Restoration Program Plan (ERPP). Levee protection also ensures that what we do in the Marsh won't happen by accident but will rather happen through planning. The ERPP recommends 5,000 acres of marsh restoration and 2,000 acres of shallow water habitat. Tom Zuckerman asked if there will be an interchange of water between channels and Chris said yes. Also, the 52,000 acres that are currently managed could have been tidal wetlands before. John Cain mentioned that a Goals Report was done by the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) that covered portions of the Suisun Marsh. Chris said a one-dimensional model is being used to model the system and model results show the tidal range in some areas being decreased up to 6" as a result of levee breaches.

Chris said CALFED has contracted with RMA Consulting Engineering out of Vallejo to do higher dimensional modeling to corroborate the results of DWR ESO modeling. The results will be released at a later date. Dennis Fox asked about elk habitat being factored in and Steve Chappell noted there are about 130 elk on Grizzly Island.

Tom Zuckerman asked if experimentation was being done to determine if regenerating tidal wetlands will improve fisheries but Gwen Knittweis noted that it hasn't been done yet. Gwen thought Montezuma Wetlands might be a good project to watch. John Cain stated he was aware of a project in the Delta that was funded by a Category III grant that would also be a good one to track.

Curt Schmutte noted that AB360 defined 12-miles of levees that are eligible in the Marsh and that can help to determine where long-term versus short-term benefits can be sought.

Chris Neudeck led the agenda item dealing with the Twitchell Island Setback Levee project. A handout was provided. The project was first described in 1992 in the DWR News publication. The project involved beneficial reuse of 350,000 cubic yards of sediment from Clifton Court Forebay and another 50,000 cubic yards from Simmons Island. The whole project will end up costing \$5 million/mile and will create habitat where none existed before. Bill Betchart asked about foundation preparation and the details that went into that. Curt Schmutte discussed the large cracks that originally occurred on the levee and noted that DWR did a cost estimate 10 years ago that had a price tag of \$10 million/mile without any habitat creation.

Rob Cooke led the agenda item dealing with the North Delta Improvements bundle. A handout was provided. Four projects that were discussed are listed on page 2 of the handout and the first three could theoretically be combined in one EIR/EIS for economy purposes rather than publishing separate documents. John Cain asked if it is true that the Liberty Island proposal is not in the North Delta bundle and Margit Aramburu confirmed this is true. Margit pointed out the North Delta bundle is actually located in the northeast Delta and not the north Delta. Michael Ramsbotham asked about how the different elements of the bundle are linked. He wondered if they all go forward as a bundle and Rob said yes. Michael wondered what would happen if one project lagged behind the rest and Rob said that was a good question and we would just have to wait and see what

happened. Gwen Knittweis discussed the White Paper that the North delta group is coming up with. The group will meet next on 9-29-99 in room 715 of the Resources Building. Also, the Mokelumne/Cosumnes Watershed Alliance will meet in Walnut Grove on 9-21-99 from 1-4:30 in the Jean Harvie Center.

The next agenda item dealt with the Risk Assessment and there was a handout available. It was noted that Ralph Torres had previously asked how we add the different risks together. Each risk has its own element of uncertainty associated with it so when we add these different risks together, do we have something we can hang our hats on? Tom Zuckerman discussed risk assessment associated with emergency response. Marty McCann discussed systematically going through processes rather than doing "guesstimating" which has been historically done in the past when dealing with emergencies. Rob Cooke thought one of the biggest risks is the Endangered Species Act. When Rob worked with the SWPAO program, there was plenty of water available but they couldn't move the water around because of the Delta Smelt issue.

Tom Zuckerman was aware of a group out of North Hampshire that figured out how to deal with the math of predicting the probability of failures in dealing with nuclear fuel rods. Although not related to the Delta issues, Tom thought it showed that the math could be worked out when dealing with risk assessment.

Margit discussed increasing the list to include other things like water facilities, electric facilities, roads, gas, etc but Rob said he's trying to keep the list manageable.

Rob scheduled the next meeting of the CALFED Levee and Channel Technical Team for Wednesday November 10, 1999 from 9-12.

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