

Draft Meeting Notes CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Suisun Marsh Levee Investigation Team
June 1, 2000 at 9:00 am in Room 133 of the Resources Building

Attendance List:

Dennis Becker, Fish and Game Region 3 (Yountville)
Dan Chapin, Suisun Resource Conservation District
Steve Chappell, Suisun Resource Conservation District
Rob Cooke, CALFED
Gil Cosio, MBK Engineers
Chris Enright, DWR Environmental Services Office
Kamyar Guivetchi, DWR Environmental Services Office
Gwen Knittweis, CALFED (chair)
Arnold Lenk, Suisun Resource Conservation District
Ed Littrell, Fish and Game Region 2
Terry Mills, CALFED
Michael Norris, DWR Central District (minutes)
Dave Showers, DWR Central District

Gwen Knittweis convened the meeting. There were no comments on the previous 5-18-2000 meeting minutes. The focus of this meeting will be on the Investigation Report scheduled to go out 6-23-2000.

The first agenda item dealt with a review of the Action Items from the previous meeting including the following:

- Incorporation of comments into the Investigation Report – This has been done.
- A review of Terry Mills Biologists Report. Terry reported he got one set of comments from Kamyar's group.
- A review of Chris Enright's Modeling Report. There were no comments except internal comments from Kamyar.
- A discussion of the Reconciliation of the Modeling Results to discuss the differences between the DWRDSM1 modeling results and the RMA modeling results. This has been drafted by Chris but not yet distributed. There are many color copies in it and it was thought that it might be best to post this on the web site www.iep.water.ca.gov/suisun for everyone to review.
- A discussion of the Cost Estimate report by Gil Cosio. An outline has been prepared and will be discussed later in the agenda.
- Incorporation of Terry and Chris reports into the larger report. This has not been done but it is pending.

The next agenda item dealt with a review of the Investigation Report Progress. Chris Enright's plots of inundation need to be converted into acres inundated for each scenario. According to Steve Chappell, this will have to be an approximation at best because it is not possible to make a hard fast statement that at a certain elevation you'll have vegetation and at another elevation you'll have tidal marsh. They'll have to make a

regional estimate based on average pond elevations. Steve will attempt to estimate totals for each region but he expects a lot of it to be shallow water habitat. Kamyar noted that he thinks we do not have good elevations for the marsh although we may have opportunities to get marsh elevations by providing supplemental funding to ongoing vegetative surveys to get topographical data. The next flight is scheduled for July 2000. Dan Chapin noted he discovered some errors in the reference points from work that was done in the 1970s. Kamyar thought that the work that was done was good enough to get an average pond elevation but not more than that. Dan wondered if we need to be more accurate than what we have right now which is about plus or minus one foot. Chris thought the area of inundation would expand and contract markedly from plus or minus one foot so it would make a difference. Regardless, Kamyar thought the need for this data should be noted even if we can't get a product from CALFED in time for the printing of the report. Rather, we can begin assembling the data at this time. Gil noted that getting less than 0.2' accuracy could be very expensive with orthophotography. More control points have to be set up. Plus or minus 0.5' is reasonable but better than that can be very expensive. Gil noted it cost Grand Island \$75,000 for its orthophotos and a good chunk of that was setting up the control. The results were good to about 0.2' though.

Terry Mills discussed his progress on the Biologists portion of the Investigation Report. There weren't too many changes from earlier versions. Recent updates occurred as a result of comments from Cassandra Enos of Kamyar's unit. It was noted that there is no wildlife section in the report and there was a brief discussion about whether or not there should be one.

Chris Enright discussed his progress on the Modeling portion of the Investigation Report. Chris noted that DWR did 10 models and RMA consultants took 3 of those 10 for their corroboration work. This included levee breach scenarios on Van Sickle, Morrow, and Grizzly Islands. There was discussion about putting the results on a CD in addition to making it accessible on a web site. The group seemed to like that idea but it was felt that a summarization of the work still needed to be passed out at the Public Workshop.

Gil Cosio discussed his progress on the Cost Estimate portion of the Investigation Report. Gil noted the reference to "deep peat" in the meeting minutes. He felt that the peat in the marsh is different from the Delta and it would be more appropriate to refer to marsh peat as "organic mud". Gil reviewed the outline he had passed out. Gil feels the work in the marsh will be a slow process. He expects it to be different from the work done in the Delta where large amounts of money were sunk in for the first 10-year period following the floods of the 1980s. Some areas in the marsh will have to be revisited time and time again. It has also been difficult getting the necessary data. Rob discussed strategies that can be tried because we simply can't just raise levees in the marsh. Gil has discussed some options with Mike Driller from DWR Engineering but we may not be able to simply widen levees because of environmental restrictions.

Dave Showers discussed possible restrictions in the Honker Bay area as far as dealing with Salt Marsh Mouse and Pickle Weeds habitat in performing levee work. A project

was recently proposed for the area and Dave envisions USFWS putting some environmental restrictions on the proposed levee work.

Kamyar doesn't think the conventional regulatory process will work for the marsh. If it goes action by action, it'll just never happen. Rather, there needs to be a coordinated effort among the different agencies.

Steve Chappell discussed how it is different dealing with the San Francisco Corps office as opposed to the Sacramento Corps office on levee maintenance issues. Gil and Steve discussed some of the topics that have come up at the San Francisco Corps meetings that have generated concern. Arnold didn't think the San Francisco Corps office had a process for dealing with a levee emergency. Staff does not appear to be able to make a decision without counsel being present.

Dan Chapin thought the Investigation Report should also clearly note "what we're going to do in the meantime" because it's going to take a long time for the recommendations to be implemented.

Gil discussed an example for Empire Tract where it took a long time for repairs to get done. The district doesn't have a lot of money so they improved the lowest of the low spots on the levees working a little bit each year under the Subventions Program. Eventually, the levee system was upgraded before the floods of 1998 came along. The levees were designed for a flood elevation of 7' and the floods hit 7.2' for 4 hours. In spite of this, no significant erosion occurred because of all the work that had been done. Gil envisions something similar occurring in the marsh where we slowly do repairs under a prioritization process.

Steve and Arnold discussed the Reclamation Districts (RDs) that have recently formed in the marsh under the AB360 program. A marsh program under CALFED could be an incentive for more RDs forming.

Ed Littrell wondered why emergency personnel aren't at our meeting today. They need to be here. Next year could be a repeat of 1998. Kamyar thought that emergency response should be the first priority looked at in our Investigation Report. Steve and Rob discussed the importance of the positioning of supplies and labor forces (CDF and CCC personnel) for marsh emergencies. The problem is that OES has to be involved and the process hasn't been tested except in 1998. Kamyar discussed how the marsh was lucky that the two water agencies (DWR and USBR) stepped up in 1998 for the marsh but it was noted that this was not meant to set a precedent.

Rob noted he would set up a work authority for the DWR Geology unit to make copies of data materials needed by Gil. The lack of such a funding mechanism has made it hard for Gil to retrieve data from that unit. Gil might have enough to complete his section the following week if the necessary data comes in.

There were no comments on the rest of the Investigation Report sections.

The next agenda item dealt with the upcoming July Public Workshop. A booth was being set up for the Suisun Marsh Field Day festivities for the upcoming weekend and there was discussion of how to make the booth best presentable to catch peoples attention. Gwen had handouts for the Summary Sheet for the Suisun Marsh Levee Investigation, a Notice of Meeting, and an agenda for the Public Information Workshop. There were proposed minor changes for these handouts and Gwen made the changes immediately so that they could be incorporated into the handouts distributed at the upcoming Suisun Marsh Field Day.

There was discussion of the 5 different Category III proposals that are being written for the marsh. At least 2 of them will propose tidal restoration projects.

One of the suggested changes to the agenda was to strike the first Question and Answer Period after the Introduction so that we have only one Question and Answer Period at the end of the meeting. This change caused an adjustment to all the following items on the agenda. Kamyar recommended focusing more on the report and on levee maintenance because not much new has come out of the modeling.

There was more discussion of RD formation. Arnold thought the item was important enough to stay on the agenda. Arnold discussed how emergency response was turned down to Sunrise Club because they have not formed into a RD. Gil reminded the group of the sequence of events that OES has to go through and how it gets elevated with each sequence. It's unlikely to get an emergency declaration for an individual island. Arnold discussed how a RD could form in the 1990s for around \$4,000 to \$5,000 but now the costs are up to \$10,000 to \$12,000.

The next meeting of the sub-team will be on June 15, 2000 from 9-11:30 in room 133. This meeting will concentrate on finalizing the Investigative Report before its mailing to the public.

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