

MEETING SUMMARY

CALFED Water Quality Technical Group February 25, 1998 Energy Commission Building

Water Quality Technical Group: Stephen Murrill, J. P. Cativiela, Bill Jennings, Shanna Swan, Jeanette Thomas, Gail Louis, Phil Wendt, Ted Roefs, Jim Hockenberry, Raymond Tom, Bob Hultquist, Kevin Donhoff, Bill Crooks, Jerry Troyan, Carol James, Kati Buehler, John Gaston, Mark J. Carpenter, Larry Joyce, Deborah Condon, Charlie Kratzer, Leslie Grober, Russ Grimes, Michelle Lynch, Karen Schwinn, Dan Otis, Chris Foe, G. Fred Lee, Lynda Smith, Elaine Archibald, Alex Hildebrand, Mary Hildebrand, Tom Zuckerman, John Winther, Marguerite Young, Lori Clamurro

CALFED Team: Rick Woodard, Judy Heath, Sarah Holmgren, Tanya Matson, Dale Flowers, Ted Way

Welcome and Introductions - Rick Woodard

Rick began by welcoming all the attendees to the Water Quality Technical Group meeting and thanking them for their continued participation in the Water Quality Technical Group. He indicated that the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR is projected for completion and release by mid-March.

Implementation Strategy Framework - Rick Woodard and Judy Heath

Rick began by explaining that CALFED will have an overall implementation plan and a Water Quality Implementation Plan will be a component of the overall plan. He directed the group's attention to a handout entitled *Draft Concept Paper, CALFED Bay-Delta Program, Water Quality Implementation, February 25, 1998*. Rick mentioned that CALFED will need the assistance of the WQTG in the development of the implementation plan. He estimated that an implementation strategy will be developed between spring and fall 1998 that will lay the framework for a more detailed plan in Phase III. Rick explained that to assist in the development of an implementation strategy and plan, further working subgroups of the WQTG may be solicited to provide technical expertise and recommendations.

Rick presented information on the two suggested working groups which may be formed in the future: (1) the Implementation Technical Group (ITG) and (2) the Scientific Review Panel (SRP). He indicated that similar to the existing PAT, these two groups would serve as advisory bodies to the WQTG. It is projected that the membership of these groups would consist of CALFED co-lead agencies, CALFED cooperating agencies, and a diverse group of stakeholders. However, in order to maintain the dynamics of a small working group, it is suggested that the number of participants be limited to approximately 16 to 18 members.

Judy Heath continued the discussion of the Implementation Technical Group and Scientific Review Panel. She explained that there is currently a sufficient technical pool of WQTG members who could serve on these advisory bodies and represent all components of the Water Quality Program; however, public workshops may also be conducted to reach interested members of the community who are not part of the WQTG. It is envisioned that the ITG and SRP will report to the WQTG at regular intervals regarding the development of the implementation plan. Judy then presented a framework of suggested tasks for the ITG including:

- Refine water quality actions which are currently programmatic in nature
- Identify relevant data sources or data gaps related to implementation projects
- Develop an implementation strategy framework and an implementation plan
- Design and oversee research and monitoring
- Define performance targets and timelines

Comments Made

- A question arose regarding the BDAC Integration Panel which is directing grant programs that deal with water quality issues and its relationship to the suggested ITG.
- A question arose regarding the use of the existing Category III process to model CALFED's process and whether or not there is a need for additional planning.

The Category III Process was developed before CALFED came into existence. The CALFED program is a larger scale and more diverse process which will need more coordination and development work.

Judy continued with a discussion of the Scientific Review Panel. She explained that the proposed panel would be patterned after the one developed for the Ecosystem Restoration Program. She suggested that the SRP consist of individuals with appropriate expertise and experience in water quality and recognized for their work related to water quality. Judy stated that the panel could convene on an ad-hoc basis pursuant to the needs of the Water Quality Program. The potential functions of the group could include the review of parameters of concern, of the approach for development of target levels, and of the scientific validity of the proposal water quality actions. Judy also stated that CALFED staff welcome any comments or suggestions regarding the functions of the subgroups, or any approaches to integrate the efforts of existing subgroups with proposed subgroups.

Break-Out Groups - Dale Flowers

Dale organized three break-out groups to facilitate discussion and feedback regarding the Implementation Technical Group and the Scientific Review Panel.

Reports from Representatives of Break Out Groups

Group 1 Comments regarding the ITG:

- The time commitment associated with ITG functions could be 25% of a members time - this

commitment must be clearly communicated to prospective members.

- ITG membership should be broadened beyond representatives of CALFED agencies and key stakeholders so that others who possess good knowledge can be considered.
- ITG must have access to the resources needed to get technical subjects evaluated.
- The time commitment for ITG members is so large that CALFED must be prepared to pay for the time provided, if the ITG members are not supported by their employers. This may be especially true for stakeholder representatives from the environmental community and from public interest groups.
- Suggests that the role of the ITG on R & D projects be examined - instead of overseeing R & D activities (which implies management responsibilities), ITG should identify R & D needs and monitor efforts to support the implementation of the Water Quality Program.
- The relationship between the ITG, SRP, Parameter Assessment Team, and the Water Quality Technical Group is unclear. From what has been presented, the ITG membership requires individuals with an in-depth knowledge of water quality, engineering principles, and the Delta.
- As a practical matter, the ITG should minimize the effort spent on development of database inventories.

Group 1 Comments regarding the SRP:

- Membership criteria for those included in the SRP must be carefully thought out. How do we find individuals that know the Delta (needed to be effective reviewers of what has been done), have no vested interest (e.g. financial stake), knowledgeable about the Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems, and possess the scientific knowledge needed? The group thought that maybe there should be more than one person chosen from each technical specialty area to get broad coverage. The group also suggested that shortcomings of a potential SRP person's Delta knowledge would be negated by having that person brought up to speed through staff briefings and presentations.
- The SRP should review the Water Quality Program Plan, even if the experts were not knowledgeable about the Delta.
- The SRP must contain individuals who have, or can get, hydrology knowledge of the Delta so that the proposed Water Quality Program can be viewed in context of what is feasible.
- Members believe that the Water Quality Program is not well-enough defined to warrant scientific overview. Meaningful feedback may be difficult to garner. However, the group recognized that use of the SRP now may help CALFED recognize the gaps in the program and help to arrive at an approach to secure the needed information.
- Members indicated that CALFED should be prepared to pay for the time and expenses of individuals on the SRP.
- What really is needed in the Water Quality Program is more clarity on:
 - What is the problem we are trying to solve?
 - What is the objective that will be achieved once the problem is solved?
 - What are the manifestations of the problem?
 - What are the possible causes and solutions?
 - How do we decide on which solution to implement?

What monitoring measures are needed to see if the chosen solution is achieving what is expected?

Group 2 Comments regarding the ITG:

- A scope of work for the ITG including the identification of deliverables and due dates should be established early.
- The ITG should be composed of multiple teams of experts in certain water quality areas such as mining, agriculture, drinking water, etc. to ensure a comprehensive representation of each interest.
- Expertise on the ITG should include stakeholders, not just agencies and consultants.

Group 2 Comments regarding the SRP:

- The SRP should become involved in the program as early as possible to ensure that a sound foundation for the program is established before a great deal of effort is expended.
- A scope of work for the SRP including the identification of deliverables and due dates should be established early.
- An SRP should be formed for the entire CALFED Bay-Delta Program.
- Expertise on the SRP should be broad enough to cover all water interests to ensure that conflicts are considered early.
- Expertise on the SRP should include individuals with a variety of approaches to solving water quality problems.
- Expertise on the SRP should include individuals from outside of the watershed to provide a fresh perspective, but time will be needed to educate these individuals on the issues in the watershed.

Group 3 Comments regarding the ITG:

- Coordination of the actions of other groups and participating agencies to integrate and enhance programs should be a function of the ITG.
- Consideration of issues and questions which are broad in scope (such as early development options) should be a function of the ITG.
- There may be difficulty in maintaining attendance and participation. Many agencies, including environmental groups, do not have sufficient resources to donate a substantial number of hours.
- The ITG should remain in existence for the life of CALFED to provide for continuing input.

Group 3 Comments regarding the SRP:

- Two suggested functions were the review of the scientific basis of the parameters of concern and review of the alternatives to ensure optimization of water quality needs.
- To ensure an unbiased review, the panel should be made up of individuals outside the bay-delta system.
- The SRP should be a standing pool of available participants who will provide ongoing participation for the life of the program. However, membership could also evolve as part of

adaptive management.

Rick thanked the WQTG members for providing input on the ITG and SRP. He stated that the WQTG will be kept abreast of any developments regarding working subgroups of the WQTG.

PAT Recommendations for Consideration by the WQTG - Sarah Holmgren

Sarah explained that the Parameter Assessment Team is a voluntary advisory body to the Water Quality Technical Group charged with recommending additions or deletions and associated water quality targets. She asked the WQTG members to consider the following recommendations by the PAT:

- The term “nutrients”, as currently listed in the CALFED Water Quality Parameters of Concern List, should be refined to include “total phosphorus, soluble reactive phosphorus, nitrate, nitrite, ammonia and organic nitrogen.”
- The water quality target for nutrients should be based on the following narrative target established in the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan: “Water shall not contain biostimulatory substances which promote aquatic growths in concentrations that cause nuisance or adversely affected beneficial uses. Waters shall not contain chemical constituents that adversely affect beneficial uses”. A footnote indicating “all the beneficial uses of water” should be noted next to the text of this narrative.
- The term “ammonia”, as currently listed in the CALFED Water Quality Parameters of Concern List, should be expressed as the toxicant form of ammonia, namely “un-ionized ammonia”.
- MTBE should be added to a list of “potential parameters of concern”, which currently contains one other substance, Chromium VI.

No objections were made to the PAT recommendations.

Recent Studies Regarding Human Health - Dr. Shanna Swan

Dr. Shanna Swan of the California Department of Health Services presented information about two recent studies involving drinking water and miscarriages. Copies of the two studies were provided to the WQTG as handouts. The studies were entitled: *Trihalomethanes in Drinking Water and Spontaneous Abortion* and *A Prospective Study of Spontaneous Abortion: Relation to Amount and Source of Drinking Water Consumed in Early Pregnancy*. Dr. Swan provided background information on the studies, including the methodologies used and the results. She indicated that in the study entitled *Trihalomethanes in Drinking Water and Spontaneous Abortion* the trihalomethane, bromodichloromethane (or some compound highly correlated with it), had the strongest association with spontaneous abortions. Dr. Swan concluded her presentation by indicating that further study of the possible link between trihalomethanes and spontaneous abortions is warranted based on these findings.

Wrap-Up - Rick Woodard

Rick Woodard thanked the attendees for their continued participation in the Water Quality

Technical Group. He asked the group for a tentative date in which to schedule the next meeting. The group tentatively agreed upon the last week of April or early May.