

WATERSHED PROGRAM ELEMENTS

I. **Coordination and Assistance**

The goal of the Watershed Program is to provide for long-term coordination, new funding, and prioritization of programs for watershed management and restoration.

The CALFED Watershed Program is to be a resource planning, problem solving, and management process that allows for direct participation of all those concerned with natural resource management in a given watershed.

Coordinating resource uses should result in improved resource management and minimize conflict among land users, landowners, governmental agencies, and stakeholders. Using this approach, resource problems are to be addressed and solved much more effectively because they are based on watershed boundaries rather than individual, agency, or political boundaries.

The Watershed Program will primarily operate on the local level because those who live, work, and recreate on a given piece of land are most interested in and capable of developing plans for its use. Inevitable conflicts in resource use that arise from diverse interests and goals are best solved by face-to-face communication among all interested groups and individuals. People with diverse viewpoints who meet together as a planning team will find common ground as they interact with one another and have a chance to observe resource problems first hand. Through discussion, landowners, users, and resource managers

begin to understand and respect each other's viewpoints. The end result is constructive problem solving through cooperative resource planning.

With a view towards protection, improvement, and maintenance of natural resources, the practical objective of each watershed effort will be to develop and carry forward a unified program of action for resource use and management that minimizes conflict, is consistent with land and water capabilities, and is supported by all those whose interests are affected.

An important local focus of the Watershed Program is community support and awareness of the problem solving nature of the planning process and the commitment of those involved to implement an effective plan.

Management efforts throughout the watersheds will achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness if they are carried out as part of a coordinated effort. This will allow integration of various local and regional interests and needs with the objectives of the Watershed Program. The coordinated CALFED Watershed Program is being established to coordinate widely separated, locally implemented watershed management efforts. It will become a comprehensive program involving interagency cooperation between CALFED agencies, local governments, watershed councils, stakeholders, and local communities with a view towards more effectively coordinating the expenditure of funds, actions, and planning within the watershed management program.

All watershed projects implemented as part of CALFED must be consistent with the goals and objectives of CALFED with respect to ecosystem quality, water use efficiency, and system vulnerability.

When a watershed management structure is determined, the implementing authority should prepare an implementation plan, which would be a component of the overall CALFED Implementation Plan.

Following is a list of features which could be contained in the watershed implementation plan:

A description of the process by which the implementing authority will carry out the CALFED goals and objectives.

A coordination framework which describes the mechanism to integrate watershed efforts among agencies and organizations.

A description of a process through which partnerships with key agencies and local entities will be formed.

A process to foster local efforts in watershed management to achieve CALFED objectives including outreach and educational programs.

An identification of priority watershed projects in terms of solutions to critical problems affecting the Bay-Delta estuary to include technical feasibility and cost effectiveness.

An identification of involved agencies and schedules for implementation of watershed projects.

Mechanisms for continuous review and adaptive management to include meeting the objectives of CMARP.

A package of assurances to address the long-term sustainability of watershed projects.

A comprehensive compilation of funding sources and guidance for funding assistance for watershed projects. This will involve coordination of existing funding programs in various State and federal agencies as well as the development of long-term funding for this resource areas as part of the CALFED solution.

A process to assemble, store, and disseminate information on watershed projects related to the CALFED goals and objectives.

B. Identify agencies and watershed groups that participate in watershed activities which could become consistent with CALFED Bay-Delta Program goals and objectives and recommend partnerships that may be formed among these agencies and groups.

Watershed planning begins when an individual, group, organization, or agency recognizes a potential resource management issue that needs to be addressed. At times watershed planning can be used as a preventive plan before there is a resource management problem, to keep conflicts from developing. Individuals and interest groups are able to present their problems to a local organization such as a Resource Conservation District, which has responsibility for planning, coordinating, and executing programs to help meet soil, water, and related conservation needs on land within their boundaries.

The watershed that the watershed planning effort will address should be adequately delineated. Ordinarily, boundaries are suggested by the types of resource issues, community interests, and geographic considerations. Watershed boundaries, vegetation or habitat boundaries, and ridgelines are commonly used for this purpose. As a general rule, the area should include all private and public lands necessary to obtain solutions to identified problems.

In addition all individuals, interest groups, and agencies that could potentially be affected by the plan, should be included. Interest groups might include those interested in wildlife or recreation activities. Also representatives of appropriate government agencies, such as land management agencies, counties, conservation districts, planning commissions, and municipalities should be included.

C. Develop a long-term plan and program that identifies the types of assistance which local watershed programs need to be effective.

These include:

Funding levels and mechanisms to coordinate funding among government agencies and local watershed programs.

Types of technical assistance to be provided by government agencies and others for local watershed programs.

Identify the agencies and the "others" best suited to deliver this assistance.

There are three generic types of assistance which can be provided by State and federal government agencies to local watershed programs:

Financial

Organizational, management and institutional

Technical

Financial Assistance

The watershed management approach seeks to maximize cost sharing opportunities between CALFED and other watershed restoration funding sources. A comprehensive compilation of watershed funding sources and assistance programs will be developed as part of the watershed management activities.

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program has identified watershed activities and cost estimates for long-term implementation under Proposition 204. These include a program which addresses coordination of existing restoration programs for projects such as fish screens and ladders, habitat restoration, water quality improvements, gravel restoration and watershed management actions.

Other funded programs that focus on watershed restoration include existing programs conducted by CALFED agencies, other federal and State agencies, local government and local watershed groups. Through jointly funded projects that are closely aligned with the CALFED mission

and objectives, these programs offer opportunities to enhance the solution outcome. Some of the key agencies and programs include:

Watershed programs should take advantage of existing funding programs which are currently in place, such as EPA/RWQCB Clean Water Act Program, Proposition 204 (one time) grants, CVPIA Category III, NRCS watershed programs, etc. New funding sources developed as part of CALFED and other opportunities will also be identified. CALFED will provide a coordination point for participating CALFED agencies to more effectively coordinate their watershed budget dollars and use them in conjunction with CALFED funds.

Two fundamental types of funding assistance are envisioned:

Capital Outlay Grants for the design and construction of projects.

Assistance grants to be used by local agencies for obtaining the necessary expertise to carry out a project from beginning to end.

These include the general areas of:

Organizational, Management and Institutional

Technical

Assistance for these types of activities can be provided to local watershed programs in two basic ways.

Funding could be provided as grants or loans to local programs in order for them to retain necessary expertise directly. Such expertise could include private consultations, agency staff or college/university faculty or researcher.

Funding could be provided through enhanced budgets of State and federal resource management agencies for the specific purpose of providing assistance to local watershed programs. This could be accomplished by direct use of agency staff or by contracting with consultants or colleges/universities.

Types of Organizational, Management, and Institutional Assistance

Developing applications for grants, loans, etc.

Developing required resolutions and other legal documents

Obtaining permits

Cost, estimates

Schedule development

Budget development

Meeting facilitation

Facilitating community support

Negotiating instruction and services

Identification and documentation of legal authorities

Types of Technical Assistance

Plans and specifications

Identification of problems (what needs to be fixed), (see list of "Sample
Project Types in C below)

Rights-of-Way issues

Development of CEQA and NEPA compliance documents

Engineering/geology/hydrology

Land planning

Water supply development planning

Biological assessments

Site assessments for hazardous wastes

Cultural resources assessment

Development of feasibility studies

Riparian vegetation

Geomorphology

C. Establish a watershed program project review team to assist local watershed groups and private landowners in their project concept, design, implementation, and monitoring.

A multi-agency/multi-government level oversight organization of some type will be needed to implement the components of the watershed program. Options for an oversight authority to manage implementation of the watershed program may include:

Designation of a current CALFED agency to lead the effort.

Forming a Joint Powers Authority. The JPA could be governed by a Board of Directors, consisting of local government, stakeholders, and CALFED agency members.

Creating an Interagency Watershed Steering Committee consisting of local government, stakeholders, and CALFED agencies, and who would jointly implement the program.

Implementing the watershed program under a new (and yet to be determined) legal entity which may be formed to implement Bay-Delta solutions. This entity could be a new institution or government agency, a public corporation, or some other construct, legally distinct from existing agencies, with its own management and governance.

Under any of the foregoing alternatives, a technical Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT) could be formed. The IWAT would include key technical representatives from federal, State, and local agencies, stakeholders, and watershed councils actively participating in or funding watershed efforts. The IWAT would serve in a technical advisory capacity to the CALFED entity responsible for implementing the Bay-Delta solution alternative.

The function of the IWAT would be to provide a liaison between CALFED management and entities actively carrying out watershed restoration efforts and participating in the development of plans for those efforts. The IWAT would meet on a periodic basis, throughout the watersheds. It would provide a forum to facilitate communications between entities carrying out watershed management and restoration efforts. It would provide a conduit for technical assistance and information to reach entities carrying out watershed management and restoration efforts. The IWAT would also provide input into the annual reporting of the CALFED entity responsible for implementing the Bay-Delta solution alternative

Examples of various types of watershed programs are listed below which, when determined to meet CALFED objectives and other criteria to be determined, could be eligible for funding.

Stream bank restoration

Stream stabilization

Road stabilization

Meadow restoration

Slope stabilization

Drainage structure improvement

Point source pollution control programs

Fisheries habitat restoration

Fisheries passage problems

Wetlands restoration

Application Process

Grant applications will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of professionals, including planners, engineer, ecologists, and fish and wildlife biologists. The team will determine if an application meets the requirements for funding (to be developed.) IWAT will require submission of copies of any necessary government permits, agreements, or environmental documents with the application or before construction. At minimum, the application must identify required permits and reflect advice from appropriate agencies. The review team will then evaluate the eligible proposals to rank their performance against criteria for establishing priorities for financial assistance (to be developed.) When a project has

been selected for funding, a contract will be negotiated.

The scope of a grant application (to be determined) should include the following elements:

Identify problems and goals;

Evaluate alternative means of meeting the problems and goals;

Identify a project that will best meet the problems and goals;

Determine engineering, hydrologic/hydrogeologic, and other technical and institutional issues related to a proposed project;

Determine the economic costs and benefits of the project;

Determine the environmental impacts of the project and any significant environmental issues it will raise;

Determine whether the proposed project will comply with federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines;

Determine the permits which are needed for the project and how to obtain them;

Determine whether the project is likely to be supported by the public it will serve;

Identify how the proposed project will meet CALFED Objectives and Solution Principles.

- D. Articulate assurances that funding from assistance programs will continue throughout the CALFED Program implementation period (20-30 years), using stakeholder input.**

[Note: This issue needs to be dealt with by the "Assurances" Group.]

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