

**CALFED Conservation Strategy**

**Policy Team Meeting Notes**

**March 12, 1999  
9:00 - 11:00 AM**

These meeting notes summarize major topics of discussion. The attendance list and a list of upcoming meetings are included at the end of these notes.

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:20 AM. Attendees introduced themselves.

**2. Meeting Notes for 2/16/99 Policy Team Meeting**

The meeting notes originally distributed for the 2/16/99 meeting recorded the position of the USFWS regarding why service area impacts should be included in the Conservation Strategy. However, no mention was made of the points raised by CALFED. The minutes were revised to include other issues beyond the USFWS position and redistributed via email.

**3. Update on Conservation Strategy Schedule**

The Staff Team is working to meet the schedule for the EIS/EIR, calling for the Administrative Draft of the Conservation Strategy to be supplied to CALFED by 4/12/99 for final formatting and printing. Internal review will begin with distribution of text by the authors on 3/12/99; comments are to be returned to authors by 3/26; and revised text sent by the authors to Sandy Guldman for editing on 4/2/99. Each agency is to consolidate comments into one set, so that authors will receive a single set of comments from each of the four agencies: CALFED, CDFG, NMFS, and USFWS.

**4. Term of the CALFED Program**

The CALFED Program, the EIS/EIR, and the Conservation Strategy will have a term of 30 years. However, there are situations that may call for the use or discussion of different time periods, for example:

- New facilities may be constructed that have a facility life longer than 30 years. It may be necessary to describe how these facilities will be treated at the end of the 30-year life of CALFED.
- Assurances will be offered only for Stage 1 actions. CALFED needs to know that assurances will be available for later actions, but recognizes that they will be developed when more is known about the proposed actions.

**5. Geographic Scope of Conservation Strategy**

At present, the geographic area covered by the Conservation Strategy does not include the water storage sites. The geographic area of coverage was limited to the 14 Ecological Management Zones, in anticipation that all but a few of the water storage sites would have

Rev. 3/8/99

## CALFED Conservation Strategy

been eliminated by this stage in preparation of the Conservation Strategy. However, that has not happened and none of the water storage sites is analyzed in the Conservation Strategy. This omission limits the usefulness of the Conservation Strategy. If an action would affect species that are not covered by the programmatic Conservation Strategy, there would be no streamlining of the permit process, and regulatory predictability would not be provided. For the NCCP, the action could not be tiered off the Conservation Strategy if the species were not covered,

Including a water storage site in the analysis would not guarantee that it could be built. The programmatic analysis for each site should include the species that could be affected by its construction and operation, typical mitigation and compensation that would be required, and any crucial issues related to a water storage facility at that location. Several people suggested that including all the water storage sites could speed the site selection process, by identifying sites that would be screened out on biological grounds. It was agreed that it is not feasible to request faster action by the screening committee and then conduct analyses for only a few sites. It would be useful if USFWS and NMFS could provide clear guidance about what they expect to see in the analysis.

The Policy Team requested that the following process be quickly implemented, with a report on the results presented at the 3/22/99 Policy Team meeting:

- CALFED will generate a map of each water storage site, showing the inundation zone, a one-mile upland area surrounding the inundation zone, and a generous allowance for water handling and conveyance facilities. It is necessary to describe only the CALFED actions, not recreational or other development that might be proposed by entities other than CALFED. Those subsequent developments would achieve ESA/CESA compliance in a process completely separate from the programmatic Conservation Strategy. If subsequent developments would result in the lack of adequate conservation for one or more species or lead to a jeopardy opinion, then this should be identified as an important issue (see the next step below).
- Using the 14 maps, CDFG and USFWS will generate a species list and identify key issues and constraints for each site. NMFS will describe broad constraints on operation to be used in the screening process. The goal will be to identify all the new species, but it is likely that in this area (as for the 14 EMZs) there may be that other species show up unexpectedly.
- CALFED will check with JSA to see what information is available for the new species and how the information could be incorporated in the Conservation Strategy.

### 6. Assurances

It is time to involve stakeholders in discussions. However, it may be appropriate to place limitations on what kind of assurances might be offered, rather than simply asking what stakeholders want. The presentation at a stakeholders' meeting to be schedule will include some background information and issues identification, to be followed by questions. There should not be an excessive emphasis on the amount of biological data that have been gathered.

Ron Rempel has written some text describing assurances. It was agreed that Ron will distribute his draft to USFWS and NMFS staff on 3/15/99 and they will use it as a basis for further writing. The assurances used for the NCCP and section 7 Biological Opinion should be the same. The revised text from all three agencies should be distributed to the Policy Team before the 3/22/99 meeting, at which assurances will be discussed. Developing assurances will be an iterative process. The Administrative Draft Conservation Strategy will contain a first step.

**Attendance at 3/12/99 Policy Team Meeting**

Danae Aitchison, AG  
Chris Beale, CDFG  
Mark Ebbin, B&D/CET  
Michael Fris, USFWS  
Cay C. Goude, USFWS  
Sandy Goldman, Toyon  
Karl Halupka, NMFS  
Marti Kie, CALFED  
Jim Lecky, NMFS (phone)  
Patrick Leonard, USFWS  
Ron Rempel, CDFG  
Steve Ritchie, CALFED  
Mary Scoonover, AG  
Michael Spear, USFWS  
Wayne White, USFWS

**Upcoming Meetings**

The Policy Team will meet:

Monday	March 22, 1999	Noon to 2 PM	San Rafael - HCP conference site Call-in Number (888) 476-3762 Access Number 458933
--------	----------------	--------------	---

Rev. 3/8/99