

Preliminary DRAFT

North Delta Conveyance Issues

Water Quality and Fish Facilities and Fisheries Study Plan to Investigate a Hood - Mokelumne Connection

Introduction

Presented below is a discussion of water quality and north Delta fisheries and facilities related studies and evaluations that could be implemented during Phase I of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. These studies would be designed to address the issues and impacts of Delta Cross Channel operations and a new screened diversion near Hood between the Sacramento and Mokelumne Rivers.

The CALFED Preferred Alternative includes future North Delta actions with a possible connection channel between the Sacramento and Mokelumne Rivers to address water quality degradation. Construction of this conveyance for water quality mitigation would only be considered if fisheries protection can be maintained or improved. Other North Delta water management strategies to improve water quality include the evaluation of various cross channel closures and EWA operations.

The June 1999 *Revised Phase II Report* stated that, "A screened diversion at Hood will be evaluated and may be implemented if necessary." The required action is the evaluation and not the implementation. In very general terms, the report describes the nature of the evaluation and the conditions that must be met. The evaluation must confirm a water quality problem, and show that a 0-4000 cfs diversion can reduce or eliminate the water quality problem without adverse impacts on fish. Only then can consideration be given to a pilot project and only after operation of a pilot facility can consideration be given to a production facility.

North Delta Conveyance Decision Steps

The following text from the June 1999 *Revised Phase II Report* describes the programmatic decision process for North Delta conveyance.

- Study and evaluate a screened diversion structure on the Sacramento River (or equivalent water quality actions) as a measure to improve drinking water quality in the event that the Water Quality Program measures do not result in adequate improvements toward CALFED's drinking water quality goals. This evaluation would consider how to operate the Delta Cross Channel in conjunction with this new diversion structure to improve drinking water quality, while maintaining fish recovery.

- If the Water Quality Program measures are consistently not achieving drinking water quality goals, and the evaluation demonstrates that a screened diversion of up to 4000 cfs would help achieve those goals without adversely affecting fish populations; a pilot screened diversion would be constructed. This pilot would likely include a fish screen, pumps and a channel between the Sacramento and Mokelumne River. The design, size

and operating rules for this pilot facility would include an analysis of impacts to upstream and downstream migrating fish as well as impacts from habitat shifts resulting from increased flows in the eastern Delta on Delta species. Following evaluation of the pilot facility operations, a final decision would be made on whether the diversion channel and structure should continue to be used, and if so, what the operational rules and optimum size of the diversion should be.

The steps below can be inferred from the Phase II Report text.

- **Refine and clarify CALFED drinking water quality goal.** CALFED has proposed a programmatic goal of continuous improvement in Delta drinking water quality. Before actions to improve drinking water quality can be selected, additional refinement and clarification of the goal will be needed. In particular, the relationship between the CALFED goal and current or potential drinking water quality standards must be clarified.
- **Identify and implement initial actions to improve Delta drinking water quality.** Actions currently described at a programmatic level must be translated into project-level specificity, planned, funded, and implemented.
- **Evaluate initial actions to improve Delta drinking water quality.** Initial actions must be monitored and evaluated for their ability to achieve drinking water goals. The period of evaluation must be long enough to make a determination of whether the actions are “consistently not achieving drinking water quality goals.”
- **Obtain Technical and Policy Advice on Next Steps.** Consistent with the CALFED strategy for drinking water quality improvement, the next step would be to consult the Delta Drinking Water Council for policy guidance and a Delta Drinking Water Quality Expert Panel for technical review and recommendations.

Next steps may include either additional water quality actions that do not include modifications to North Delta conveyance, or recommendation to give further consideration to a potential screened diversion on the Sacramento River. If the latter is recommended, additional steps would include the following.

- **Conduct modeling and analysis of a potential screened diversion.** Study elements would include, but not necessarily be limited to: evaluation and modeling of operation of a new screened diversion facility of various sizes up to 4000 cfs; evaluation and modeling of operation of the Delta Cross Channel in conjunction with a new diversion structure; consideration of lessons learned from Tracy fish screen test facility that could be applied to a new Sacramento facility; assessment of the success of North Delta ecosystem restoration actions on fish populations; assessment of the effect of a new screened diversion on fish populations including upstream migrants and downstream migrants; assessment of the effect of increased flow in the eastern Delta on Delta fish species and habitats; and definition of “adverse effect” on fish populations.

- **Obtain Technical and Policy Advice on Next Steps.** Present the results of evaluations to technical experts in water quality and fisheries, and to policy advisors, for recommendations on next steps.

If there were consensus to proceed with a pilot screened diversion facility, the following steps would be followed.

- **Determine design, size, and operating rules for a pilot facility.** This determination would be based on the evaluation described above.
- **Prepare a project-specific EIS/EIR for a pilot facility.** This document could tier off of the CALFED programmatic document, but would entail significant additional effort.
- **Design, construct, and operate a pilot facility.** Test operation would be carried out in conjunction with operation of the DCC, concurrent implementation of additional water quality actions and North Delta ERP actions, over a range of water year types.
- **Evaluate performance of a pilot facility.** Evaluation would include consideration of effect on Delta drinking water quality, effects on Delta species and habitats.
- **Obtain Technical and Policy Advice on Next Steps.** Present the results of evaluations to technical experts in water quality and fisheries, and to policy advisors, for recommendations on next steps.

Following evaluation of the pilot facility operations, a final decision would be made on whether the diversion channel and structure should continue to be used, and if so, what the operational rules and optimum size of the diversion should be.

“Pre-Pilot” Fish Facilities and Fisheries Study Plan

A fully developed North Delta diversion facility could include a fish screen, upstream fish passage facilities (locks, ladders, screen openings, etc.), fish bypass facilities (including fish lifts), fish return facilities, channel diversion pumps, and various configurations of control structures to control the volume of water entering the conveyance channel. The operating rules for these facilities would depend on the requirements for both upstream and downstream migrating fish, and on their impacts on habitat shifts resulting from increased flows in the eastern Delta on Delta species.

In general, initial assessments and studies would include modeling and analyzing the impacts of a various configured diversions. Much of the evaluation will draw from information either already being gathered (or that will be underway shortly). One of these focused efforts could include the construction of a test facility at the Delta Cross Channel. These and other efforts are described below.

Specific Facility Components and Fishery Issues

To develop adequate studies and evaluations, we must first identify the criteria to be used and the range of proposed facilities or features we are considering. Any proposed facility would have to be designed with the following criteria in mind:

- Survival goals for juvenile fish (including screen and fish lift if applicable): 95% or greater survival (not including indirect losses) of salmon (all runs) and steelhead. The facility will be designed with delta smelt, splittail, American shad, and sturgeon in mind, but due to their limited presence and our uncertain ability to protect or pass them efficiently, criteria should not be set. Incidental protection of other species will be provided using the criteria set for these species.
- Eggs and Larvae Entrainment: Design of screen facilities for E&L will not be considered. Diversion may be reduced or shut off during E&L pulses if necessary. For a through-Delta alternative, this may not be a significant issue unless E&L are damaged as a result of passage through the screen (or pumping plant if applicable).
- Upstream Passage Goals: "Insignificant" delay to migrating salmon, steelhead, shad, sturgeon. Possible screen opening passage for these and other fish based on "real-time" monitoring (for instance, delta smelt may not pass a ladder well so pass them operationally). Fish passing to the "wrong side" of screen structure may have a difficult time getting back to their stream of origin. Possible passage opportunities back to their stream of origin should be investigated or considered.

Listed below in no particular order of importance are a number of issues or project features that will need to be investigated:

- A North Delta diversion may have to operationally deal with significant seasonal pulses of eggs and larvae. However, entrainment may not be a significant issue if the larvae are not damaged by passage through the facility (since this is a "through-Delta" option).
- Salmon and steelhead fry will have to be protected, but these fish should pass the area quickly since there is little rearing habitat available on the Sacramento River near Hood and flows are generally good.
- The facility must include upstream passage facilities for adult fish including salmon, steelhead, delta smelt, splittail, sturgeon, and American shad. A variety of options are necessary including fish lifts, false weir ladders and permanent or periodic screen openings. The performance of these facilities, however, is largely unknown for most of the species of concern (especially delta smelt that might be there in dry years and splittail). Also of concern is the additional risk of fish wandering the Central Delta and resisting passage through the conveyance facility or straying as a result of this facility is largely unknown.
- On-river screens will be considered if the maximum diversion is no larger than 4000 cfs and is operated according to established hydraulic criteria and flows in the Sacramento River. The screens shall have uniform hydraulic flows under all possible river and diversion conditions.
- Off-River screens with juvenile collection facilities may be considered for options that include permanent screen openings for upstream migrants.

- A low head canal pumping plant behind the screened diversion might be considered to control the diversion and screen hydraulics. Operations will need to be defined in the initial assessment process. Without a pumping plant, operation of the channel may be significantly constrained during periods of diminished or reversed flows due to tidal action.
- A flow control structure in the channel may have to be considered if the diversion will be limited to 4000 cfs and there is no pumping plant to control flows.
- Maintenance access to screen units will be provided under all river conditions if screened diversion is required.
- Wedgewire screens will be used.
- Surface booms (with underwater deflectors) to deflect floating debris (and possibly even juvenile fish) away from the screen will be considered.
- Screen brush cleaners or comparable cleaning devices will be provided.
- Sediment removal and/or resuspension systems will be considered for all facilities.

Specific Action Plans to Investigate Fisheries/Facilities Impacts

This is the section that needs to be more fully developed and commented on.

Planning Studies that can or should begin immediately - (and are actually feasible to quickly initiated):

Collect Site Specific Data near Hood (see other section for fisheries studies)

- Survey the river bathymetry (needed for modeling)
- Analyze historic hydraulic data (needed for modeling and boundary conditions)
- Set up additional water quality and hydraulic monitoring stations on the Sacramento River at Hood or on the lower Mokelumne River if necessary
- Collect suspended sediment and bed load information

Conduct Delta Operations (and System) Modeling with a Proposed Diversion Facility

- DSM2 and CALSIM modeling
- Investigate Flood Control Issues (Flooding of Interior Delta Area?)
- Conduct particle tracking analysis
- Investigate various flow splits (diversion conveyance)
- Investigate operations scenarios (flow restrictions/channel control with gates or pumps/water quality triggers/fish triggers/etc.)
- Look at tide phasing changes in the Delta
- Look at modeled water quality changes

- Investigate head available to possibly drive a bypass system (if needed)

Conduct 2-D Numerical Hydraulic Modeling

- Look at alternative facility configurations and function under various flow conditions
- Analyze range of flows, velocities, and head differentials around the proposed facility that might be occur
- Investigate potential sediment transport/deposition issues
- Investigate River Hydraulic Degradation Potential

Conduct Physical Modeling

- Using boundary conditions and operations scenarios from the numerical models, set up model of the Sacramento River diversion

Conduct site specific fisheries monitoring of the North Delta and Mokelumne area:

- Analyze existing database and old studies in the North Delta area.
- Conduct sampling to investigate the temporal distribution of fish in the North Delta area.
- Conduct fisheries sampling in the Hood area to investigate vertical and horizontal distributions of adult and juvenile (down and up) migrating fish that may be in the area to help in planning facility layouts.
- Investigate timing and spawning/movement triggers of downstream migrating egg and larval in the Hood area (including delta smelt, striped bass, American shad, splittail, and sturgeon).
- Investigate the potential damage to migrating fish and greater exposure to predators, poor water quality, and pumping plants in central and southern Delta by doing more control studies of marked and released fish.
- Compare habitat conditions for juveniles and adult fish and evaluate threats of the possible new fish routes for various flows and residence times for various hydrology.
- Radio tag or monitor juvenile fish movements in the North Delta more intensively to investigate potential fish residence in Delta, downstream migration, and potential for recirculation of fish around or near a fish screen.
- Control experiments using CWT or radio tagged fish to look at the effect of lower net downstream flows below Hood on migration, timing, and success.
- Conduct some pilot studies of delta smelt spawning habitat enhancement in the eastern Delta area (on the Mokelumne side of the proposed diversion channel) in anticipation of having to mitigate for not being able to pass these fish upstream around a screen.

- Expand fisheries sampling at the Delta Cross Channel to better understand gate operations.

Complete Fish Screen Criteria Development for Juvenile Fish – Analyze fish movement and survival along long screens:

- Evaluate studies underway to address salmon and steelhead passage along long screens being conducted at GCID starting in summer 2000.
- Evaluate data from the UC Davis Treadmill studies. This already being done.
- Coordinate studies at the TFTF for application to the North Delta. This should not require much of a change in work scope.
- Consider additional testing for juvenile sturgeon if they may be potentially listed. Consider lab tests at UC Davis Treadmill
- Investigate potential damage to entrained larval and juvenile fish passing through a screen system - mesh size considerations. This should be done in a lab environment and with the TFTF studies.

Initiate Fish Passage and Ladder Investigations

- Analyze (research) various locks and ladders around the world that are designed to pass fish species similar to Delta species.
- Conduct scaled model lab experiments to look at various ladder configurations and velocity profiles of various ladder options that may be considered for Delta Species.

Fish Release Studies - If fish bypass pipes are considered at Hood, various release strategies must be considered. Hood would use a long pipe, instead of a truck or barge, and release directly into river downstream.

- Lab studies could investigate passage problems in long pipes for Delta species
- Expand studies at GCID and the TCCA Red Bluff screens focusing on salmon passage in pipes.
- Expand TFTF release site study to look at predation, fish accumulation at various release sites and possible release pipe configurations

Fish Bypass Lift Evaluations – If salvage/collection facilities are necessary

- Evaluate data from Red Bluff Research Pumping Plant and proposed TFTF studies on fish lifts. Include data on larval fish survival. Data needs are similar so not much change in work scope is anticipated.
- Install new fish lift in Bay #4 at Red Bluff RPP to investigate long term pump reliability issues.
- Investigate passage of adult fish through the fish lifts including salmon, sturgeon, splittail, and delta smelt (since they could get into bypasses) since they could be entrained. This could be accomplished at the RBRPP or the TFTF.

- Evaluate proposed facilities and operations under a range of flows

"Pre-Hood" Diversion Studies Designed to Investigate Upstream Attraction/Passage Issues

Initial studies could be implemented without constructing a new Hood channel, but these investigations might require construction of monitoring facilities and reoperation of the Delta Cross Channel. These changes might require additional environmental documentation and operations agreements before implementation or studies.

Possible attraction issue studies could include:

- **Delta Cross Channel Investigations** - This facility might give the best insight into Delta fish migration issues and incremental water quality changes. The DCC is close in proximity to the proposed Hood Diversion. Although this channel is considered a navigation channel, the study and corresponding facilities could be developed and operated when the gates might otherwise be closed.
 - Construct large fish trap downstream of the Delta Cross Channel gates. Control flows into the DCC from 1000 to 4000 cfs (net daily) by cracking the gates and investigate the numbers of salmon that might be attracted into the fish traps during and following a change in flow. It might be appropriate to investigate different configurations of fish trap entrances. These insights might help in channeling adults into a future ladder, lock, or simple passage through a screen opening.
 - Investigations might also include tagging adult salmon caught above Hood or in Mokelumne, then transported back to Chipps Island and released. These fish could then be followed to look at their passage back upstream through the Delta (with Cross Channel open to some degree). These studies would investigate the potential delay or the inadvertent passage of non-Sacramento fish over the barrier (DCC). (Do Sacramento Fish only go up the Sacramento River, or do they wander through the Delta channels? Do Mokelumne fish travel up the Sacramento, then cut across?)
- **Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel Ladder** - Evaluate passage/attraction at the SDWSC Locks adjacent to Sacramento. There is already a known attraction issue there due to lock leakage. Construction of a pilot facility here could be beneficial to that areas water quality and fish attraction problem. I would also be relative to the Delta attraction issue. Allowing some water to enter the channel might help determine the influence of various flows into the channel.
- **Radio Tagging of Adult Salmon** - Conduct an extensive fish tagging effort that will look at passage of adult fish through the Delta. Fish could be tagged in the Suisun Bay area.

Ladder and Lock Investigations in the Field

- Install pilot lock or ladder facility in the Delta using various attraction flows. This could be constructed at the Delta Cross Channel after some initial study on

the attraction issue. An alternate location for a pilot facility would be at the SDWSC locks.