

Scientific Review Panel

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## Memorandum

Date: November 18, 1997  
 To: CALFED Policy Group  
 From: Lester A. Snow, Executive Director  
 CALFED Bay-Delta Program  
 Subject: Scientific Review Panel for ERPP

### Summary

A facilitated Scientific Review Panel was convened on October 6-9, 1997 to provide an independent scientific evaluation of the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP). The Panel was comprised of eight nationally recognized experts in various disciplines including hydrology, landscape ecology, fisheries biology, plant ecology, wetland restoration and ecology and conservation biology. A summary report from the Panel was released on November 5, 1997 and is attached. This report was distributed to over 1,000 people and was the focus of discussion at the most recent meeting of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group on November 17, 1997. A summary of the comments and recommendations from the Ecosystem Restoration Work Group is being prepared and will be forwarded to the full BDAC for comment and discussion. All public comments will then be forwarded to CALFED Policy Group in addition to the report from the Panel.

An overview of the discussion at the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group meeting includes the following recommendations:

***Simplify and focus the goals and approach of the ERPP.*** The Work Group agreed with the Panel's advice to create a clearly articulated big picture vision of the ERPP that the public, stakeholders and scientists can seize upon.

- ***Write an ERPP Strategic Plan*** that simplifies its goals and approach and includes a timeline for completion of items currently lacking in the document for inclusion in the draft Programmatic EIS/EIR.

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#### CALFED Agencies

**California**  
 The Resources Agency  
 Department of Fish and Game  
 Department of Water Resources  
 California Environmental Protection Agency  
 State Water Resources Control Board

**Federal**  
 Environmental Protection Agency  
 Department of the Interior  
 Fish and Wildlife Service  
 Bureau of Reclamation  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture  
 Natural Resources Conservation Service  
 Department of Commerce  
 National Marine Fisheries Service

***CALFED should create an ERPP Science Program*** to develop and address the complex scientific issues underpinning the ERPP. The Work Group suggested that this Science Program utilizing staff experts, local/stakeholder scientists and independent scientists for three separate activities.

- ***Retain technical experts to augment the ERPP staff effort.*** ERPP staff effort should be augmented as soon as possible with technical experts including independent scientists, consultants or agency specialists to address disciplines not represented on staff. Suggestions include to hire a hydrologist/fluvial geomorphologist, a landscape ecologist/ecological planner, an indicator specialist, an ecological modeler and a technical writer.
- ***Establish a standing science panel by Spring 1998.*** The Work Group suggested that work begin immediately to establish a standing science panel of outside, independent scientists and local stakeholder and agency specialists to explore and develop the scientific issues of the ERPP.
- ***On a periodic basis, convene a panel of wholly independent scientists*** to review Program progress, much like the configuration of the Scientific Review Panel.

***Continue development of a set of conceptual models.*** The Work Group suggested that the highest priority model is a simple conceptual model created to increase the public's understanding of ecosystem function and to convey the goals and approach of the ERPP. CALFED should continue development of more detailed, quantitative models which enable the study of complex ecological linkages. Consultant scientists should be hired immediately to help develop these models. Models should then be reviewed in focused technical workshops.

***Clearly articulate and present the ERPP's hypotheses for scientific review.*** The hypotheses underlying the ERPP should be explicitly stated and reviewed by the public and a standing science panel. The testing of these hypotheses would serve the basis of the adaptive management process and the monitoring program.

***To the extent possible, incorporate the initial responses to the Panel's recommendations in the draft EIR/EIS.***

#### **Action Item**

This item is included for discussion and information only.