

Program Coordination Team Meeting Summary March 11, 1997

The March meeting of the PCT was held on Tuesday, March 11, 1997 at the Resources Building from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Introduction

The objective of the meeting was to update PCT on work groups and technical teams and to provide issue discussion. The intent of the issue discussions was to identify issues of concern to PCT which need to be resolved before the preferred alternative is selected.

Item 1 - Issues for PCT Consideration

A. Water Transfers

Rick Soehren and Mike Heaton provided an overview of the water transfer discussion paper sent to PCT prior to the meeting. Discussion:

- A suggestion was made to change the wording in the document to state that actions will help transfers move efficiently in all areas, not just across the Delta.
- There is question as to the scope of water transfer actions. Is the intention to facilitate all transfers, both in-basin and inter-basin, or only those which help meet the Bay-Delta objectives? CALFED staff will clarify what the intent of a water transfer strategy will be and resubmit to the PCT.
- Stakeholder sentiment reflects a desire for CALFED to forego involvement with local transfer issues (i.e., transfers among San Luis Unit contractors or along the Tehama-Colusa Canal). There is desire, however, for CALFED to improve the current transfer process for inter-basin transfers.
- Has an attempt been made to estimate the volume of water transfers that will occur under the CALFED alternatives? No. This information will be a result of impact analysis. During impact analysis, the Program team will estimate physical constraints as well as perform economic evaluations to see level of transfers may occur as a result of each alternative.
- How will the ideas presented in this document be developed (i.e., who will develop details of a water transfer tax)? The ideas themselves will be of sufficient detail for purposes of impact analysis. However, a parallel process will be developed to work on creating and refining the details of measures agreed upon.
- Concern was expressed that the document contained many ideas that were actually already in place or already being developed outside of CALFED. What is the intention of this document -- to solicit more comments and ideas or to reaffirm how an existing transfer market operates? There seems to be a perception problem. From the agencies' viewpoint, transfers rules and procedures seem clear. However, from the standpoint of the transferee, there is a perception of three agencies with three different sets of rules or criteria, and

different interpretations of regulations, etc. The intent of a water transfer approach is to clarify misconceptions and work toward consistency among the agencies involved with transfers.

- A smaller work group with agency representatives will probably be formed to discuss these issues in more detail. Rick Soehren will organize this group.
- A suggestion to not link the policy approach to Governor Wilson's Water Policy speech was offered. This may be perceived as too political. Reasons for a better approach to water transfers can be based on what is wrong with the current approach.
- **Comments on the water transfer discussion paper should be provided to Rick Soehren no later than March 21.**

B. Watershed

Judy Heath provided an overview of the Program's watershed policy statement. A revised draft, dated March 10, was distributed at the meeting. The intent of this approach is to integrate various watershed programs throughout the Bay-Delta and its tributaries with CALFED objectives. The redraft has already incorporated comments from several state agencies. The policy reflects the desire of CALFED to supplement current local, state, and federal watershed programs. Discussion:

- A suggestion was made to change reference to watershed programs for purposes of "increasing yield" to something that reflected improved reliability and/or management of watersheds.
- Is this policy statement going to be presented Monday to the CALFED Management Team? Yes, if there is a consensus by the PCT that the approach is appropriate and that there are no major issues. However, the Management Team will only be asked to support the proposed approach, not to "sign on the line."
- A main goal of the policy approach is to develop consistency for data collection and monitoring. When this idea was proposed to BDAC, there was some negative feedback. CALFED staff has to better defend the necessity for quality control and quality assurance for data collection in order to offset negative response that may continue to be voiced.
- Can the scope of the approach be expanded to include the area of the Bay and Pacific Ocean out to the Faralons? This would be more consistent with the CALFED defined solution area.
- Concern was expressed regarding the continued use of the term "policy" to describe what is presented in all the papers. Could another word be used, such as "strategy" or "activity?" Anything regarded as "policy" has a built-in formal review and approval process within some of the agencies, but that is not the intent of these papers or what CALFED is asking from the PCT. CALFED staff will work on developing better terms to describe what is intended.
- PCT representatives seemed to generally agree with what was presented but no final decision was made in regard to presenting this information to the Management Team.

C. Water Recycling

Rick Soehren and Steve Kasower provided an overview of the draft approach for urban water recycling that will be incorporated into the existing draft Water Use Efficiency approach. There is a strong legal foundation for urban water recycling in the state. In addition, there is a large potential for reuse. Current state and federal assistance programs are quite modest. The approach proposed is similar to that for urban conservation and relies heavily on technical, planning, and funding assistance. The approach also proposed to formalize the review of recycling activities currently done by DWR. Agencies would be certified when they meet minimum requirements as mandated under the Urban Water Management Planning Act. Development of a water recycling BMP is also being discussed as part of the approach. Typically, recycling projects are developed and implemented at the local level and require cooperation between water purveyors and sanitation districts. CALFED's approach would facilitate this coordination through incentives. Past attempts to use "sticks" have resulted in these agencies not cooperating and nothing getting built. In addition, local projects need approval from city councils or boards of supervisors. These bodies are more sensitive to public outcry against projects. Education of decision makers is also a key element of this approach. Discussion:

- The approach needs to include recognition of potential adverse impacts to stream flows which can result from recycling projects re-diverting treated water that otherwise augment stream flow. DWR recognizes this anomaly and anticipates the majority of recycling potential to be in regions that directly discharge to ocean/bay outfalls. Notation of this fact will be added to the draft approach.
- It would be helpful to have comments quickly to allow presentation of this material at the March 20 Water Use Efficiency workshop. Please provide **comments to Rick Soehren no later than March 14.**
- Upon incorporating the few comments received, this discussion paper will be provided to the Management Team for their review at their next meeting.

D. San Joaquin Drainage Issues

Rick Woodard provided an overview of the strategy for improving water quality in the San Joaquin River as it relates to drainage. A revised draft, dated March 10, was distributed. Several sources of drainage have been identified including, agricultural surface and subsurface drainage, mine runoff, storm-related runoff, and others. Salt management is a key issue to improving the water quality of the River. The ultimate solution must include permanent reduction in the salinity levels. The CALFED role presented in the draft paper includes coordination with the San Joaquin Valley Drainage Program (SJVPD) which has been actively pursuing measures to improve water quality for a number of years. CALFED will use a "whole watershed" approach to solving the water quality problems. Discussion:

- Concern was expressed that the CALFED role relied too heavily on the SJVPD which is directed at only one of the sources in the area: agricultural subsurface drainage. It would seem more appropriate to have the SJVPD fit within the objectives of CALFED than the other way around, as it now appears. Other actions are anticipated to fall under the CALFED watershed program. That is why there seems to be a limitation on the overlap between identified problems and coordination with SJVPD as presented in the paper. Clarification will be added to the approach to better distinguish what components of CALFED will address the particular sources of San Joaquin River water quality degradation.
- Part of the reason for this statement of CALFED's role is to distinguish what CALFED is targeting, versus what some stakeholders and agencies want. Namely, CALFED is limiting its water quality actions in the San Joaquin Valley to areas that directly affect the water quality of the San Joaquin River. This means that drainage issues of the Tulare Lake basin are not within the scope of the CALFED Program. It is not beyond the Program's ability to improve the quality of water exported from the Delta, some of which is delivered to the Tulare basin and thus may have a beneficial impact on drainage problems in that basin.
- Concern was expressed that the SJVPD is only looking at short-term solutions. However, it was noted that the SJVPD is currently shifting its focus to more long-term solutions, consistent with the desires of CALFED.
- A suggestion was made to reword the first bullet on the second page to read "improve and protect" not just "improve."
- Some felt that the SJVPD needed a good push to move forward and that CALFED can provide that push. There are already many good ideas that have been developed. CALFED needs to better define its role, possible as an entity that can focus on implementing previously developed actions. Clarify what is meant by coordination with the SJVPD.
- **Comments on the CALFED role from the PCT are requested to be received no later than March 21.**

E. Exotic Species

Sharon Gross gave a brief overview of the exotic species program. The intent of this program is to allow CALFED to coordinate with existing programs and where programs are lacking, develop new programs or initiatives. Exotic species have been identified as major stressors on the ecosystem. Management of exotic species is a major component of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan. CALFED also needs to address management of exotic species from the standpoint of infrastructure; levees, conveyance facilities. The draft strategy has three primary areas: prevention, control, and detection/monitoring. Prevention includes enforcement, new regulations, risk assessment, and education programs. Control includes a rapid response program for newly identified exotics, and a management program for existing exotics. Detection/monitoring includes development of more comprehensive monitoring programs and identification of research needs. Discussion:

- Is the relationship between the restoration of habitat and removal of some exotic species stated in this approach? No. However, that relationship should be discussed with reference made to the ERPP. It is discussed in greater detail in the ERPP.

- What exactly would be CALFED's role in management of exotic species? Would CALFED provide funding to the Coast Guard for regulation enforcement, others? This document needs to better state what the intended role is. If the role is coordination, how do we coordinate? Getting involved in management of exotic species can be financially overwhelming. We need to think more about where and how we would want to spend money. CALFED staff will clarify the role of the Program and provide a revised version to PCT.
- The document needs to discuss the limitations of what really can be done. It may sound great to create a rapid response program, but in actuality, it may be too late by the time an invading species is discovered.
- A suggestion was made to differentiate between economically important exotics and those that are not. Currently, the strategy can be interpreted to assume all exotic species are considered a problem.
- **Comments should be sent to Sharon no later than March 21.**

Item 2 - Status Report on ERPP

Dick Daniels provided an update on the status of the ERPP. Currently, the ERPP is comprised of four documents: 1) a technical summary; 2) volume 1 - containing presentation of details, targets, and objectives for each ecological zone (includes a suite of programmatic actions; 3) volume 2 - containing discussion of habitat types, stressors, etc.); and 4) preliminary working draft of the monitoring program (includes indicators of health, phasing of actions, and focused research needs). The draft ERPP will be released at the April 8 workshop. It may be feasible to provide a copy to PCT the week prior to the workshop. Discussion:

- Concern over the delayed receipt by agency staff of the draft ERPP was raised. Some agency staff would like a copy to assist them in the development of other portions of the ERPP itself.
- Some felt that the April 8 workshop should be delayed to allow people an opportunity to review the document prior to the workshop. Steve Yeager commented that the workshop will go as scheduled. It is designed to allow for easier distribution of the large amount of material and to familiarize reviewers with the structure of the ERPP. This will facilitate timely review. Comments will be requested 45 days following the April issuance.

Item 3 - Overview of Washington D.C. Trip

Lester gave a short overview of the recent trip by CALFED Program staff to Washington D.C. The primary intent of the trip was to provide updates on the CALFED Program to federal representatives both at the various CALFED agencies and at the Capital. The trip took on greater importance, however, because of federal budget approval activities. Overall, the CALFED Program is viewed highly by many members of congress because it is making progress. Many high level meetings and briefings were held to discuss the CALFED actions and early implementation activities.

Item 4 - Alternatives: What will they look like? This agenda item was not discussed.

Item 5 - Permit Streamlining

A draft of the Environmental Permit Coordination Process was distributed to those present. Frank Wernette gave an overview of the proposed process. Permit coordination includes more than just habitat restoration projects. The process envisioned has CALFED committing funds to facilitate permitting. An environmental team will be established that will assist a lead agency or project proponent to ensure that projects are compatible with the CALFED goals and objectives. Frank stressed that the process being developed is not going to ignore necessary public involvement. Discussion:

- Is this going to the Management Team on Monday? This seems too quick and does not give PCT the appropriate amount of time to go back to their respective agencies and further discuss what is proposed. Some comments received at this meeting could be incorporated and this process be presented to the Management Team solely for discussion.
- Could funding be offered by CALFED to other compatible programs to help with permit streamlining? Is this the role being envisioned?
- There seems to be confusion over the proposed method of packaging projects together to mitigate for one another's impacts. Combining could be advantageous in some cases, but there is a risk that some adverse impacts might not be addressed. It is envisioned that the environmental teams involved in the streamlining would also look for opportunities for combining projects on a case-by-case basis.
- What kind of time frame would be involved? The Fish and Wildlife Service has a specified time frame allowed for Section 7 consultation. Would this process short-circuit that? The idea of permit streamlining is to be proactive and perform preliminary consultation to address impact issues up-front. If this is done appropriately, the Section 7 time frames for permit review will not be a factor and formal consultation would be expedited.
- **Comments on the proposed process are to be provided to Frank by March 21.**

Item 6 - What is on the Minds of PCT?

Concerns have been raised in the past regarding the lack of time available in the PCT meetings to discuss issues that may be on the minds of PCT representatives. Wendy asked those present to provide issues that they would like to see addressed now or at future PCT formal or ad hoc meetings. The following was suggested:

- A strategy paper should be produced regarding the desire to include research, monitoring, and data collection as part of early implementation actions. Currently, it seems as though such actions do not qualify for early implementation funding.
- A more comprehensive discussion on general and specific assurances is needed. Some specific assurance issues include: the use of HCPs to provide assurances; the impact of assurances on water quality rules and water rights; and level of detail necessary for

assurances in the context of a programmatic document. How do you provide assurances at a programmatic level of detail?

- Discussion is needed regarding the method for analyzing water reliability increases. How will reliability be measured? What data will be provided to allow for policy makers to develop recommendations?
- The PCT wants to stay better informed about the events in the numerous small groups that are working on different aspects of the Program. For example, monthly updates on the status of the Ecosystem Roundtable may be helpful. (It was noted that all CALFED agencies are in the process of providing representatives directly to the Ecosystem Roundtable and CALFED wants to avoid overlap where possible).

Miscellaneous

Steve Yaeger asked the PCT representatives if there is a need to go to an all-day meeting to allow for all the information to be discussed. The Program is continuing to move forward rapidly and there is a tremendous amount of information and issues to discuss. Steve asked for representatives to provide their thoughts directly to him.

Wendy passed out copies of the *Draft Assessment Methods for Fisheries and the Aquatic Ecosystem*. **Comments are requested by March 20 and should be directed to Wendy.**

Also distributed was a schedule for impact analysis team meetings. If any PCT agency would like to have staff participate, please inform them of the meeting dates and send them to the meetings.

The next PCT meeting is scheduled for April 9, 1997. In addition, CALFED Program staff announced that a workshop to discuss the approach to impact analysis is scheduled for April 29, 1997.