

BDAC - Ecosystem Restoration Work Group
Meeting Summary
May 20, 1996

The BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group held its second meeting on May 20, 1996 at the Resources Building in Sacramento. BDAC members of the Work Group in attendance were Mary Selkirk (Chair), Bob Raab, Stuart Pyle, Tib Belza, Ann Notthoff and Lee Lehman. Invited participants included Pete Rhoads (MWD), Cindy Darling (BR), Pete Chadwick (DFG), Nat Bingham (PCFFA), Gary Bobker (Bay Institute), Ron Fujita (EDF), Bruce Herbold (EPA), Greg Zlotnik (DFG), and Kate Hansel (DWR). Fifteen individuals representing the general public and stakeholders also attended. CALFED staff present included Lester Snow, Dick Daniel, Rick Soehren, and Judy Kelly.

Mary Selkirk introduced the meeting and described its purpose as seeking input on the following:

- draft Ecosystem Strategy,
- revised draft Ecosystem Indicators, and
- key targets and goals.

She further expressed the need for balance between technical and policy issues. Pete Chadwick expressed the need for some fundamental thinking on ecosystem restoration objectives and how they relate to the vision and strategy.

Rick Soehren provided an overview of the revised CALFED Bay-Delta Program Ecosystem Restoration Strategy. Broad agreement is needed on the vision statement that technical and non-technical people can understand and relate to. The limiting factor approach will evolve into a "stressors" approach. Habitat restoration will concentrate on improvements to ecosystem functions, not necessarily restoration of pre-disturbance habitat. Focus will be on ecosystem functions that are impaired and preventing us from reaching our vision and objectives. Among the group there was general support for the revised vision statement and strategy. Suggested improvements included:

- provide more resolution on the vision, strategy, and objectives;
- specify key eco-indicators;
- provide specific goals/targets in objectives;
- include a short- and long-term strategy;
- need a near-term focus on ESA species recovery;
- need more emphasis and detail on adaptive management;
- adaptive management should adjust treatments as needed, but not goals;
- need structure for an institutional program;
- need more emphasis on non-fish issues, need more on wildlife;
- need more emphasis on ecosystem functions and less on individual species;
- include benefits gained from conveyance and storage facilities.

Dick Daniel led a discussion on ecological indicators. He referenced the recently published final report: *"Report of Two Workshops--Restoration of the San Francisco Bay-*

Delta-River Ecosystem: Choosing indicators of Ecological Integrity” (June, 1996). He also presented a table detailing indicators and target levels for key CALFED actions groups. Ron Fujita summarized the workshop report and emphasized the need to focus attention at the landscape level and on the experiences of other restoration programs.

Bruce Herbold summarized his memo on “tools to get to quantification of environmental restoration goals.” He emphasized the importance of diagnostic goals: those things we want the ecosystem to do that it is not doing now. These goals should not change, only treatments or actions may change depending on alternative and adaptive management. Diagnostic goals should focus on several key ecosystem functions that are at the source of the fish problems:

1. migration success - fish need rest stops when getting through Delta;
2. floodplain inundation - only in wet years does this occur any more;
3. tidal wetlands - dead-end sloughs are only remnants of this important habitat.

Comments on Bruce’s memo included general support for the concept and the need for more emphasis on nutrients and food production.

Gary Bobker summarized his memo on “Ecosystem focus and strategy.” He had the following key points:

1. Reality is a moving target, thus we need a process to give assurance to get where we want to go;
2. We should try and address both crisis and parts we know best;
3. Processes and habitat are good approaches to meet objectives;
4. Meeting targets won’t meet all goals: need near- and long-term targets to get broader system goals (non-species goals);
5. Near- versus long-term goals: natural functions, resilience, self-sustainability;
6. We should use adaptive management program to conduct plan and oversee implementation;
7. We should provide financial institutions for long-term program; and
8. We should look to ways to increase protections of key species and habitat during restoration.

Comments included a need to emphasize the need for and importance of new institutions to buy land and water, and to measure performance.

Comments and questions from the public included the following: need more information on cost/benefit of actions, need more emphasis on San Joaquin River and tributaries, and what will be the effect of new development in the Delta.

Mary Selkirk ended the meeting with a reminder that the next meeting would be on June 26th.