

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) Watershed Work Group met on July 16, 1999, in Sacramento. The BDAC Watershed Work Group (Work Group) was created to address the public's request to have more participation in the CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program). The Work Group provides a forum for stakeholders covering a broad geographic area and wide array of interests. Attendees of the Work Group meetings have direct interaction with the Watershed Program's Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT) and an opportunity to review and comment on Watershed Program draft documents. In addition, the Work Group may provide input to the BDAC on issues related to the Watershed Program.

Introductions

Work Group co-chair, Robert Meacher (BDAC/Regional Council for Rural Counties) began the meeting with introductions. A list of meeting participants (Attachment A) and handouts (Attachment B) is included.

Revised Watershed Program Plan

John Lowrie (Watershed Program Manager) stated that the Revised CALFED Programmatic EIS/EIR was released to the public on June 25, 1999. Accompanying the document are several appendices including plans for each Common Program, an Implementation Plan, and Revised Phase II Report. The comment period is 90 days and will close on September 23, 1999. In addition to the formal written comment period, CALFED staff are holding 15 public hearings throughout the state to gain additional input. The hearings will serve as an official forum and comments received will be part of the record.

Mr. Lowrie explained that the Revised Watershed Program Plan is virtually the same as the last draft except that it includes a new section - an Implementation Strategy. The ideas in this section have been discussed at multiple Work Group meetings. The Implementation Strategy illustrates desired outcomes of the Watershed Program elements including:

- Improved Coordination and Assistance;
- Development of Monitoring Protocols and Application of Adaptive Management Processes;
- Improved and Expanded Watershed Education and Public Outreach;
- Maximized Multiple Benefits of the Common Programs; and
- Improved Watershed Stewardship.

Mr. Lowrie stated that at the last Work Group meeting in May, the meeting participants requested that several changes be made to the Finance Plan regarding the Watershed Program. In the current drafts, the finance and governance sections are incorporated into the Implementation Plan, also an appendix to the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR. Mr. Lowrie said that many of the problematic areas in the Finance section were revised, but unfortunately, some items were not changed. The Watershed Program staff will recommend again that these items be rectified before the next release.

Local Watershed Presentations

Conner Everts - Public Officials for Water and Environmental Reform/Mothers of East L.A

Conner Everts was present to report on a community meeting held in Oakland on July 15. The meeting discussed CALFED and its implications for urban communities. Environmental justice groups are concerned that the CALFED Program does not adequately address environmental justice issues or engage minority and low-income communities in the process. A coalition of 30 community groups from the Bay Area has written a letter to Secretary Babbit and Governor Davis requesting meaningful outreach by CALFED to the urban and rural environmental justice communities and greater representation on CALFED governance and advisory bodies.

Work Group participants expressed the desire to coordinate their efforts with those of these community groups and asked Mr. Everts how they could build a relationship. He suggested that an invitation to participate in the Work Group be extended to them. A meeting participant commented that there is a strong link between urban needs for training and jobs with that of the rural watershed needs, i.e.; fuel management - this link further supports the need to build a partnership.

It was agreed that the Watershed Program staff obtain contacts/addresses for these community groups to include them on the mailing list and list-serve, and extend an invitation to these groups to participate in future Work Group meetings.

It was also noted that POWER is holding a conference on October 14 and 15, 1999. Contact Mr. Everts at connere@west.net for more information. Additionally, the CALFED Policy Group has recently decided to open portions of their meetings to the public. The next Policy Group meeting is August 11 and 12, 1999. Call the CALFED offices at 916/657-2666 or look on their webpage (<http://calfed.ca.gov>) for more information.

Gary Nakamura - Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council Mary Schroeder - Western Shasta Resource Conservation District

Mr. Nakamura presented an overview of the Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council (STBC). STBC is a community-based organization formed in 1993 to serve as a forum for discussing and promoting environmentally and economically sustainable natural resource management issues. STBC acts through its diverse membership of government agencies (local, state,

federal), industry and businesses, conservation organizations, academic organizations, and general citizenry. The organization sponsored a North Central California Water Roundtable in 1997 which resulted in a vision and principles for managing water in California, raising the awareness of local citizens and elected officials to water issues. STBC also sponsored an April 1998 BDAC meeting in Redding on the importance of watershed management to CALFED which resulted in the formation of the Work Group in July 1998. The Western Shasta Resource Conservation District (WSRCB) is an example of an "implementer" group that has the capability of obtaining grants and other funds and conducting the on-the-ground work that the STBC advocates and supports. In the lower Clear Creek watershed, the WSRCB has 13 ongoing projects, funded by 5 agencies, including CALFED, on education and fuels inventory to restoring the stream channel and adding spawning gravels.

Watershed Program Implementation

Dennis Bowker (Napa County Resource Conservation District/Watershed Program staff) led a discussion on the implementation of the Watershed Program. Mr. Bowker reviewed the Implementation Strategy, desired outcomes, and anticipated decisions from the Watershed Program Plan with the meeting participants. It was noted that the information on governance and finance pertaining to the Watershed Program is included in the Implementation Plan on pages 70 and 129, respectively. The following comments were made by Work Group participants during the discussion:

- A concern was raised regarding CALFED's "control" over local activities. Some of the language in the Implementation Strategy sounds like CALFED will oversee watershed activities. Mr. Bowker responded that that is not the Watershed Program's intention. The Watershed Program will provide support to local groups, assist with capacity building, and enable watershed practices to occur in a more coordinated fashion. Another meeting participant added that it is important that any CALFED funding to local watershed groups be administered by an organization or group that the project proponent supports.
- A Work Group participant made a comment regarding the integration of Common Programs: each Common Program needs to take responsibility to coordinate with other Common Programs and help maximize the multiple benefits of the programs. This responsibility should not rest solely with the Watershed Program.
- Maria Rea (Resources Agency) commented that Mary Nichols (Secretary of Resources) is very supportive of state-wide watershed stewardship activities. The California Biodiversity Council has established a Watershed Work Group similar to that of CALFED. She suggested that the two groups build on each other's efforts.

- Mr. Meacher raised a discussion about the meaning of "local control." A Work Group participant responded that it does not mean that the local groups are merely the implementor of the CALFED solution, but should be involved in the decision making process as well.

Planning for the September BDAC Meeting in Redding

Mr. Lowrie announced that the next BDAC meeting will be held in Redding on September 16 and 17, 1999. A tour of Battle Creek will be given on September 16. Because the focus of the meeting will be placed on governance, finance, and the Water Management Program, there may not be enough time to include a discussion on watershed stewardship. Mr. Meacher and Roberta Borgonovo (BDAC) agreed to make a request to CALFED staff that 15-20 minutes be given to members of the Work Group. It was suggested that local officials also make a request to CALFED to include a watershed presentation at the BDAC meeting.

A discussion was raised regarding the importance and benefits of watershed management. It was suggested that these points be put together in a cohesive, coherent fashion and presented at the BDAC meeting. A meeting attendee recommended that 8 Work Group participants each give a 2 minute presentation. Several people volunteered to either help with the development of the presentation or act as presenters. Otis Wollan (Placer County Water Agency) volunteered to coordinate the development of the presentation.

Response to the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR

Work Group participants Gary Nakamura and Leah Wills (Plumas Corp.) suggested forming study groups to review and comment on the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR. Because the document and supporting appendices are quite lengthy, it was thought that it would be helpful for interested individuals to review the documents with others. Work Group members interested in participating in a study group should contact Mr. Nakamura at gmnakamura@ucdavis or Ms. Wills at plumasco@psln.com. Mr. Lowrie explained that the reviewers should not expect to find many specifics in the document because of its programmatic nature. Instead, he suggested asking oneself if what they want to see in the program is precluded in any way. If so, that should be a red flag.

Watershed Updates

Mr. Lowrie announced that the concepts and comments of the Work Group on the watershed legislation (Assembly Bill No. 730) was delivered to the authors of the draft language (RCRC). The authors have modified their draft language and delivered it to Assembly Member Dickerson for his consideration. In deference to the Water Bond authors, a revised draft of AB 730 will not be circulated until late August. Mr. Meacher stated that the draft proposal includes a 1% fee on urban water use, and a 5% surcharge on hydroelectric generation to fund watershed management activities.

Mr. Bowker stated that the Sacramento River Watershed Focus Group on pesticides is holding a meeting at the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board on Tuesday, July 20, from 10 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to assist with the development of the Organophosphate Pesticide Management Plan.

Suzanne Gibbs (Big Chico Watershed Alliance) announced that their Existing Conditions Report will be available at the end of July. It will be posted on CA State University Chico's watershed projects webpage.

CALFED Category III Funding Results

Complaints were noted throughout the meeting regarding the results of the CALFED Category III process. Mr. Bowker participated on the Integration Panel and stated that members of the panel were also frustrated. Mr. Bowker and Mr. Lowrie pointed out that this funding process is part of the early implementation of the Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) - not the Watershed Program. The criteria and decision making methods are closely tied with the objectives of the ERP Plan, particularly Delta issues and endangered species. When implementation begins for the other Common Programs, the Watershed Program will employ a funding process that is in tune with the goals and objectives as illustrated in the Watershed Program Plan.

Mr. Lowrie explained that only one "watershed" project was funded during the last round. Because of these results CALFED received many complaints, and much concern was raised over the lack of recognition of the need for improved watershed management. As a result, Lester Snow, CALFED Executive Director, with agreement of the Policy Group, asked staff to review the existing set of watershed proposals, and suggest a set of additional projects which could be funded by CALFED. Watershed Program staff reviewed the watershed proposals and have made some initial recommendations. Those recommendations were presented to Mr. Lowrie and then forwarded to Mr. Snow and Wendy Halverson-Martin for consideration. After review, the matter will be discussed with and recommendations made to the Policy Group and Ecosystem Roundtable. A decision on this matter could be made by the end of August.

A meeting participant commented that in the past CALFED has funded coordination and outreach efforts of watershed groups; however, the last round of funding focused on directed actions and moved towards implementation. The meeting attendee added that it does not make sense to have CALFED help local watershed groups get started and then walk away - there needs to be continued support. Mr. Lowrie reiterated that the Watershed Program will support coordination and planning efforts.

Planning for August Work Group Meeting

The next Work Group meeting will be held on Friday, August 20, 1999, in Sacramento. The following are agenda items that the Work Group participants requested:

- Watershed legislation update;
- Planning for September BDAC meeting;
- Comments on the Programmatic EIS/EIR; and
- Watershed Program Implementation.