Interim Science Panel Recommendations
September 27-28, 1999

Based on a recommendation of the BDAC Ecosystem Roundtable, CALFED staff convened an Interim Science Panel on September 27 and September 28, 1999, to complete three tasks (these tasks were identified in a September 16, 1999 memorandum from Wendy Halverson Martin to the Interim Science Panel):

- Review the FY 2000 Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan and provide support for the plan as identified, or specific guidance as to how it should be modified
- Review the remaining 1999 proposals which were not funded in 1999 and recommend specific projects which satisfy the FY 2000 implementation plan
- Review the list of watershed projects recommended to supplement the 1999 funding package and provide concurrence or specific recommendations for revising the list.

Attachment A is a list of Interim Science Panel members.

Before responding to these tasks, the panel emphasized that time and resource constraints precluded anything more than a cursory scientific review of the Implementation Plan and potential projects. However, the Interim Science Panel focused intensively during this period on developing a recommended list of projects and providing guidance to CALFED on subsequent processes. The panel work product represents the best recommendation that the Panel could provide with the resources and time available. This effort should not in any way be considered a full, in-depth scientific vetting of projects as described by the Strategic Plan Core Team. In the future, CALFED should allow adequate time and provide the resources necessary for a full, in-depth review of priorities and projects.

Review the Implementation Plan

The Interim Science Panel had the opportunity to review the Draft FY2000 Implementation Plan for Ecosystem Restoration (dated September 13, 1999) as well as a CALFED staff generated matrix of projects, organized by the programmatic actions contained in the Implementation Plan, and heard a CALFED staff presentation on the priorities in the Implementation Plan. During the presentation, the Implementation Plan was described as a combination of science and administrative concerns, including coordination with other CALFED programs (hence the focus on the South Delta). The Panel was not comfortable commenting on the administrative focus in the plan or in adopting this plan as a foundation for recommending projects for funding in FY 2000 for two reasons:

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1) The pool of projects was solicited based on 1999 Proposal Solicitation Package criteria, not the FY 2000 Implementation Plan.

2) The scientific basis for the Implementation Plan has not been fully developed. Therefore, there is no assurance that the "optimal" or "best" projects are encompassed by the current Implementation Plan.

Rather than providing guidance as to how the plan should be modified, the panel focused on the remaining two tasks.

Review the 1999 proposal and recommend specific projects

The Panel reviewed the lists of 1999 proposals provided by CALFED staff and identified a number of proposals for further discussion, based on the following considerations:

- The scores and comments from the 1999 technical review panels. These scores and comments were made in the context of the priorities identified in the FY99 Proposal Solicitation Package and were the only information available to the panel that was based on an in-depth review of the proposals.

- Whether or not a project had a high potential to yield information useful for future restoration planning and implementation. The Panel considered these projects to be "information rich" in that they likely addressed one or more of the critical scientific uncertainties and impediments to restoration identified in the Strategic Plan.

- Whether or not CALFED had invested in previous phases of the project. The Panel considered providing funding to existing projects ready for next phase funding to avoid losing valuable information and momentum on these projects.

  One caveat to this consideration is that the Panel recommended comprehensive scientific and technical review for large-scale, phased projects prior to providing construction phase funding. For these large-scale and costly projects, additional review should confirm that the emerging project is scientifically sound, continues to address critical scientific uncertainties, remains a priority action when compared to other types of ecosystem restoration actions, and fits within the developing region-wide perspective. The Interim Science Panel recognized all existing large, next-phase construction projects as having the potential to address scientific uncertainties and fit within an adaptive management framework. The Panel recommends holding these large construction projects for review in FY 2001. This allows for completion of ERP White Papers currently being developed, completion of comprehensive scientific and technical review prior to construction-phase funding, and completion of comprehensive monitoring plans

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including peer review.

- The need to invest in the science review of the Ecosystem Restoration Program. This would, in part, bring additional scientific validity to the program, review past project efforts to assess their value, and help scope FY2001 priorities.

- The need recently expressed by the CALFED Policy Group to fund watershed proposals to demonstrate CALFED's support and commitment to local, community-based watershed improvement efforts, and to more clearly address the scientific uncertainties and relationships of upper and lower watershed management and the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

The Panel members reviewed the proposals selected from the list and based on the above considerations and on the potential availability of approximately $25 million dollars for ecosystem restoration projects and activities from the Federal Bay Delta Act, the Panel recommended 20 projects totaling more that 14.5 million dollars for funding in FY2000. They also supported a CALFED staff recommendation for providing money for the Environmental Water Account and strengthening of the Ecosystem Science and Monitoring Program, although the Panel did not have the information necessary to assign specific funding levels to these efforts. Attachment B provides a more detailed description of the recommendations. Attachment C is the executive summaries for the twenty projects.

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FY2000 Project Recommendations

Project Title	Amount
99-B102 Tuolumne River Bobcat Flat Floodplain Acquisition	$1,984,320
99-B116 Canal Ranch Habitat Restoration Phase II	$131,980
99-B126 Subreach/Site-Specific Management Planning on the Sacramento River	$519,000
99-B145 Culture of Delta Smelt Phase II	$431, 606
99-B152 A Mechanistic Approach to Riparian Restoration -San Joaquin Basin	$233,666
99-B153 Merced River Corridor Restoration Project Phase III	$229,000
99-B165 Liberty Island Acquisition and Restoration Phase I	$2,623,043
99-B166 Focused Action to Develop Ecologically-based Hydrologic Models and Water Management Strategies in the San Joaquin Basin	$295,925
99-B192 McCormack Williamson Tract Phase II Restoration Planning	$355,000
99-B193 McCormack Williamson Tract Phase II Monitoring Program	$556,200
99-C100 Last Chance Creek Project	$980,000
99-C105 Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed Management/ Action Plan	$848,000
99-C108 Cottonwood Creek Watershed Monitoring and Assessment	$350,000
99-C140 Sonoma Creek Watershed Conservancy (1 year)	$489,923
99-D100 Real Time Water Quality Management	$652,330
99-D124 Dissolved Organic Carbon Release - Delta Wetlands Part 2	$2,740,040
99-E109 Treating Ballast Water Discharges at Existing Municipal Wastewater Treatment Plants	$118,460
99-E110 Determining the Biological, Physical and Chemical Characteristics of Ballast Water Arriving in SF Bay	$375,750
99-E118 Arundo Donax Eradication and Coordination	$818,045
99-F105 Biological Assessment of Green Sturgeon	$205,013
Subtotal : $14,937,301 plus 3% administration	$15,400,000

Review of 1999 Watershed Projects

The Panel reviewed nine watershed projects recommended for additional funding as part

of the 1999 Ecosystem Restoration Projects. These projects were identified in a September 1, 1999 memorandum from Wendy Halverson Martin to the Ecosystem Roundtable upon request of the CALFED Policy Group. The Panel supports eight of the proposals and recommends that these proposals be funded.

The Panel does not recommend funding 99-C115, Upper Trinity River Watershed Stewardship Project. There were several reasons for this recommendation.

- Because of the unique relationship between the Trinity River and the Central Valley, it is difficult to establish direct connections between restoration on the Trinity watershed and problems specific to the Bay Delta,

- The amount of money requested seemed disproportionately low in relation to the type of work to be completed, and

- The Panel felt that the scope of this project would not provide information addressing the issue of the link between upper watershed processes and the Bay Delta. The Panel discussed the importance of implementing upper watershed projects which can provide such information.

Guidance for FY 2001 Priorities using Adaptive Management

The implementation of adaptive management requires the construction of a comprehensive framework which addresses scientific uncertainties, testable hypotheses and conceptual models which allow for accumulation of information and contributes to improved future decision making. Once the framework has been established, specific types of individual projects can be recruited or solicited to comprise the building blocks of an adaptive management framework. This process allows a critical review and comparison of projects which are similar to each other, and allows for cost/benefit comparisons of similar projects. The Panel encourages CALFED to emphasize adaptive management in all aspects of ERP implementation, including in the FY 2001 priorities.

In addition to addressing the tasks originally assigned to the Interim Science Panel, the Panel offered several suggestions for the process of setting FY 2001 priorities.

- Continue to use the Ecosystem Restoration Plan and Strategic Plan as the basis for developing priorities.

- Immediately involve a group of scientists in developing the FY2001 priorities and preparing specific proposal language for the Proposal Solicitation Package. Conduct informational meetings to provide status of activities to date.

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- Be sure to tap into specialized scientific expertise. Conduct meetings to bring in regional technical experts. Use bottom-up science.

The Panel also emphasized that adaptive management requires scientific interventions (projects) which generate high levels of information. Implementation of adaptive management requires a different process than has been used in the past to recruit ecosystem restoration projects.

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