BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group
Meeting Summary
June 25, 1997

The fourteenth meeting of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group was held on Wednesday, June 25 at the Resources Building from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

BDAC Members of the Work Group in Attendance:

Ann Notthoff
Mary Selkirk

Invited Participants in Attendance:

Gary Bobker
Pete Chadwick
Buford Holt
Pete Rhoads
Sally Shanks
Frank Wernette
Tom Zuckerman

CALFED Staff/ Consultant Team in Attendance:

Dick Daniel
Michael Fainter
Sharon Gross
Peter Kiel
Eugenia Laychak
Jim Martin
Scott McCreary
Ray McDowell
Terry Mills

Other Participants in Attendance:
Bill Alsop
Lee Barrett
Catriona Black
Annalena Bronson
Peter Candy
Dan Craig
Bruce DiGennaro
Bill DuBois
Greg Elliott
Anthony Farrington
Steve Ford
Jeff Harvey
Winnie Jones
Walter Kornichuk
Lowell Landowski
Jim Lynch
Stacy Ollmann
Elizabeth Patterson
Barbara Patton Kichel
Nicole Sandkulla
Sean White

Draft Meeting Summary

Action Items and Decisions

1. The Work Group reaffirmed the need for independent and objective Scientific Review Panel members.
2. The Work Group indicated that the general level of detail of the questions for the Scientific Review Panel is appropriate.
3. Participants indicated a need for members of the public to be able to comment during the Scientific Review Workshop under the guidelines of facilitated scientific review.
4. Background briefings that are prepared for each question should summarize all relevant views and issues of concern, ensure a diversity of stakeholder positions on the issues, be balanced and unbiased.
5. Technical advisors should assist CALFED in developing the background briefings.

Mary Selkirk (Chair, BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group) began the meeting at 9:15 a.m. with a discussion of the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to review the status of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP), the status of the Scientific Review Panel, the panelist and technical advisor selection criteria, the questions for the Scientific Panel, and the role of the Scientific Panel and technical advisors.

Sharon Gross (CALFED Program Staff) described the process of facilitated scientific review of the ERPP, candidates for the Scientific Review Panel, and the proposed outline of the Scientific Review Panel work shop.

Overview of the Facilitated Scientific Review Process

- The objective for facilitated scientific review is to analyze the scientific validity and rationales of the hypotheses underlying the ERPP.
- Facilitated scientific review of the ERPP will be accomplished through the following steps: convene a Scientific Review Panel of nationally recognized scientists with broad expertise; select technical advisors with specific technical knowledge of the Bay-Delta system to assist the panel; draft questions to guide the panel deliberation; and organize a four day work shop to review the ERPP.
- In order to ensure an independent and objective review, scientists who have extensive experience in the Bay-Delta system will not be considered as panelists.
- The Scientific Review Panel will be asked to analyze the general process, planning, organization and scientific foundation of the ERPP. It should not be necessary for the Panel to analyze technical data nor review action-specific information. This scope of review is appropriate because panelists will not have specific knowledge of the Bay-Delta system, the panel will only meet for four days, and the lead time into the Workshop is necessarily brief in order to get early feedback on the ERPP and work within the time frame of the EIR/EIS.

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- Public input into the development of the process for scientific review will occur through the BDAC ERWG. Additional CALFED agency input is occurring through an interagency Steering Committee.
- Expected results from the process include a written report on concurrence on issues of scientific agreement and disagreement and recommendations to improve the ERPP.

Scientific Review Panel Candidates

The Work Group briefly discussed the Scientific Panel candidates. Comments on the Panel candidates include the following:

- There are too few panel candidates with expertise on migratory waterfowl.
- Dick Daniel (CALFED Program Staff) indicated that there is probably sufficient expertise on wetland habitat to address migratory waterfowl.
- Change the Panel selection criterion to: *"objectivity and independence of Bay-Delta stakeholder groups."*

Proposed Outline of Four Day Work Shop

1) The Scientific Review Panel Workshop will be open to the public with several opportunities for public comment. There was general concern about the opportunities for the public to participate in the Workshop and the Panel review. Work Group comments or suggestions include:
   - Allow ample interaction between the Panel and members of the public.
   - Allow public participants in the Workshop to submit written comments. These comments could be distributed to all panelists and to technical advisors qualified to address the comments.
   - Allow public comment periods daily at the end of the deliberations. Some participants expressed concern that public comments during the deliberations could slow the process down.

2) CALFED will begin the Workshop by providing a general overview of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, the Bay-Delta system, and the ERPP. Work Group comments or suggestions include:
   - Provide written background information to panel well before work shop is convened to familiarize panelists with the Bay-Delta system.

3) CALFED will provide a background briefing for each question. The briefing will include the rationale for asking the question, the background scientific or technical data necessary to understand and provide feedback on the question, and an overview of the issues of concern surrounding the question. Work Group comments or suggestions include:
   - Have technical advisors help develop the briefings.

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4) The Panel will deliberate the questions and issues. Work Group comments or suggestions include:
   - Allow panelists to interact or ask questions of the public, technical advisors and agencies during the deliberations.

Timing of the Scientific Review Panel and ERPP

Dick Daniel (CALFED Program Staff) described the timeline for release of the three volumes of the ERPP and the Scientific Review Panel.

1) Volume I of the ERPP will be distributed beginning on Friday, June 27.
2) Volume II and III of the ERPP are anticipated to be released mid- to late-July. The 45 day public review period will be triggered upon release of Volume III.
3) The Scientific Review Panel will convene during the review period or shortly after. There was concern among participants regarding the timing of the Scientific Review Panel relative to release of the ERPP:

   Some participants believed that the Scientific Review process should occur during the 45 day review period for the following reasons:
   - Those commenting on the ERPP can refine their comments based on the Panel findings, especially if it occurs in near the beginning or middle of the review period;
   - Scientific review during the review period could trigger public interest in the ERPP; and
   - Stakeholder viewpoints may have been polarized if the scientific review follows the review period.

   Other participants favored of the Scientific Review process to follow the 45 day review period because:
   - Scientists on the Panel would have the opportunity to review public comments to determine which issues are most important or are the most uncertain which would help guide discussions; and
   - Technical advisors to the Panel would have more time to comment on the ERPP.

Review of Draft Questions for the Scientific Panel

The draft questions for the Scientific Review Panel was included in the previous Work Group packet as Attachment 2. Mary Selkirk described the purpose of questions for the Scientific Panel and offered three questions to guide the Work Group's discussion of the questions: 1) Are the question categories a sufficient basis for the Scientific Panel discussion?; 2) Do you suggest revisions to the categories and if so do those revisions capture the parameters of the feedback needed by CALFED?; and 3) Is the level of detail of the questions appropriate?

Sharon Gross reiterated the scope of questions.

- Because the Panel will not have local experts, the questions will be on a broader, landscape level.
- The questions will focus on review of more conceptual scientific issues.
- The questions should not require Panel members to review a detailed analysis of system-specific technical data.
- The background briefings and question and answer sessions with technical advisors will present the necessary technical information.

The following are suggested revisions to the questions resulting from discussions during the meeting. Suggested revisions to questions and new questions are italicized. Additional suggestions can be sent via email to pkiel@water.ca.gov.

Questions regarding the planning approach of the ERPP.

- Rephrase 1 to: "*To what extent* is the general planning approach described in the ERPP appropriate and adequate *to meet mission of CALFED*?"
- "*Is the relationship between targets and implementation objectives clear?*"

Questions regarding targets of ecosystem health.

- *"Are there flaws in this approach? How have other restoration programs chosen targets? How can we improve this process?"*
- *"Does the general scope and attempt of targets suggest a reasonable attempt to achieve implementation objectives?*
- *"Is the scientific information upon which the targets are based valid?"* - Some participants indicated that this question was too specific and would require analysis of technical data. This Panel would not be the appropriate forum to address the level of detail necessary to answer this question.

Questions regarding the scope of the ERPP.

- Clarify the geographic scope in the introduction to the question to make it clear that the ERPP relies on different levels of actions among three areas.
- Have a question which asks whether the scope of actions in the near-shore ocean is sufficient to address anadromous fishes issues.
- Rephrase 4 to: "Can and under what circumstances will restoration of ecological processes in *areas outside of the Ecological Zones (including the upper watersheds and near-shore ocean)* result in measurable benefits in the tributaries of the Delta and the Delta itself?"

Questions regarding the process of adaptive management.

- Rephrase 5 to: *"To what extent* is the ...?"
- Describe the conflict between flexibility and certainty of adaptive management in the introduction to the question.

Questions regarding the process of phasing.

- Rephrase 7 to: "... *based on scientific certainty and biological urgency?*"
- "Proper balance" can be confused as a cost-benefit analysis question. Socioeconomic issues are dealt with in the EIR/EIS, not in the Scientific Review process.

Questions regarding indicators of ecosystem health.

- *"Do the indicators and implementation objectives adequately define ecosystem health?"*
- Provide background information on the monitoring program and the oversight mechanism.

Questions regarding the outcomes of the ERPP.

- Rephrase 10 to: *"What do the irreversible changes in the Bay-Delta system suggest for the ERPP? How have irreversible changes in other systems affected restoration efforts?"*
- Move 11 to new category with target questions: *Questions regarding the scientific foundation of the ERPP.* Add: *"How would you quantify the wetland characteristics that serve to support basic ecological processes and functions?"*
- *"How do you prioritize the most important irreversible changes to the system?"*
- There are no questions specifically about stressors.
- *"How can we identify unforeseen stressors or future changes in stressors?"*
- *"How have you measured success of a project?"*

Background Information Briefings

For each question the Panel will be provided with a packet of information and a background briefing. The briefing will provide a rationale of what the ERPP proposes and summarize issues surrounding the question or topic. Technical advisors will be asked to provide input on the issues for the briefings. Comments include:

- The briefings must be unbiased and have balanced presentation of all issues.
- Should have a dress rehearsal of the presentations or a meeting to revise the briefings with technical advisors to make certain that the briefings cover all the issues surrounding the question. Stakeholders and technical advisors must be assured that the Panel has received all relevant available information in order to make an informed decision.

Technical Advisor Selection Criteria

Technical advisors will be selected among those scientists who have specific technical expertise in the Bay-Delta system. Technical advisors may be aligned with stakeholders or agencies. The Work Group recommended revisions to the technical advisor selection criterion that there be "parity among stakeholder groups among technical advisors." Comments include the following:

- Parity has too precise a definition; consider *"equity"* or *"ensure a balance of stakeholder groups."*

- *"Ensure adequate representation of a diversity of stakeholder positions on the issues."*
- Ensure that there is good diversity of technical expertise.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group was scheduled for Wednesday, July 30 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (This meeting has been changed to Thursday, July 24 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

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