

**BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group
Meeting Summary
July 24, 1997**

The fifteenth meeting of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group was held on Thursday, July 24 at the Resources Building in Room 1412 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

BDAC Members of the Work Group:

Mary Selkirk

Invited Participants in Attendance:

Pete Chadwick
Buford Holt

CALFED Staff/ Consultant Team:

Dick Daniel
Sharon Gross
Peter Kiel
Scott McCreary
Susan Shanks

Other Participants in Attendance:

Anthony Barrett
Lee Barrett
J.P. Cativiela
Dan Craig
William Cunningham
Bruce DiGennaro
Anthony Farrington
Earl Nelson
Diane Hinson
Linda Hunter
Marti Kie
John Kopchick
Walter Kornichuk
Roger Masuda
Nicole Sandkulla
Scott Spaulding
Mike Stephens
Leo Winternitz

Draft Meeting Summary

Mary Selkirk (Chair, BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group) began the meeting at 1:40 p.m. with introductions and a discussion of the agenda. The primary purpose of the meeting was to review the questions for the Scientific Panel, discuss the role of the technical advisors in the Scientific Review Panel workshop, and to comment on Volume I of the ERPP.

Review of Draft Questions for the Scientific Panel

Mary Selkirk began the discussion of the questions by reiterating the purpose of the questions (questions were included in meeting packet). The questions are designed to guide the deliberation of the Scientific Review Panel during a four-day workshop by highlighting specific issues in the ERPP. Informational briefings for each question will be presented by CALFED to the Panel. The briefings will incorporate the background needed to understand the questions, the type of information that would be helpful for CALFED to improve the ERPP, and the diversity of stakeholder issues and concerns regarding that question. She then asked the participants to provide feedback on whether the categories of questions and the specific questions reflect the feedback needed by CALFED, whether the questions are clear, and if not, how the questions should be rephrased and what information is required in introductory material and briefings to answer the questions.

The following are suggested revisions to the questions and information needed in the briefings resulting from discussions during the meeting. Suggested revisions are italicized.

General comments on the questions and briefings

The Work Group suggested that many of the questions are very vague and only make sense when included in the context that is described in the introduction. Background briefings are critical to clarify the questions and to elicit a useful response from the Panel. CALFED will need to provide background information to panelists as early as possible so that additional clarification can be provided if needed before the workshop meets.

There was debate concerning the appropriate level of specificity of the issues presented in the briefings. Comments include the following:

- By highlighting only certain specific issues, it may lead the discussion to overlook potentially more important issues.
- The primary intent of the Panel is to review the concepts of the ERPP at a broad, landscape level; specific issues or concerns in the briefings may lead the discussion to an action-specific level of analysis.

Questions regarding the planning approach of the ERPP

Suggestions for the briefing:

- CALFED should make the clarification in the background briefing that the problem of the system is one of ecosystem quality and not simply species conflict with water management. The targets, implementation objectives, etc. area designed to restore ecosystem quality.
- Clarify that indicators and implementation objectives define a vision of ecological health.

Suggested question revisions:

- Question 2 should ask, "Is the relationship between *visions*, targets and implementation objectives clearly defined?"
- Add first part of Question 7 to this category: "To what extent do the implementation objectives adequately describe a vision of ecological health?" (to become new Question 3).

Questions regarding the scope of the ERPP

Suggestions for the briefing:

- The briefing should clearly provide the rationale with specific examples for defining the two components of the ERPP scope: 1) the problem area and solution area; and 2) geographical tiering of actions.
- Briefing should ask whether the scope is large enough to restore ecological health to the system.

Suggested question revisions:

- Change the question from "What are the conceptual strengths and weaknesses of pursuing this approach of tiering of actions" to "*Has the ERPP appropriately tiered actions?*"

Questions regarding the process of phasing

Suggestions for the briefing:

- Ask the Panel how a twenty-five or more year program can be implemented given scientific uncertainty.
- Specific examples explaining potential conflicts of actions in the ERPP would be helpful. Examples of the conflict between actions include short-term disturbance to critical or endangered habitats for long-term improvement of that habitat.
- Agricultural land conversion may harm species dependent on those lands.
- ERPP actions have the potential to conflict with other restoration and resource management programs.

Suggested question revisions:

- Question 5 should be changed to: "*Can you comment on our approach or recommend a method that addresses scientific uncertainty and biological urgency to achieve proper phasing of actions.*"

Questions regarding indicators of ecosystem health

Suggestions for the briefing include:

- Indicators have a specific technical/numerical component - quantity, distribution, abundance, time, etc.
- Indicators will focus primarily on habitat and processes and not on species.

Suggested question revisions:

- Move "To what extent do the implementation objectives adequately describe a vision of ecological health?" to the Planning Process category (to become new Question 3). Add new question with this one: Have we properly defined the problem of ecosystem quality?
- Change question to: "*To what extent will the indicators selected provide a reasonable definition of ecological health?*"
- New question: "*Are the selected indicators adequate to determine whether the implementation objectives are being achieved?*"

Questions regarding targets of ecosystem health

Suggestions for the briefing include:

- CALFED set targets using three different methods or a hybrid of the three methods. The best approach would have been to use one method, but the lack of historical documentation precludes CALFED from using only historical reference conditions.
- Targets can be adjusted based on Panel suggestions and adaptive management.

Suggested question revisions:

- This category should follow the Planning Approach category.
- Suggested change: "*Can you recommend a better approach for CALFED to set targets?*"

Questions regarding the scientific foundation of the ERPP

Suggestions for the briefing include:

- The purpose of this category of questions is to analyze the most important scientific issues upon which the ERPP is based. The flow characteristic question is one of many uncertain scientific issues of the ERPP, but it is the only specific scientific question because it is the most contentious issue and one that the Panel could provide insight gained from other programs. If there are other scientific issues that should be addressed by the Panel, they should be suggested to CALFED.
- Panelists unfamiliar with unique attributes of the system and California will need briefing information on the Mediterranean climate of the ecosystem, hydrologic variability, snowmelt runoff, distribution of water resources, unique geomorphology, water diversions effects on hydrology, and more.

Suggested question revisions:

- The purpose of the flow question is to collect information on the best methods to quantify the varied attributes and roles of water and flow in riverine and estuarine aquatic ecosystems. It is expected that the Scientific Review Panel will offer numerous types of

- quantification, some of which are specific to riverine systems, estuaries, channel forming processes, frequency and duration of flow, and others.
- The term “streamflow” is not sufficiently descriptive of all aspects of water flow processes that are of concern like estuarine hydrology and hydromorphology. Change streamflow to “*riverine and estuarine flow,*” or “*flow attributes.*”
 - “Determine the flow characteristics” should be changed to “‘*select*’ or ‘*identify*’ the flow characteristics.”
 - Change “restoration” to “*management*” to emphasize that the Bay-Delta has undergone irreversible change and must be managed.
 - Include new questions about specific aquatic system attributes including channel-forming processes, water temperature, etc.
 - CALFED should state what methods have been used in the ERPP to quantify flow characteristics and then ask the Panel if those are appropriate.
 - The question is too long. Move the description of “flow characteristics” to the question introduction and clarify.

Questions regarding the outcomes of the ERPP

Suggested question revisions:

- Question 10 should be rearranged: First part of question should be “What irreversible changes have occurred in other systems...”
- “Given the irreversible changes in the system, *which implementation objectives may not be achievable?*”
- “What irreversible changes have occurred in other systems, how have those affected restoration efforts, *and what lessons can be applied to this system?*”
- In Question 11, change “requirements” to “*elements.*”

Comments on ERPP Volume I

Comments discussed on Volume I of the ERPP included: the geographic scope of the ERPP must be better defined; Volume I is difficult to review by itself and may be easier to read in conjunction with the other volumes; the definition of “riparian” is insufficient; concern about how contaminants will be addressed in the ERPP.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Work Group was scheduled for Thursday, August 21, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.