

## Proposed Changes to Project Selection Process

The Restoration Coordination Program began its transition to long-term implementation in 1999. The transition from early ecosystem restoration to long-term implementation involves moving from a very broad solicitation and implementation of ecosystem projects, characteristic of the 1997 and 1998 solicitations, to an increasingly focused implementation plan moving towards implementation of the long-term Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP). The Ecosystem Restoration Plan provides the framework for implementing ecosystem restoration projects. Every project approved should make measurable progress towards implementation of the long-term plan.

In 1999, the public solicitation for ecosystem projects included increased specificity in the form of focused actions, most of which were contained in the ERP Stage 1 Actions. Future solicitations for projects are expected to be increasingly focused.

The revised project selection process needs to address and incorporate issues and concerns raised by stakeholders and the public:

- The process should be “transparent”
- Project selection should be conducted in a public forum
- Local governments, adjacent property owners and other interested parties should be given the opportunity to be engaged early in the process

### FY 2000 Vision/Priorities

The first step toward project selection for FY 2000 involves development of a vision/priorities for the year 2000. The vision should identify desired outcomes through project actions in the first year of implementation. As noted above, every project approved should make measurable progress towards implementation of the long-term plan. These implementation actions are described in ERP Stage 1 Actions and Stage 1A Bundles. Stage 1A Bundles geographically represent implementation actions for not only the ERP but other CALFED programs (e.g. Water Quality and Watershed Management).

A draft FY 2000 vision will be presented to the Ecosystem Roundtable and the public. This plan will identify ERP priorities for the coming year. A public workshop will be held on August 31<sup>st</sup> to discuss the vision/priorities outlined. Upon completion of that document, projects can then be identified which fulfill those priorities. Projects can be selected one of three ways:

- 1) an existing proposal can be funded as is
- 2) an existing proposal can be revised and submitted for consideration as a Directed Program
- 3) a proposal can be developed as a new Directed Program

The attached table describes the key dates for the Roundtable in this process. It is expected that recommendations will be made, in part, by October of this year in time for FY 2000 funds. It is anticipated that CALFED may receive \$30 to \$45 million dollars for ecosystem restoration projects for FY 2000.

### **Long-Term Project Selection Process**

For future project selection, it is expected that projects may be selected from several different avenues. An existing proposal may be funded, a Directed Program may be identified, or additional funding may be provided to a future phase of an already funded project. An annual solicitation process which is focused on annual and long-term priorities would be held.

Once proposals are received, they will first be evaluated by CALFED staff for their completeness and responsiveness to the solicitation. Proposals which do not meet specified minimum requirements will be eliminated at this step.

Proposals will next be evaluated by a science review panel and CALFED staff for scientific and technical merit. A large group of scientists will be selected which can provide an independent peer review of the projects. It is expected that several scientists will be selected for reviewing proposals within his/her expertise. Staff will be providing recommendations as to the proposal's potential ability to meet ERP short and long-term objectives, and reviewing administrative and non scientific components.

The staff and science review recommendations will be forwarded to the Ecosystem Roundtable for consideration. The Ecosystem Roundtable's role is to provide policy input into the selection process. The Ecosystem Roundtable will be developing an initial recommendation for funding based on scientific and staff input. As has been done in the past, the Roundtable recommendation will be forwarded to the Bay Delta Advisory Committee and Policy Group. Policy Group will make the recommendation to the Secretary for Resources and Secretary of Interior for approval.