

CALFED Management Meeting
March 17, 1997

This is a list of some of the issues which arose during our attempt to define the affected environment, the no action alternative and actions to be considered for cumulative impact analysis.

Affected Environment

Resources and Description Periods

Development of the list of resources to be affected and the period for describing the resources was fairly straight forward. Additions were made to our resource list as well as description periods based on comments received throughout the process. The most significant was:

In describing the affected environment a historical perspective is needed to place current conditions in perspective. Further, to describe current conditions for some resources, it is necessary to discuss more than a single point in time because of the seasonal and annual variations that affect those resources. Accordingly, tables were prepared proposing historical and current condition description periods for each resource. Recently, we have decided to identify the overall timeframe that will be used to describe historic as well as current conditions but will not define a specific current condition description period for resources until impact analysis needs are apparent. A set of criteria will be prepared for each resource category to be used to select the appropriate description period.

Assumptions

Since the affected environment will serve as one of the "baselines" to help differentiate between alternatives, operational and regulatory criteria and assumptions also need to be developed. The issues raised with respect to these criteria and assumptions are discussed under the No Action Alternative Assumptions heading.

No Action Alternative

Development of the No Action Alternative was a bit more problematic.

Projects

CVPIA - To minimize speculation, projects were selected based on a set of criteria. Most of the CVPIA actions did not make it into the no action alternative. The Northern California Power Agency suggested that all CVPIA items should be part of the no action alternative. They indicated the following:

- need to separate CVPIA from CALFED actions in order to decide on how well CALFED meets its objectives;
- reduce confusion on assigning costs between "mitigation" versus "restoration" actions. CVPIA is mitigation for CVP impacts, costs are to be covered by the CVP beneficiaries per CVPIA. Incorporating the mitigation costs of CVPIA as part of CALFED will create confusion and conflict;
- reduce the tendency for Congress to double count its CVPIA contributions. IF CVPIA funding is intermingled with CALFED funding, CVPIA funding could become conveniently lost resulting in less overall federal funding; and

unable to comply with CALFED's solution principles. Mandatory CVPIA objectives and actions are contradictory to the principle of no significant redirected impacts. CVPIA has explicitly included redirected impacts as a part of implementing its action plan objectives.

We have continued to maintain that the most CVPIA actions are not appropriate for the no action alternative because they do not meet the criteria. Making an exception here may open the door to others. However, rationale could be crafted that would allow us to add the whole of CVPIA to the no action alternative and still be able to avoid adding others.

The desire to keep the two projects distinct seems to revolve around two items, making sure no one gets the impression that CVPIA actions are back on the drawing board and making sure a clear picture of the cost of the CALFED actions is presented.

800,000 af/year - The dedication of the 800,000 acre-feet/year met the criteria. However, there does not seem to be an agreement on how to model the 800,000 af/year for either the existing conditions or the no action alternative. In our alternative development process, it has been assumed that the 800,000 af/year are used in upstream river basins.

Assumptions for No Action Alternative and Affected Environment.

Assumptions for both are described when there are differences between the Affected Environment and No Action Alternative.

COA - Assume current sharing formula which is based on D-1485.

Trinity River - Assume current imports to the CVP and proposing to conduct a sensitivity analysis of instream flow/import adjustments if there are increased Trinity River instream flow allocations.

American River - Assume current allocations and proposing to conduct a sensitivity analysis of potential increased allocations.

Delta Standards - Assume 1995 Water Quality Control Plan is in place and proposing to conduct a sensitivity analysis of difference between the D-1485 and 1995 WQCP.

Vernalis Standards - For Affected Environment assume existing situation that the standard is not met in all years. For the no action, show that the standard will be met but not assigning responsibility or water requirement for meeting this standard to any party.

"Demands" - Questions related to "demands". 1. What is meant by "demands" in DWRSIM Modeling? -- Refers to amount of water assumed to be requested by water contractors; 2. Why do CVP "demands" increase between 1995 and 2020? -- Contractors such as Contra Costa Water District are currently using 140,000 acre-feet but has a contract for 195,000 af; 3. Will "demands" always be met? The model tries to meet the "demands" each month but is constrained by prior water rights, water quality requirements, compliance with biological opinions, etc. and 4. Are upstream "demands" consistent with demands in DWR Bulletin 160? -
- Yes.

Drinking Standards - Assume current standards continue into the future but will follow work in progress by CUWA. CUWA's December 1996 draft identifies limits for two disinfection by products 40ug/L for total trihalomethanes and 30ug/L for the sum of 5 haloacetic acids and a potential limit of 5ug/L for bromate.

Levee Failure Probability - Assumptions need to be developed.

Cumulative Analysis

Projects

Interim South Delta Program - Concern about appropriateness of item because it seems to be part of the alternatives. We intend to adjust, if appropriate, as alternatives are firmed up.

Delta Wetlands - As Above

12