

Agenda Item 3C

Special Support Programs

1. Introduction

At the previous Ecosystem Roundtable meeting, members requested additional information on the proposed expenditure of federal FY 98 funds for special support programs within CALFED. Several of the special support programs have been significantly modified based on previous Roundtable input as well as a desire on the part of the CALFED program staff to more fully integrate the Restoration Coordination Program and the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan.

This paper describes the four special support programs proposed for funding from the FY 98 federal appropriation. The first program is the development of a phased implementation strategy for the ERPP. Many of the tasks in this program have been identified by the Roundtable work group. The second program is the integration of the Comprehensive Monitoring and Research Program with the needs for monitoring of projects and programs being implemented now. This is one of the most important steps in adaptive management and is responsive to needs identified in many forums. The third special support program is the development of a watershed management strategy. The fourth program will involve efforts to assist projects already approved as they seek regulatory approvals and is a need that has been repeatedly emphasized at previous Roundtable meetings.

Special Support Programs	Description	Budget Amount (Thousands)
Integrated phasing strategy	Coordinated Development of Phasing Strategy for ERPP, Guidance Document, and HCP	\$1,647
Comprehensive and Coordinated Monitoring and Research Program	Integration of Near Term Restoration Monitoring with CMARP	\$157
Watershed Management	Development of a coordinated approach to watershed management	\$184
Coordinated Permitting	Coordinated permitting of near term ecosystem restoration projects	\$282
	Total:	\$2,270

2. Strategies for Phased Implementation of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan

In order to restore the Bay-Delta ecosystem using adaptive management, a logical set of priorities must be established based on the current understanding of the system. Actions need to be selected to address these priorities and the results of these actions need to be evaluated to refine priorities in future years. A strategy for phased implementation of the ERPP needs to be developed to lay out these priorities and identify the near term restoration actions to address them. The strategy for phased implementation of ecosystem restoration activities:

- ▶ will be described in the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan,
- ▶ will be essential to the conservation strategy being developed to comply with the Endangered Species Act, and
- ▶ will be the basis for setting funding priorities for near term restoration in the Guidance Document.

Development of the phased implementation strategy will be a joint effort of CALFED staff involved in the

- ▶ the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan,
- ▶ the Restoration Coordination Program, and
- ▶ Endangered Species Act compliance and development of assurances.

There is a need for additional resources at both the technical and policy level to complete the phased implementation strategy with strong technical and policy level consensus. At the policy level, it will require coordinated, effective stakeholder input from the BDAC Ecosystem Restoration Workgroup and the BDAC Ecosystem Roundtable.

The phased implementation strategy will require technical input on three levels including 1) additional technical assistance at the staff level, 2) establishment of a standing science panel composed of outside independent scientists and local stakeholder, agency and independent specialists, and 3) a panel of wholly independent scientists.

3. Comprehensive and Coordinated Monitoring and Research Program

The Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) and the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) are going to be working with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program staff and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and coordinated monitoring and research program (CMARP) for the Bay/Delta and its watershed. CMARP will include a structure and process for integrated data management, data analysis, and reporting. Monitoring elements for near-term ecosystem restoration need to be integrated with CMARP so that restoration proposals contain monitoring elements to determine whether stated objectives have been met and to provide guidance for assessing future restoration needs. This special support program will fund a portion of a system which does the following:

- 1) Review of monitoring, assessment, and reporting plans prior to implementation,
- 2) Standardization of data collection methodology, format, and storage, and
- 3) Review, evaluation, and circulation of results to all interested parties.

4. Development of a Watershed Management Program

Successful and durable solutions to complex water quality problems which affect environmental resources are best approached from the perspective of an entire watershed. Through this approach, local pollution prevention and control activities are coordinated with similar activities to enable a concerted effort to alleviate water quality problems. Coordination of these efforts also results in the exchange of information, sharing of experiences, and development of more efficient solutions.

5. Coordinated Permitting

Facilitation of timely review and necessary action on permits will be required for implementation of near term ecosystem restoration projects. This effort will also lay the groundwork for a coordinated approach on permit coordination for the eventual implementation of the CALFED program.

Over half of the money will be devoted to projects that restore rivers and the riparian forests along them. Wetlands and marshes will benefit from another third of the money. The remainder goes to projects such as installation of fish screens on water diversions to keep endangered fish from being pumped out of rivers, educating the public on the environmental harm that exotic species can cause if they are accidentally released into the wild, educating farmers on how to improve farming practices to lessen reliance on pesticides, as well as research on endangered species such as delta smelt.