

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

May 21, 1998

Background/Program Goals

The goal of the CALFED Watershed Management Program is to provide technical assistance, funding, and project support to existing or potential watershed programs to help solve the problems of the Bay-Delta system. The Program will partner with federal, state, local government, and local watershed groups to help achieve this goal. A draft Watershed Management Strategy, an appendix to the Programmatic EIS/R, discusses proposed plans for effective coordination with federal, state, local government and watershed groups. This document is being further refined to incorporate comments from CALFED agencies and watershed stakeholders. A refined document will be available for review by August 23, 1998.

Program Description

Previous to March 1998, the CALFED Watershed Management Policy was in existence which described the intent to develop a coordinated watershed management approach to resource management focusing on local involvement. The Watershed Management Program was officially launched in March 1998 when it was elevated as a common program with the advent of the PEIS/R Phase II Report. In March 1998, an Interim Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IIWAT), composed of key CALFED watershed agencies was developed and has met five times as of May 19, 1998. The purpose of the team is to help develop components of the Watershed Management Program and to integrate watershed efforts among agencies and stakeholders. The Program also conducted two large stakeholder meetings in Redding and Sacramento to obtain input.

The IIWAT identified the need for a forum to ensure integration on fact finding with stakeholder groups. Through meetings with the IIWAT, an organizational structure was developed to include the formation of a technical work group. It is intended that the technical work group will consist of both CALFED agencies and stakeholder groups, and be largely stakeholder driven. At the stakeholder meetings, over 90 stakeholders signed to participate on the technical work group. The purpose of the technical work group is to help refine the Watershed Management Strategy and to develop the Implementation Framework through work on a number of tasks identified by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The technical work group will produce work products which will become part of the revised PEIR/S, Phase II Report and Stage I of the Implementation Phase. Currently, the IIWAT is in the process of refining the Watershed Management Program objectives and tasks to help facilitate and guide the technical work group effort.

The preliminary set of objectives developed by the IIWAT are stated below. Tasks associated with achieving these objectives will be further developed in subsequent meetings with the IIWAT:

1. Facilitate and improve coordination among government agencies and local watershed programs
 - A. Develop a coordination framework whereby mechanisms to integrate watershed efforts among agencies, organizations and local watershed programs will occur (it is intended to leverage and support watershed projects linked to the CALFED goals and objective)
 - B. Coordinate funding among government agencies
 - C. Develop a mechanism to provide technical assistance to local watershed programs

2. Provide criteria/framework to evaluate watersheds
 - A. Provide a description of watershed functions
 - B. Identify common issues involved
 - C. Identify the needs of watershed groups

3. Develop watershed monitoring assessment and protocols to incorporate into CMARP
 - A. Facilitate monitoring efforts that are consistent with CMARP's protocols
 - B. Define performance measures so that adaptive management process can occur

4. Support education and outreach to local watershed programs
 - A. Provide baseline support to organize watershed programs
 - B. Provide educational opportunities regarding conservation resource issues
 - C. Sponsor training on monitoring, grant writing, and watershed assessment

Issues/Concerns

The Watershed Management Program is in the early stages of developing its strategy, objectives and tasks to achieve goals. There is a concern that considering the limited time remaining before selection of a preferred alternative and release of the revised draft EIS/R, it is expected that the Watershed Management Strategy and the Implementation Framework will most likely be a programmatic documents. Detail regarding implementation actions would then be refined in 1999 for the final EIS/R. The level of detail/outreach needed to achieve consensus for the preferred alternative may not be achieved by August 23, 1998.