

## **Draft Project Workplan**

### **EIR/EIS: Ecosystem and Flood Plain Restoration in the Lower San Joaquin River and South Delta Region**

#### **Project Purpose**

The project's objective is to restore ecosystem structure and function in the lower San Joaquin River and south Delta region through restoration of wetland, riparian, and other habitats utilized by fish, wildlife, and plant communities, restoration of flood plains, and screening of agricultural and wetland diversions. Restoration actions will be designed and implemented in a manner consistent with CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program, Multi-Species Conservation Strategy, and the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Basins Comprehensive Study.

#### **Project Description**

The complete suite of restoration and screening actions associated with this project within the lower San Joaquin River and south Delta region (Figure 1) has not been identified. Some actions will be well defined prior to circulating a DEIS/DEIR, while other actions and alternatives will be defined during or following EIS/EIR preparation. The final EIS/EIR will provide the project specific environmental documentation for those actions that are defined at the time of public review. The final project actions would be the result of detailed analyses and collaboration among the affected agencies, a panel of independent scientific reviewers, and stakeholders. It is anticipated that additional restoration actions will be developed after the preparation of the EIS/EIR, during subsequent phases of CALFED implementation. Although the EIS/EIR will not provide all of the necessary environmental documentation for those additional actions, it will serve as the foundation for subsequent project specific documentation.

Actions would also be taken in the context of a site specific, comprehensive restoration strategy for fish, wildlife, and plant communities in the lower San Joaquin River and south Delta region, including restoration of fish and wildlife habitats, diversion screening, and invasive species management. These actions will be carried out in a manner compatible with flood protection goals along the San Joaquin River corridor. Coordination with other south Delta actions will ensure that irrigation water supplies to south Delta farmers and circulation would not be adversely affected during low flow periods.

Consistent with relevant restoration actions taken, selected local agricultural diversions would be screened in the south and central Delta and lower San Joaquin River. Diversions would be

selected based on priorities established, in part, by an analysis of entrainment data collected early in the project planning stage. A fish screen maintenance program would be initiated. Consolidation and screening of local diversions would be evaluated but would only be done if consolidation does not change the existing water right of the diverter or the priority thereof. Consolidation of agricultural diversions shall only be done on a voluntary basis and at no cost to the diverters. Screening of local agricultural diversions would be advanced in accordance with the process set forth in Chapter IV, Section (C) (1) of the State Water Resources Control Board 1995 Water Quality Control Plan. That process was designed to reduce losses of all life stages of fishes to unscreened water diversions in the San Joaquin River and the Delta. Screening and maintenance of local agricultural diversions under this program would be at no cost to the diverters.

### **Implementing Agencies**

- The *California Department of Fish and Game* would be the state CEQA lead agency and would be the project manager, project lead, and provide support staff for completing the EIS/EIR and ensuring that a project is developed and permitted. The CDFG may also implement specific elements of the project.
- The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service* will be the federal NEPA co-leads, and at a minimum will serve on the fish and wildlife agency coordination team to review, comment, and approve Project documents as required.
- The *California Department of Water Resources* will provide significant project support to include operations modeling, DSM2 modeling, and engineering related to levee modifications.
- The *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* will provide project support to include levee and channel engineering and floodplain management expertise.
- The *Wildlife Conservation Board* will obtain appraisals and negotiate and complete any land acquisitions or easements.
- *Private consultants* will provide project support to include assisting in public scoping sessions, meeting facilitation, selected chapter preparation, and general support as needed. Consultant participation in this project would decrease or increase depending on how quickly the consultant could be selected and hired and how quickly funding can be provided and new positions established and filled.

### **Project Schedule and Costs**

The Project tasks covered in this workplan are expected to require a minimum of three years

(Figure 2) resulting in certified environmental documentation and permits for implementation are in place for selected projects. Actual implementation will occur over a five year period following completion of those steps. Land acquisition may occur during the time the EIS/EIR is being prepared; actual acquisition and construction costs are not included in this estimate. Project cost estimates were determined by extrapolating from other Delta planning program costs; they are likely to approach \$3 million per year for the first two years and the final year would approach \$2 million. Total costs would therefore be approximately \$8 million for a three-year effort. Project tasks are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Project Task Summary and Preliminary Schedule for the Ecosystem and Flood Plain Restoration Associated with the South Delta Improvements Program EIS/EIR.**

Task	Deliverables	Estimated Month of Completion	Estimated Budget
Task 1. Initiate Work on the DEIS/DEIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Project description</li> <li>•Staff meeting summaries</li> <li>•Notice of preparation</li> </ul>	December 1999	<i>Total Task: \$25,000</i>
Task 2. Public Scoping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Scoping Report</li> </ul>	December 1999	<i>Total Task: \$152,000</i>
Task 3. Development of Project Description and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Preliminary Alternatives Report</li> </ul>	June 2000	<i>Total Task: \$438,000</i>
Task 4. Prepare Administrative DEIS/DEIR for CALFED review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Administrative DEIS/DEIR</li> </ul>	November 2000	<i>Total Task: \$2,457,500</i>
Task 5. Prepare Public DEIS/DEIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Public DEIS/DEIR</li> </ul>	January 2001	<i>Total Task: \$485,000</i>
Task 6. Prepare a Final EIS/EIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Final DEIS/DEIR</li> </ul>	November 2001	<i>Total Task: \$1,500,000</i>
Task 7. Prepare other CEQA Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Mitigation Monitoring Plan</li> <li>•Final Notice of Determination</li> <li>•Record of Decision</li> </ul>	May 2002	<i>Total Task: \$1,117,500</i>
Task 8. Identify Project and Mitigation Sites		November 2001	<i>Total Task: \$650,000</i>
Task 9. Implement Environmental Permitting Process		December 2002	<i>Total Task: \$1,175,000</i>

### **Project Task Descriptions**

This project consists of nine tasks which will result in a final certified EIS/EIR and selected projects permitted for implementation.

#### **Task 1. Initiate Work on the DEIS/DEIR**

- 1a.** Identify co-lead agency representatives from the USFWS and NMFS. Identify project responsibilities for all co-lead agencies (including CDFG) as well as CALFED staff and identified consultants.
- 1b.** Refine the project EIS/EIR implementation plan to include defined geographic scope, revised budget estimate, and revised project schedule.
- 1c.** Develop a process that ensures coordination with other programs and agencies involved in current and future restoration activities within the lower San Joaquin River and south Delta region.
- 1d.** Identify data gaps, research needs, and develop adaptive management strategies for lower San Joaquin River and south Delta region ecosystem restoration actions. Develop a process for evaluating, ranking, and selecting potential restoration projects.
- 1e.** Develop strategies for minimizing impacts and providing benefits to Delta agriculture.

#### **Task 2. Public Scoping**

- 2a.** Draft a proposed Notice of Preparation and submit to lead agency representatives and CALFED staff for review prior to being finalized and filed.
- 2b.** Make arrangements for conducting two to three public scoping meetings to be held in areas such as Stockton, Tracy, Modesto, and Sacramento. Prepare and present materials at the public scoping meetings.
- 2c.** Prepare and distribute a scoping report summarizing input received at the scoping meetings.

#### **Task 3. Development of Project Description and Alternatives**

- 3a.** Develop a proposed project description in consultation with fish and wildlife agency staff, DWR and USBR engineers, Corps of Engineers staff, Reclamation Board, landowners, Delta

Protection Commission, Department of Food and Agriculture, and independent scientists.

**3b.** Conduct appropriate hydrodynamic, hydrological, and floodplain modeling to guide project development.

**3c.** Conduct a detailed diversion sampling program designed to identify which diversions should be screened first in the south and central Delta.

**3d.** Develop a range of project alternatives that can achieve similar results for ecosystem restoration.

**3e.** Prepare a preliminary alternatives report. Develop screening criteria for feasibility of alternatives and determine project alternatives.

#### **Task 4. Prepare Administrative DEIS/DEIR for CALFED review**

**4a.** Conduct literature reviews, review of existing data, identify additional studies needed, and collect additional data to assess existing and affected environments. Conduct field surveys of special status plants and wildlife in the proposed project and alternative areas.

**4b.** Conduct appropriate hydrodynamic, hydrological, operations, and floodplain modeling to help in evaluating the impacts of the proposed project and its alternatives.

**4c.** Conduct impact analysis, identify cumulative impacts, and develop mitigation measures.

**4d.** Prepare DEIS/DEIR for CALFED agency internal review and incorporate review comments prior to public release of document.

#### **Task 5. Prepare Public DEIS/DEIR**

**5a.** Release DEIS/DEIR to the public for review period and comment.

**5b.** File a notice of completion with the state clearinghouse, and file a notice of availability.

**5c.** Conduct public hearings to obtain comments on the document.

#### **Task 6. Prepare a Final EIS/EIR**

**6a.** Prepare responses to the DEIS/DEIR for CALFED Agency administrative review.

**6b.** Prepare response to comments report.

**6c.** Incorporation appropriate comments into the final EIS/EIR, make other needed modifications, and release.

**Task 7. Prepare other CEQA Documentation**

**7a.** Prepare a mitigation and monitoring plan with coordinated review from lead agency representatives.

**7b.** Draft findings outlining status of decisions for significant impacts and alternatives described in the EIS/EIR.

**7c.** Prepare draft Notice of Determination for lead agency review and finalization.

**7d.** Determine project approval and file final Notice of Determination and sign Record of Decision and file.

**Task 8. Identify Project and Mitigation Sites**

This task will be conducted throughout the period of EIS/EIR preparation.

**8a.** Identify potential project sites within the project area.

**8b.** Contact willing landowners and complete appraisals.

**8c.** Where mitigation is needed, identify potential mitigation areas in the south the central Delta.

**Task 9. Implement Environmental Permitting Process**

Implement project permitting with assistance from lead agency environmental permitting team.

**9a.** Prepare permit applications as appropriate for encroachment permits, county grading permits, and COE permits.

**9b.** Assist in preparing the Action Specific Implementation Plan.

**9c.** Participate in interagency discussions needed to obtain permits and complete obligations under the federal and state endangered species acts and the NCCP act.

## **Project Management**

Project organization, assisting agencies, and ongoing program linkages are shown in Figure 3.

*Reporting:* All project support staff within and outside of the CDFG will receive assignments from, and report to, the Project Lead. The Project Lead will consult with the Project Manager as needed, as well as routinely forward project status reports. The Project Manager will be responsible for overseeing the Project, and will routinely brief Rick Soehren, Regional ERP Implementation Coordinator. Rick Soehren will coordinate with Dick Daniel, ERP Program Manager, and Stein Buer, CALFED, Implementation Coordinator, to assure that the regional ERP project documentation is consistent with other CALFED program elements.

*Program Coordination:* CDFG will ensure that coordination with other CALFED programs occurs during the development of the EIS/EIR and development of project specific actions. Programs of particular relevance are the South Delta Improvements Program, Levee Program, Multi-species Conservation Strategy team, and Comprehensive Monitoring, Assessment, and Research Program.

*Coordination with other Agencies and Projects:* CDFG will ensure that coordination with other agencies such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Reclamation Board, the Delta Protection Commission, and the South Delta Water Agency occurs during the development of the EIS/EIR and development of project specific actions. Coordination with other projects such as the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Basin Comprehensive Study will also occur. Activities will be closely coordinated with specific landowners in the south Delta.

*Electronic Coordination:* The CDFG will develop and maintain a reflector site to facilitate coordination among agencies, independent scientists, and programs. The CDFG will also develop and maintain a web site to keep all interested parties informed throughout the environmental documentation and project formulation process.