

March 16, 2000

TO: Federal-State Management Group

FROM: Mary Selkirk

SUBJECT: Meeting Outcomes, March 14, 2000

The following is a brief summary of outcomes from the CALFED Federal-State Management Group meeting held on Tuesday, March 14, 2000.

### 1. Announcements

- New USBR Solicitor Office Representative - Alf Brandt, Club Fed Coordinator, introduced Kaylee Newell, who will be USBR's legal counsel at Federal-State Management and Policy Group meetings.
- Tribal Participation in CALFED Bay-Delta Program - Karen Schwinn, USEPA, called attention to the January 26, 2000 letter (handout) from Steve Ritchie to Tribal Chairs. The letter seeks proposals for grants totaling \$100,000 funded through CALFED's non-ecosystem restoration money (FY 2000). The purpose of the grants is to assist tribes in determining potential impacts of CALFED actions on tribal resources, as well as in increasing tribal awareness and participation in the CALFED programs. All proposals must be postmarked no later than March 31, 2000. The proposal solicitation package is available on the CALFED web site, <http://calfed.ca.gov> and selecting "Request for Proposal" button or by contacting the CALFED office at (916) 657-2666.

Alf added that the representatives of 15 tribes recently met on their own. This was a substantial increase over previous CALFED meeting participation.

- Stage 1A Action List- CALFED staff Tracie Billington noted CALFED is distributing to the Management Group copies of Chapter 6 of the Implementation Plan, which contains the action items shown in Table 3.1.

*Outcome:* Comments are requested.

- ### 2. South Delta Program - Scope of ERP Actions
- CALFED staff Rick Soehren provided an update on the status of one action in CALFED's south Delta bundle: Ecosystem and Flood Plain Restoration in the Lower San Joaquin River and South Delta Region. Several preliminary activities are underway. The ERP Focus Group is wrapping up policy-level recommendations, initial funding has been secured through the Bureau of Reclamation ecosystem funding, and agreements are being drafted to transmit these funds to the agencies that will serve as state and federal co-lead agencies. Technical staff has been meeting to begin project-level planning. One significant policy/regulatory issue remains, namely whether regulatory agencies will view habitat restoration in the south Delta as essential interceptor habitat to protect fish species of concern, or an attractive nuisance that lures fish to a perilous part of the Delta.

Rick described an approach recommended by DFG, which includes Stage 1 habitat restoration distributed roughly equally throughout the Delta, with no special emphasis or avoidance of the southern half of the Delta. This would provide appropriately-scaled experimentation in Stage 1 to guide future adaptive management.

Margit Aramburu, Delta Protection Commission, suggested making a list of possible actions and depicting the restoration actions on a map to help increase understanding of the nature and scope of the actions.

**Outcome:** Ryan Broddrick suggested a small meeting among the regulatory agencies and others to develop recommendations on this issue, with a report at the Management Group meeting on March 21.

On a related topic, Rick mentioned that DWR contemplates some dredging in the south Delta this summer, and will need to mitigate for dredging impacts. One opportunity to meet mitigation obligations and help further the long-term restoration objectives of the ERP might be to ask DWR to purchase Fay Island in the south Delta as mitigation, with the CALFED program carrying out habitat restoration on the site as a CALFED action later. A concern is whether this approach would take longer than simply buying into a mitigation bank, such as the one at Kimball Island.

**Outcome:** Rick will report back in two weeks following discussions with USFWS, USACE and DWR.

3. **Report back on Central Delta intake proposal** - CALFED staff, Ron Ott, Darryl Hayes and Bruce Herbold briefed the group on the alternative analysis used in the consideration of potential Central Delta intakes involving operations, fisheries, intakes, storage, water quality and cost issues. The components of the proposed alternatives are: new intakes, island storage, CVP/SWP connection, and South Delta improvements. Potential long-term benefits of Central Delta intakes are: diversion shift to Central Delta indirectly improves South Delta water levels; gaming efforts showed storage and connection benefit; and operational flexibility for fisheries, water quality and conveyance due to storage.

A McDonald Island intake could address South Delta Improvements by eliminating all or most of the South Delta agricultural barriers. Ryan Broddrick asked what the costs are for a lateral distribution system. Darryl responded that they are in the \$.5 billion range. Darryl assured Margit Aramburu that even if the island distribution system were in place, there still would be water in the channels for aquatic habitat.

Darryl continued that they are looking at a number of different options and taking some elements and incorporating them into the CALFED program.

- Bacon Island Intake could distribute intake impacts of CVP/SWP and provide storage buffer for operational flexibility
- Multiple intake screens
- Delta Island storage
- Conveyance to Clifton Court Forebay
- Intertie to CVP

There are a number of fish screen intake issues:

- If too much water is diverted from the Central Delta, it might simply move the "sump" problem and require fish salvage facilities.
- Distribution of intake screen options may limit fish exposure to screen under some conditions, but diversion rates in the Central Delta over 4,000 cfs may require are likely to require salvage operations
- Screens will not effectively protect fish <20mm

Water Quality benefits were also discussed:

- Salinity is generally lower in the vicinity of the Central Delta intakes compared to the South Delta
- Poor circulation in SD for CVP/SWP intakes improved by change in point of diversion
- Access to Central Delta water may provide salinity benefits to in-Delta users
- Water quality improves as intakes get closer to Georgiana Slough and Mokelumne River
- Total organic carbon spikes in Delta could be avoided with storage and connection
- Flexibility may create opportunities for more quality benefits

Water quality impacts are:

- Shifting exports to central Delta causes slight degradation to south Delta salinity
- Salinity benefits obtained by access to Central Delta water may be negated through export blend.
- Changes to organic carbon load have not been examined

Operational benefits are:

- Storage flexibility (it may provide delivery not otherwise available due to fisheries or water quality issues)
- Some spatial shift in diversion may be provided
- Most advantages may be with EWA use

Bruce Herbold reported that the Diversion Effects on Fisheries Team has exchanged emails and had one meeting of a group of biologists and engineers to discuss how the two proposed new diversion locations in the Central Delta might affect fish. The options considered were: a) MacDonald Island, b) Bacon Island, and c) a combination of MacDonald and Bacon Islands. There were significant biological periods of consideration: delta smelt adults during January through March and young March through June; steelhead during February through May; fall-run salmon smolts from the San Joaquin during March through June; steelheads February through May; striped bass May through July of wet years when they spawn in the lower San Joaquin and June through August of dry years when they spawn in the Sacramento River; and splittail during November through January,

Potential benefits would be: effective screening without the need for salvage and handling could eliminate post-screening mortality at the existing facilities; greater tidal action in the Central Delta would carry fish away from the screens more effectively than occurs in the South Delta; diversion of water from a larger Central Delta channel could have proportionately smaller impacts on some of the fish in the channel; flexibility to choose among several diversion locations where fish density is lower; Options B and AB would allow diversion for storage when fish were not at risk; provide alternative supplies to southern Delta agricultural would avert need for tidal barriers; and consolidated screen diversion for Delta agricultural supplies could reduce fish impacts.

Ron Ott said the result of the gaming studies was to focus only on in-delta storage directly connected to Clifton Court Forebay.

CALFED is currently beefing up sections on island storage issues (EIS/EIR sections expanded to discuss intake and conveyance); programmatically covering a range of alternatives that will be considered in the SDIP; and SDIP is expanding alternatives evaluation to include some on-island distribution, consolidated diversion, and dredging options.

Ron said they are not talking about a time delay. Mike Spear noted there was no talk hereabout the expansion of Los Vaqueros.

**Outcome:** Rick Breitenbach asked Ron to get feedback on tying this to Los Vaqueros as part of the through-Delta option.

Kathy expressed concern about how this new option will affect the SDIP. Tracie said CALFED would be making a decision in about one year on the SDIP project specific alternative.

Mary Selkirk questioned what is different about this option than ones considered a couple of years ago. She was hesitant to revisit alternatives which had already rejected.

- 4. Report on Federal-State discussions** - Patrick Wright said that after a couple of meetings, they have come up with a direction and strategy to make the programmatic document more specific to Stage 1 actions. They are approaching it in regional packages of actions drawing out actions linked together program by program. There will be a meeting at the end of this month and another two next month. He said it would be useful if each agency would report on what it is doing regionally. This regional format is helpful in discussing the CALFED Bay-Delta Program to State legislators and Congressional members.

Lester said from his experience he can see one of the biggest problems CALFED has is the difficulty for others to comprehend the scope of the program. It appears it is easier to understand when broken into regions. Alf added they are trying to hold regional meetings to speak with stakeholders. Steve Ritchie said these Federal-State meetings are not limited to discussions of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

**Outcomes:** Lester will try to have a presentation on Sacramento Valley ready for the next Management Group meeting utilizing the regional package format.

- 5. Report on DWR Draft Progress Report on Integrated Storage Investigation: North of Delta Offstream Storage** - Naser Bateni, Chief of DWR Integrated Storage Investigation Unit, presented the draft of the "North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Investigation Progress Report". This internal document contains a status report of the findings over the last two years to evaluate the four north-of-the-Delta offstream storage alternatives: Red Bank Project, Thomes-Newville Project, Colusa Reservoir and Sites Reservoir.

Such offstream storage would allow water to be diverted and stored during winter and early spring when the Sacramento River and local stream flows are highest. This reduction of inflows could reduce flood damage downstream and water stored in a reservoir could be released from May through October for irrigation and wetlands in Colusa Basin in exchange for diversion that would have occurred from the Sacramento River. Reducing diversions from the Sacramento River allows for longer storage of water in Shasta Lake, which in turn when released could be used to provide cooler water to benefit winter-run salmon in the Sacramento River.

In an effort to integrate CALFED agencies in the study, Naser said the Technical Advisory Group formed to assist DWR staff in developing study plans consists of interested parties from Federal, State and local agencies, as well as environmental groups and property owners in the project area. Julie Tupper, USFS, said it is yet unclear if land resource agencies, such as the Forest Service, will be involved.

The study thus far has resulted in the following recommendations:

- Red Bank Project studies should be discontinued because of the fishery and environmental concerns. Red Bank and Thomes-Newville Project areas contain a greater diversity of habitat and species than Sites and Colusa Projects.
- Colusa Project geologic studies should be deferred because of cost for the very large embankments required for construction of four main dams and seven saddle dams that would form the Colusa Reservoir.
- Environmental documentation process for an offstream storage project should be started this year.
- Fairy shrimp survey should start this year to provide critical data needed for agency. Patrick Leonard, USFWS, stated the Service is currently considering DWR's request for an incidental take permit. The permit is needed for the survey to proceed.

**Outcome:** Naser requested all agency comments on the draft report be submitted by the end of the month to provide direction of the work in progress and to future program activities.

**6. Report back on CALFED science program** - This item was tabled for the day's discussion.

**Outcome:** A small group would meet to discuss the science program further and would report back at next Management Group meeting.

**7. Other Business** - Teresa Pacheco, USACE, distributed informational copies of the Record of Decision signed July 1, 1999 for the Central [Everglades] and Southern Florida Project.