



BAY-DELTA
ACCORD

1st Anniversary

(CALFED/963



CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

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BAY-DELTA ACCORD

One Year and Counting . . .

On December 15, 1994, California reached a historic turning point. Decades of conflict and discord were set aside and, for the first time ever, state and federal officials, as well as representatives from agricultural, environmental and urban water interests, all signed an agreement to regulate water quality in the state's vital San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary.

This Bay-Delta Accord allocated additional water for the aquatic resources of the Bay-Delta estuary and improved reliability of the water supplies for many of the state's farms and for its city dwellers. Coupled with an exceptionally wet water year, the Accord has improved environmental conditions in the Bay-Delta during 1995. A reliable water supply has meant improved credit opportunities for farmers and has been noted by major bond rating agencies, which earlier had warned that continued gridlock on California water policy could lead to reduced credit ratings for major urban water utilities.

Perhaps even more importantly, the Accord inaugurated a new, more cooperative era in California water policy. Recognizing that a comprehensive solution is still required to resolve the state's long-term water supply and environmental conflicts in the Bay-Delta, water interests have continued to work together in 1995. The Accord set in motion a variety of activities in a number of related forums, all with the purpose of crafting that comprehensive solution.

The CALFED process is a work-in-progress. Nonetheless, only one year after signing of the Accord, the following accomplishments should provide Californians with confidence that the promise of the agreement--a comprehensive, long-term solution for the Bay-Delta system--can be developed and supported by all the parties.

FIRST YEAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Water Quality:

The Accord announced on December 15, 1994, set in motion a number of actions with an emphasis on improving water quality.

- ◆ On May 22, 1995, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) adopted the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary after public hearings. The plan is based largely on the recommendations in the Accord.
- ◆ On September 27, 1995, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved the State Board's water quality control plan and began the steps necessary to withdraw federal standards.
- ◆ In June 1995, the SWRCB implemented a water rights decision based on the water quality control plan, modifying water permits of the State Water Project (SWP) and the Central Valley Project (CVP) to conform with the new standards.
- ◆ The SWRCB initiated the process to develop a long-term water rights decision in August 1995 with a series of EIR scoping workshops. Additional workshops are scheduled through March 1996, and a long-term water rights decision is scheduled for completion no later than December 1998. The Board is encouraging development of a consensus-based, negotiated agreement among the stakeholders to implement the plan. Negotiations are already underway among stakeholders in both the Sacramento and San Joaquin river basins.
- ◆ The new water quality control plan instituted regulations for water diversions by the SWP and CVP based on a percentage of Delta inflow. The plan requires increases in Delta outflow to protect important habitats in the Bay-Delta system.

Coordinated Operations:

An important principle in the Accord is the agreement to develop a more flexible approach to managing California's two major water projects.

- ◆ A system of improved, real-time monitoring has been tested and used to track sensitive species throughout the estuary and adjust project operations to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts. In 1995, a variety of state and federal agencies with the assistance of stakeholders, conducted a daily, 2-month long monitoring program of fish movements within the Bay-Delta under a variety of conditions.

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◆ As part of the Accord, the stakeholder groups (ag, environmental, and urban) were added to the CALFED operations or "ops" group, which had been formed by the CALFED framework agreement signed by the state and federal agencies in the summer of 1994. The ops group meets monthly to track, monitor, and make adjustments to project operations. A special action team has also been established to provide timely advice and enhance communication on urgent operational issues.

◆ In April-May 1995, extensive coordination among SWP, CVP, and upstream water users on the San Joaquin River resulted in pulse flows on that river for the benefit of fish. Because of the cooperation of the parties, the pulse flows were five times higher than water diversions at the projects.

◆ During the coordinated high-flow pulse event, a study of the Sacramento splittail was conducted, yielding important information about behavior of the species.

◆ State and federal water project operation control centers are now housed in one facility, allowing for ongoing dialogue and improved coordination.

◆ The CALFED ops group has enlisted greater participation from water users along the San Joaquin River system.

◆ Many water users and other interested parties agreed to develop a program of environmental projects that would provide habitat benefits in the short-term while more comprehensive programs are developed. During the past year, the institutional framework for these non-flow related projects (covered by Category III of the Accord) has been put in place and the first projects approved.

Category III - Non-Flow Related Projects:

The third section of the Accord addresses environmental improvements other than water flows.

◆ The nine projects approved this past year include (see map and descriptions):

Parrot-Phelan (M&T Ranch) Pumping Station Relocation
Suisun Marsh Wetland Diversion Screening Project (Phase I)
Extension of the Biologically Integrated Orchard Systems (BIOS) Program
Keswick Spawning Gravel Restoration
Battle Creek Restoration Proposal
Sacramento River Riparian Restoration (Verona to Colusa)
Butte Creek Fish Ladder/Screen Project (Durham Dam)
Sacramento River Winter-Run Chinook Salmon Captive Broodstock Program
Parrott-Phalan Dam Fish Ladder

- ◆ A group of northern California urban water agencies announced that they will add \$1.7 million to the \$10 million Category III funds already contributed by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, making a total of \$11.7 million now available for environmental improvement projects in and upstream from the Bay-Delta. So far, \$4 million has been committed to approved projects. Additional projects are under review.
- ◆ Fish ladders, screens and gravel restoration programs have been approved, along with expansion of a pesticide control program and riparian habitat restoration.
- ◆ While many of the programs provide benefits to all species, special attention is being paid to the needs of threatened and endangered species.

CALFED Bay-Delta Program:

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program began operations in May 1995 and in seven short months has launched an array of efforts to find long-term solutions for the Bay-Delta.

- ◆ Lester Snow was named manager in February and technical support staff were recruited from participating agencies.
- ◆ Thirty-three people representing agriculture, business, environmental and urban water interests, were named to the Bay-Delta Advisory Council in May and have held four meetings in their advisory role to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.
- ◆ Four public workshops and three public meetings have been held by the CALFED Bay-Delta Program to identify alternatives for the long-term comprehensive solution to the water supply and environmental conflicts in the same collaborative spirit that created the Bay-Delta Accord.
- ◆ The CALFED Bay-Delta Program remains on schedule to announce in the Spring of 1996 a list of alternative solutions to the Bay-Delta conflicts that will undergo further environmental review.