

THE CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM Overview



The Bay-Delta: A Local Resource, A National Treasure

The Bay-Delta is the region around where the San Francisco Bay meets the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. This maze of islands, sloughs, and channels southwest of Sacramento is the largest estuary on the west coast of North America. It once sheltered a stunning variety of fish and wildlife, and still offers a habitat for hundreds of species, including some found nowhere else in the world. The Bay-Delta also provides water to two-thirds of all homes and businesses in California and irrigates more than four million acres of farmland across the state -- America's "produce section" where 45 percent of the nation's fruits and vegetables grow.

The mission of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program is to develop a long-term, comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system.

The Bay-Delta Program: A New Way of Solving Old Problems

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is unusual, and probably unique, in the way it deals with natural resource policy. It is a joint venture of federal and state agencies, of Democratic and Republican administrations, and of popular interest groups that are usually at odds. In a span of about four years, the Program will attempt to solve a tangled web of problems that could each occupy a contingent of fact-finding commissions and blue ribbon panels for a decade. It does not just encourage public participation, or invite popular scrutiny, but depends upon a huge and diverse public to become an active and equal partner with the government in defining and solving problems.

CALFED unites ten public agencies that have management and regulatory responsibilities in the Bay-Delta. Via its Bay-Delta Program, CALFED seeks a comprehensive, long-term solution to complex and interrelated problems in the Bay-Delta, including uncertain water supplies, aging levees, declining habitats, and threatened water quality.

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CALFED AGENCIES

CA RESOURCES AGENCY
CA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
CA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
CA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
U.S. BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Solution Principles: Requirements for Success

Through a series of public work sessions, stakeholders and CALFED agencies have developed and agreed in essence on the following criteria for a Bay-Delta solution. The Program calls these criteria its "solution principles." A Bay-Delta solution must

- ♦ Reduce major conflicts among beneficial users of the Bay-Delta system.
- ♦ Be equitable, solving problems in all problem areas. Improvements for some problems cannot be made without corresponding improvements for others.
- ♦ Be affordable, capable of being implemented and maintained within the foreseeable resources of the Program and stakeholders.
- ♦ Be durable, with political and economic staying power, and likely to sustain the resources it was designed to protect and enhance.
- ♦ Be implementable, earning broad public acceptance while being legally feasible, timely, and relatively easy to implement compared to other options.
- ♦ Have no significant redirected impacts. The solution will not solve Bay-Delta problems by creating significant new problems in the Bay-Delta or other regions of California.

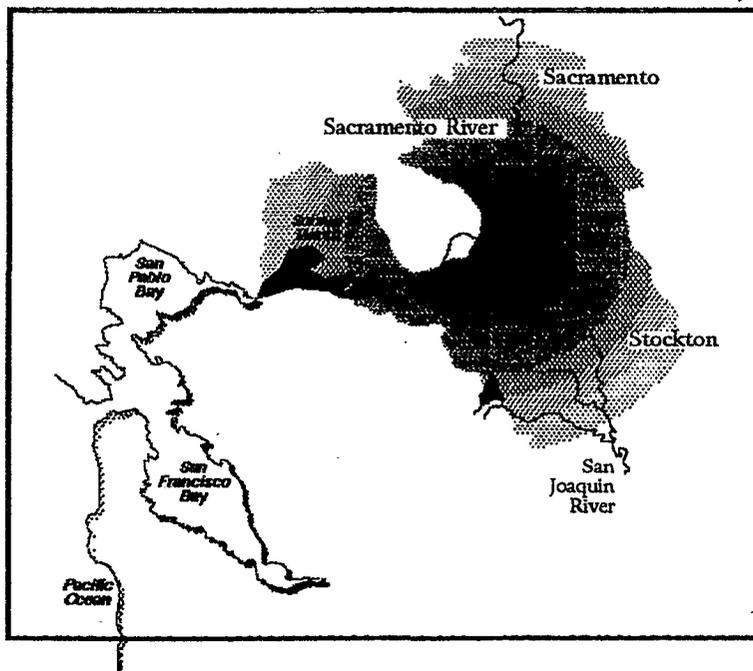
You: A Full Partner in the Process

The Bay-Delta Program affects you. To be placed on the mailing list, call us with your name and address at 916/657-2666. For recorded updates, call our 24-hour hotline at 916/654-9924.

Objectives: What the Bay-Delta Program Aims to Do for California

- ♦ Improve and increase aquatic and terrestrial habitats and improve ecological functions in the Bay-Delta to support sustainable populations of diverse and valuable plant and animal species.
- ♦ Reduce the mismatch between Bay-Delta water supplies and current and projected beneficial uses dependent on the Bay-Delta system.
- ♦ Provide good water quality for all beneficial uses.
- ♦ Reduce the risk to land use and associated economic activities, water supply, infrastructure, and the ecosystem from catastrophic breaching of Delta levees.

The Bay-Delta region includes 70,000 acres of wetlands, supplies drinking water for 20 million people, and irrigates 200 crops. Over the past century, Bay-Delta habitats have declined to the point that several native species are listed as endangered or threatened. Likewise, the Bay-Delta no longer serves as a reliable source of high quality water, and Delta levees are decaying.



Program Process: When and How a Solution Will Be Developed

PHASE I:

Summer 1995 - August 1996

- Intensive Public Participation
- Defining Bay-Delta Problems and Devising Alternative Solutions

CALFED launched its Bay-Delta Program during the summer of 1995 with the appointment of a small Sacramento-based staff and the formation of an official Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC). Chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, BDAC includes 31 Californians who represent Bay-Delta stakeholders -- farmers, fishermen, environmentalists, urbanites, and others -- selected by the U.S. Interior Secretary and the Governor of California. BDAC meets publicly every one to two months.

In Spring 1996, BDAC appointed several small, fact-finding workgroups to examine specific issues, such as environmental restoration and water use efficiency.

Meanwhile, between August 1995 and June 1996, CALFED hosted seven technical workshops where stakeholders and members of the general public discussed Bay-Delta problems and possible solutions and reviewed staff proposals. Workshop attendance topped 1,000.

Similarly, in 13 towns across California, from Red Bluff to San Diego, Program staff hosted public meetings to encourage Californians' input. Another 1,000 or more people attended these events.

Using thousands of public recommendations and several thousand hours of technical analysis, the Program first developed 20 comprehensive Bay-Delta solutions and, by summer 1996, narrowed this list to three alternatives.

PHASE II:

June 1996 - September 1998

- Intensive Public Participation
- Programmatic (general) Environmental Review
- Refinement of Alternatives via Extensive Technical Analysis
- Development of Implementation Strategies

During Phase II, the Program will conduct a programmatic environmental review of the three Bay-Delta solution alternatives developed during Phase I. A *programmatic* environmental review examines broad environmental impacts and possible mitigation measures but does not address specific issues, such as the exact location of a habitat restoration project or the precise size of a new reservoir. (These issues are addressed later, in a *project-level* environmental review.) The Program expects to release a draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/S) by October 1997, followed by a final EIR/S in September 1998. The latter document will recommend a single comprehensive Bay-Delta solution.

Simultaneously, during Phase II, Program staff and the public will refine the alternatives that were formulated during Phase I and will strategize ways to fund and carry out the Bay-Delta solution.

At the conclusion of Phase II, it is expected that the CALFED agencies will approve the EIR/S, including the recommended solution, setting the stage for Phase III.

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HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

At the heart of the Program's evolving financial strategy is the requirement that a Bay-Delta solution be affordable and equitable. Simply, the solution must be in keeping with reasonable projections of future resources, and the costs must be shared by everyone who benefits. A comprehensive Bay-Delta fix, which could include everything from many acres of new habitat to a million or more acre feet of storage, could cost as much as \$8 billion over several decades. In keeping with the principle of equity, numerous revenue sources will be sought, from federal and state appropriations, to general obligation bonds, to user fees and public-private partnerships.

Program Process: Continued

PHASE III: Late 1998 - Full Implementation

- Intensive Public Participation
- Project-level (focused, detailed) Environmental Review

Phase III could stretch for several decades. While some projects contained in the CALFED solution will be virtually ready for implementation upon completion of Phase II, other projects will require their own, project-level environmental impact analyses, along with detailed designs and permits.

When will we take action?

While many years might be required to develop and begin implementing a comprehensive Bay-Delta solution, some elements of a solution will be ready for implementation by the beginning of 1999 (upon completion of Phase II). Primarily ecosystem restoration activities, these projects already enjoy broad public support and are

included in all of the three alternative solutions. Along with protecting and enhancing a

wide range of habitats in and upstream of the Delta, these projects include an emergency levee management plan and programs to educate small agencies about conservation and reclamation.

Components: The Building Blocks of a Possible Bay-Delta Solution

Each possible comprehensive Bay-Delta solution is called an "alternative." By summer 1996, after extensive public comment, the Program had developed three alternatives. Each alternative is made up of components: four components embodied in a common program that is essentially the same in every alternative, and two components that vary among the alternatives.

In the common program are the components for water use efficiency, water quality, ecosystem restoration, and levee system integrity. Each component in the common program includes hundreds of actions, from policy changes to new construction. As for the variable components, they address conveyance (how water is moved through and/or around the Delta) and storage. Of the three alternatives, one uses the existing conveyance system through

the Delta, the second recommends significant improvements in the existing system, and the third combines the existing system with a manmade structure that would isolate some water flow from the natural Delta channels. Each alternative includes a range of storage options, including conjunctive use and groundwater banking, as well as offstream surface storage upstream of the Delta, in the Delta, and south of the Delta.

During Phase II of the Program, detailed technical analyses will help refine the components in the alternatives.

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Check out the CALFED Bay-Delta Program Home Page on the Internet.