

April 16, 1998

Distribution List

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is initiating more detailed planning studies for many proposed projects in the Delta. One of CALFED's proposed projects is to reconstruct Delta levees up to the Corps of Engineers' PL84-99 levee standard. CALFED is also planning extensive ecosystem restoration in the Delta. On February 5, 1998, CALFED met with representatives of North, Central and South Delta water agencies, and other local interests to identify potential sites where habitat restoration can be integrated with levee reconstruction. Representatives of the water agencies suggested CALFED contact the local districts for help to complete this task. Therefore, on behalf of the water agencies and other local interests, CALFED requests your input.

One of CALFED's primary solution principles is to reduce conflicts in the Delta. One such conflict is preserving habitat while performing levee maintenance. CALFED's objective is to establish approximately 160 miles of shallow riverine aquatic habitat throughout the Delta. The need is to recreate the shade cover and spawning/rearing habitat for fish and other species that were once a significant part of the Delta landscape. The idea is to separate this shaded habitat from the levee's structural cross-section, which will allow for regular levee maintenance without disturbing the habitat.

Local knowledge and experience is critical to the successful and equitable restoration of this habitat. We need your suggestions as to where levee and channel conditions are most likely to promote shallow shaded habitat. Most important, we seek your suggestions as to how our habitat restoration efforts can benefit your levee and land management activities.

Our technical requirements are simple. We would like the shallow aquatic habitat to be no more than 9 feet deep at high tide. We want to foster emergent plant growth and minimize the need for revetment and maintenance on the resultant habitat. Examples of potential sites include:

- 1) Channel reaches that have been aggraded to less than the desired six to nine foot depth at high tide, but which could be dredged to restore depth, and with a sediment disposal area nearby, preferably with potential for shade trees. The sediment may be used to improve levees.
- 2) Oxbows and blind sloughs that are connected to larger channels but which need maintenance dredging to maintain adequate connecting depth.

CALFED Agencies

California
The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal
Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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- 3) Stagnant reaches that have lost their value as shallow habitat due to water hyacinth and other exotic aquatic plants.
- 4) Locations where there could be more effective shading of shallow habitat if bank protection prevented the undermining of shade trees near the bank. Also, locations where dredging and possibly bank protection are needed to maintain low water channel depth near the shade trees.

Please send us your comments and recommendations by May 29, 1998. You may also provide feedback through your respective Delta water agency. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Rob Cooke, Levee Program Manager, at (916) 654-4479.

Sincerely,



Lester A. Snow
Executive Director

cc: Bob Clark
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Central Delta Water Agency
Alex Hildebrand
South Delta Water Agency
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