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Comment by Alex Hildebrand on the 20 Alternatives
in the Workshop 5 Packet

Alternative 1

Retirement of 800,000 acres of farm land would be very disruptive to the local economy. More important, however, California can not afford to lose that large increment of food and fiber production when our per capita production of these necessities is already doomed to decline substantially as the population grows. Transfers of water from agriculture to urban use for spring fish flows must be restrained for the same reason.

Measures to restore shallow water habitat and protect it from exotic aquatic plants need definition.

Refer to previous comments on the San Joaquin River bypass and on purchase of east side agricultural water for fish flow.

Refer to California Central Valley Flood Control Association's suggestions re Georgiana Slough.

Use of reclaimed water for agriculture must be in situations where it will not create or exacerbate problems with toxic ions, soil and water salinity, and disposal of salt load to maintain a salt balance.

Alternative 2

Several Alternative 1 comments apply also to this and other alternatives.

Most alternatives should include ^a spring and fall fish barrier at the head of Old River, and the Middle River, Grantline, and Old River (near Tracy) tidal barriers. The fish barrier is needed to protect San Joaquin salmon. The tidal barriers keep the fish barrier from dewatering downstream channels, and they restore water depths and circulation in those channels. They also substantially reduce the reexport of the salt load which enters the river from the westside CVP service area and flows down the river and back to the CVP pumps.

Refer to previous comments regarding restoring a low flow San Joaquin channel by dredging sediments rather than by "confinement".

Alternative 3

Refer to previous discussion of features common to prior alternatives.

All of the proposed isolated facility proposals would impact ^{Delta} water quality by segregating high quality Sacramento water before it dilutes the salt load which comes down the San Joaquin River from the CVP westside service area. The degradation would be severe at times when the pump rate and isolated capacity are such that little or no Sacramento water is drawn across through open channels. Furthermore, South and Central Delta channel depletion often exceeds the San Joaquin inflow. This isolated facility could then exacerbate problems of stagnant channel reaches where salinity can not be controlled and where young fish suffer from high residence time and increased temperature.

Furthermore, there is no legal way to assure that Delta interests would be considered in operating and levee preservation decisions.

This and other alternatives seem to consider the reliability of water for export without also addressing reliability for those who divert for local use in the Delta and throughout the stream systems.

The alternatives do not address correction of the flood problems that relate to the Mokelumne River system. Refer to CCVFCA proposals.

Alternative 8

In this and other alternatives the discussion of benefits from purchase of upstream water sometimes seems to assume that this is new water rather than a reallocation in time of flow from an overcommitted system in order to benefit fish while degrading the water supply for diverters from the stream system.

The chain of lakes needs more description regarding intake and releases for agricultural needs. It also needs an analysis of the water loss due to the increased evaporation from flooded islands as compared to consumptive use by agriculture on those islands.

Alternative 9

Discussion here and elsewhere seems to assume that upstream water purchases would improve water quality in the South Delta even though it is released for the pulsed fish flow. During the pulse flow there is more dilution water than is needed, whereas the purchased water is robbed from other times when dilution is insufficient.

Alternative 14

How will it be assured that the new reservoirs are filled only with new yield due to capture of flood flows and that the isolated facility will not be used to bypass the Delta with water diverted during low river flows?

Other Alternatives

The questions and comments on the above alternatives are applicable at least in part to the alternatives that were not directly discussed.