IN-DELTA STORAGE

Description

The Delta Wetlands project is one possible implementation of the In-Delta storage concept. The Delta Wetlands proposal, developed and marketed by private investors, would convert two Delta islands (Webb Tract and Bacon Island) comprising 11,000 acres into surface storage facilities and two islands (Bouldin Island and Holland Tract) comprising 9,000 acres to habitat. Together, the two storage islands would provide 238 TAF of new storage capacity.

Potential Benefits

- Improved flexibility for quick response in managing Delta fisheries and water quality problems.
- Elimination of 92 unscreened agricultural diversions and 56 TAF/year of agricultural drainage water releases.
- Creation of 9,000 acres of wetland and wildlife habitat.

Potential Impacts

- Potential impacts on salinity of water at Contra Costa WD intake.
- Storing water on peat soil Delta islands may increase TOC content. Potential for increased treatment costs for urban water users.
- Control measures will be required to prevent seepage problems on adjacent Delta islands
- Potential fishery impacts due to "double screening" of water released from storage for export.

Estimated Cost

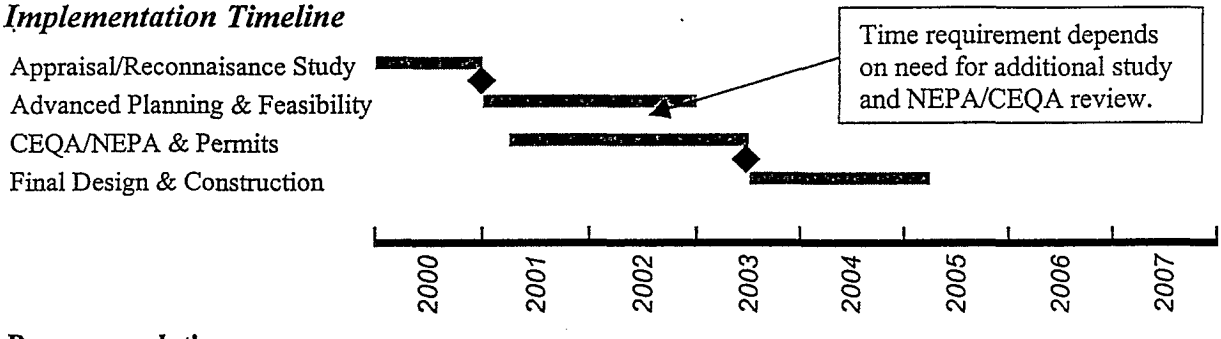
	Delta Wetlands[1]	Bacon Island Only[1]
Total Capital Cost:	$650,000,000	$250,000,000
Total Annual Cost:	$50,000,000	$20,000,000

Notes:
[1]These are rough cost estimates based upon anticipated project facilities and land acquisition needs. These estimates were not provided by the Delta Wetlands project sponsors.

Implementation Issues

One of several potential In-Delta storage projects, the Delta Wetlands proposal has been under development for some time by private sponsors. A Revised Draft EIR/EIS, with SWRCB and USACE as co-leads, is expected in April 2000. A hearing before the SWRCB is expected to be scheduled this fall. The project sponsors will need a Water Rights Permit and Sec. 401 permit from the SWRCB and a CWA 404 permit from the USACE. The USACE has indicated they will not issue a 404 permit until after the Board issues its permits. The USBR is currently completing an appraisal study on the Delta Wetlands proposal and expects to recommend a feasibility study, which would require federal authorization. DWR is conducting a reconnaissance study on in-Delta storage alternatives, including the Delta Wetlands proposal, which is to be completed in July 2000.

Implementation Timeline



Recommendations

Conduct joint DWR/USBR/local partnership evaluations (appraisal, advanced planning & feasibility studies)/designs necessary to lead to an operable project within 3 to 5 years. Determine requirements for additional NEPA/CEQA review for implementation of Delta Wetlands. Allocate $12 million over next 3 years for advanced planning/feasibility studies, CEQA/NEPA, permitting including resolution of levee seepage and potential TOC-related water quality concerns.