

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) Watershed Work Group met on November 5, 1999, in Oakland. The BDAC Watershed Work Group (Work Group) was created to address the public's request to have more participation in the CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program). The Work Group provides a forum for stakeholders covering a broad geographic area and wide array of interests. Attendees of the Work Group meetings have direct interaction with the Watershed Program's Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT) and an opportunity to review and comment on Watershed Program draft documents. In addition, the Work Group may provide input to the BDAC on issues related to the Watershed Program.

Introductions

The meeting began with introductions of the meeting participants. A list of attendees (Attachment A) is included.

Local Watershed Presentations

Robert Meacher (Work Group co-chair) informed the meeting participants that five individuals were present to discuss the relationships between environmental justice, urban, and watershed issues.

Josh Bradt - Urban Creeks Council

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Mr. Bradt introduced himself and his organization. The Urban Creeks Council is a grassroots, non-profit organization that is dedicated to urban waterways and settings. The Council's office is located near Strawberry Park in Berkeley. Currently, there are five chapters of the Urban Creeks Council with approximately 40 affiliate organizations. The Council serves as a tool for environmental education; for example, the Urban Creeks Council runs a series of workshops to educate creekside landowners on methods to manage riparian areas and ways to develop and implement restoration projects.

Mr. Bradt thanked CALFED staff for coming to Oakland to meet with environmental justice advocates. He stated that environmental justice groups have received a positive response from CALFED in the past. However, Mr. Bradt urged CALFED to make the Bay and Delta more relevant to the CALFED Bay-Delta process. CALFED often mentions the idea of using a watershed approach, but little is being done to act on the concept. If CALFED only funds projects in the upper watersheds then a full watershed approach is not being implemented. Mr. Bradt encouraged CALFED to look at long-term solutions versus short-term band-aids. In an effort to promote a long-term solution, CALFED should help improve the capacity for the development of watershed councils. Mr. Bradt also promoted the importance of involving all stakeholders - including communities of color, urban interests, and minorities.

The Urban Creeks Council has been promoting watershed councils for some time. Watershed councils bring stakeholders together, identify problems in the watershed, and work together to develop a coordinated approach to solving problems. Such a process has many spillover benefits including:

- sharing project costs;
- bringing resources together;
- sharing knowledge and expertise;
- raising public awareness;
- generating clean-up projects;
- generating restoration projects; and
- giving people a voice.

Lastly, Mr. Bradt urged CALFED to address environmental justice issues by empowering local communities and ensuring their participation and involvement. Promoting local participation can be carried out by developing and funding environmental councils.

A meeting participant asked Mr. Bradt what the current funding sources are for the Urban Creek Council. He replied that the Council's funds come mostly from public agencies and grants, private donations, and fee for service work. In the past, they have also received funding from the California Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Program. Most of the Council's work is performed in Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

Another meeting participant asked if the Urban Creeks Council implements any projects in the upper reaches of the watersheds. Mr. Bradt explained that the headwaters of most of their projects are located in the nearby Berkeley/Oakland hills for Alameda County; the headwaters of Contra Costa County streams are located in numerous areas.

Mr. Meacher thanked Mr. Bradt for his presentation and commented that many rural watershed groups have the same vision as the Urban Creeks Council.

Dana Lanza - Literacy for Environmental Justice

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The Literacy for Environmental Justice is an organization based in San Francisco's Hunters Point. The organization defines environmental justice as a right for all people to have access to their basic needs including: clean water, safe energy, non-toxic communities, healthy food, equitable education and employment opportunities, and open space. Hunters Point encompasses six square miles along the San Francisco Bay. Over 30,000 residents reside in the area; 90 percent of which are of color. Because Hunters Point is a peninsula, it is an active location for dumping waste into the Bay and therefore acts as a sponge for toxins. Ms. Lanza displayed a map of Hunters Point illustrating 325 toxic sites and 2 Superfund sites. This area should be very important to CALFED; Hunters Point is the "last frontier" in San Francisco. Currently, there is great pressure for re-development of the area. There are also advocates for wetland restoration projects in Hunters Point to promote open space and improve water quality. Unfortunately, misinformation was spread with the first Hunters Point wetlands/open space project in 1997.

Residents were fearful of the spreading of malaria and other diseases. The Literacy for Environmental Justice would like to work with CALFED to dispel mis-information and help educate Hunter Point residents on the benefits of wetland restoration projects.

A meeting participant inquired about San Francisco's wastewater treatment plants. Ms. Lanza explained that the City has two treatment plants; however, 80 percent of the City's waste is treated in Hunters Point. There is often a terrible odor in the air and sewage has been seen on surface streets. There is talk of retro-fitting the facility - some want the City to fix it; others want it to be moved.

Allen Edson - Environmental Science Institute

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Mr. Edson introduced himself and his organization. He emphasized the importance of education and outreach as a means of looking at the Bay Region as a whole and creating an informed citizenry. He also stated that participation is the key to gaining the involvement of minority communities.

Mr. Edson gave an example of an educational project that the Environmental Science Institute has promoted. In the past, East Oakland schools have discouraged students of color to take science classes. In an effort to introduce science to the students, the Environmental Science Institute developed a curriculum focused on watershed education for middle-school students. Students now gain field experience by using the nearby Arrowhead Marsh as a laboratory. Mr. Edson displayed slides showing the students taking water quality samples and performing other field projects.

A meeting participant commented that often when youth are disconnected from the environment they tend to stray and become involved in gangs, etc. Programs such as the Environmental Science Institute help to open up possibilities for children and introduce them to things they were not aware of. Mr. Edson concurred with the statement and stated that it is important to obtain funding to allow these activities to continue - education is the most significant means for change.

Ms. Lanza also commented that environmental issues need to be introduced to inner-city children in a context they can understand. Air quality issues does not excite children, but if you relate it to asthma problems, or learning disabilities to lead poisoning then they become interested.

Henry Clark, West County Toxics Coalition

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Mr. Clark stated that he was interested in CALFED both as an elected official and as a representative of the West County Toxics Coalition (WCTC). The WCTC is dedicated to protecting the environment and public health. The Coalition conducts research, provides

education, and responds to the hazards of toxins in the communities of West County.

Wildcat Creek, San Pablo Creek, and marshlands are located in North Richmond - the unincorporated area of Richmond. Flooding is a problem for residents as well as water quality issues. Many local residents fish in the area, often for their livelihood, despite the health hazards that go along with fish consumption.

The WCTC has teamed with an elementary school that is located on Wildcat Creek to introduce students to environmental science. Mr. Clark also described a water reclamation project involving Chevron and the East Bay Municipal Utility District. The focus of the project was to replace potable water used in cooling towers with treated sewage water. It is now the largest water reclamation project in Northern California.

Mr. Clark announced that the WCTC would like to be more involved with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. However, it is unfortunate that the issue of environmental justice is the catalyst for becoming involved - all people have a right to a safe and healthy environment.

Michael Stanley-Jones - Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition

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The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition (SVTC) is a grassroots, non-profit organization consisting of environmental and neighborhood groups, labor unions, public health leaders, people affected by toxic exposure and others. SVTC embraces a vision of a future which is based on a sustainable non-polluting economy where a healthy environment is a right rather than a privilege. The Coalition strives to achieve this vision by:

- documenting and exposing the hazards of toxic chemical pollution;
- educating the community about the dangers of toxic hazards;
- empowering people to hold government and industry accountable; and
- shifting the environmental priorities of industry and government to a focus on pollution prevention and the development of environmentally beneficial technologies and alternatives.

The Coalition has been working on chemical safety issues since 1982 when substantial groundwater contamination in Silicon Valley associated with high-tech manufacturing was discovered. By the mid 1990s, 179 underground toxic contamination sites were identified in the region. There are 29 toxic sites in Santa Clara County and the neighboring community of East Palo Alto that historically have been listed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List (Superfund).

Mr. Stanley-Jones explained that 50 percent of South Bay water is imported through the Bay-Delta system, 40 percent is from local groundwater sources, and 10 percent comes from runoff into reservoirs. Imported water is less desirable than local groundwater as it is increasingly degraded by upstream pollution and has to be chlorinated, a process that produces toxic byproducts. Recycled water as an alternative is an expensive solution. When money tends to be

allocated to expensive engineered solutions, less funding is available for local community solutions for water supply and for programs to ensure the future security of local resources.

Mr. Stanley-Jones recommended that CALFED promote aggressive industrial and commercial conservation in industrial regions such as Silicon Valley. Every acre-foot conserved in urban regions provides more resources for ecological restoration or agriculture upstream, thereby helping address environmental justice concerns that farmworker communities not be disproportionately impacted by CALFED policies. He called for better integration with the TMDL process so that solutions could be developed at the local level. He further urged CALFED to commit to the following:

- advocate watershed management across the state;
- promote water education and pollution prevention;
- do a better job addressing water use efficiency;
- print publications in other languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, etc.
- increase public participation; and
- include an environmental justice representative on BDAC.

Thank You

CALFED staff and the Watershed Work Group co-chairs thanked Arlene Wong (Pacific Institute) for coordinating the presentations.

Discussion

A meeting participant commented that she works in a rural watershed with one municipality, but has the same problems and issues that many of the presenters from urban areas. She thanked the presenters for sharing their stories and appreciated hearing the information.

A meeting attendee asked if the presenters had reviewed and commented on the CALFED Programmatic EIR/EIS. Most of the presenters responded that yes, their organizations did provide comments.

A comment was made regarding the strong linkage between the Bay and the northern watersheds. For example, the mouth of Wildcat Creek is very important to chinook salmon.

A meeting participant suggested that CALFED's Policy Group hear a similar discussion on environmental issues.

Ms. Davis asked the presenters if any modifications should be made to the Watershed Program Plan and/or draft priorities to do a better job to address environmental justice. It was suggested that a clarification be made between urban and rural watersheds. It was also recommended that representatives of the environmental justice groups review the Watershed Program Principles and author a statement regarding environmental justice to be included in the Principles.

Lastly, it was suggested that a representative from both a rural environmental justice group and urban environmental justice group serve on BDAC.

Watershed Program Priority Setting

John Lowrie, Watershed Program Manager, reminded everyone of the Watershed Program

priority discussion at the September Work Group meeting. At that time, the Work Group brainstormed a list of possible priorities for the Watershed Program to focus on during fiscal year 2000 (see Attachment B). The IWAT members later grouped the priorities under the Program's five "desired outcomes:"

- Improved Coordination and Assistance;
- Development of Monitoring Protocols and Application of Adaptive Management Processes;
- Improved and Expanded Watershed Education and Outreach;
- Maximize the Multiple Benefits of the Common Programs; and
- Improved Watershed Stewardship.

Mr. Lowrie explained that a meeting will be scheduled with the CALFED Program Managers, Watershed Program staff, Work Group co-chairs, Maria Rea, and a sub-set of the Watershed Work Group to refine the list of priorities. The full Work Group will be updated of the progress at the next Work Group meeting.

Planning for December BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting

The next Work Group meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday, December 6, in the Sacramento area.

***Update:** There will not be a December Work Group meeting. Instead, the next meeting will be held on the regularly scheduled third Friday of the month - January 21, 2000.*

Meeting Participants

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Barris, Lynn	Cherokee Watershed/Friends of the River
Bradt, Joshua	Urban Creeks Council
Chang, Phil	UC Berkeley
Clark, Henry	West County Toxics Coalition
Cornelius, James	Calaveras County Water District
Cornwall, Caitlin	Sonoma Ecology Center
Coulter, Ken	State Water Resources Control Board
Davis, Martha	Work Group Co-Chair/Californians and the Land
Denzler, Sara	California Department of Water Resources
Drake, Nettie	Panoche/Silver Creek Watershed CRMP
Edson, Torri	Environmental Science Institute
Estrada, Torri	Urban Habitat Program
Everts, Conner	Southern California Watershed Alliance
Gentry, Isla	Gentry & Associates
Gordon, Nina	Resources Agency
Harthorn, Allen	Butte Creek
Kayaian, Masis	Westlands Water District
Knecht, Mary Lee	Jones & Stokes
Lanza, Dana	Literacy for Environmental Justice
Lovato Niles, Cheryl	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Lowrie, John	CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Mar, David	Westlands Water District
Meacher, Robert	Work Group Co-Chair/RCRC/BDAC/Plumas County Supervisor
Moore, Carla	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Murphy, Vicki	Family Water Alliance
Nakamura, Gary	UC Cooperative Extension
Olsen, Jenna	Environmental Water Caucus
Rea, Maria	California Resources Agency
Sapanor, Mike	City of San Jose
Sime, Fraser	California Department of Water Resources
Stanley Jones, Michael	Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition
Tupper, Julie	U.S. Forest Service
Traub, Cori	Clean Water Action
Wallace, Doug	East Bay Municipal Utilities District
Woo Shanks, Lisa	Natural Resources Conservation District
Wong, Arlene	Pacific Institute
Zimmerman, Karita	Luster

Results of the 10/1/99 Watershed Work Group Brainstorm

Possible FY2000 Priorities for the Watershed Program

adequate funding
assessment of limiting factors
bridging gaps between interest groups
CMARP linkage
demonstrate success/benefits of local programs
erosion control
geographic scope
habitat
help local groups gain protection for key lands
improve local capacity to address regulatory compliance issues
increase capacity/infrastructure of local groups
means to share information- technology transfer
monitoring - how to track changes in the watershed
public awareness and education
public outreach
reduction in contaminants to fisheries downstream
safe harbor needs
source protection
stewardship via participation in water quality/watershed projects
time value of water
volunteer corps
water quality