



- Bay-Delta Management Report

### Summary

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This report provides the status of various processes and activities related to the Bay-Delta.

### Detailed Report

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#### Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Work continued on many elements of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) this month. The BDCP Steering Committee continued to work on several topics including: terrestrial species conservation measures; monitoring metrics; existing ecological conditions and covered species accounts; near-term actions; and implementation cost and funding. In September, public workshops were conducted at four locations throughout the Delta: Brentwood, West Sacramento, Stockton, and Walnut Grove. The purpose of the workshops was to provide an update on the status of the BDCP, share information on proposed conservation measures, and solicit information from and hear the concerns of the public. Expanding the understanding of the BDCP and generating broad public acceptance is a key element in successfully completing the BDCP. The BDCP Steering Committee is working toward completion of an administrative draft conservation plan by December 2009. Metropolitan is continuing to participate in all BDCP-related workgroup efforts.

#### Near-Term Delta Actions

##### Two-Gates Project

The CALFED Science Program held an independent scientific peer review workshop for the Two-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project on August 6 in Sacramento. The CALFED Science Program Independent Review Panel was receptive to the project and the broad field-test approach to the project, and focused on the need for more definitive monitoring and field sampling to support experimental design. The Review Panel report is expected to be released in October. Meanwhile, staff is working with the state and federal agencies to get monitoring equipment installed and begin Two-Gates project baseline monitoring of delta smelt, turbidity, etc., this fall.

All Department of Water Resources (DWR) and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) comments on the Two-Gates Project draft environmental documents have been received. Final drafts of the environmental documents are targeted to be released for public review in October 2009, and the final Environmental Assessment and Biological Opinion are targeted for mid-November. Gate fabrication is scheduled to begin in November 2009. In-water installation of the gate structure is targeted to begin in summer 2010 and be completed by mid-November 2010. Operation of the gates is targeted to commence in December 2010.

Metropolitan and the other water contractors have identified project funds through Category III of the 1995 Bay-Delta Accord for environmental documentation and design, and are pursuing funds for construction through other sources. Approximately \$16 million of remaining Proposition 13 funding has been identified as one source of State funding for the Two-Gates project. Proposition 84 funding through the Governor's September 2008 enactment of SB 1 (Perata) may also be available, but is contingent on the State's budget and subsequent appropriations. On the federal side, \$10 million has been identified for the Two-Gates project in proposed federal funding legislation for fiscal year 2009/10. Staff is currently updating the project cost to reflect design changes for additional seepage control and adjustments to maintain localized channel capacity near the gate installation. Based on current project scope and an accelerated construction schedule to achieve completion in 2009 through a sole source solicitation, design and construction costs were found to increase from the previous \$30 million estimate to over double these costs. A determination has been made to pursue the project on the unaccelerated construction schedule noted above, which results in a total current estimated cost of \$44 million. A competitive

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solicitation is underway with a limited grouping of marine contractors qualified to fabricate and install this temporary, removable barge-gate system.

### **State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Issues**

#### SWRCB Periodic Review of Bay-Delta Water Quality Objectives

The SWRCB process for the periodic review and update of the 2006 Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP) for the Bay-Delta Estuary was initiated in August 2008. Currently, the SWRCB is focusing on the review and potential amendment of the southern Delta salinity objectives included in the 2006 WQCP. The south Delta salinity objectives are for the purpose of protecting the agricultural beneficial uses within the Delta. In July, the SWRCB released an analysis of the salt tolerance of crops in the south Delta and the salinity objectives needed to protect the yields from those crops. The report was prepared by Dr. Glenn J. Hoffman, an independent expert in the field hired by the SWRCB. The SWRCB's WQCP contains salinity objectives in the south and central Delta to protect the quality of water available to the farmers in those areas. Many interests, including DWR, USBR and state and federal water contractors, have long contended that certain Delta agricultural objectives are more protective than are necessary to protect the yields of the crops grown in the Delta and, therefore, the related beneficial uses. Attempting to meet the objectives causes significant reductions in SWP and CVP water supply otherwise available to the export projects' customers.

Dr. Hoffman's report indicates that the salinity objectives could be relaxed while still protecting all of the crops normally grown in the South Delta. The SWRCB held a workshop on August 13, 2009, where Dr. Hoffman and SWRCB staff orally presented this report. Metropolitan staff, along with other SWC staff, participated in the August 13 workshop and submitted comments supporting Dr. Hoffman's report and recommendations on areas of additional study and actions SWRCB should take to implement the conclusions in the report. Staff continues to review the report and prepare for a second SWRCB workshop scheduled for November 4.