



● **Bay-Delta Matters**

Summary

This report provides a summary of the activities related to the Bay-Delta.

Detailed Report

Bay-Delta Conservation Plan

This month, work on the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) focused on efforts to define the covered activities—proposed contractor actions and conservation measures—to conduct an environmental effects analysis. The effects analysis is being conducted to satisfy several related but separate regulatory purposes, namely the BDCP, Section 7 analysis for the Biological Assessment and new biological opinions, and the impact analysis required to satisfy CEQA/NEPA. To meet the aggressive schedule to circulate the draft BDCP and accompanying Draft EIR/EIS in fall 2010, the hydrodynamic modeling of proposed near- and long-term operations and certain conservation measures need to be initiated in February. Defining the “proposed project” for the purpose of the effects analysis is a major milestone in the BDCP work effort.

Another major BDCP activity during January was a Risk Assessment Workshop on the Isolated Facility. The workshop, sponsored by Metropolitan, assessed the risks of the conveyance options (east canal, west canal, and tunnel) in various categories including construction, cost, environmental, public relations, legal, and land use/real estate. The purpose of the Risk Assessment Workshop was to identify the pros and cons of the conveyance options to help identify the preferred project. Technical efforts continued in the areas of terrestrial species, adaptive management, and metrics. Metropolitan is continuing to participate in all BDCP work efforts.

Two-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project

In December 2009, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) announced delaying the implementation of the Two-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project. USBR is currently developing a revised workplan to resolve questions raised during the project review, and to identify other near-term options.

Staff is continuing to move forward on forecasting turbidity/smelt movement in the Delta. This real-time modeling effort is being conducted in coordination with state and federal agencies, and augmented by a new network of water quality sensors in the Delta to assist in monitoring of delta smelt, turbidity, conductivity, and water temperature.

State Water Resources Control Board Issues

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) process for the periodic review and update of the southern Delta salinity and San Joaquin River flow objectives from 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, which protect the agricultural beneficial uses within the Delta. On January 5, 2010, the SWRCB released Dr. Glenn Hoffman’s final report titled *Salt Tolerance of Crops in the Southern Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*. Metropolitan staff is reviewing the final report to see how our comments were addressed. The SWRCB staff has proposed a timeline for the periodic review process that includes completing the technical review early this year, followed by environmental review workshops, and then adoption of an EIR and revisions to the WQCP in 2011.

The SWRCB has initiated a process to develop flow criteria for the Delta ecosystem necessary to protect public trust resources. This action is required under recently enacted Delta legislation (SB 1, enacted November 12, 2009). The SWRCB held a pre-proceeding conference on January 7, 2010, and approximately 55 people/organizations filed notices of intent to appear, indicating they wished to present information at the proceeding. The SWRCB has set a February 15, 2010, deadline for receipt of written testimony, exhibits, and witness identification lists. The informational proceeding for the SWRCB to receive scientific information in

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order to develop new flow criteria for the Delta is scheduled for March 22, 23 and 24, 2010. Metropolitan staff will work with the SWC to participate in this process.