



● Bay-Delta Matters

Summary

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

Detailed Report

Bay-Delta Conservation Plan

In February, the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Steering Committee made the decision to support a focused analysis of the tunnel conveyance approach for the purpose of bringing this potential alternative up to the same level of analysis as the other conveyance options. This analysis will support effective comparison of the tunnel conveyance approach to the canal alignments, which have already received significant review and analysis, and will develop the necessary information for the environmental documentation process. Metropolitan is continuing to participate in all BDCP work efforts.

Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program

This month, the Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP) followed up on the Risk Assessment Workshop held in January by presenting the analytical results to the DHCCP Executive Committee and separately to the BDCP Steering Committee. The workshop, sponsored by Metropolitan, assessed the risks to cost and schedule of the conveyance options (East Isolated Facility (EIF), West Isolated Facility (WIF) and the all tunnel option (ATO)) in various categories including engineering, operations, construction, environmental, public relations, legal, and land use/real estate. The results of the Independent Cost Estimate (ICE) were also presented to the DHCCP Executive Committee and BDCP Steering Committee this month. The ICE was independently developed and showed good correlation to the DHCCP developed cost estimates for each of the conveyance options. Over the next few months the DHCCP staff will develop the ATO concept to the same level as the EIF and WIF.

Two-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) is currently developing a revised workplan to resolve questions raised during the Two-Gates project review. In February, USBR and the state and federal water contractors initiated discussion of the workplan. The discussions are focused on addressing concerns with the Two-Gates project and identifying other potential near-term actions. The workplan will include an evaluation of key issues from the Environmental Assessment and Biological Assessment review of the Two-Gates project. A timeline for expedited actions will be developed consistent with the Interim Federal Action Plan for the California Bay-Delta issued by USBR in December 2009.

Staff is continuing to move forward on forecasting turbidity/smelt movement in the Delta through model development and field testing. Real-time modeling efforts are 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

Review of Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) process for the periodic review and update of the Delta water quality objectives and flow requirements of the 2006 Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP) for the Bay-Delta Estuary was initiated in August 2008. The SWRCB's initial focus is on review and potential amendment of the southern Delta salinity objectives, which protect the agricultural beneficial uses within the Delta, and San Joaquin River flow requirements. 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.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Matters)

Flow Criteria. The SWRCB has initiated its 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 (including Metropolitan) filed notices of intent to appear, indicating they wished to present information at the proceeding. On February 16, 2010, about two dozen parties filed written testimony, exhibits and witness lists in preparation for SWRCB's March 22-24, 2010 informational hearings on the flow requirements. Metropolitan Bay-Delta Program and Legal staff assisted in preparation of testimony and exhibits submitted jointly on behalf of the State Water Contractors, federal export water contractors and a few individually named contractors including Metropolitan. Metropolitan Bay-Delta Program Initiatives staff members have been identified as potential witnesses in the hearings. Cross-examination will not be allowed at the hearings, but the parties can submit written questions that SWRCB members and staff may direct to the witnesses designated to appear in the hearings. Metropolitan staff is reviewing the testimony and exhibits filed by other parties and assisting in the preparation of the written questions that must be filed by March 8, 2010.