



● Bay-Delta Matters Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of the activities related to the Bay-Delta for April 2010.

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). In April, BDCP activities focused on a framework structure to link species recovery goals and system-wide response to BDCP goals, objectives, and conservation measures. Providing this linkage has been an important target for the non-governmental organization representatives. Initial hydrodynamic modeling results were completed, which forecast water supply projections under the current facilities and operations and with the proposed new diversion and conveyance facility and new operational parameters. The modeling results indicated that under the assumed near- and long-term climate change and sea level rise scenarios, water supplies would be reduced, but the impact would be less under the proposed BDCP program.

Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP). The DHCCP completed several work products related to the evaluation of the conveyance alternatives in April. An independent review committee assembled by the Department of Water Resources, completed their technical review of the three conveyance alternatives: the East Isolated Facility, West Isolated Facility, and all tunnel option. An independent cost estimate report and a risk analysis draft report focused on the conveyance alternatives were also completed. Metropolitan staff is coordinating with other water contractor staff to develop additional information on the conveyance alternatives for the DHCCP Executive Committee.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration. Metropolitan is working jointly with other export water interests to develop early action habitat restoration projects. In April, Metropolitan made substantial progress in advancing the 700-acre tidal marsh habitat restoration project in the southern Yolo Bypass. Metropolitan completed calibration of the Yolo Bypass Model, which will be used to evaluate the design of tidal marsh channels and floodplain for critical ecosystem parameters, as well as evaluating the potential flood control benefits within the important bypass flood conveyance facility. Conceptual designs for the project and modeling results were presented to the DHCCP Cache Slough Restoration team. Staff provided a briefing on the habitat potential for Yolo County staff, the State Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA), and Natural Resources Defense Council. Staff is also working to develop an opportunity for board members to visit the area and to receive a briefing on the status. They also gave a presentation to and received initial approval from the SFCWA for contracts to fund final design, environmental documentation, biological surveys, and project monitoring and science.

Two-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project. Metropolitan continues to work with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), the state and federal water contractors, and the fisheries agencies to resolve issues related to the Two-Gates Fish Protection Project and develop a workplan for moving forward. Staff is continuing to move forward on forecasting turbidity and Delta 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. The Army Corps of Engineers has indicated that a recreational boat survey and navigation study would be required for further processing of a 404 permit for the Two-Gates project. The survey work is being planned for May 2010 and June 2010 when proposed gate operations would coincide with increased seasonal boating in the Delta.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Matters Report)

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Issues

Flow Criteria. In April, the SWRCB continued its process to develop flow criteria for the Delta ecosystem necessary to protect public trust resources. Metropolitan staff, as part of a state and federal water contractor team, participated in the SWRCB public Informational Proceeding to Develop Flow Criteria on March 22-24, 2010. The purpose of the proceeding was to receive scientific information in order to develop new Delta flow criteria in compliance with Senate Bill No. 1 of the 2009-2010 Seventh Extraordinary Session. The flow criteria developed through this informational proceeding will not have any regulatory or adjudicative effect. The SWRCB solicited written testimony prior to the proceeding. During the proceeding, the SWRCB received an introduction by a SWRCB-appointed expert panel and received input from stakeholder panels in five technical areas: hydrology, anadromous fish, pelagic fish, non-flow stressors, and hydrodynamics. The export water contractors, including Metropolitan, provided written testimony and were represented on all five technical panels.

Closing statements were filed April 14. The water contractors' statement argues that no evidence was provided at the informational proceeding to support flow criteria different than those contained in the SWRCB's Water Rights Decision 1641. The statement further argues that habitat, food supply impacts, and other non-flow stressors should be addressed before additional flow measures should be considered, because additional flows would be wasted without commensurate environmental benefit. Follow-up submittals and meetings with SWRCB board members are planned by the water contractors. Legislation requires the SWRCB to submit new flow criteria in August 2010.