



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Attachments

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Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP): Working with the other water contractors, Metropolitan staff conducted a review of the proposed framework for the BDCP process to analyze the effects of conservation measures (effects analysis). The review focused on the scientific and technical justification for the proposed analytical tools and assumptions, and consistency with our positions in various legal and public forums. Metropolitan's comments highlighted several areas of concern. First was the assumption that changes to flow requirements is an appropriate surrogate for assessing impacts to habitat for Delta smelt and other pelagic species. Metropolitan's second concern challenged the strategy for calculating entrainment of juvenile smelt. Several methods were proposed which we believe have little foundational merit and/or scientific justification. Finally, the comments focused on the need to develop a process to determine which tools to utilize, how to resolve conflicting results, and how to consolidate the various analyses. Metropolitan staff will continue to monitor the effects analysis process to ensure that best available science is considered. Metropolitan continues to directly participate in all BDCP work related efforts.

Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP): During this past month, the DHCCP completed several technical work products, including an updated cost estimate for the East Isolated Facility and West Isolated Facility, technical memoranda on the rationale for the intake configurations and locations, the intake and intermediate pumping plant optimization, and the conveyance system operations. The DHCCP also prepared a Geotechnical Investigation Work Plan. To date the consultants have completed a combined total of 30 cone penetrometer tests and borings for all alignments. Their investigation activities in the Delta are being delayed by litigation and lack of temporary entry permits. The geotechnical information is required for preliminary and final design. Without this information the project schedule may be delayed.

Water Contractors led by Metropolitan staff continue to work on determining the final capacity for the conveyance. They also provided cost and presentation materials to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and Department of Water Resources (DWR) for analysis and presentation to the BDCP Steering Committee.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration. Metropolitan is jointly coordinating with other export water users, environmental interests, local entities, and state/federal agencies to develop early action habitat restoration projects consistent with the targets set forth under the US Fish and Wildlife Service's and National Marine Fishery Service's biological opinions. In May, Metropolitan continued progress in advancing a potential 700-acre tidal marsh habitat restoration project in the southern Yolo Bypass. Metropolitan completed biological resources surveys including field reconnaissance surveys, natural resource database research,

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aerial imagery analyses, vernal pool shrimp species surveys, rare plant surveys, wetland delineations and burrowing owl nesting surveys. Through a series of meetings with BDCP and DHCCP staff, Metropolitan successfully transferred to DWR our more robust and accurate hydrodynamic model of the Yolo Bypass. This new model will allow DWR to better evaluate social, flood control and ecological effects of all the tidal marsh and floodplain habitat and infrastructure improvements contemplated under the BDCP. Staff is also working to re-schedule an opportunity for board members to visit the area and to receive a briefing on the status.

Two-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project: Metropolitan continues to work with 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 work plan for moving forward. 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 the monitoring of Delta smelt, turbidity, conductivity, and water temperature. Through coordination by USBR, California Department of Boating and Waterways will be expanding their annual recreational boating survey and safety study to include survey points at the Two-Gates project locations. The Corps of Engineers would utilize the survey in conjunction with any further processing of a 404 permit. The survey work will be conducted through the period of proposed gate operations in late-June and would also extend into the fall months.

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Issues

In May, the SWRCB continued its process to develop flow criteria for the Delta ecosystem necessary to protect public trust resources in compliance with Senate Bill No. 1 of the 2009-2010 Seventh Extraordinary Session. Metropolitan continues to work with the state and federal water contractors to participate in this process. 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. In May, Metropolitan coordinated with the water contractors to participate in follow-up meetings with SWRCB board members to discuss and clarify the water contractors written arguments. Legislation requires the SWRCB to submit new flow criteria in August 2010.