



- Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP): In September, Metropolitan staff continued to focus on the BDCP environmental effects analysis. Portions of the habitat analysis for terrestrial communities were circulated for review. Metropolitan staff, working with representatives of other state and federal water contractors, will coordinate review and development of comments on this material. Preliminary draft sections of the BDCP are being reviewed in anticipation of a November release of a working draft report.

Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP): Work continued this month on planning, engineering, and geotechnical evaluations for the DHCCP conveyance options. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) initiated work on the Pipeline/Tunnel Option Optimization effort. DWR consultants have assembled teams of tunneling experts from DWR, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), the water contractors (including participants from Metropolitan, Santa Clara Valley Water District and Kern County Water Agency), DHCCP consultants, and external consultants. These expert teams will address the following issues: (1) design criteria and analysis, (2) construction, alignment and profile, (3) conveyance system optimization (sizing), (4) barge facilities and gas wells, and (5) maintenance and dewatering. The expert teams will work in a collaborative manner to develop a report addressing design, construction and maintenance issues, and the report is scheduled to be submitted to an outside panel of tunnel experts for review. The schedule calls for the teams to complete initial tunnel configuration information for review by the panel by October 5, 2010 and draft tunnel configuration and report to the panel by December 8, 2010.

DWR is also moving forward with the in-water geotechnical drilling and soil sampling. The plan calls for 28 in-water borings to be completed by the end of October 2010. Land-based borings on state or federal property will also proceed. The land-based borings that involve Temporary Entry Permits on private property are still held up in litigation.

Delta Stewardship Council (DSC): The DSC met on September 23 and 24 and continued their efforts to consider early actions proposed for inclusion in the Interim Plan, and the process and schedule for development of the Delta Plan. Metropolitan continues to coordinate with the state and federal water contractors to provide comments to the DSC. At the September meeting, the DSC approved administrative procedures governing appeals that include a standard of review for the BDCP that "gives weight to" the Department of Fish and Game's reasoning and factual findings on whether the BDCP meets the State requirements and therefore should be included in the Delta Plan. The administrative procedures will be included in the Interim Plan that was adopted by the DSC at the August 27, 2010, meeting. The Interim Plan provides a process for a responsible agency or proponent with an action, project, or program to be considered by the DSC before the Delta Plan is adopted. The DSC considered five early action applications at their September meeting. They plan to consider additional early action applications at their October 2010 and November 2010 meetings. The DSC also discussed the process for development of the Delta Plan. Preparation of the Delta Plan will be initiated with development of white papers providing background information related to implementation of the coequal goals, the Delta Plan framework, and the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). A Draft Delta Plan and Draft EIR will be prepared by June 2011, and the Final Delta Plan and Final EIR will be prepared by December 2011.

Board Report (<Bay-Delta Management Report>)

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration: Progress continued in September on the 700 acre Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project located on the Yolo Ranch. The 3,400-acre Yolo Ranch, also known as McCormack Ranch, is located in the lower Yolo Bypass just to the north of Liberty Island. This location presents an ideal opportunity to expand tidal wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Metropolitan and the state and federal water contractors held meetings with state and federal resource agencies to address the regulatory process for moving forward with the project. The restoration project has been well received by the agencies. Project planning is continuing to move forward. Most of the field survey work is complete. The wetlands delineation is about 80 percent complete and the soils testing associated with this delineation is 100 percent complete. The last topographic surveys are now complete, as is the existing irrigation/drainage mapping. The Yolo Ranch Restoration Project final CEQA document is targeted for completion in 2011.

Two-Gates Fish Protection Demonstration Project: Priority is being placed with efforts to forecast adult delta smelt movement and distribution in the Delta and resulting spawning behavior and location. Modeling tools are being refined, based on developing scientific data, in order to start testing the capability to forecast smelt distribution in the upcoming smelt spawning period in December 2010 through March 2011, and possibly help minimize water cost within the existing regulatory regime. The emphasis on this activity will also contribute toward reaching agreement on operations for the export water projects in the future. Further work on the physical components (gates) and environmental documentation for the Two-Gates Project will be placed on hold in favor of this more critical effort in the immediate future.

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Issues: The SWRCB adopted the *Development of Flow Criteria for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Ecosystem* report at its meeting on August 3, 2010. Metropolitan staff is working with the state and federal water contractors, the San Joaquin River Group, and DWR to evaluate potential water supply impacts associated with the flow criteria and how these impacts would affect water users in each of the upstream areas as well as export areas. On September 21, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) made available for public review draft Delta biological objectives and flow criteria in compliance with Senate Bill No 1 of the 2009-2010 Seventh Extraordinary Session. The biological objectives and flow criteria contained in the draft report rely on the data and information DFG submitted as part of the SWRCB's March 22-24, 2010 informational proceeding and their subsequent flow criteria report. Staff is reviewing the report and developing comments.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Metropolitan continued to participate in the preparation of DWR and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) coordinated emergency preparedness and response plans. These initiatives focus in part on materials stockpiles and response plans to repair breaches and reduce slumping on levees potentially forming an emergency freshwater pathway in the event of a catastrophic failure of Delta levees. In September, DWR, USACE, Reclamation District 2028 (Bacon Island), and Metropolitan staff met to review draft agreements and funding strategies for participation in the USACE's Levee Stability Program, through which levee stability berms would help mitigate the potential for slumping of pathway levees during seismic activity. Metropolitan has facilitated discussions considering the use of materials from other Delta sources in pathway restoration.