



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP): In October, BDCP activities focused on three topics: implementation, governance, and cost estimates. The BDCP Implementation chapter outlines the annual planning, budgeting and reporting process, and the legal obligations and assurances provided under the BDCP. The governance structure establishes the roles and responsibilities of various entities for managing and implementing the BDCP. Metropolitan participated in the development of the implementation plan and governance structure, and was very active in securing a role for the water contractors in the implementation and BDCP decision-making process. In addition, estimates have been prepared for capital and operation/maintenance costs for all conservation measures.

Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP): During this past month, DHCCP work focused on pipeline and tunnel preliminary design work. Teams of tunneling experts continue to work on the Pipeline/Tunnel Option Optimization. These teams represent Department of Water Resources (DWR), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), water contractors (including participants from Metropolitan, Santa Clara Valley Water District and Kern County Water Agency), DHCCP consultants and external consultants. The teams are addressing (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 individual teams have been meeting on a weekly basis. On October 5, all the above teams met with the outside panel of tunnel experts to present the current tunnel project configuration and to get their initial input on the direction the teams are taking. The experts provided input to the teams for their consideration in many of the areas being addressed. The schedule calls for the teams to complete draft tunnel configuration and report by December 8, 2010.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration: Progress continued in October on the Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project. 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 area presents an ideal location to expand tidal wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The water contractors held a pre-application meeting with the Central Valley Flood Control Board staff to agree on the specific hydraulic modeling analyses to be performed. In separate meetings, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) staff provided guidance on Giant Garter Snake, vernal pool issues and wetlands design. Metropolitan and water contractor staff are currently working with Yolo County staff to develop a mitigation strategy to deal with loss of agricultural lands and comply with provisions to exclude the project from their habitat moratorium. The water contractor team provided a site tour for USFWS and DFG staff. Cost sharing issues between the state and federal water contractor members are being discussed as well. Agreements with neighboring reclamation districts are also being developed for easements and material disposal.

Near-Term Actions: Metropolitan and USBR representatives are focusing on non-structural methods of forecasting and export operations to influence fish distribution and help minimize entrainment risk. Biostatistical consulting experts have advised that recent statistical procedures developed for detection of physical barrier effects are equally applicable to the detection of effects of forecasting and export operations or other hydrodynamic control mechanisms in the Delta.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Issues: DFG submitted draft Delta biological objectives and flow criteria to the SWRCB on September 21, 2010 in compliance with the 2009 Delta legislation. Staff reviewed the report and coordinated with the state and federal water contractors to submit comments. Metropolitan also submitted a separate comment letter emphasizing the role of BDCP in protecting Delta fishery needs.

A public workshop is tentatively scheduled for December to solicit input on the SWRCB's proposed technical approach to evaluate a range of regulatory alternatives for meeting southern Delta salinity and San Joaquin River flow objectives. Staff will participate in this public workshop and are coordinating with state and federal water contractors and DWR. This workshop is a step to follow through on the SWRCB's strategic workplan for activities to protect beneficial uses in the Bay-Delta, which was adopted in 2008. Among other activities, the workplan calls for review and potential amendment of the southern Delta salinity and San Joaquin River flow objectives included in the 2006 Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

By invitation of DWR, Metropolitan participated in a workshop with the DWR levees risk analyses team to help define response strategies up to and including a plausible multi-island failure resulting in emergency freshwater pathway implementation to avoid extended water export disruptions. DWR, Metropolitan and USBR District 2028 (Bacon Island) discussed local funding through DWR's Delta Levees and Flood Emergency Groups for participation in the Corps Levee Stability Program to mitigate slumping of pathway levees during seismic activity.