



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of the activities related to the Bay-Delta for January 2011.

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP): The change in state administration will result in new state leadership for the BDCP process. John Laird has been appointed as Director of Natural Resources Agency, and Jerry Meral has been appointed as Deputy Secretary.

Judge Wanger's ruling in December, which remanded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Delta smelt Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the joint operations of the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) facilities back to the USFWS for reconsideration, has introduced another level of complexity for the BDCP effects analysis. The ruling called into question the validity of several key biological assumptions and methodologies used to assess the effects of water operations on sensitive aquatic species.

Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP): During this past month, DWR directed the DHCCP consultants to significantly reduce the engineering work being done. The staff reductions are being made to live within the existing budget until remaining BDCP effects analysis issues are resolved. The current schedule calls for preliminary engineering design to start in October 2011 if outstanding BDCP issues are resolved.

Delta Stewardship Council (DSC): DSC activities in January focused on development of the Delta Plan. The DSC held seven public scoping sessions from January 18 to 26, in different regions of the state, to seek public comments on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This is a key document to start the environmental review process for the Delta Plan. Staff attended all of the NOP scoping sessions and delivered a public statement at the Southern California session in Diamond Bar. Staff also coordinated with the state and federal water contractors on the review of the NOP, and plan to submit written comments. Metropolitan's oral and written comments focus on support of the co-equal goals of improving water supply reliability and ecosystem restoration, discussion of Metropolitan's water resources plan and goals for water conservation, the need to keep the Delta Plan focused on Delta activities as described in the legislation, and specific technical comments on the NOP.

The next DSC meeting will be held January 27 and 28. The meeting will focus on development of the Delta Plan, an update on the scoping sessions, review of the Delta Plan outline, presentations of methodologies for setting flow criteria for rivers and estuaries, and a report from the Delta Independent Science Board (ISB) on Delta stressors. During March through June, the DSC is planning to increase their meeting frequency to two times a month to discuss the developing Draft EIR and Delta Plan.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration: Progress continued in January on the Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project, which presents an ideal location to create over 1,000 acres of new tidal wetlands in the Delta. Staff is coordinating with other state and federal water contractors through the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA) to work on the newly expanded CEQA documentation, and is preparing for a public scoping session in late January. An NOP and an Initial Study for the project have been prepared and will be mailed out prior to the scoping session. A public draft EIR is currently scheduled to be completed next spring. The SFCWA/Metropolitan team is continuing to work with Yolo County staff to develop a memorandum of agreement (MOA) to exclude the project from their habitat moratorium provisions. Progress on the MOA was delayed due to Yolo County staff focus on the Conaway Ranch purchase.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB): The SWRCB held a public workshop on January 6 and 7 to present and discuss a draft technical report on San Joaquin River flow and southern Delta salinity objectives. The purpose of the workshop was to solicit input on the proposed technical approach to evaluate a range of regulatory alternatives. Presentations were made by SWRCB staff, DWR, and the San Joaquin River Group Authority. The SWRCB received input from four expert panels, and SWC representatives participated on all panels. On or before a February 8 deadline, the contractors will provide a more complete recommendation on how the SWRCB should proceed in order to ensure that the best scientific and economic data are utilized to balance the competing beneficial uses before new flow and water quality objectives are adopted.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Hydrodynamic modeling studies are scheduled for completion by DWR consultant Resource Management Associates in the first quarter 2011 addressing emergency response scenarios with established water quality targets for export resumption. Staff is performing operations and water treatment plant modeling to evaluate potential water quality targets, including coordination with the DWR Municipal Water Quality Investigations program. A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers executive briefing is planned with the South Pacific Division Engineer in February 2011, which will include the Delta Flood Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Program. Stability analyses and cost estimates reflecting effects of additional landside levee fill to help mitigate pathway levee slumping will consider imported levee fill materials from alternate Delta sources.