



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)

On June 15, the Natural Resources Agency held a public meeting on the BDCP. This meeting is a key element of the Brown Administration's commitment to provide greater opportunities for public input into the BDCP planning process. The objectives of the meeting were to build on the stakeholder engagement discussions from the April 25 public meeting, describe the structure of the public work groups and how stakeholders can participate, share technical updates from work groups currently underway, and allow for productive feedback on BDCP issues. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Jerry Meral, Deputy Secretary of Resources, and included question and answer sessions. A key element of the BDCP planning forum is the formation of the topic-specific workgroups. These workgroups are composed of representatives of various stakeholder groups. The workgroups are also open to the general public. Three workgroups met during June—Governance, Goals and Objectives, and Yolo Bypass Habitat. The Goals and Objectives workgroup is considering the initial recommendations from an independent science panel regarding species goals and natural community objectives. Work will continue in these workgroups and others as they are convened, over the next few months.

Delta Habitat Conservation and Conveyance Program (DHCCP)

During June, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and DHCCP consultant's staff continued to work on the geotechnical investigations for the program. By the end of June, field geotechnical work was completed at 30 locations near the north end of the proposed conveyance near the pumping plants, intakes, forebay and intermediate pumping plant. The work includes down hole borings, cone penetration tests, and test pits. During the months of August to November 2011, geotechnical investigations will be conducted at the south end of the conveyance facilities near Clifton Court Forebay, and borings will be conducted at 18 locations. The geotechnical investigation is on the schedule critical path. DWR is still evaluating whether to appeal the judge's ruling and will negotiate with landowners to purchase the easements necessary for the geotechnical investigations. The Fish Facilities Technical Team (FFTT) continues to evaluate the proposed intake facilities. The FFTT is composed of participants from DWR, Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The FFTT evaluation includes, but is not limited to, operational criteria, sweep and approach velocities that will protect the fish, size and location of facilities, and proposed near- and long-term studies. Metropolitan staff continues to review the All Tunnel Conceptual Engineering Report to identify areas where Metropolitan can assist DWR in the preliminary design of the conveyance facilities. Metropolitan staff is preparing a list of issues that need to be addressed prior to start of preliminary design. The current schedule calls for preliminary design to start October 2011.

Delta Stewardship Council (Council)

The Council continued to focus on the development of the Delta Plan in June. Metropolitan submitted comments on the third draft Delta Plan on June 10, including specific revisions to the Delta Plan language to address Metropolitan's key concerns related to water supply reliability, covered actions and Delta Plan implementation, BDCP, Delta flow criteria, and Delta risk reduction.

On June 14, after considering substantial public input on the third draft Delta Plan, the Council released the fourth draft Delta Plan. The fourth draft Delta Plan includes significant refinement of many of the regulatory policies and recommendations included in the third draft. There are 14 proposed regulatory policies and 54 proposed

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recommendations in the fourth draft, a slight reduction in regulatory policies and increase in recommendations. The Council held two meetings in June that focused on the fourth draft Delta Plan. At the Council meeting on June 16, the Council discussed changes to policies and recommendations in the fourth draft Delta Plan and also discussed the conceptual Delta Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) alternatives. The Council held a two-day meeting June 23-24, which focused on the changes in the fourth draft Delta Plan and discussion of Council suggestions for revisions to the fourth draft. The next step is for the Council to prepare a fifth draft Delta Plan, which will be posted for public comment and circulated with the Delta Plan Draft EIR for public comment.

Near-Term Actions

Habitat Restoration

The State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA), of which Metropolitan is a member, has been investigating opportunities for habitat restoration in the Suisun Marsh, in addition to the Lower Yolo Bypass, to comply with the federal Endangered Species Act biological opinion to develop 8,000 acres of intertidal habitat for Delta smelt. DWR has the ultimate obligation for restoring the Delta smelt habitat, and SFCWA is working cooperatively with DWR to achieve this result in a timely and cost effective manner. Toward this end, SFCWA is working with Westervelt Ecological Services to acquire interest in the Tule Red property in the Suisun Marsh. In order to provide interim funding, Metropolitan, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and Westlands Water District have all recently approved a payment totaling \$1,239,500.00 for an easement, an option for fee title and real estate service. Ultimately, the objective of the Tule Red project is to restore over 300 acres of habitat in the Suisun Marsh. The Suisun Marsh is the largest contiguous brackish water marsh remaining on the west coast of North America, once encompassing more than 74,000 acres of marshlands.

Progress continued this month on the Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project. The 1,100 acre tidal marsh restoration project is located in the Lower Yolo Bypass just to the north of Liberty Island. With support from Metropolitan staff, SFCWA consultants are continuing to work on the administrative draft EIR. A public draft EIR is currently scheduled to be completed in late July 2011. Concurrently, the SFCWA team is preparing various permit applications and continuing to develop a habitat restoration plan.

State Water Resources Control Board (State Board)

The State Board held a scoping meeting on June 6 for the update and implementation of the 2006 Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Basin Plan), focused on south Delta salinity and San Joaquin River flow objectives. Presentations were made by State Board staff, state and federal fisheries agencies, the San Joaquin River Group, and South Delta Water Agency. The State Water Contractors (SWC) provided the following comments at the meeting:

- Support the State Board's proposal to maintain existing water quality objectives for the San Joaquin River at Vernalis.
- Acknowledgement that the causes of "null" zones (or lack of circulation) in the south Delta are not well understood, and that the SWC are working with DWR to develop modeling studies to gain a better understanding.
- The State Board should use best available science, including life cycle models, to develop appropriate fishery flows on the San Joaquin River.

The State Board anticipates filing a final environmental document for the update of the 2006 Bay-Delta Basin Plan by June 2012.

Staff, through SFCWA, continues to participate with the San Joaquin River Group and several interested power utilities to develop modeling tools that will be used to evaluate the impact of proposed State Board flow criteria on hydropower generation. A consulting firm was selected to undertake an initial evaluation of impacts downstream of major reservoirs.

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Delta Emergency Preparedness

Work continued this month on several Delta emergency preparedness efforts. DWR is conducting modeling studies evaluating a range of water quality target start-up scenarios for resumption of exports after Delta emergencies. The results of these studies will be available for review by Metropolitan water quality staff in July 2011. A meeting is being planned with DWR Flood Management to attempt to finalize funding needs under a Federal Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) for Bacon Island pathway levee improvements. DWR and its consultants have completed development of a water analysis model and an emergency response and repair model to use for emergency response evaluations. Working together, these models provide expeditious assessment of hydrodynamic conditions, emergency priorities and response capabilities in the event of a severe flood and seismic emergency in the Delta. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have completed a comprehensive draft mapping data base of all existing federal, state, and local emergency preparedness and response plans in the Delta. This would form an important component of DWR's Delta Flood Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan. A policy briefing being planned for Pat Port, Department of Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Oakland, and agency executives directing the current Delta emergency operations planning team is being expanded to include David Nawi, Department of Interior (DOI), Senior Advisor to the Secretary for California and Nevada. DOI executives have offered assistance in enhancing dialogue particularly with federal agencies in Delta emergency operations planning initiatives.