



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of the activities related to the Bay-Delta for March 2012.

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)

As reported last month, the first administrative drafts of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/S) were posted on the BDCP website (baydeltaconservationplan.com) for the public to view. This is not a formal public review and comment release but rather part of the state's commitment for an open and transparent process. The first administrative drafts contain several thousand pages of text, figures, tables, and technical appendices. Key chapters of the reports address critical topics such as governance, cost allocation, effects analysis, alternatives, plan implementation, and expected surface and groundwater impacts. Additional work and refinement of these documents is expected between the first administrative drafts and the release of the second administrative drafts scheduled for May 2012, and the public drafts scheduled for the end of June 2012. Metropolitan staff is reviewing the first administrative drafts in detail and is coordinating with other public water agencies.

Delta Stewardship Council (Council)

The Council held two, two-day meetings in March. On March 15 and 16, the Council discussed comments received on the draft Delta Plan EIR and potential changes to the draft Delta Plan to address comments received. The Council plans to continue the discussion of draft EIR comments and provide direction to staff for a sixth staff draft of the Delta Plan at the March 29 and 30 meeting. Council staff committed to bring back a matrix that includes options for Delta Plan revisions for the Council to consider at their next meeting. Metropolitan staff is coordinating with Council members and staff, and with Association of California Water Agencies' Ag-Urban Coalition.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration

Progress continued in March on the Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project. A solicitation for consulting firms to assist with the preparation of regulatory permits was finalized. The regulatory crediting Prospectus for the project is also nearing completion. The draft Prospectus provides technical justification for over 1,000 acres of both salmon and delta smelt credits to meet the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service requirements in their respective Biological Opinions. With final concurrence of the land owner and State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA) Board, the draft EIR should be ready for public comment this spring. Finally, Metropolitan and SFCWA staffs continue to work with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) to develop agreements to reimburse SFCWA and other water agencies for OCAP related habitat expenditures, which will assist with the efficient implementation of much needed habitat.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board)

The State Water Board is conducting a phased review and update of the 2006 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay-Delta WQCP). To date, the process has focused on the southern Delta salinity objectives for the protection of agriculture, San Joaquin River flow objectives for the protection of fish and wildlife, and the program of implementation for achieving those objectives. The State Water Board released for public review three draft technical appendices addressing these issues. An informational hearing on the draft appendices was held on March 20. The three draft technical appendices cover the following topics:

- **Scientific Basis for Alternative San Joaquin River Flow and Southern Delta Salinity Objectives:** This revised draft report describes the scientific information and tools needed to consider potential changes to San Joaquin River flow and southern Delta water quality objectives and their associated program of implementation. The draft Scientific Report was first released for public review and comment in October 2010. The revised draft was modified to address the comments received through a November 2011 peer review.
- **Agricultural Economic Effects of Lower San Joaquin River Flow Alternatives:** The analysis in this appendix estimates the potential effects to agricultural production and related sectors of the lower San Joaquin River watershed economy that could occur with changes to surface water diversions resulting from a range of flow alternatives.
- **Hydropower and Electric Grid Analysis of Lower San Joaquin River Flow Alternatives:** This appendix analyzes the potential effects on hydropower generation and electric grid reliability in the lower San Joaquin River watershed that could occur under a range of flow alternatives.

In addition, last month the State Water Board initiated a process to consider the comprehensive review of the Bay-Delta WQCP and potential changes to protect beneficial uses in the Bay-Delta. Staff coordinated with state and federal water contractors to submit written comments regarding the proposed State Water Board process focusing on the need to (1) coordinate with the BDCP, (2) use best available science, (3) avoid protracted water rights proceedings, and (4) recognize competing water uses such as hydropower. Our comments also proposed a modified schedule that will ensure a timely, open and transparent process and address our concerns. Staff has been working with State Water Board members and staff, power utilities, and other water users to develop a proposal for holding workshops that will inform the State Water Board in its upcoming flow proceedings.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Delta Flood Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Program (EPRRP)

Efforts continued this month to identify levee improvements that would help reduce levee slumping during major seismic events along emergency freshwater pathway levees and reduce pathway levee improvement costs. URS consultants design representatives met with East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) consulting engineers responsible for design of levee improvements to protect the Mokelumne Aqueducts at Jones Tract and Woodward Island to determine compatibility with emergency freshwater pathway needs. URS will evaluate the reduced potential for levee slumping under earthquake conditions with the addition of the EBMUD levee improvements and will identify further work deemed appropriate for pathway purposes.

In addition, this summer a toe berm will be constructed to provide additional levee stability along much of the Bacon Island emergency freshwater pathway west levee with funds from the Delta Levees Program. URS consultants will evaluate the potential for levee slumping under earthquake conditions with the addition of the toe berm and identify any further pathway needs.

DWR is identifying funding for emergency preparedness stockpiles through Proposition 1E appropriations based on findings of the EPRRP. Staff is coordinating with DWR to ensure suitable stockpiles for pathway construction.