



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan

The state of California and the federal government agency principals held meetings on September 12 and 13 to further define key elements of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). Resolution of outstanding issues over the next several weeks would support the release of the public review drafts of the BDCP and the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) this year.

Delta Stewardship Council

The seventh draft of the Delta Plan was released on September 5. The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) reviewed the seventh draft at its September 13 meeting, and with minor changes voted to move forward with the seventh draft as the preferred project for a draft supplemental EIR and as the basis to start the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) process to review regulatory policies. The Council expects to release the draft supplemental EIR and start the OAL process in November 2012. Both processes will have 45-day comment periods. The Council is scheduled to hold its monthly public meeting on September 27, when it is expected to announce selection of the next Executive Officer for the Council, who will be replacing Joe Grindstaff, who is retiring.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration

Progress continued in September on the Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project, which would create over 1,000 acres of habitat beneficial to salmon and Delta smelt. ICFI, the consulting firm hired to assist the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA) with the preparation of regulatory permits for the project, continues to advance regulatory approvals, and SFCWA continued to advance the official crediting of the habitat with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Fish and Game and National Marine Fisheries Service. SFCWA is also evaluating alternatives for beneficially reusing the excavated material, which includes temporarily stockpiling the materials near Prospect Island where Department of Water Resources (DWR) is developing a tidal wetlands restoration project.

The schedule is for the Draft EIR to be released for public review in fall of 2012, with certification of the Final EIR targeted for early 2013.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

State Water Resources Control Board

Staff continued to work closely with the state and federal water contractors to participate in the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) Phase 2 workshops to receive information and conduct discussions on the scientific and technical basis for considering potential changes to the 2006 Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. On September 5 and 6, Metropolitan staff participated with other water contractor representatives on an expert panel at the State Water Board's workshop on Ecosystem Changes and the Low Salinity Zone. The key theme of the water contractors' panel presentation was that major ecosystem changes have occurred in the low salinity zone, and while flow is important to the ecosystem, flow is not the primary driver in those changes.

On September 14, Metropolitan, in coordination with the State Water Contractors (SWC) and the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority, submitted a technical assessment of available scientific information in support of the State Water Board's second workshop on Bay-Delta Fishery Resources. This workshop is scheduled for October 1 and 2. Staff is reviewing submittals by other parties in preparation for a joint presentation at the workshop. Finally, staff is drafting written material in support of the third workshop on Analytical Tools scheduled for November 13 and 14, 2012.

Turbidity Forecasting

Staff is reviewing a draft technical report prepared by our consultant addressing a new screening tool for Delta turbidity forecasting. Metropolitan will meet with SWC staff and DWR management this month to discuss DWR's potential role in using the forecasting tools and methodology developed by Metropolitan to implement the adult Delta Smelt actions within the biological opinions this winter.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Metropolitan is coordinating with central and south Delta water agencies and reclamation districts regarding local levee improvements currently underway and recently completed that collectively benefit the integrity of the emergency freshwater pathway. Reclamation District 2028 is moving forward with construction of Bacon Island levee improvements along Middle River with funding provided through the DWR Delta Levees Program. Through a consulting agreement to Metropolitan, URS is conducting a detailed levee stability assessment of pathway levees under severe earthquake conditions, and will coordinate work with reclamation district design engineers MBK, Hultgren-Tillis, and KSN. The design data and construction plans recently provided by MBK for Bacon Island will help support the URS pathway levee stability assessment.

Discussions are taking place with DWR regarding potential use of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding through the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) to augment state emergency preparedness funds for materials stockpiles and selected levee improvements. Cal EMA emergency recovery services are typically modeled after FEMA protocols.

DWR's schedule for issuance and review of their draft Delta Flood Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan includes completion of a draft document by the end of 2012 and a final document by June 2013.