



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan

On November 29, the Natural Resources Agency held a public meeting on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). Updates were provided at the meeting on the proposed project and responses to Fishery Agency comments; the development of the Decision Tree on certain operations criteria; and the preparation of a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis for the program. Discussions continue between state and federal agencies on the next steps for completing the BDCP, including the schedule and process for public review of the Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Study.

Delta Stewardship Council

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) held a meeting on November 15, which included updates on the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee, a review of near-term strategies for implementation of the Delta Plan, the Council's approach for BDCP EIR review, and the development of the Delta Science Plan. On November 30, the Council released the final draft of the Delta Plan (which will be similar to the seventh draft released in September 2012 with some minor changes). Also on November 30, the Council released a draft EIR that will use the final draft Delta Plan as its preferred project, and a package of documents to support the Office of Administrative Law process to review regulatory policies. All documents have a 45-day comment period. On this timeline, the earliest that the Council could vote to finalize the Delta Plan and certify the EIR is April 2013.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration

Progress continued in November on the Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project. This project could create over 1,000 acres of both salmon and Delta smelt credits to meet the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service requirements in their respective biological opinions. It could also advance the BDCP goals for creating new aquatic habitat. The State and Federal Contractors Water Agency continues to work on acquisition of regulatory approvals and development of final restoration design. A selection process has been initiated to hire a construction management consultant to oversee and direct the construction including earthmoving operations. The project schedule is for the Draft EIR to be released for public review in December, with certification of the Final EIR targeted for early 2013.

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 November 13 and 14, Metropolitan staff participated with other water contractor representatives on an expert panel at the State Water Board's workshop on Bay-Delta Analytical Tools. The water contractors' panel presentation covered a wide range of topics,

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including: adaptive management, natural flows in the Delta and Central Valley, economic models, and life cycle models.

Turbidity Forecasting

Last month, staff met with Department of Water Resources (DWR) management to discuss DWR's potential role in using the modeling tool for Delta turbidity forecasting developed by Metropolitan to help implement the adult Delta smelt actions within the biological opinions. DWR operations staff agreed to conduct a pilot of the turbidity forecasting model. Metropolitan and DWR staff plan to meet to confer during the upcoming Delta smelt spawning and rearing period of the year (December 2012 through June 2013) on a variety of technical issues related to model forecasting and data linkages

Delta Emergency Preparedness

DWR is expected to release their draft Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan for public review in early 2013 and release the final report in June 2013. The document is being prepared in coordination with California Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, state and federal water contractors, and other state and federal agencies.

DWR invited staff to attend an in-house review of operational tools providing input to emergency response under major flood and seismic emergencies. These include the Emergency Response and Recovery model which predicts assets required and available for response, and the Water Analyses Model which predicts hydrodynamic phenomena associated with major levee breaches.

Metropolitan has identified levee reaches where levee improvements and priority maintenance will benefit the conveyance of fresh water to the south Delta pumps under emergency conditions. Principally, these include Middle River east and west levees from Victoria Canal to Columbia Cut, including Latham Slough.