



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan

The governance structure for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) was the key consideration for the month of December. On December 12, a revised Chapter 7, Implementation Structure, was posted to the BDCP website for public review. A Governance Working Group meeting was held on December 18 to discuss the revised chapter and the strategy for managing the various aspects of the BDCP. The schedule for the release of the Draft BDCP and Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Study (EIR/EIS) for public comments has been updated to spring 2013 with the Final BDCP and EIR/EISS targeted for the end of 2013. Staff continues to work closely with the state and federal administrations and other public water agencies to provide input on the BDCP.

Delta Stewardship Council

On November 30, 2012, the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) released a final (eighth draft) of the Delta Plan. Also on November 30, 2012, the Council released a Recirculated Draft EIR that uses the eighth draft Delta Plan as its preferred project, and a package of documents to start the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) process to validate regulatory policies contained in the Delta Plan. All documents have a 45-day public comment period, making comments due by January 14, 2013. The Council held a meeting on December 13, where they provided an overview on the released Delta Plan documents, and discussed other items including near-term strategies to implement the Delta Plan, the Lower Yolo Ranch restoration project, and development of the Delta Science Plan. On January 24, 2013, the Council will hold a hearing to take public comment on the OAL package. Given this timeline, the Council expects to vote to finalize the Delta Plan and certify the EIR sometime in the spring of 2013, and expects to complete the OAL process in the summer.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Habitat Restoration

Progress continued in December on the Lower Yolo Bypass tidal marsh restoration project, which is located in the Lower Yolo Bypass just to the north of Liberty Island. The State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA) continues to work on acquisition of regulatory approvals and development of final restoration design. Interviews are scheduled to select a construction management consultant to oversee and direct the successful construction including significant earthmoving operations.

SFCWA provided an update on the project to the Council on December 13. Yolo County representatives also participated in the meeting and discussed their concerns with the restoration project.

In coordination with SFCWA, staff is continuing to revise and finalize the Lower Yolo Project's Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Report (ADEIR) to address recent design changes and further evaluations of additional California Environmental Quality Act alternatives. The project schedule is for the ADEIR to be released for public review in the latter part of January 2013, with certification of the Final EIR targeted for later in 2013.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Turbidity Forecasting

A major storm hit the Central Valley in late November 2012, resulting in a “first-flush” turbidity event in the Delta. Turbidity began reaching elevated levels at Freeport on the Sacramento River by early December, and reached concern levels in the central and south Delta several days later. Several meetings were held with the State Water Contractors, Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff to evaluate real-time data and forecast information. As DWR continued to transition toward fully managing the development of turbidity forecasts on its own, Metropolitan’s consultants provided forecasts to inform the meetings. At the time this report was prepared, some Delta smelt salvage was being reported at the water export facilities and pumping was reduced accordingly.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

DWR is expected to release their draft Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan for public review in the second quarter of 2013 and release the final report in the third quarter of 2013. This reflects a delay caused by the need for additional time necessary to coordinate and establish new internal operational measures to implement the Plan. The measures include an emergency response and recovery model to estimate physical resources necessary to respond to catastrophic levee breach emergencies, and a water analysis model to predict hydrodynamic conditions during such emergencies.

Staff is providing input to DWR on conditions for implementation of an emergency freshwater pathway along Middle River under severe earthquake conditions. The DWR Emergency Response & Recovery and Water Analyses Module models which predict levee restoration needs and hydrodynamic phenomena associated with major levee breaches are being integrated into DWR’s operational response tools. In a working group meeting of emergency response agencies in late January 2013, DWR will review preparedness measures and operational response tools under major earthquake scenarios.

DWR has selected three emergency material stockpile locations with land and waterside access at Rio Vista, Brandon Island, and Stockton. Lands are being secured through fee ownership or lease, allowing construction to proceed on emergency transfer facilities and warehouse storage in 2014. Funding has been scheduled for placement of emergency stockpiles from 2012 through 2016. The Stockton site would be the primary transfer site if an emergency freshwater pathway is implemented.