



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of the activities related to the Bay-Delta for January 2013.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Bay Delta Conservation Plan

Two Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Working Group meetings were held in January. The Finance Working Group met on January 23 and the Yolo Bypass Fishery Enhancement Planning Team met on January 25. A pre-public draft of the BDCP is expected to be released in February 2013. This draft will be a complete draft BDCP and will provide the public with the opportunity to review the improvements and modifications that have been made to the document since February of 2012. Metropolitan is working with the Public Water Agencies on a strategy to collectively review the pre-draft BDCP. A Public Draft BDCP and Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Study will be released for formal public review and comment later in the year.

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, Council released a Recirculated Draft EIR that will use the eighth draft as its preferred project, and a package of documents to start the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) process to validate regulatory policies. Metropolitan, in conjunction with other state and federal water contractors, filed comments on all documents on January 14. On January 24, the Council held a hearing to take public comment on proposed regulations for the OAL process. Metropolitan staff provided public comment along with numerous other stakeholders. 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 successfully complete the OAL process in summer 2013.

Near-Term Delta Actions

State Water Resources Control Board

Staff continues to participate in the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) proceedings to develop a proposed update to the 2006 Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP). On December 31, 2012, the State Water Board released a public review draft of its environmental document (Substitute Environmental Document or SED) in support of its Phase 1 proposed changes to the Bay-Delta WQCP. Phase 1 is focused on San Joaquin River flows and southern Delta salinity objectives. Staff will be working with other water contractors to develop and submit written comments to the State Water Board by the March 29, 2013, deadline. Key elements of the proposed changes to the Bay-Delta WQCP include: (1) new February-June flow requirements to be provided by three San Joaquin River tributaries based upon a percentage of unimpaired conditions (i.e., flow that would occur if all runoff from a watershed remained in the river as currently configured, without storage or diversions), (2) relaxation of D-1641 salinity objectives in the southern Delta, and (3) new obligations for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to continue operating seasonal barriers in the south Delta for agricultural water use protection.

On January 17, the State Water Board released a Final Draft Summary Report of the State Water Board Workshops on the Comprehensive (Phase 2) Review and Update to the Bay-Delta WQCP. The report is a summary prepared by the workshops facilitator and includes areas of agreement, disagreement and questions

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Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

along with summaries of the three workshops held in fall 2012 on ecosystem changes, Bay-Delta fishery resources, and analytical tools. The State Water Board plans to schedule an informational session soon to discuss next steps in the Phase 2 process. Staff is reviewing the draft report and preparing comments.

Turbidity Forecasting

Following a major storm that hit the Central Valley in late November 2012, Delta turbidity has continued to occur at levels that raise concerns about Delta smelt salvage at the state and federal water projects. Metropolitan staff, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other stakeholders, is participating on the Delta Conditions Team to advise the Smelt Work Group on the use of forecasting tools to implement the adult Delta smelt Biological Opinion actions. Staff continues to monitor DWR's progress in piloting and adopting turbidity forecasting tools. Staff also continues to work with Metropolitan's consultants in the development, refinement, and application of forecasting tools. Staff is having discussions with State Water Contractors representatives to conduct a retrospective analysis of the 2012/13 Delta turbidity and Delta smelt salvage conditions.

Delta Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan

DWR recently briefed executive management on the schedule for completion of their draft Delta Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan (EPRRP). The schedule includes completion of the draft EPRRP in the second quarter of 2013, incorporation of partner agencies' review comments in the third quarter, and completion of their final draft report in the early fourth quarter. Included in the EPRRP will be implementation of an emergency freshwater pathway following an earthquake that causes major levee failures and flooding. The objectives of this plan are described as the protection of life and property in the Delta region; protection of water quality; restoration of water supply for Delta and export water users; and the reduction of recovery time for California's water supply to less than six months using coordinated response of local, state and federal agencies. DWR has identified the water quality and island flooding volume scenarios necessary to trigger implementation of the emergency freshwater pathway.

DWR is purchasing and implementing critical water and land access properties and emergency materials storage and loading facilities for response to conditions requiring implementation of the emergency freshwater pathway. Other materials storage and loading facilities are being established at other locations in the Delta region. Separate funding accounts have been identified for stockpiled materials purchase in support of local agencies emergency response needs, as well as the needs of statewide interests reliant on Delta water supplies.

At the request of DWR, Metropolitan will provide a ground shaking scenario under severe earthquake conditions that might be considered to test capabilities of the new EPRRP. In a working group meeting of emergency response agencies in late January, DWR reviewed preparedness measures and operational response tools under major earthquake and other scenarios.