

Meeting Notes
North Delta Agency Team
September 5, 2001

The following provides a summary of the North Delta Agency Team Meeting held on September 5, 2001. The group agreed to meet again on **October 2 9:30 - 11:30**, at the Resources Building, Room 133.

Attendees:

Kerry Wicker - DFG	Margit Aramburu - DPC
Mike Coleman - CALFED	Donna Podger - RWQCB
Gwen Knittweis - DWR	Aimee Dour-Smith - J&S
Rob Cooke - CALFED	Ryan Olah - USFWS
John Thomson - USFWS	Scott Cantrell - DFG
Tony Frisbee - CALFED	Chuck Vogelsang - CALFED
Craig Stevens - J&S	Pete Rawlings - J&S
Marina Brand - DFG	April Zohn - J&S

Members Invited but not Present:

Frank Wernette - DFG	Carl Werder - Bureau
Lorna Burks - SLC	Bellory Fong - CALFED
Matthew Reischman - RWQCB	Mike Aceituno - NMFS
Diane Windham - NMFS	Paul Bowers - USACE
Peter Rabbon - DWR/Rec Board	Terry Mills - CALFED
Dennis Majors - CALFED	Steve Shaffer - CDFA
Jim Starr - DFG	Rod Johnson - CALFED
Ron Ott - CALFED	
Dennis O'Bryant - DOC	

Notes:

- Aimee Dour-Smith provided the group with a project update.
 - The regional Hydraulic Modeling Group is currently reviewing information available through existing models (including models for low flow conditions) to develop a schedule and cost estimate for the modeling effort that will be used for the NDIP. The schedule and cost estimate should be provided to the group by MBK and Ensign & Buckley by early November.
 - The NDIP project team is currently working with the Delta Wide Ecosystem Restoration Steering Committee (DWERSC) to help develop ecosystem actions and goals that will guide the ecosystem restoration component of the NDIP. Since the DWERSC is developing the regional ERP plan for the Delta, DWERSC does not anticipate having NDIP goals and actions available until February of 2002.
 - TNC is currently working on designs for the McCormick-Williamson tract. It was noted that TNC's efforts on McCormick-Williamson will be incorporated as an element of the NDIP ERP and flood conveyance efforts.
 - TNC is currently negotiating the Staten Island contract and expects to close on September 14.
 - Scoping associated with the EIR/EIS is expected to occur during the first quarter of 2002. These dates are being driven by two "critical paths"; development of the NDIP ERP actions and goals by DWERSC, and the development of the regional hydraulic model for NDIP. Conceptual alternatives, which cannot be developed without the above information, will be needed prior to scoping.
- Gwen Knittweis gave an update on the status of the NEPA lead agency. Based on internal discussions with DWR and CALFED, Gwen and Rob Cooke plan on requesting that USACE regulatory act as the NEPA lead agency. Gwen and Rob will continue to pursue this option.
- Margit mentioned that we may want to invite San Joaquin county and the City of Galt to the stakeholder or hydraulic modeling meetings since portions of their jurisdictions would be directly affected by implementation of the project

- Aimee discussed the comments provided by NDAT members on both the purpose and need statement and on consultations and permits that may be required to authorize the NDIP. Because all agencies did not provide input, Aimee asked that comments continue to be submitted through September 15, 2001. Additional comments were provided on the permit requirements and will be incorporated into a revised list of consultations.
- Pete Rawlings provided an overview of the Action Specific Implementation Plan (ASIP) process (see attached handout). The ASIP process is used to comply with the federal and state Endangered Species Acts (ESAs) and the Natural Communities Conservation Plan Act (NCCPA). CALFED's Multi-Species Conservation Strategy (MSCS) covers CALFED actions proposed in the ERP focus area. Because the NDIP is a CALFED sponsored program, all endangered species consultation will be tiered from the programmatic biological opinions. We will prepare an ASIP for the NDIP that evaluates project-specific impacts. Preparation of the ASIP will be coordinated with the USFWS, NMFS and DFG and will likely begin through development of a subcommittee under the NDAT. Chuck Vogelsang stated that agency members working on the South Delta Improvement Program are currently sitting on an ASIP committee to determine the process and content for the ASIP process. Aimee recommended that USFWS, NMFS and DFG members work with the SDIP ASIP members to provide the group with an overview of SDIP's ongoing efforts and to provide guidance (i.e., "lessons learned") from their experience with the SDIP ASIP subteam. It was also noted that the ASIP process does not cover Clean Water Act compliance.
- Aimee stated that J&S will work with CALFED and NDAT to refine the project schedule to reflect some of the permitting "milestones" that the group will try to achieve over the course of the project. Craig Stevens mentioned that the CALFED regulatory compliance handbook provides an overview of some of the major permitting actions and how they should integrate with the CEQA/NEPA process. This guidance will be provided at the next NDAT meeting, or can be accessed on the CALFED website.
- Craig asked the group to consider developing regional permits. Donna Podger stated that the RWQCB is already in the process of considering a regional 401 permit, but is trying to determine how to handle "regional" CEQA compliance. Craig stated it might be possible for the NDIP EIR/EIS to provide enough information to support a regional CEQA document for 401 compliance.

Action Items:

1. **NDAT:** Provide comments on Draft Purpose and Need Statement to April Zohn no later than September 15, 2001. (Email = aprilz@jsanet.com, p: 503-6681)
2. **USFWS/NMFS/DFG:** Identify project members currently working on SDIP ASIP process and ask for input into NDIP ASIP process. Provide feedback for NDAT at next meeting, and make suggestions on who should sit on NDIP ASIP.
3. **NDAT:** Provide additional information on permits, consultations, and deliverables that could be required during the NDIP process to April Zohn no later than September 15, 2001.

Next meeting:

- Review revised purpose and need statement & comments for agencies
- Review revised permit/consultation requirements
- Incorporate permitting requirements into NDIP schedule
- Discuss NDAT ASIP subteam and lessons learned from SDIP