

Meeting Notes
CALFED Bay-Delta Program North Delta Improvements Group
Thursday, October 4, 2001 at 9:30 am in room 1142

Attendance List:

Margit Aramburu, Delta Protection Commission
Marina Brand, DFG/CVBDB
Mike Callahan, San Joaquin County Public Works
Robert Clark, CCVFCA
Rob Cooke, CALFED
Gilbert Cosio, MBK Engineers
Craig Crouch, Sacramento County Public Works
Bruce Duncan, CALFED
Mike Eaton, The Nature Conservancy
Bill Fleener, UC Davis
Mike Ford, DWR
Tony Frisbee, CALFED
Sergio Guillen, DWR
Walter Hoppe, Point Pleasant
Gwen Knittweis, CALFED (chair)
Grant Kreinberg, SAFCA
Gil Labrie, DCC Engineering
Roger Lee, DWR Reclamation Board
Sara Martin, Jones & Stokes (minutes)
Ed Schmit, DWR Central District
Sally Shanks, Staten Island
Steve Sinnock, Kjeldsen, Sinnock & Neudeck, Inc.
Craig Stevens, Jones & Stokes
Jeff Stuart, NMFS
Topper VanLoebenSels, RD 551, NDWA, and DPC
Chuck Vogelsang, CALFED
Carl Werder, USBR
Daniel Wilson

Introductions:

Craig Stevens convened the meeting and stated expected outcome: to update the group on project efforts and to receive stakeholder input on North Delta issues. The group then introduced themselves.

North Delta Improvements Project Schedule:

Gwen began by handing out the revised North Delta Improvement Program schedule. This new schedule reflects that the process will take longer than previously expected, because the Delta-Wide Ecosystem Restoration Steering Committee (DWERS) will be developing an ecosystem restoration plan for the North Delta area, and the NDIP team needs to wait for the results of that process before developing the detailed alternatives for scoping. The DWERS is expected to complete their North Delta work by February

2002. Gwen pointed out some key dates on the schedule:

- **February 2002**—The North Delta Ecosystem Restoration Plan actions identified by Delta-Wide ERP Steering Committee
- **April-May 2002**—Internal design workshops conducted
- **May-June 2002**—Public Scoping
- **April 2003**—Circulation of draft EIR
- **December 2003**—Circulation of final EIR

Gwen also pointed out another schedule issue, that the consultant contract has not yet been finalized. Jones and Stokes has received authorization to spend up to \$250,000 for work while the contract is being finalized, but the lack of a contract is preventing them from beginning intensive work on the project. The Bureau has made a commitment to finalize the contract by November 15.

North Delta Agency Team Progress and Overview of Endangered Species Act Compliance Process:

Craig Stevens explained that the agencies comprising NDAT are ones that have regulatory authority to permit or approve aspects of the North Delta project. Craig indicated that the October 2 NDAT meeting was cancelled because sufficient progress hadn't been made on key issues. He then provided an update on the September 5 NDAT meeting. Staff is working with NDAT to develop a list of all of the permits that will be needed for the NDIP, so that compliance can be built into the schedule. The other issue for NDAT is selecting a NEPA lead agency. The most likely current candidate is USACE Regulatory Branch. Staff is awaiting the return of a key USACE staff member to determine if they are willing to accept that role. A third issue being addressed by the NDAT is the boundaries of the project area. It is expected that the matrix of regulatory requirements and a proposed project area will be brought to NDAT and NDIG at their next meetings.

Craig described that compliance with the Endangered Species Act for the NDIP is being achieved through the preparation of an Action Specific Implementation Plan (ASIP) which will tier from the Programmatic Multi-Species Conservation Strategy (MSCS). He explained that the principle differences between the standard Section 7 process and the ASIP process are that resource agencies are being involved in the process from the beginning to help formulate the project so that it can be permitted, and that actions and mitigation measures from the MSCS will be incorporated into the project design. Although this new process has not been tested, approval timeframes under the ASIP process are expected to be shorter than under the Section 7 process. Jones and Stokes will begin working with the NDAT to identify actions from the MSCS to include in the NDIP project description.

Update on Staten Island Purchase:

Mike Eaton reported that the Nature Conservancy has reached an agreement with DWR for Proposition 13 and Proposition 204 funds for the purchase of Staten Island. They are now waiting for completion of the CEQA Notice of Exemption to cover the granting funds, and approval from the Department of General Services.

Update on Regional Hydraulic Modeling Effort:

Gwen Knittweis handed out MBK’s draft Scope of Work. The modeling process is currently in the data acquisition phase, and CALFED will be working with the central district of DWR to augment their annual data collection. After the data collection is complete, the data will be distributed to the public and to experts for review. A detailed Scope of Work is expected from MBK within a week. Gilbert Cosio then explained the basics of how the hydraulic model works and is used.

- The next Hydraulic Modeling Team meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 24 from 1:30-3:30 in the Jones and Stokes 19th Street office.

Role of the Delta-wide Ecosystem Restoration Steering Committee:

Gwen Knittweis and Marina Brand explained that the Delta-Wide Ecosystem Restoration Steering Committee is developing the science and adaptive management plans for ecosystem actions in the North Delta project so they can ensure that the actions are integrated with plans for the entire Delta region.

Other Project Updates/ Next Meeting Date:

Craig Crouch announced to the group that the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved the Sacramento County Department of Water Resources project to coordinate the County engineering and environmental compliance studies for the I-5 / Point Pleasant Flood Protection Project with studies by the State of California for the CALFED North Delta projects. This is expected to be a half-million dollar commitment from Sacramento County for a two-year process.

The next NDIG meeting is scheduled for 9:30-11:30 a.m. on November 1, 2001, and the meeting after that will be held at the same time on December 6, 2001.

Action Items:

Item No.	Action Item	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Finalize Jones & Stokes consultant contract	US Bureau of Reclamation	by 11/15/01
2	Identify agency overseeing recreational boating, add agency to NDAT	Jones & Stokes	by 11/01/01
3	Finalize scope of work for hydraulic modeling	MBK Engineers	by 10/12/01