
Watershed Program Plan

Responses to Comments

WATERSHED PROGRAM PLAN RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Glossary

WSH-Glossary-1

Thank you for the comment. The suggested change has been incorporated into the Watershed Program’s definition of the term “watershed restoration.”

1.2.1 Primary Objectives

WSH 1.2.1

The goal of the Watershed Program Plan is to provide technical and financial assistance for watershed activities that help meet the mission and goals of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED Program). Potential watershed activities may cover a broad array of possibilities, including protection of oak woodlands (see Section 3.3, “Desired Outcomes,” and Section 3.3.5, “Improved Watershed Stewardship” in the Watershed Program Plan). Implementation of the Watershed Program Plan will include consideration of all watershed management projects that are consistent with the Watershed Program principles (Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan), are in concert with local needs and desires, and support the objectives of CALFED.

1.4 Geographic Scope

WSH 1.4-1

The Watershed Program Plan designates no geographic boundaries for support of solutions to the problems described by CALFED for the Bay-Delta system. Any project that supports attainment of the objectives of CALFED (see Section 1.2.1, “Primary Objectives,” in the Watershed Program Plan) will be eligible for support from the Watershed Program, regardless of geographic location.

WSH-1.4-2

The CALFED Program was created to address a specific set of resource problems (ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and Delta levee stability) manifest in or closely linked to the Suisun Bay/Suisun Marsh and Delta area. This area is commonly described as the CALFED problem area. The CALFED Program was not created to address all resource concerns within the larger estuary. In contrast to the problem area, the solution scope of the CALFED Program is quite broad, potentially including any action that could help to solve identified problems. The Watershed Program is not a regulatory or mandatory program and will not require anyone to develop a plan that benefits the estuary. The Watershed Program is designed to support community-based watershed activities that contribute to the goals and objectives of CALFED, and to address concerns within the problem area—regardless of the physical location of those watershed activities.

WSH 1.4-3

The Watershed Program Plan states, “Actions that would result in beneficial impacts on the resources of the Bay-Delta and that support the goals and objectives of CALFED will be considered, regardless of the physical location of action implementation.” The program will not discriminate between urban and non-urban watersheds but will focus on the ability of proposed projects to further the goals and objectives of CALFED (see Section 1.2.1 in the Watershed Program Plan) in a manner consistent with the CALFED Program principles of participation.

WSH 1.4-4

CALFED’s solution area is defined in part to include the entire watershed of the Sacramento River. The Sacramento River watershed is made up of numerous tributaries, including Cache Creek. Cache Creek is fed directly by Clear Lake. A small portion of the watershed of Clear Lake falls within Mendocino County. Therefore, that area of Mendocino County has been included as part of the solution area for the CALFED Program.

WSH 1.4-5

The Watershed Program Plan notes, “The Watershed Program will support activities that provide benefits to the areas within the problem scope.” Watershed activities anywhere that help to achieve the goals of CALFED and follow the Watershed Program principles will be considered for support from the Watershed Program.

1.5 Watershed Program Goals and Objectives

WSH 1.5-1

The Watershed Program objectives do not preclude support for water consumption reduction programs that help achieve CALFED objectives (see Section 1.2.1 in the Watershed Program Plan), and specifically recognize the validity of water conservation as a desired outcome of program implementation (see Section 3.3.5.1 in the Watershed Program Plan).

WSH 1.5-2

CALFED does recognize that Delta pumping is a stressor to many Delta-dependent aquatic species. The Watershed Program is designed in part to support activities within the watersheds of the Bay-Delta that help to meet the objectives of CALFED (see Section 1.2.1 in the Watershed Program Plan), including activities that “improve ecological functions in the Bay-Delta.” The Watershed Program will consider supporting community-based actions within the watersheds of the Bay-Delta, as well as watersheds receiving water from the Bay-Delta, that are designed to reduce Delta pumping as a stressor.

WSH-1.5-3

One goal of the Watershed Program is to provide technical and financial assistance for watershed activities that help to meet the mission and objectives of CALFED. The program is particularly interested in providing this assistance to local, community-based programs and activities, using a watershed-based approach (see Section 3.2, “Watershed Program Principles,” in the Watershed Program Plan). The Watershed Program will consider providing assistance to the community-based efforts on Putah Creek and Cache Creek, as well as to numerous other watershed programs—to the degree that these efforts are consistent with the Watershed Program principles,

and to the degree that activities carried out through these programs contribute to the overall mission and objectives of the CALFED Program.

WSH 1.5-4

The statement quoted from page 3.1 in the June 1999 Watershed Program Plan is not intended to describe a planned program accomplishment. The planned “accomplishments” of the Watershed Program are described within the plan as the Watershed Program goal, primary objectives, and desired outcomes. The Watershed Program goal (Section 1.5 in the Watershed Program Plan) is “to provide assistance—both technical and financial—for watershed activities that help achieve the mission and objectives of CALFED, and to help coordinate and integrate existing and future local watershed programs.” The primary objectives for the Watershed Program are described in Section 1.5.1 in the Watershed Program Plan. The desired outcomes of the Watershed Program are described in Sections 3.3.1 through 3.3.5 in the Watershed Program Plan.

1.5.1 Primary Objectives

WSH 1.5.1-1

The objectives of the Watershed Program are to support the objectives of CALFED, as outlined in Section 1.2.1 in the Watershed Program Plan—including “improve and increase aquatic and terrestrial habitats and improve ecological functions in the Bay-Delta to support sustainable populations of diverse and valuable plant and animal species.”

WSH 1.5.1-2

A primary objective of the Watershed Program is the integration of Watershed Program activities with other CALFED common programs. Projects proposed that emphasize water quality improvements, for instance, would be closely aligned with the priority areas of the Water Quality Program, to achieve the objectives of both the Water Quality Program and the Watershed Program. (Also see Section 2.5 in the Watershed Program Plan.)

WSH 1.5.1-3

The Watershed Program Plan was developed as a programmatic, rather than a project-specific document. The program plan has therefore identified a broad set of program goals and objectives, along with a description of potential desired outcomes, to describe the intended benefits that the program will generate. These broad goals and objectives and desired outcomes will be used to guide the development and implementation of local, community-based watershed programs. Prior to receiving substantial support for program implementation from the Watershed Program, these community-based programs will need to develop specific measurable objectives and define the actions (including restoration actions) to be undertaken to meet these specific objectives.

The implementation plan for the Watershed Program is still being refined as a part of the Watershed Program Plan. When completed, the implementation plan will contain a clear description of the processes to be used in establishing annual program priorities and in making decisions on the selection of actions to be supported by the Watershed Program. The decision-making process will include clear criteria that will help to ensure that Watershed Program assistance will be focused on those activities with the greatest potential for addressing the ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and levee stability objectives of the CALFED Program. The program is currently working closely with the Bay Delta Advisory Council’s (BDAC’s) Watershed Work Group and the Interagency Watershed Agency Team to develop these important processes.

WSH 1.5.1-4

As described in the Watershed Program Plan, the Watershed Program was established as an aid to achieving the overarching goal of CALFED by working with the community at a watershed level. The goals of the Watershed Program are to (1) provide assistance (both financial and technical) for watershed activities that help achieve CALFED's mission, and (2) help coordinate and integrate existing and future local watershed programs. Whereas other CALFED common programs have identified specific projects to be implemented in distinct geographic regions, the Watershed Program took a different approach and compiled a list of desired outcomes (see "Desired Outcomes" on page 3-3 in the June 1999 Watershed Program Plan). The Watershed Program is designed to help support projects that are initiated by the community, technically appropriate, and politically in concert with local needs and desires.

WSH 1.5.1-5

Establishing total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) is the responsibility of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is not the responsibility of the Watershed Program to establish TMDLs. The Watershed Program will coordinate and collaborate with these agencies in an effort to maximize the overall benefits of our various program efforts. It is possible that the Watershed Program could provide technical or financial assistance to community-based programs working to address water quality concerns within their watersheds, including those water quality issues related to discharges from agricultural lands. The availability of program assistance would depend on how well the actions undertaken by these local efforts (to comply with regulations) in turn help to meet CALFED's water quality, ecosystem quality, water supply reliability, or levee stability objectives and their adherence to the principles described in Section 3.2, "Watershed Program Principles," in the Watershed Program Plan.

WSH 1.5.1-6

Land use planning, including zoning and many other land use decisions, falls within the jurisdiction of city and county governments. It would not be appropriate for CALFED to make policy recommendations to limit the geographical expansion of California cities. Regarding the Watershed Program, activities supported by the program will comply with land use plans in place within the watersheds where these activities occur (see responses WSH 2.2-5 and WSH 2.2-6).

WSH 1.5.1-7

Rather than try to accomplish this type of analysis at a programmatic level, the Watershed Program has chosen instead to establish a program of technical and financial assistance that will support community-based watershed management. It is anticipated that one of the early actions undertaken by the program will be to support community-based efforts to develop comprehensive watershed assessments. These specific watershed-scale assessments will identify and quantify the threats that may be present within those individual watersheds. These assessments then will lead to development of locally appropriate strategies to address the threats that have been identified.

2.1.2 Watershed Stewardship

WSH-2.1.2-1

The Watershed Program has been designed to provide technical and financial assistance to community-based watershed programs that contribute to one or more of the four broad objectives of the CALFED Program. This

technical and financial assistance will be available to programs and activities in both urban and rural watersheds within the broad solution area described in the Watershed Program Plan (Section 1.4, “Geographic Scope”). Support from the Watershed Program in the form of technical or financial assistance will be based on a local program’s willingness to adopt the Watershed Program’s principles (Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan) and the degree that activities (including urban forestry projects) carried out by a local watershed program measurably contribute to the broad goals and objectives of the CALFED Program.

WSH- 2.1.2-2

The Watershed Program has not suggested nor endorsed practices such as the accumulation of large woody debris in rivers or creeks. The Watershed Program would consider support for projects that accumulate woody debris only if the projects were designed appropriately to ensure no adverse impacts to bridges, levees, and other structures.

WSH- 2.1.2-3

The Watershed Program agrees that a better connection needs to be made between urban communities and the more rural “headwater” communities. As part of the coordination and assistance element, the Watershed Program will facilitate means and opportunities to improve coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders seeking to better manage watershed resources.

WSH 2.1.2-4

The Watershed Program recognizes the benefits of addressing watershed issues from upstream to downstream. Furthermore, specific watershed projects are most successful when initiated by the community, technically appropriate, and politically in concert with local needs and desires. Implementation of the Watershed Program will include consideration of all watershed management projects that are consistent with the Watershed Program principles (Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan) and support the objectives of CALFED.

WSH 2.1.2-5

A wide range of possible actions can be taken to address the issues in the Bay-Delta; therefore, CALFED’s solution scope is quite broad, potentially including any action that could help to solve identified problems. The Watershed Program is designed to provide technical and financial assistance for watershed activities—regardless of the physical location of action implementation—that help to meet the mission and goals of CALFED. Implementation of the Watershed Program will include consideration of all watershed management projects that are consistent with the Watershed Program principles (Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan), are in concert with local needs and desires, and support the objectives of CALFED.

WSH 2.1.2-6

The Watershed Program Plan states that the Program will support “...on-the-ground activities such as restoration projects and stream corridor rehabilitation, forest improvement projects, and water quality enhancement. The program also will support activities that provide guidance or establish a framework for implementation of those types of projects.” No determination will be made on specific selection criteria for supported projects until the Watershed Program is funded to implement the program plan. Principles of participation, from which the criteria for project selection will be derived, are described in Section 3.2, “Watershed Program Principles,” in the Watershed Program Plan.

2.1.3 Watershed Restoration Projects

WSH 2.1.3-1

The Watershed and Ecosystem Restoration Programs will support actions that protect habitats used by beaver.

WSH 2.1.3-2

The Watershed Program was designed to promote a watershed approach in order to address a variety of issues, including water retention. Implementation of the Watershed Program will include consideration of all watershed management projects that are consistent with the Watershed Program principles (Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan), are in concert with local needs and desires, and support the objectives of CALFED.

2.2 Element A - Coordination and Assistance

WSH 2.2-1

CALFED concurs with the comment regarding the importance of involving local governments and landusers in any restoration or pollution control effort. CALFED has developed the Watershed Program in part to promote the involvement of the entire range of stakeholder interests in the development and implementation of the CALFED Program. Therefore, CALFED will continue to refine the Watershed Program with full stakeholder involvement.

WSH 2.2-2

CALFED has no plans to duplicate federal or state watershed programs or authorities already in place. The Watershed Program will work closely with the appropriate federal and state agencies, including the SWRCB, to promote better coordination and cooperation among these programs.

WSH 2.2-3

The Watershed Program goal (Section 1.5 in the Watershed Program Plan) is “to provide assistance—both technical and financial—for watershed activities that help achieve the mission and objectives of CALFED, and to help coordinate and integrate existing and future local watershed programs.” The Watershed Program has no intention of competing for sources of funding currently available to watershed programs.

WSH 2.2-4

The Watershed Program recognizes the importance of improved coordination at all levels of watershed management activities. In Section 2.2.A3, the program plan specifically mentions the need to facilitate and coordinate funding with local watershed management efforts. In Section 2.4.C1, the intent to provide support for both improving and maintaining the capacity of local watershed programs is noted, including support for coordinators.

WSH 2.2-5

The Watershed Program acknowledges the importance of land ownership and management processes, from private ownerships, to city and county parks, to national forests. The Program intends to assist all landowners in improving their stewardship of the lands over which they have management authority.

WSH 2.2-6

The Watershed Program does not promote adherence to local ordinance as optional. It is intended that projects support local land use regulation in a positive way. The Watershed Program principles (Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan) note that the Program will support activities “that are consistent with related resource activities and applicable regulations.”

WSH 2.2-7

The Watershed Program will illustrate the benefits (including economic) of watershed management that accrue from watershed plans and projects designed to meet the goals of CALFED (see Section 2.6 in the Watershed Program Plan). The Watershed Program has also stated its intent to sponsor projects that adhere to legal requirements, including permitting and issues such as water rights, and has committed to assisting project proponents with such actions (see Section 3.6.1 in the Watershed Program Plan).

WSH 2.2-8

The Watershed Program has no intention to differentiate among projects by size. Projects will be solicited that help to meet CALFED objectives, using the Program’s principles of participation.

WSH 2.2-9

The Watershed Program intends to emphasize community-led watershed planning and management. Local governments are key elements in such a strategy. Program principles include the involvement of local leadership; and the program plan specifically identifies local planning, ordinance, and other regulation (see Section 2.2 in the Watershed Program Plan) as a necessary element of projects that the program will support. Section 2.1.2 notes that watershed management activities must be socially and politically in concert with local needs and desires. Section 2.1.3 in the Watershed Program Plan states that the “Watershed Program will support local and regional activities that improve the ability of the watershed to function as a contributor to the health of the entire Bay-Delta system.”

WSH 2.2-10

CALFED agrees that locally led efforts are the most effective means to better watershed management. The Watershed Program does not intend to develop any new agencies or authorities. Element A in the Watershed Program Plan (Section 2.2) is “to facilitate and improve coordination and assistance among government agencies, other organizations, and local watershed groups.” Section 2.1 in the Watershed Program Plan notes that “The Watershed Program will facilitate the development of locally appropriate, community-based strategies to maintain and improve watershed conditions to achieve CALFED objectives.”

WSH 2.2-11

Through the use of demonstration streams, the Ecosystem Restoration Program intends to demonstrate its policy of regional or local implementation on a watershed scale. CALFED’s proposal is to take our publically developed objectives to regional community organizations for the development of regional implementation plans. The three demonstration streams proposed are in Tehama, Shasta, and Tuolumne Counties. Each stream has a strong community-based organization with broad landowner and water user participation. Each community is looking forward to the availability of CALFED technical support and financial resources.

Project refinement, scientific design, monitoring, and evaluation for adaptive management for these demonstrations will be done under the auspices of the Ecosystem Restoration Program. Broad scope integration with the elements of the overall CALFED Program will be done by CALFED through its Policy Group as advised by the BDAC. Regional coordination and implementation will be carried out by the local conservancies or organizations and facilitated by the Watershed Program. The scientific evaluation is under way. The results of focused tributary analysis will be discussed with the conservancies, modified as appropriate, and submitted to the Ecosystem Restoration Program Science Board for peer review.

2.4 Element C - Education and Outreach

WSH 2.4-1

Funding assistance means the provision of financial assistance from the Watershed Program to local watershed management efforts. The assistance may be provided through competitive solicitation, directed action, or direct contracting with specific groups. The Watershed Program itself is not expected to be financially independent from CALFED; the local programs that it supports with administrative help in early years are expected to be financially self-sustaining after initial support.

WSH 2.4-2

“Bioregion” is one of the several regions outlined by the California Biodiversity Council that describes extra-watershed areas with significant biological interactions. While watersheds in themselves are considered unitary, each is part of some larger region with which the watershed shares major common elements such as sub-species of plants and animals, climate, geology, or hydrologic connection.

WSH 2.4-3

The term “regional leadership institute” refers to an organizational component of the Adopt-a-Watershed Program. The Adopt-a-Watershed Program is developing these regional institutes to better train and support community teams of educators who are working to introduce the Adopt-A-Watershed educational process into their community K-12 schools. Within the Watershed Program Plan, CALFED used the Adopt-A-Watershed Program as an example of a K-12 educational program based on the local watershed. This program is one of many useful educational programs that could be used by communities to further their local watershed management efforts.

2.5 Element D - Integration with Other CALFED Programs

WSH-2.5-1

The Watershed Program describes its commitment to “encourage and promote a community-based watershed approach in implementing all of the CALFED programs” (Section 2.5, “Element D - Integration with Other Common Programs”).

WSH-2.5-2

The Watershed Program understands the need to promote an entire watershed approach to achieving the objectives of CALFED and has designed the Watershed Program as an approach or process that can be used by

CALFED as a whole to help address the numerous goals and objectives of the common programs. (See Element D on page 2-13 in the June 1999 Watershed Program Plan).

WSH 2.5-3

On page 2-14, the June 1999 Watershed Program Plan notes that the program will work with the other CALFED programs to describe the types of activities of each program, and will identify the relationships among those activities to watershed management and the Watershed Program. The Watershed Program will generate recommendations to improve the coordination and collaboration of funding cycles, solicitation package releases, summary report delivery, and other areas of opportunity for improved collaborative efforts.

2.6 Element E - Watershed Processes and Relationships

WSH 2.6.1

The health of the Bay-Delta ecosystem very much depends on the health of the entire watershed that feeds the Bay and Delta. During implementation, the Program plans to better define the relationship between major watershed processes and the attainment of CALFED's objectives in order to illustrate that important connection.

WSH 2.6-2

Groundwater characteristics are the result of several basic watershed functions. The quality, accessibility, and availability of groundwater are of significant importance in watershed dynamics. The Watershed Program will support projects that quantify and clarify the relationship between good watershed management and sustainable quality groundwater supplies. (See also Section 3.3.5.1 in the Watershed Program Plan.)

3. Implementation Strategy

WSH 3.0-1

In the Watershed Program implementation strategy, the points raised are addressed in Section 3.2, "Watershed Program Principles," and in Section 3.3.2, "Development of Monitoring Protocols and Application of Adaptive Management Processes." The Watershed Program intends to work closely with any relevant existing program—from local groups to federal agencies—to improve the knowledge of the Bay-Delta watershed and the effectiveness of its management.

WSH 3.0-2

The Watershed Program agrees with the comment regarding the potential for increased water yield through watershed restoration and will support appropriate community-based activities designed to bring about this restoration. The program also agrees with the comment regarding the lack of information or analysis to fully calculate the magnitude of potential increases. To help address this lack of information, the Watershed Program Plan contains the watershed processes and relationships element. This element is intended to support actions that help to resolve many of these fundamental questions related to watershed function, and to better "describe the basic biological and physical functions and processes of a watershed" (page 2-15 in Section 2.6.E1 in the June 1999 Watershed Program Plan, as well quantifying a wide range of other accrued and potential benefits associated with comprehensive watershed management.

The Stage 1 actions described in Chapter 3 in the Watershed Program Plan are programmatic and are derived directly from the Watershed Program elements detailed in Chapter 2 in the program plan. Each of the Stage 1 actions described in Chapter 3 in the Watershed Program Plan includes a reference to the year(s) in Stage 1 when CALFED plans to carry out that action.

3.2 Watershed Program Principles

WSH 3.2-1

The Watershed Program principles in Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan were inspired by the Sierra Nevada Alliance work. The program principles will guide all aspects of implementation of the Watershed Program.

WSH 3.2-2

The concept of providing significant funding for approximately 2 years (page 134 in the June 1999 Implementation Plan), with declining support beyond that, applies only to the internal management and administrative costs associated with the creation and development of an organized Watershed Program. This concept is based on the assumption that by generating local capacity, other sources of funding can be obtained—thereby decreasing reliance on a single source of support (CALFED). This concept of limited-term funding does not apply to possible Watershed Program support for the implementation of projects or other ongoing watershed management activities. The Watershed Program plans to make funding for these implementation activities available on a continuing basis through an established competitive process. The Watershed Program itself is not expected to be self-sustaining after initial support but rather the local programs it assists with startup administrative and internal management processes.

WSH 3.2-3

The Watershed Program encourages the inclusion of all parties in locally led watershed management, as outlined in its Watershed Program principles (see Section 3.2 in the Watershed Program Plan). To that end, the program will conduct and/or support activities to reach as many local interests as possible, including agricultural groups, in pursuing the objectives of CALFED (see Section 2.4 in the Watershed Program Plan).

3.3 Desired Outcomes

WSH 3.3-4

The Watershed Program principles state that “CALFED supports watershed activities that contribute to ongoing local watershed management.”

3.3.1 Improved Coordination and Assistance

WSH 3.3-5

“Socially and politically in concert with local needs and desires” means that any project supported by the Watershed Program will not conflict with local needs and desires as described through local political processes, such as county boards of supervisors and city councils.

WSH 3.3-6

Activities outlined in the Watershed Program Plan are intended only as informative illustrations, not as suggested projects. Projects are expected to be developed and proposed by local communities based on the coincidence of their needs with the objectives of CALFED. Because no projects have been proposed to the Watershed Program, no analysis is available.

WSH 3.3-7

The Watershed Program is designed in part to provide technical and financial assistance to community-based watershed programs that will carry out activities designed to meet one or more of the CALFED Program's primary objectives—ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and levee stability. The proposed finance strategy for the Watershed Program would include funding from both public revenues and from specified beneficiaries. Therefore, we disagree with the assumption that all water quality and quantity benefits accrued through the program should be used exclusively for environmental purposes.

WSH 3.3-8

The Watershed Program Plan repeatedly states that the program intends to support locally led watershed activities that help to achieve CALFED goals. The program does not intend to manage watersheds directly nor to dictate programs to anyone. The desired outcomes are intended to demonstrate the potential for collaboration among different parties seeking to improve the greater Bay-Delta watershed. The various projects and activities supported by the Watershed Program will be developed and implemented by others under the Watershed Program principles outlined in Section 3.2 in the program plan. Anticipated decisions outlined in the program plan are for the program only and are not intended for any other entity. The criteria to describe a “watershed group” are relevant only to the program's implementation and are not intended for any broader use. Nowhere does the program plan state that it will establish a list of entities and individuals eligible for executing on-the-ground watershed management.

3.3.2 Development of Monitoring Protocols and Application of Adaptive Management Processes

WSH-3.3.2-1

We agree with the comment. One of the Program's Stage 1 actions described in the Watershed Program Plan is to “improve the use and usefulness of existing watershed resource information centers.” If implemented, this action would support the expansion of an active network of watershed data and development of information to assist local watershed programs in conducting effective watershed management, conservation, and restoration activities. These information centers use GIS technology as a primary means to store, analyze, and display data.

3.3.3 Improved and Expanded Watershed Education And Outreach

WSH 3.3.3-1

The Watershed Program is committed to community-led implementation that assists with attaining the objectives of CALFED. The program itself is structured around the idea of support of locally generated and locally appropriate mechanisms and programs to help meet those objectives (see Section 3.3.3 in the Watershed Program Plan).

Watershed science and watershed awareness are relatively new. Not all residents and visitors of the Bay-Delta watershed are aware of how a watershed functions or of how their daily activities affect the watershed. Those who are fully aware of watershed functions may not have access to all data and information available relative to their watershed. In making more information about specific watersheds more available, decision makers can be better informed, thus resulting in improved watershed health. Education programs have been shown to result in more impact than any other approach, for instance, in curtailing the dumping of noxious substances into storm drains. All aspects of watershed education likely to improve conditions in the Bay-Delta watershed will be included, regardless of their geographic or occupational placement.

3.3.5 Improved Watershed Stewardship

The CALFED Program designed the Watershed Program element with the intent to enhance natural resource conservation, restoration, and management of watersheds within the broad solution area of the Program. The Watershed Program plans to provide technical and financial assistance to local programs and activities that contribute to one or more of the four broad purposes of the CALFED Program—ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and Delta levee integrity. Further, CALFED recognizes the potential for water yield increases, both surface water and groundwater, through forest and rangeland vegetation management. Water yield increases from the watersheds of the greater Bay-Delta watershed will, in turn, enhance the reliability of water supplies from the Bay-Delta system. Therefore, the Watershed Program has clearly stated its intent to support “planning and implementation of fire and fuel load management programs that maintain, enhance, or restore sustainable ecosystem processes, while protecting human safety” (Section 3.3.5.1, “Fire Management,” in the Watershed Program Plan). However, CALFED does not currently endorse a specific set of practices or techniques to manage vegetation in order to reduce fuel loads or improve water yield. Specific actions to reduce fuel loads or otherwise alter vegetation at the community level would need to be analyzed in a site-specific environmental document prepared by the project proponent, following state and/or federal guidelines for public involvement. Funding by CALFED for a specific project will be contingent on the completion and approval of the appropriate environmental documentation. Kattelmann (Chapter 30 in Volume II) and Marvin (Chapter 4 in Volume III) in the *Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project: Final Report to Congress* (1996 Davis: University of California, Centers for Water and Wildland Resources) provide a comprehensive review of water yield issues and discuss the wide range of results in water yield studies. Their reviews show that while prudent vegetative management can lead to changes in the timing of flows and improvement in water quality, readily measurable increases in water yields are difficult to assess. This review points out the need to carefully monitor and evaluate the results of actions funded or supported by CALFED in order to better understand the relationship between forest and rangeland vegetation management and watershed yield. See response WT 00-3 (in the Water Transfer Program Plan Responses to Comments) for additional information regarding this topic.

The Watershed Program will provide technical and financial assistance to local watershed programs and activities that contribute to one or more of the four broad purposes of the CALFED Program—ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and Delta levee integrity. The Watershed Program states its intent to provide support and assistance “to watershed communities who desire to maintain existing high water quality, as well as providing support to those communities working to improve water quality conditions.... Water quality issues addressed in supported programs will be those which have importance to local communities and that address state and national concerns as well” (Section 3.3.5.1, “Water Quality Enhancement,” in the Watershed Program Plan).

WSH 3.3.5-3

The Watershed Program is currently working with stakeholders and state and federal agencies to establish an initial set of program priorities to be used when the program begins implementation. When this process is complete, the Watershed Program will have a set of priorities described as desired outcomes that it hopes to achieve during implementation. The program would then consider support for those community-based watershed projects that appear most likely to achieve these prioritized desired outcomes, regardless of the project's position in the watershed.

WSH 3.3.5-4

One of the specified desired outcomes of the Watershed Program is "improved watershed stewardship," which includes habitat restoration at many scales. Also see Section 2.1.3 in the program plan, "Watershed Restoration Projects."

WSH 3.3.5-5

The Watershed Program recognizes that balance must be achieved in water and other resource use by humans and their environment. Support for improved watershed stewardship (see Section 3.3.5 in the Watershed Program Plan) that includes water management is a critical desired outcome of program implementation.

WSH 3.3.5-6

The Watershed Program recognizes the importance of effective watershed stewardship in both the watersheds that produce water for use elsewhere and in watersheds that are net recipients of that water. The Program will support stewardship and conservation activities that help attain CALFED objectives, regardless of where those actions occur.

WSH 3.3.5-7

The Watershed Program understands that well managed watersheds produce high-quality water for all beneficial uses (see also Section 2.1.3 in the Watershed Program Plan).

WSH 3.3.5-8

The Watershed Program is acutely aware of the impacts of wildfire in the Bay-Delta watershed. One of the major desired outcomes of program implementation is to achieve improved watershed stewardship (Section 3.3.5 in the Watershed Program Plan), which includes fire prevention as well as fire impact mitigation programs. Also mentioned is the need for improved groundwater management and protection as a critical issue to Californians.

WSH 3.3.5-9

This comment is essentially correct. Numerous factors, singly and in combination, affect the health and productivity of the Bay-Delta watershed. The Watershed Program feels that it is best to identify and describe these factors on a watershed-specific basis. As part of Stage 1 implementation, the Watershed Program plans to make financial and technical assistance available to community-based programs to develop watershed-specific assessments. These assessments will identify specifically those factors currently affecting the health and productivity of the particular watershed.

WSH 3.3.5-10

In addition to input from the Watershed Advisory Group, individual meetings and public statements from statewide groups representing planners and commissioners have lamented the lack of training available for planners in watershed science. Such training would be made available on a request basis for those counties and cities who expected benefit from it.

WSH 3.3.5-11

The Watershed Program recognizes the importance of reliable, clean water in the Bay-Delta watershed. Illustrative details in Section 3.3.5, "Improved Watershed Stewardship," in the program plan note the importance of an adequate water supply, both surface water and groundwater. Projects and programs supported by the Watershed Program will be locally led and locally supported, thereby addressing the significant issue of local water supply on a project-by-project basis.

WSH 3.3.5-12

The Watershed Program agrees that watershed management and water management are inter-related. Consequently, watershed management is considered a tool in CALFED's overall Water Management Strategy (see pages 59 and 65 in the June 1999 Phase II Report). The quality of watershed management greatly affects water supply quality and quantity, both on local water and on water exported to other watersheds. Water management options in turn can significantly affect the ability to effectively manage local watersheds. Whereas the scale of water management in California transcends watershed boundaries, local watershed management develops the character of the water supply to be managed.

The Watershed Program itself is not intended to become financially self sufficient. Administrative and managerial costs supplied by the program to local efforts is not intended to be the sole source of funding for those efforts in perpetuity. The local costs of administrative and management functions should be paid by sources other than CALFED as local capacity grows. It is intended that the Watershed Program help the local efforts become self-sufficient for such costs, in order to make more funds available from the program to support projects and programs for those groups.

The Program is developing priority criteria for project selection. The criteria will include the prioritization of funding to correct problems and/or to protect future benefits. The Watershed Program Plan describes a set of program "principles of participation." These principles will be used to guide the development of the priority criteria.

WSH 3.3.5-13

The CALFED Program is an integrated set of Program elements designed to solve major resource problems associated with the Bay-Delta. The Program is designed with the assumption that all Program elements need to be fully implemented in order to meet the primary objectives of CALFED. One of the key elements of the Watershed Program Plan is to "illustrate the benefits (including economic) that accrue from watershed plans and projects designed to achieve the goals of CALFED" (page 2-16 in the June 1999 Watershed Program Plan). The Watershed Program plans to carry out this key element during implementation of Stage 1 of the Program. Given the long lead time needed to develop large-scale water management projects, the Watershed Program should have ample time to assess, determine, and illustrate the benefits of watershed management in helping to achieve the primary objectives of CALFED. This information will be available to planners, decision makers, and the public as future CALFED Program decisions are made, including decisions about large-scale water management projects.

In Section 3.3.2.1 in the Watershed Program Plan, CALFED describes the importance of assessing watershed conditions. CALFED plans to support the collection, analysis, and compilation of information to establish baseline conditions for a watershed. Biodiversity can be established through these initial assessments. CALFED plans to assess biodiversity at scales larger than the project watershed through implementation of the watershed element of the CMARP (Comprehensive Monitoring, Assessment, and Research Program). The criteria and protocols CALFED will use to measure biodiversity will be developed by the CMARP early during Stage 1a, with assistance from the Watershed Program.

3.4 Governance

WSH 3.4-1

No structure for Watershed Program implementation oversight has been established (see Section 4.4.4 in the Implementation Plan). The Watershed Program is committed to support and participation in community-led watershed management of the Bay-Delta watershed.

WSH 3.4-2

No decision has been made concerning long-term governance of the CALFED Program or specific responsibility for implementing the watershed component of the program. The current proposal suggests that a new CALFED entity, made up of state and federal agency, tribal, and stakeholder representatives will have oversight responsibility for implementation of the CALFED Program, including the watershed component. Specific responsibilities for Program implementation, including the Watershed Program, would be assigned by this entity. Scheduling of key milestones will not occur until the Watershed Program begins implementation. The Watershed Program has identified a set of Stage 1 actions that describe in a programmatic way the prioritized activities that will be implemented during the first 7 years of the program.

WSH 3.4-3

The Watershed Program receives focused stakeholder advice and guidance from the BDAC and its Watershed Work Group. Since its inception, the Watershed Work Group has been a forum for all watershed interests to discuss issues of particular concern and to advise the Watershed Program on how to address these issues. Recently, the Watershed Work Group has made a significant effort to engage watershed stakeholders from both the urban and environmental justice communities in order to focus greater attention on the specific watershed issues of these communities. The Watershed Program intends to continue working with BDAC's Watershed Work Group as the primary forum for stakeholder input on the development and implementation of the Watershed Program.

3.5 Finance

WSH 3.5-1

The Watershed Program itself is not expected to be self-sustaining after initial support but rather the local programs it assists with startup. Successful local groups will become less dependent on CALFED as a sole source of administrative and internal management financial support over time. CALFED support for programs and projects will still be available to those groups. Such support will be contingent on the local program's ability to help meet the overall CALFED objectives, which are referenced in the program plan in order to ensure that the objectives are not diluted through interpretation.

WSH 3.5-2

The Watershed Program consistently uses any and all information available from a variety of sources (including the referenced report) in the construction and implementation of the program.

WSH 3.5-3

The Watershed Program will work to ensure that costs of watershed management that result in quantifiable benefits outside the watershed are distributed equitably.

WSH 3.5-4

The current cost estimate to implement the Stage 1 actions of the Watershed Program will be refined during Stage 1, as specific community-based watershed programs, projects, and activities, and the benefits of these activities are identified. Recognize that the current cost estimate for Stage 1 actions of the Watershed Program does not include the cost of implementing the watershed element of the CMARP. This element of the CMARP is being designed to meet many of the Watershed Program's monitoring needs. The estimated costs to implement the CMARP, including the watershed element, are identified in the Phase II Report.

WSH 3.5-5

At this time, the Watershed Program does not anticipate having funds to begin implementing the program during fiscal year 2000. The Watershed Program is developing a specific set of initial program priorities, as well as an appropriate decision-making process, that will help to ensure that projects funded by the Watershed Program will have strong public support, high public visibility, and a high chance of success in meeting program objectives and achieving an appropriate set of desired outcomes.

WSH 3.5-6

Page 145 in the June 1999 Phase II Report contains estimates of the Stage 1 costs for each component of the CALFED Program. The estimated Stage 1 cost for the Watershed Program is \$210 million. This is a broad programmatic estimate of costs but does represent the correct order of magnitude of investment that will be needed to carry the program forward successfully. During implementation of the Watershed Program, cost estimates will be refined as more specific information on projects and activities becomes available.

3.6 Stage 1 Actions

WSH 3.6-1

The Watershed Program supports watershed plan development. While encouraging development of additional plans, the program also desires to provide support for the implementation of existing plans. For the first 7 years, the program will provide assistance to implement existing plans while also providing assistance to develop plans for watersheds without a plan in place.

WSH 3.6-2

The distribution and priorities of funding for the Watershed Program have not been set. They will be developed as the Program has been developed—through extensive participation of a wide range of stakeholders—when funds become available.

4.2 Monitoring

WSH 4.2.1

The Watershed Program states that “monitoring is a fundamental component of CALFED and is directly related to the adaptive management cycle.”