

**DRAFT**

# **California Bay-Delta Program**

## **Watershed Program Status Review (Years 1 – 4)**

**Implementing Agencies:**

*Resources Agency*

*State Water Resources Control Board*

*Department of Water Resources*

*Department of Fish and Game*

*US Dept of Agriculture- Natural Resources Conservation Service*

*United States Environmental Protection Agency*

*United States Fish and Wildlife Service*

**June 2004**



## **Program Goals and CALFED Record of Decision Commitments**

*“The Watershed Program will use a comprehensive, integrated, basin-wide approach with a goal to improve conditions in the Bay-Delta system. This Watershed Program will emphasize local participation and provide financial and technical assistance for local watershed stewardship, and promote coordination and collaboration among watershed efforts.” CALFED Record of Decision; August 28, 2000*

The Program assumes that community based and locally led watershed management is essential to attaining the goals outlined for the CBDA. Local participation in managing the use and maintenance of the natural resources in the Bay-Delta system is a highly effective means to ensure its permanent health and sustained productivity. The Program considers the Bay-Delta system as all those areas that contribute to or receive water from, the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and that have an effect on the reliability and quality of water-related resources.

The goals described in the Program Plan are to:

- o Provide assistance—both financial and technical—for watershed activities that help achieve the mission and objectives of the CBDA.
- o Promote collaboration and integration among existing and future local watershed programs.

### **Record of Decision Commitments**

The ROD describes two specific commitments from the Program:

- Establish a grant program to solicit, evaluate and fund local projects that contribute towards achieving California Bay-Delta Program goals
- Develop Watershed Program performance measures and monitoring protocols consistent with the Science Program.

## **I: ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM**

The Grant Program established has 3 major elements:

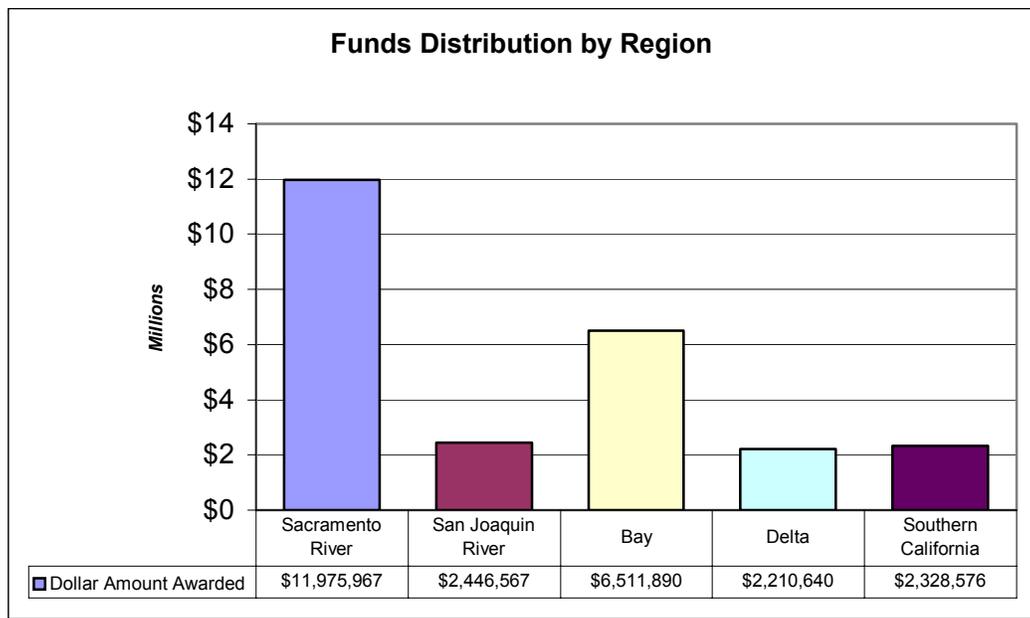
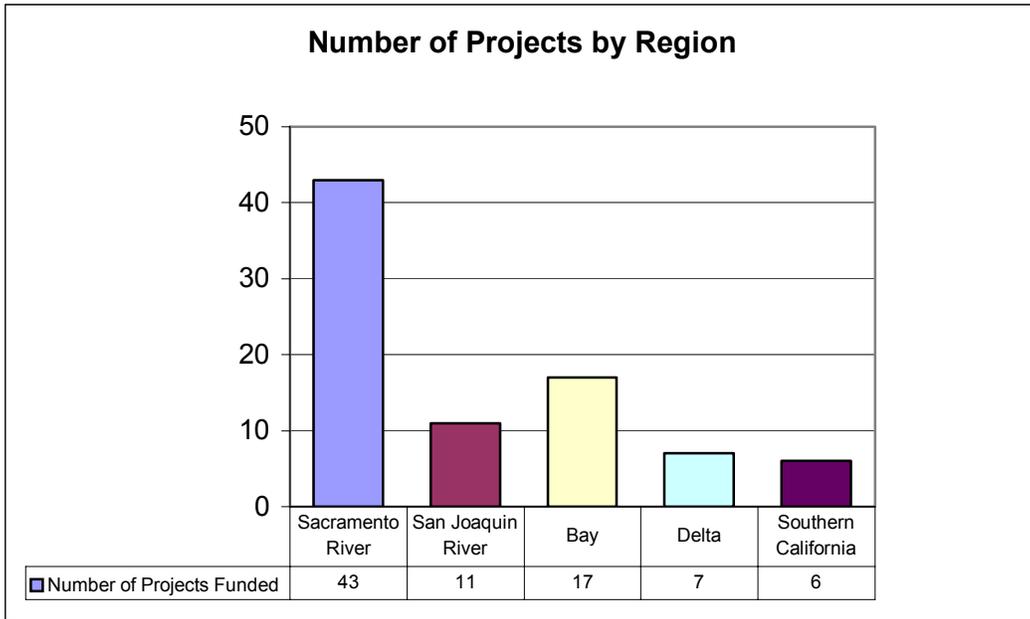
*Project proposal solicitation*  
*Watershed coordinator support*  
*Watershed Partnerships Seminar scholarships*

Other activities include grants to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for vegetation mapping, and budget support to four other agencies to fund technical assistance staff to the Program.

**Grant Program Implementation Findings**

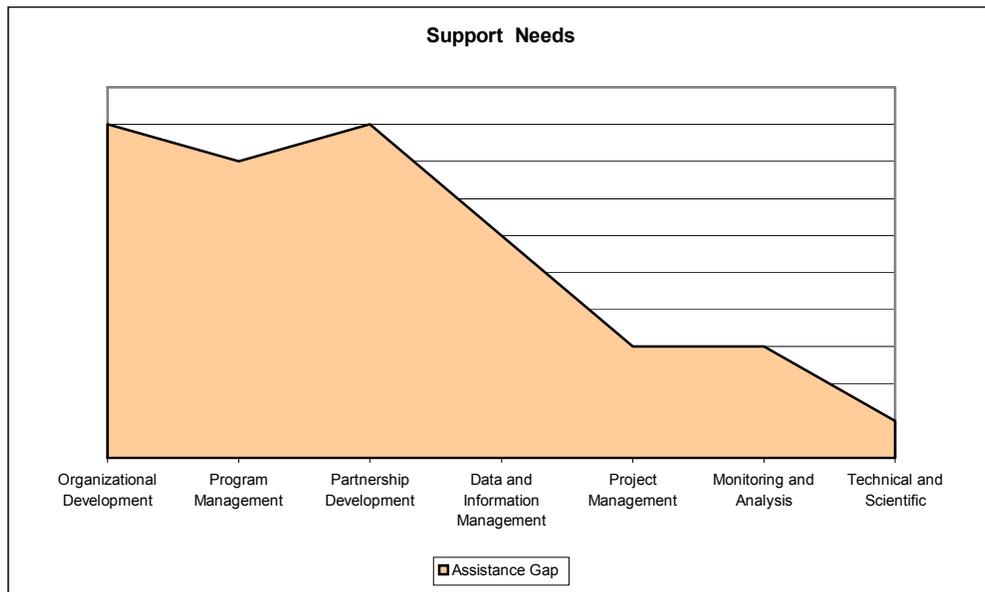
**Proposal Solicitation Element**

1. Project awards have been distributed throughout the Bay-Delta system, as noted in the ROD, and in the distributive criteria developed through the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC) Watershed Subcommittee (Subcommittee).

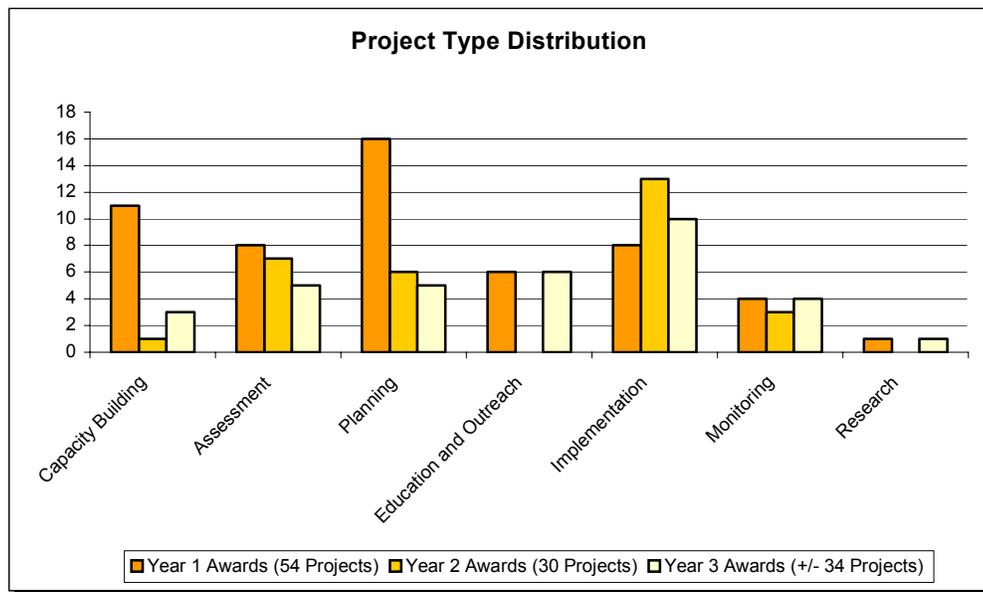


2. Connections with other CBDA Program Elements are increasing
  - Joint applications and proposal reviews have been done with WUE; DWQP; ERP
3. The first year review and selection process was transparent and effective
  - Application and review criteria were closely connected to Program Plan
  - There was a wide diversity of reviewers
  - The regional focus of technical review panels was beneficial

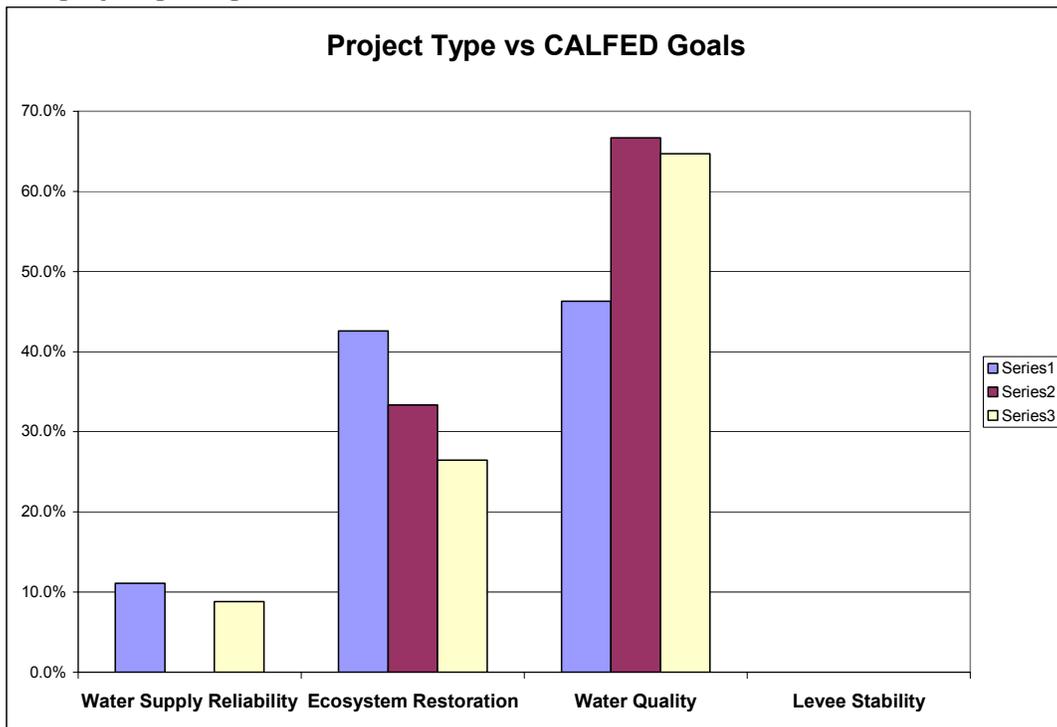
- Multiple stages of review for recommendations to the agency responsible for funding decisions enhanced the final recommendations
- 4. The second process retained much of the first year benefit, but was less effective, owing to fund source restrictions, and contracting agency characteristics
- 5. The first year projects are returning valuable results
  - Many projects have made presentations to the monthly Subcommittee meetings
  - The Program developed a catalog of first year funded projects
  - Effective project products such as the Contra Costa Atlas, Capay Valley Vision plan, Placer County principles development, and the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust survey demonstrate values in project implementation
- 6. Distribution among project types is not in balance
  - The fund source shift greatly reduced topical and entity type eligibility, and had a negative impact on priority pursuits



***The above graph represents the gap between stated needs of watershed management practitioners and the ability of state agencies to deliver those needs. It does not quantify the level of requested need, but the relative difference between what is requested and what is available. Information is from interviews, grant application responses, and surveys with county and special district officials, watershed groups, industry groups, and agricultural interests.***



- Changes in the proposal solicitation package development strongly biased project submittals toward implementing non point source water quality compliance related projects
- Change in contracting agency had negative impact on priorities, scheduling, and partnerships, and diminished direct contact between the Program and the awarded project principals



7. Available technical assistance for proposal development is insufficient
  - The intended full component of 16 technical assistance positions was not realized (only 5 positions filled)
  - There are increasing requests for Watershed Program orientations from throughout the Bay-Delta system

**Grant Program Implementation Findings**

***Watershed Partnerships Seminar Element***

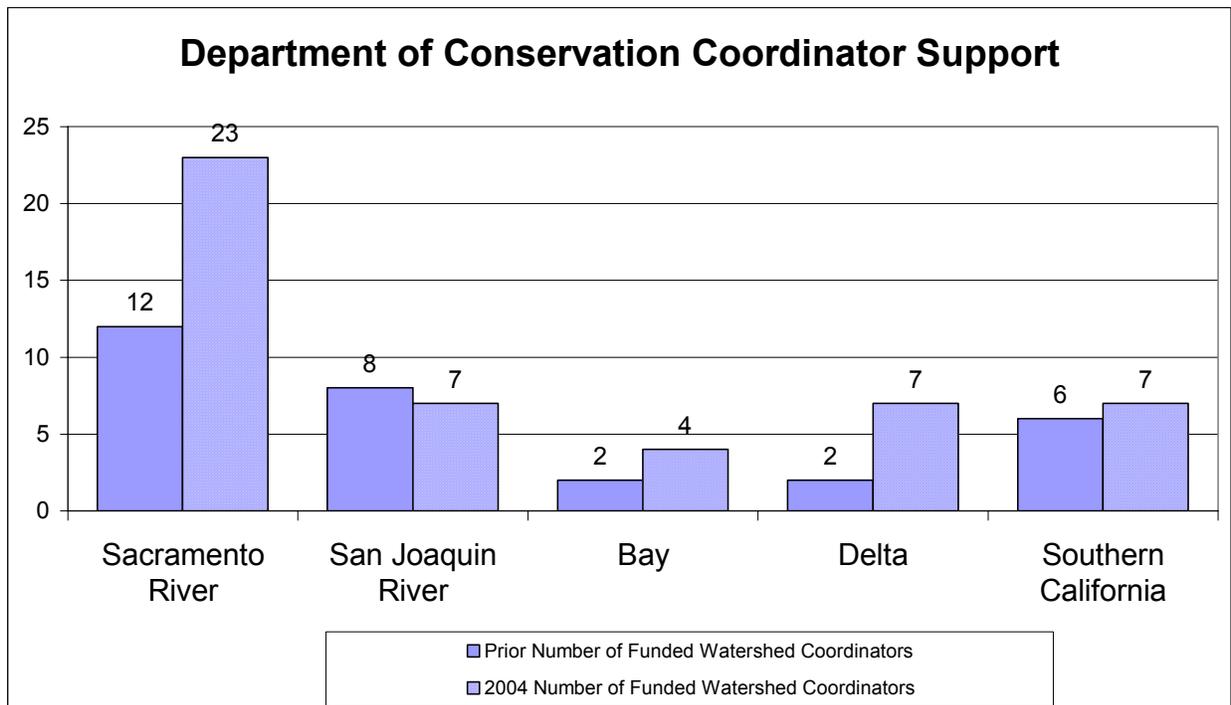
- A total of 184 nominations were received for two classes
  - Full scholarship grants were awarded to 78 of the nominees
  - The classes were the two highest rated Watershed Partnerships Seminars since 1996
1. The Seminar has been a useful aid in building local capacity to effectively manage watersheds affecting the Bay-Delta system
  2. Seminar alumni have had a noticeable impact in their local communities
  3. Irregular scheduling has diminished the ability for potential applicants to attend

**Grant Program Implementation Findings**

***Watershed Coordinator Element***

The DOC began to successfully support local watershed coordinators through their grant program to Resource Conservation Districts (RCD) in 2000. They funded 30 RCD coordinators for a total of \$2,000,000. The Program supplied the funding for the second round of coordinator grants to RCD's. The most recent round of coordinator grants were open to non-RCD applicants, as well. It was also funded with support from the Program.

1. Coordinators in place through project funding and/or Program funds implemented through the Department of Conservation (DOC) have generated value in local watersheds
2. The project with DOC the has been an effective partnership
  - Over 50 coordinators have helped further local organization of watershed management programs
  - Contracts and contract management through DOC have been reasonable, timely and responsive, averaging 90 days or less for completion
  - Coordinator support has promoted increased local partnerships with the Program



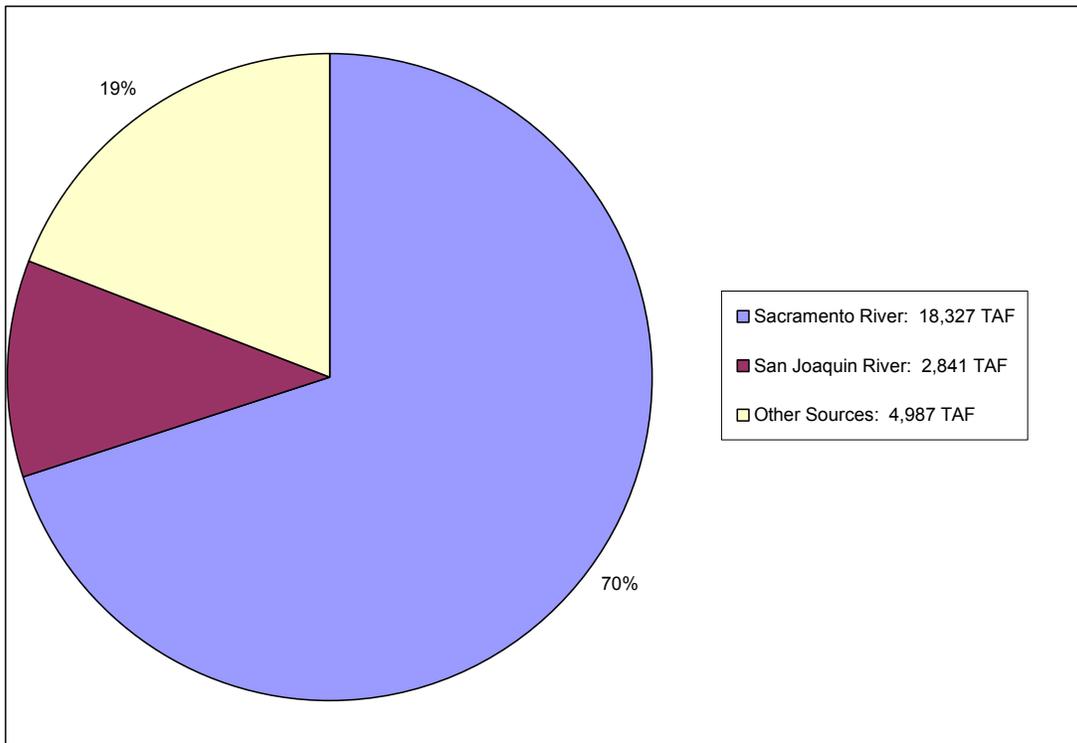
2. The project has not yet fully developed connections between the coordinator activities and the goals and objectives of the Program.
  - Not all coordinator positions have been aware of the CBDA Watershed Program connection
  - Program performance indicators are not always well aligned with DOC performance indicators, and vice versa.
  - Connections between the coordinators and the Program have improved in the second round of Program financial support
3. Work plans developed for the coordinators have not consistently related results to the implementation of the Program Plan

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

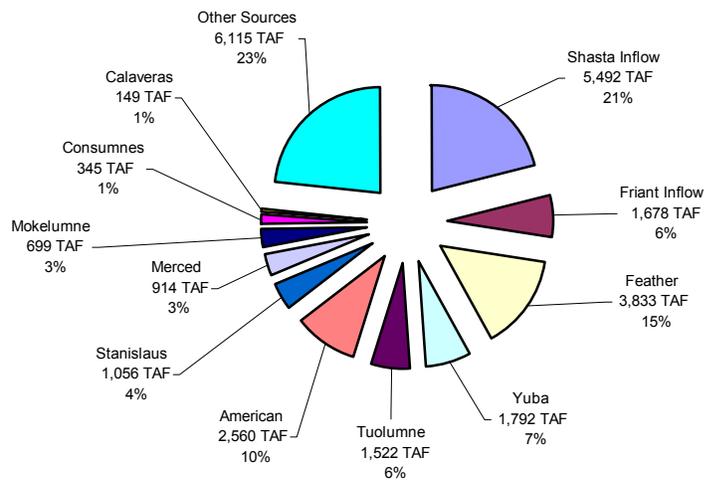
### **Grant Program Proposal Solicitation Recommendations**

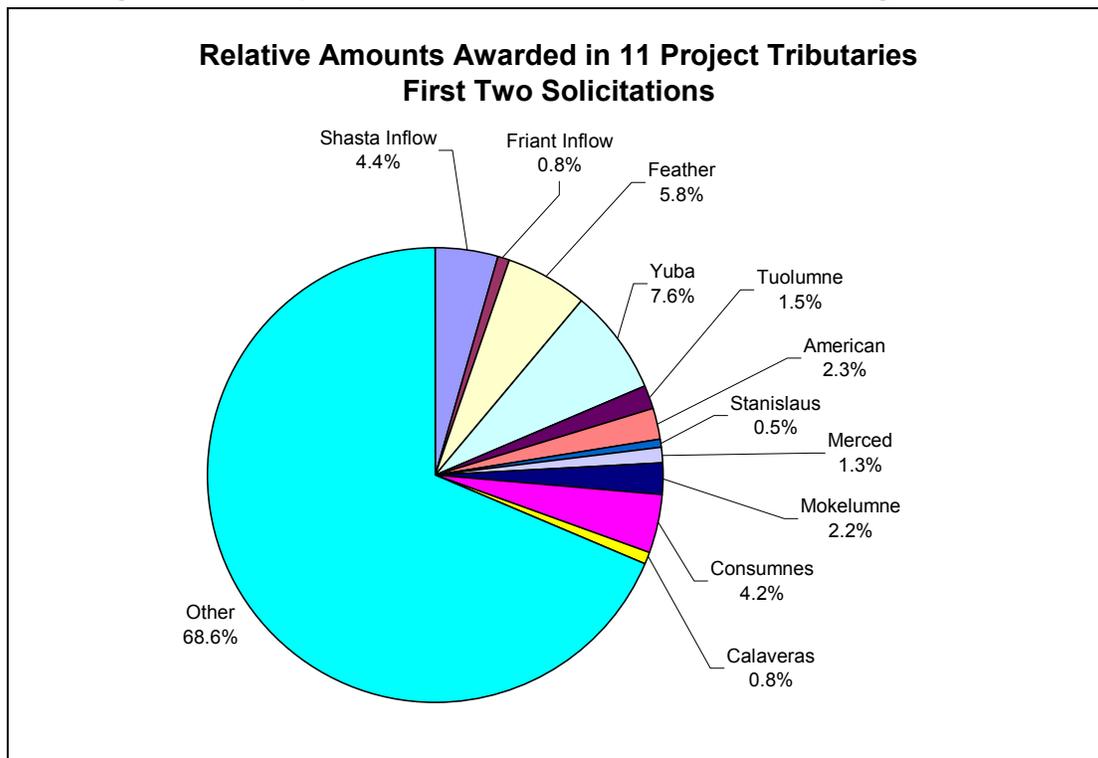
#### ***Proposal Solicitation Element***

1. Emulate and enhance the grant proposal solicitation, evaluation and selection process begun in the first round, as adjusted by feedback comments
  - Revise proposal solicitation questions to reflect adjusted Program priorities and focus
  - Provide additional Program outreach and informational workshops
  - Provide additional orientation for reviewers
  - Consider providing compensation for expert science reviews
2. Fund sources, contracting, and contract management processes should be better aligned with Program objectives and priorities
  - Fund source for grants should come from the general fund, Proposition 50 (Chapter 7), or other sources that allow high compatibility with Program goals, objectives, and priorities
  - Proposal evaluation and selection should be done by a Program-specific and Program-knowledgeable group of reviewers committed to the Program approach.
  - Contracting time from award to beginning work should be reduced to less than six months for a typical project
  - Contract management should include an active role for Program staff and implementing agency Bay-Delta Program representatives
3. The Program desires to make progress evenly in all areas over the implementation period. To do so will require adjustments from time to time in priorities for different topics and areas of investment. Adjustments should provide infill for topics and areas of under-investment, and maintenance support for topics and areas that have received relative high levels of support in the first four years. In that context, the Program Solicitations in the short term should emphasize specific areas and topics that best correlate with multiple CBDA Program Element goals, objectives and priorities that presently seem under-represented. Some potential areas of emphasis under consideration by IWAT and the Subcommittee:
  - Topics and watersheds that help to maintain balanced implementation of the Program as represented by the three distributive criteria developed through the Subcommittee
  - Topics and areas that will contribute substantially to multiple Bay-Delta Program Element implementation priorities
  - Projects that generate high levels of scientific information in support of Program performance indicators
  - Projects that well illustrate the relationship between local watershed management and the overall CALFED mission and goals
  - Watersheds without completed assessments
  - Watersheds without completed watershed plans
  - Watersheds that provide significant flows to the Delta



### Average Annual Water Flow to Bay-Delta System From Eleven Project Tributaries





Program Grant expenditures Year 1 & 2 Projects in Eleven Tributaries  
 Y1=\$17.9 million for 54 projects  
 Y2=\$7.8 million for 29 projects  
 Total=\$25.7 million for 83 projects

**Grant Program Implementation Recommendations**

***Watershed Partnerships Seminar element***

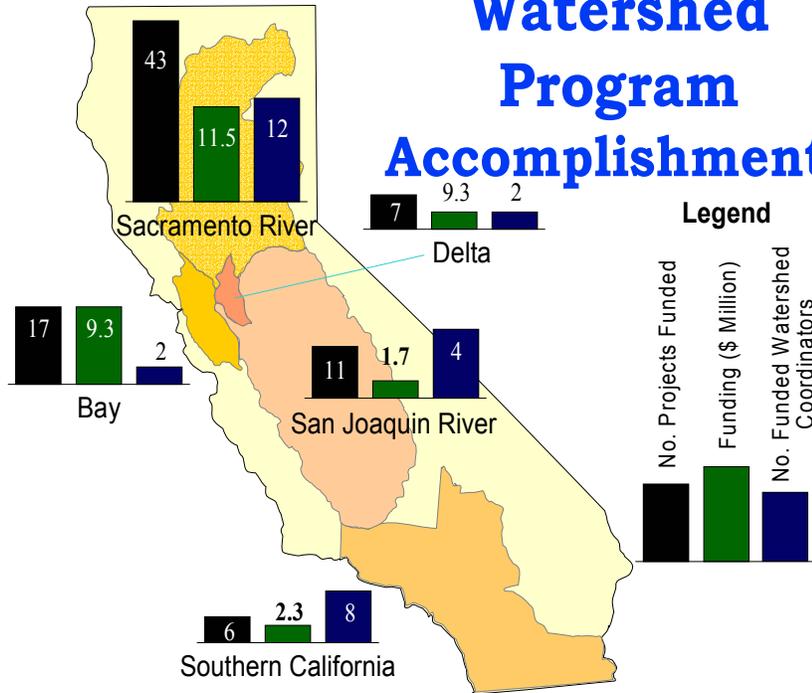
1. Provide regular, long term schedule for Seminars
2. Link outreach and scholarships to Program priorities on an annual basis
3. Provide an active network to connect graduates, including an annual or bi-annual workshop
4. Work with other Bay-Delta Program elements to include critical partners in the Seminar
5. Seek middle and upper management level participants

**Grant Program Implementation Recommendations**

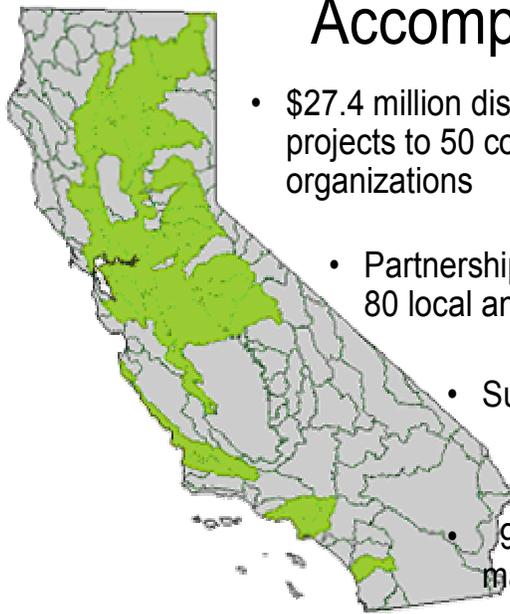
***Watershed Coordinator Element***

1. Continue to support coordinator activities in high priority areas
2. Assess the effectiveness of continuation of the DOC program, and develop joint success measurements that benefit the Program, DOC, and the local programs
3. Improve the awareness of, and relationships with, the Program by coordinators through expanding the existing partnership with DOC
4. Improve the partnerships through joint application criteria development
  - Strengthen connections to the CBDA Program
  - Improve the relevance of application and performance criteria to Program implementation success

## Watershed Program Accomplishments



## Watershed Program Accomplishments



- \$27.4 million distributed through 84 grant projects to 50 community-based organizations
- Partnership Seminars have trained 80 local and agency personnel
- Support for 26 Watershed Coordinators
- 9 million acres of vegetation mapped

■ Funded Grants

## II: DEVELOP PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND MEASUREMENTS

### Program Performance Measurement

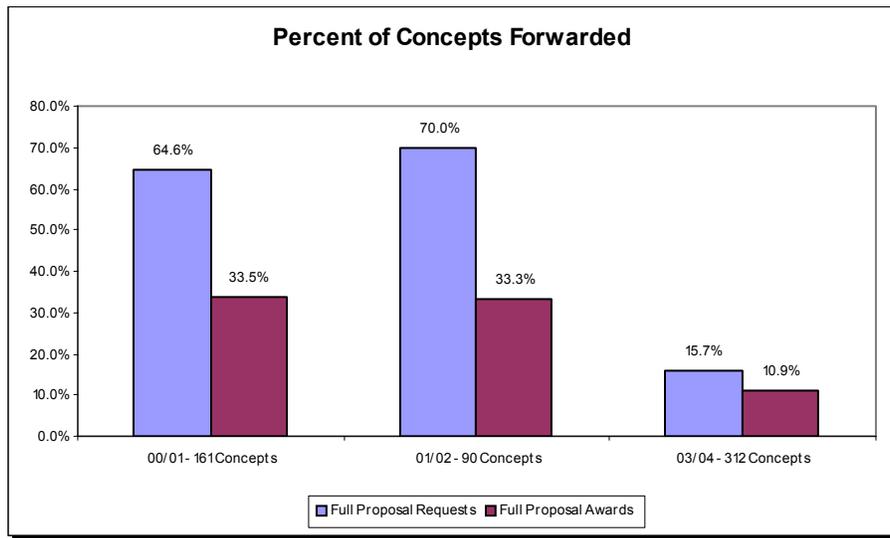
The Program has completed the design of a suite of performance indicators and metrics. They will provide guidance for information gathering to assess Program performance relative to the goals and objectives of the Program, and progress in meeting the purpose and commitments made in the Record of Decision. The information will be used to:

- Guide performance based program management
- Track progress toward achieving Plan goals and objectives accurately and consistently using directly measured impacts, estimated impacts, and assumed impacts
- Assess direct Program influence on actions and results
- Assess indirect Program influence on actions and results
- Define actions/results influence on the Program
- Demonstrate accountability

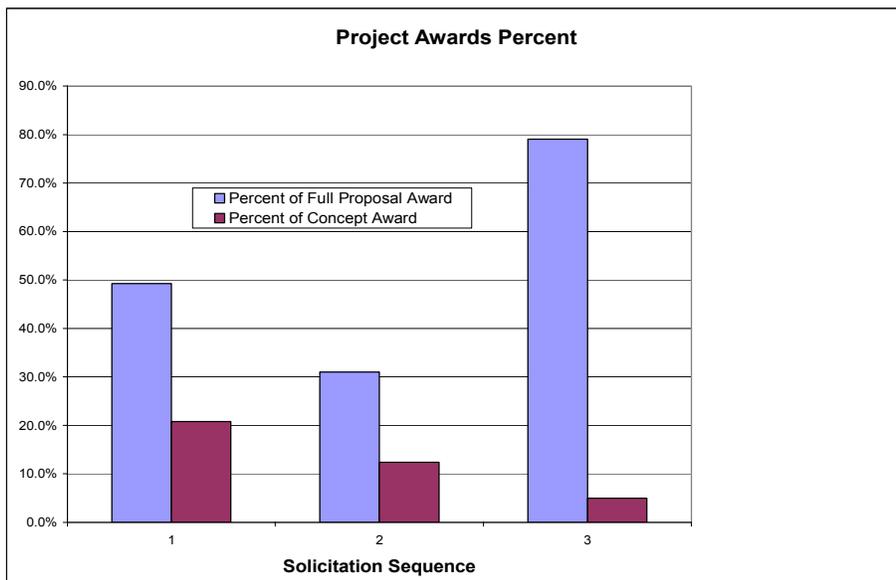
### Overall Program performance measurements:

Program Goal	Desired Outcome	Performance Measure	Indicator	Baseline	Target
Promote collaboration and integration among existing and future local watershed programs	Improved collaboration between public and private parties	Tributary watershed management partnerships with continuous activity.	Diversity of involvement and continuity of local watershed initiatives, by tributary watershed	Known efforts as of August 2000 with at least 3 years continuous activity	Active, diverse participation in community based watershed management for 11 tributaries to the Bay-Delta.
	Maximized benefits to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program	Extent of Watershed Program supported activities that address multiple CALFED Program objectives	Percent of supported projects that help achieve objectives of three or more CALFED elements	Status as of August 2000	Greater than 80% of supported projects further the objectives of three or more CALFED elements
Provide assistance for local watershed management	Improved local watershed planning and management	Effective support for local watershed planning and management	Percent area of the Bay-Delta watershed with completed assessments	Status as of August 2000	Current watershed assessment for at least 80% of the Bay-Delta watershed
	Sustained local watershed management	Active participation in watershed management by local government and land use decision makers	Level of local government involvement in ongoing watershed initiatives, by tributary watershed	Status as of August 2000	Active involvement of cities and counties in watershed management of 11 tributary watersheds.
	Improved watershed ecosystem maintenance and enhancement	Positive changes in characteristics of tributary hydrographs	Hydrograph changes relative to selected reference watersheds	Hydrographs as of August 2000	Maximum reasonable correspondence between tributary hydrographs and reference hydrographs

In addition to the overall measures, the Program has developed intermediate and process specific indicators for shorter-term analysis.



**Example Indicator:** Quality of watershed management projects proposed to the Watershed Program  
**Metric:** Percent of Concept Proposals requested to complete full applications  
**Baseline:** First year PSP results  
**Target:** Virtually all concept proposals of adequate quality to be requested for full development



**Example Indicator:** Sufficient funding to meet the needs of local watershed management  
**Metric:** Percent of requests for funding (from full proposals) met annually  
**Baseline:** First year PSP results  
**Target:** Virtually all full proposals funded

External influences on the Program from shifts in fund source and contracting agencies resulted in unexpected changes. Data from the third series of proposals are not easily correlated with the performance metric, owing to the differences in implementation methods. The Program may not be able to effectively use the information from the third round in quantifying performance as intended.

## Summary

The Watershed Program has progressed steadily during the first three and a half years of implementation. It has developed a base of data and experience that will guide the reassessment of priorities and goals for the next several years. Program implementation activities will be targeted to those areas necessary to achieve adequate balance within the Program, and across the other Elements of the Bay-Delta Program as a whole.

### Grant Program

The original short-term intent of the Program grant process was three fold, as reflected in the published early implementation priorities. The priorities stated for early grants were to provide funds to support local capacity building, to develop watershed assessments and watershed management plans, and to fund implementation activities for plans already completed. In establishing the broad early solicitations, the Program assumed that:

1. By generating general solicitations for proposals during the first few years, the Program could augment its needs analysis by further analyzing the type and extent of requests for assistance from local watershed management initiatives;
2. Promoting improvements in the capacity of local communities to effectively manage their watershed resources was an important early task for the Program; and
3. Implementation activities should be funded when in concert with a locally developed management plan that clearly demonstrates the Principles of Participation.

The first solicitation proved those assumptions to be accurate. Proposals received in the concept stage were widely varied. The flexibility of using general funds allowed the Program to select a wide range of proposals to be developed into full proposals. The full proposals received, and those eventually funded, exhibited a range of project and applicant types, watershed characteristics, and regional location and scale.

Subsequent solicitations were less effective in serving the early priorities. Changes in funding source to the heavily restrictive Proposition 13 funds, and changes in the solicitation, review and selection process contributed to a relatively less effective result in the second two solicitations.

Watershed coordinator support has been successful in developing new local partnerships, and enhancing existing ones. Greater effort to provide a higher level of orientation relative to CALFED Program goals will improve effectiveness even more.

Watershed Partnerships Seminar scholarships have generated increased local leadership by graduates of the Seminar. The program has been well received, and demand is high. The Program is working to establish a regular and predictable schedule for additional Seminars.

### Program Performance Measurement

With wide participation by implementing agencies, local partners and the Science Program, the Program developed a complete set of performance indicators and metrics. For the next few years, it will focus on a reduced selection from among those indicators. It will work closely with the Science Program to define baselines and targets, and means to gather data necessary to assess progress. Results of tracking the performance indicators will provide information necessary to make periodic adjustments in Program activities.

**Adaptive Management**

The Program will use this early status report to adjust the priorities and objectives for the next phase of implementation. The Program will actively consult with the Subcommittee, IWAT, local stakeholders and the Authority to define changes necessary to continue improvement in Program performance. By the end of the fourth year of implementation, necessary adjustments will be articulated, and a plan to implement them completed. Management adaptations will be published as an update to the Watershed Program Plan.