

MEEETING NOTES

<p style="text-align:center">Delta Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee <i>and</i> CALFED BDPAC Delta Levee Subcommittee Friday, June 7, 2002</p>

1. Welcome/Self Introductions/Announcements/Handouts.

The meeting was chaired by Bob Orcutt, Department of Fish and Game.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting. There were no changes.

3. Presentation of Short-Term Funding Plan for Delta Levees

Tom Zuckerman, Co-Chair of the CALFED BDPAC Delta Levee Subcommittee, said the draft short-term funding plan for maintenance of Delta levees will be presented to the full BDPAC. He asked if the memo is factually correct and asked the members of the Committee if they concurred with the recommendations.

Marci Coglianese, Co-Chair of the CALFED BDPAC Delta Levee Subcommittee, said she supported presentation of the memo as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of the Delta levees to the BDPAC.

George Bayse, counsel for Central California Flood Control Association, recalled that the original bill setting up a State funding program identified the larger than local values of the Delta levees, including protection of Delta water quality.

Lynn O'Leary, CALFED, said the levees protect the Delta water supply and Delta habitat. Mr. Zuckerman reviewed the history of the levee subventions program and the evolution of the environmental component of the program and the restrictions on the flood control component. He is concerned that levee maintenance will fall behind, and that the program funding has been cut in the current budget crisis. He stressed the need to maintain the on-going program at a baseline level.

Mr. Bayse suggested showing the BDPAC the pie chart that shows the local share of levee maintenance costs.

Eugenia Laychak, CALFED, said staff is currently recommending including a report within a report on the overall budget, no specific action on the Subcommittee's recommendation, and consideration of the levees when the overall CALFED budget/balance is reconsidered in December.

Mr. Zuckerman supported a more specific recommendation for action from the Subcommittee to the full BDPAC.

Ms Laychak said written reports from the Subcommittees will be included in the packets.

Ms Coglianese said the BDPAC had adopted the goals and actions presented by the Subcommittee, and the Subcommittee had committed to presenting a recommended short-term funding proposal.

Paul Bowers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said the meeting is being held in the home area of the levees, and under the "home town" theme of the meeting it would seem appropriate to emphasize the Levee Subcommittee and its recommendations.

Bob Yeadon, Department of Water Resources, asked if other CALFED programs had received 90% budget cuts; Ms Laychak said the Watershed Program has a similar cut, or more.

Dave Mraz, Department of Water Resources, suggested it might be more equitable to ask all the CALFED programs to accept a similar percentage cut, rather than cut the funds to some programs a larger percentage than other programs.

Gilbert Cosio, MBK Engineers, expressed his concern that low funding for levee maintenance could result in a flooding disaster.

Ms O'Leary agreed with the need to continue funding for the levee program.

Ms Coglianesi said she had recently attended a meeting of USGS managers who discussed the risk of Delta levee failures and the dramatic impacts that could have on the Delta, its water quality, and its habitat values. She said the levee program needs more attention and publicity. She emphasized that while levee failures would occur in Northern California, Southern California would also be impacted.

Ms Laychak said she would confer with BDPAC Chairman Gary Hunt to determine the appropriate location on the agenda for a discussion of the Delta levees.

Mr. Zuckerman said it is still timely to discuss funding for FY 02-03.

Mr. Bowers asked about the recommendation for a new fee; he asked if that would be in the recommendation or deleted.

Mr. Bayse suggested it would be appropriate to ask the largest water exporters to make a *contribution* to the costs of Delta levee maintenance.

Ms Coglianesi suggested the memo be converted to an informational memo that outlines potential options.

Mr. Zuckerman agreed and said he will not let down in pursuing appropriate Delta levee funding from any source, and asked that CALFED be sensitive to the needs of the on-going Delta levee program.

Outcomes: Staff will edit the memo; Ms Laychak will seek a specific agenda item to discuss Delta levees; Dave Mraz will assist in preparing a presentation, if needed.

4. Update on SB 34/AB 360 Program/Other Central District Activities/Reuse of Dredged Materials-Department of Water Resources

Dave Mraz, Department of Water Resources, passed out a Subventions program update memo.

Mr. Zuckerman said many Reclamation Districts have not gone to the expense of submitting proposals for work because they have heard about the proposed budget cuts; he said DWR should not assume that no work is needed.

Mr. Mraz said the Special Projects program has included:

FY 00-01 \$8.652 million

FY 01-02 \$3.747 million

Earlier year bond funds available for FY 02-03 for Special Projects include \$1 million for flood fight and \$3 million for other projects. Mr. Mraz said his staff will be inspecting the eight western islands' levees this summer. He mentioned that some General Funds have been substituted for bond funds to keep bond funds available for the next FY. Mr.

Mraz reported that DWR is assembling materials to store at critical sites in the Delta in case of flood emergencies.

Ms Coglianesi suggested that DWR broaden its levee emergency drills to include local government "first responders". She said there is an existing mutual aid agreement in the Delta that could be expanded to include levee/flooding emergencies; Mr. Mraz agreed that would be helpful.

5. Request for Support of Funding Proposed Acquisition of Mitigation Site on Bradford Island

Bob Yeadon, Department of Water Resources, distributed a handout and described the need for an acquisition on Bradford Island to provide required mitigation for past levee maintenance work on Bradford Island, to replace a 35-acre dredge disposal site formerly located on Department of Fish and Game property on the tip of Decker Island, and for possible future mitigation. DWR is proposing to transfer Levee Special Flood Control Project funds to RD 2059, Bradford Island, to purchase 149-acre parcel of ag land used for grazing adjacent to a scour pond. The site is not under Williamson Act contract. The RD will grant an easement for dredge spoil disposal on an additional 35 acres. The remainder of property will remain in ag/grazing until needed for future mitigation. He said the review of the proposed funding is to fulfill CALFED's public outreach component.

Margit Aramburu, Delta Protection Commission, asked about the mitigation; Mr. Orcutt said about 10 acres of vegetation was lost on the land and water sides of the levee and must be mitigated at a 3:1 ratio.

Mr. Yeadon said the Reclamation District does not want to manage the site in the long term, and will seek a third party to manage the site.

Mr. Cosio asked about purchasing mitigation from the Medford Island mitigation bank; Mr. Yeadon said the cost of the Medford Island mitigation would be \$12,000 per acre versus the lower cost on Bradford Island.

Mr. Mraz asked for support for the acquisition.

Outcome: The Committee agreed that mitigation must be provided as required by Department of Fish and Game; that there were appropriate responses for all the questions raised; and suggested that the issue of assessments should be addressed in the future planning for ownership and management of the site.

6. Update on SB 34/AB 360 Program-Department of Fish and Game

Bob Orcutt, Department of Fish and Game, reported that Frank Gray has taken a new position at DFG leaving a vacancy in the Levee Program staff; DFG is advertising the position. He said he has received a biological opinion for the Decker Island Fish Monitoring Plan; he will check with the Corps re: any other steps that are needed for the permit.

Mr. Cosio distributed 18" by 24" photomontages of the evolution of the Decker Island habitat enhancement project. A bathymetric survey of the newly constructed channels is underway.

Mr. Orcutt said McCormack Williamson Tract has requested assistance with removal of exotic trees from the levees, and reported that DFG staff had worked on Decker Island to remove and control exotic/invasive plants.

7. Update on Implementation of CALFED Levee Program

Patricia Fernandez, CALFED, said CALFED is working to provide assistance to final production of the report for the Delta Dredge Reuse Strategy project.

Lynn O'Leary, CALFED, reported that CALFED is proceeded with the contract process to retain a consultant to prepare the Delta Levee Risk Assessment report. She noted that an earlier report evaluated seismic risk to the Delta levees, and the proposed report will evaluate risks to the entire system, and other risks to the Delta levees.

8. Briefing and Request for Support of Proposed Acquisition and Restoration of Decker Island (473 acres)

Lisa Stallings, representing California Wildlife Foundation, said the Foundation is seeking funding to acquire and restore the remaining privately owned portions of Decker Island. Portions of the site would be returned to tidal and riparian habitat as a mitigation bank. She said the acquisition funds are being sought from Wildlife Conservation Board and the restoration would be funded by sales of mined sand. She said one of the benefits of the project would be a reliable source of material for levee maintenance and the rate could be negotiated up front. She noted the request needs to be reviewed through the CALFED process; she added that there are no ag uses in the site. She said there are lots of opportunities for research and restoration. An application is being submitted for funding and Wildlife Conservation Board would appreciate indications of support.

Mr. Mraz said DWR looked at buying the Island, and said he supports the public-private partnership outlined in the current proposal.

Mr. Zuckerman said as a member of the BDPAC he must refrain from commenting on any specific funding proposals.

Mr. Orcutt said the concept of restoring habitat on Decker Island is positive, but there is no process yet outlined for DFG review and comment on the proposal.

Ms Aramburu noted that Ms Stallings had asked for review of the proposal at the Delta Protection Commission's July meeting.

Chris Neudeck, KSN, asked if there is a willing seller; Ms Stallings said yes, with conditions.

Ms Stallings mentioned she is seeking review from an agency mitigation bank team.

9. Discussion of Delta Dredging and Reuse Strategy Report (Two Volumes) Prepared by Regional Board and Department of Fish and Game

Margit Aramburu, Delta Protection Commission, said she had copies of the draft report available at the meeting and asked that comments be submitted by June 10, 2002.

10. Adjourn