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Agenda Item: 4 – Supplement to Director’s Report
Meeting Date: October 9, 2003

September 2003

California Bay-Delta Update

News Highlights from the California Bay-Delta Authority

In the News

California Bay-Delta Authority Actions: After being sworn in, the California Bay-Delta Authority took action on an array of items during the August 14 inaugural meeting. Those actions included:

- Approving multi-year work plans for each major element of the Bay-Delta Program. The plans outline specific actions over the next four years in areas such as ecosystem restoration, water quality, and water use efficiency. The plans were developed by State and Federal agencies with input from stakeholders and members of the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee. Further details on the program plans can be accessed at http://calwater.ca.gov/Final_Program_Plans_2003/FinalProgramPlans2003.shtml.
- Appointing 15 scientists from across the United States to serve on a newly created Independent Science Board for the California Bay-Delta Program. The board will make recommendations to the Authority and the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee on science issues relevant to the overall Program and individual program elements. Further details are available at <http://calwater.ca.gov/CBDA/NewCBDA.shtml>.
- Approving funding for a variety of projects within the Ecosystem Restoration Program. A total of \$14.3 million in grant funding was approved for nine projects ranging from water quality and habitat restoration to outreach on ballast discharges. More information on the grants is available at <http://calwater.ca.gov/Programs/EcosystemRestoration/Ecosystem.shtml>.

Integrated Operations: Bay-Delta agencies continue to discuss options for integrating Central Valley Project and State Water Project operations. This is one of several objectives laid out in the Bay-Delta Program’s August 2000, Record of Decision, which

also includes development of a long-term Environmental Water Account, long-term contract renewals, South Delta improvements, development of the Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP), and biological opinions for the projects. The entire package will be subject to extensive public review and comment between December and June 2004. In the meantime, project contractors have developed a preliminary proposal, and the agencies will consider these and other alternatives in developing a comprehensive set of actions. Information on the proposal can be accessed at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvp/DraftPropOperations.pdf> and at <http://www.calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/Subcommittees/WaterSupplySubcommitteeMeetingMaterials.shtml>.

Trinity Flows: The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has announced plans to release an additional 33,000 acre-feet of water by the end of summer to protect fish in the Trinity River. The releases hinge on an exchange agreement in which Metropolitan Water District of Southern California will make 50,000 acre-feet of water available to the Central Valley Project for immediate use. The district purchased the water from Northern California rice growers earlier this year. Under the agreement, the CVP will return the water to MWD at a later time. Details on the Trinity plan and exchange agreement are available at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/Mp140/news/2003/8-22_Trinity_Releases.html.

Court Ruling: On September 8, 2003, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed an earlier U.S. District Court ruling which had dismissed, as not “ripe” for review, a lawsuit filed by the California Farm Bureau Federation and several farmers challenging, under Federal law, the adequacy of the CALFED Programmatic environmental review documents. The case will now go back to the trial court to decide the substance of the allegations. Also at issue on remand will be the extent to which certain State officials named as defendants are proper parties to this Federal action. A similar, consolidated challenge by the Farm Bureau and others based on State law is currently on appeal in State court. In that case, the lower court, in March 2003, had upheld the adequacy of the programmatic environmental review documents in their entirety. The full opinion is available at the Ninth Circuit's website at <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/ca9/newopinions>.

Salmonid Workshop: The California Bay-Delta Authority's Science Program sponsored a two-day workshop on Central Valley salmon issues. The workshop at UC Davis explored all aspects of the recovery of threatened and endangered salmonid populations in the Central Valley. Further details are available at http://www.pfeg.noaa.gov/tib/events/cv_events/cv_tw.html.

Bay-Delta Program Happenings

Advisory Committee: The Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee will meet September 11, in Sacramento. The agenda topics include assessing Year 3 accomplishments and progress, state and regional priorities, near-term budgets and the long-term finance plan. A panel of agency representatives and BDPAC members will address coordination

between the California Water Plan Update, the Federal Water 2025 strategy, and the Bay-Delta Program. A major coordination issue to be discussed is cooperation between the State and Federal processes and regional efforts. The Committee is expected to provide reports or recommendations to the Bay-Delta Authority and implementing agencies on these and other topics. Meeting details are available at <http://www.calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/BDPAC.shtml>.

CVPIA Conference: Landmark legislation that reshaped the Federal Central Valley Project is the focus of a conference September 12, in San Francisco. The event, “A Decade of Water Policy Reform: The Central Valley Project Improvement Act in 2003,” features keynote speaker Bill Bradley, former U.S. senator and co-author of the legislation. Conference details can be accessed at http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/site/news_item_detail.php?id=56.

Watershed Forum: A one-day forum on the future of watershed management policy in California will be held September 19, in Sacramento. The event’s sponsors include the Watershed Management Council and the California Watershed Network, with support from the Environmental Protection Agency. Forum details are posted at <http://www.watershednetwork.org/events.html>.

BDPAC Subcommittees: Several subcommittees of the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee are slated to meet in September. Upcoming meetings include the Delta Levees and Habitat Subcommittee and the Environmental Justice Subcommittee on September 12, Ecosystem Restoration Subcommittee on September 25, and Drinking Water Subcommittee on September 26. Meeting notices are posted on the Program calendar at <http://www.calfed.water.ca.gov/calendar/calendar.shtml>.

South Delta Fish: The next meeting of the South Delta Fish Facilities Forum is set for September 23, in Sacramento. The forum is charged with examining and recommending options for fish protection in the South Delta. Further information is available at <http://calwater.ca.gov/Programs/Conveyance/SDFP/SouthDeltaFishFacilitiesForum.shtml>.

Correction to the August Enews Update on In-Delta Storage Feasibility Study Reports: Because of a delay in releasing the Executive Summary to the In-Delta Storage Feasibility Study Reports, the public comment period and public meetings have been delayed. The release of the Executive Summary is now anticipated to be the week of September 15, and the 30 day public comment period will begin on the release date. The two public meetings are tentatively rescheduled for September 30, in Walnut Grove and October 2, in Sacramento, both from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. When the Executive Summary is released and subsequent information confirmed, an update will be sent. More information is available at http://calwater.ca.gov/Programs/Storage/InDeltaStorageReports_2003/InDeltaFeasibilityStudies_Aug03.shtml.