

Meeting Notes  
Delta Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee  
And  
CALFED BDPAC Delta Levee Subcommittee  
Friday, October 4, 2002

**1. Welcome/Self Introductions/Announcements/Handouts.**

The meeting was chaired by Bob Orcutt, Department of Fish and Game. See attached list of attendees.

**2. Minutes of last Meeting.** There were no comments.

**3. AB 360/SB 34 (DWR Report)**

Handout: Delta Levee Maintenance Subventions – Program Status October 2002

Status of the Subventions program was detailed in the handout. The Reclamation Board meeting, where the Department of Water Resources will recommend the FY 02/03 program will be held on November 18, 2002.

The Special Flood Control Projects program has limited funding. Several urgent projects have been identified for funding; a number of others are being monitored to determine the level of need.

Delta seismicity was brought to the forefront through a series of small earthquakes that rattled Discovery Bay during the last week of September. The events woke people in Discovery Bay, but caused no significant damage. There was some discussion of Delta earthquakes, ending in a request for a report of seismic activity on Sherman Island and be added as an agenda item.

**4. AB 360/SB 34 (DFG Report)**

The Department of Fish and Game has received 7 Special Project Work Agreements which they have signed and returned to DWR. Since March, 2002, they have written 21 Streambed Alteration Agreement drafts and have sent them to reclamation district engineers for review.. DFG has completed and printed Habitat Assessments for 21 districts, while five are in the review process. Mr. Orcutt passed around a sample for members to review The reports will have a long-term benefit as they can be reviewed and updated on a yearly basis to show changes in the habitat In some cases there may have been an increase in a district's level of habitat .

District engineers at the meeting were concerned that any positive difference between what the 1988 assessment and the 2000 assessment will be lost by adoption of the 2000 assessment as a new baseline. RDs are interested in receiving credit for developing habitat where the recent assessment shows an increase.

Mr. Orcutt agreed that where there is a documented, sustainable increase in habitat, the district should get some kind of credit, and suggested that maybe financial reward should be offered. He believed that one of the district engineers was in the process of designing a way to quantify increases in habitat between 1988 and 2000 and that his staff would review this proposal. He indicated that there are technical challenges in comparing the 1988 data with the new data, which was recorded somewhat differently to comply with AB 360 requirements. If a net increase is documented, the next hurdle is to see that it is sustained over the long term. In some cases the level of habitat may have decreased, and this also needs to be addressed. One challenge is that AB360 does not provide a process for the above concept.

The concept of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) was introduced. It is being proposed by the Department of Agriculture to allow farmers to be financially reimbursed for allowing 10 percent of their land to be returned to wildlife habitat. They must commit to a 10-year plan to receive funding, but once the 10 years is complete the land would then revert to farmland. There will be additional information provided as more information becomes available.

Decker Island Fish Monitoring – The DWR and DFG are waiting for a letter from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers asking FWS for authorization to sample. . Sampling is to be done by the Department of Fish and Game, including help from the DFG Bay-Delta Office. They are still awaiting a decision.

In discussion of the sampling process, several pointed to the fact that the conditions on the take permit may severely restrict the fish monitoring effort. For example, sampling on Kimball Island reached their endangered species limit within the first 1/2 –hour of commencement of sampling. Though the numbers of ES encountered could be construed as showing a very successful habitat development program, the limit on take required that the sampling terminate before a statistically significant data set could be obtained. As a result of the take limit, the sampling program was meaningless.

## **5. Update on Implementation of CALFED Levee Program**

Curtis Schmutte is the CALFED Levee System Integrity Program Manager and will be co-representing the CALFED BDPAC Levees Subcommittee members at the weekly CALFED meetings.

CALFED Levees staff is revising the FY 02/03 Work Plan and has received input from DWR, the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers, and others. The DRAFT Work Plan will be

provided to CALFED BDPAC Levees Subcommittee Chairman for his review and comment before it is finalized and released to the public.

The Risk Assessment contract is supported by CALFED and is now being reviewed by DWR contracting personnel in advance of contract award.

Program funding was discussed. CALFED is concerned about Balance. There is a perception that the Levee System Integrity Program has received less than its planned share of CALFED funding, resulting in program imbalance. CALFED management is struggling to bring the Levee System Integrity Program to parity with other CALFED elements and will look within their existing funding authority for opportunities to enhance it.

Proposition 50 is on the November ballot and if passed will provide a total of \$70 million to fund levee work. There is some concern that the Delta is poorly prepared to use a high level of funding in the immediate future. The last 2 years of lean program funding have used most of the RD's available cash reserves so they will be unable to cost share many significant projects. Also, the lean years have limited the number of contractors working in the Delta. The Delta reclamation districts will require a couple of years of consistent funding before they are able to cooperate in achieving CALFED's Levee System Integrity goals.

There was a proposal to use Proposition 50 to fully fund the Years 2 and 3 of CALFED's Stage 1. This would help to meet CALFED's commitment to the Delta while providing needed cash to the Reclamation Districts and placing them in a much better position to cost share future CALFED projects.

Since Prop. 50 is so important to the future of the CALFED Levee System Integrity Program, the normal meeting for November was rescheduled to occur after Election Day.

## **6. Yolo Bypass Improvements' effect on the Delta**

Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency representatives presented a map of the greater Sacramento Area, including the Yolo Bypass and portions of the Delta. They gave an overview of SAFCA's proposed project to reduce flood threats to the Natomas area by lowering the water surface elevation within the Yolo Bypass and suggested there are opportunities to cooperate with SAFCA on a project that would benefit Delta concerns. They requested input from other stakeholders for their report and asked to return with progress updates at future meetings.

## **7. Update on Short-Term Funding Plan for Delta Levees**

Tabled for November 15, 2002 meeting.

**8. Presentation on Delta Dredging and Reuse Case Study**

Tabled for a future meeting, possibly in December.

**9. Adjourn      *Next Meeting: Friday, November 15, 2002 in the Resources Building, Room 435 from 9:00 to 11:00.***