

**Delta Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee**  
**September 12, 2003**  
**Room 435, Resources Building**  
**Draft Meeting Notes**

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

Bob Orcutt of Department of Fish and Game called the meeting to order at 9:08 am. Those in attendance introduced themselves. The list of attendees is attached.

**2. Minutes from last meeting**

The minutes of the August 8 meeting were accepted as presented.

**3. Update on CALFED Levee SB 34/AB 360 Program**

Dave Lawson of the Department of Water Resources distributed copies of a document (attached), entitled "Request for Approval of Applications, Reimbursement Limits, and Advances for Fiscal Year 2003-04, Delta Levee Maintenance Subventions Program," that will be presented to the Reclamation Board at its meeting on September 19, 2003. He briefly reviewed the main elements of the request. Funds from Proposition 13 have all been spent; \$8.4 million from Proposition 50 has been approved for subventions. The funds will be available for use once the budget change book is received. September 30 is the claim deadline for 2002-03 claims, but extensions may be available until November 1. It is anticipated that \$6 million per year for next 3 years will be needed. Tom Zuckerman inquired about a report that he heard that the State may have trouble marketing the bonds, and that the California Bay-Delta Authority may not have enough staff to process the bonds. Curt Schmutte clarified that the Prop. 50 money is coming to DWR, not CBDA.

Tom Zuckerman reported on an item that had been discussed at the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee meeting of September 11: There is a need for better accounting of the local funding that is used in pursuit of CALFED projects. Margit Aramburu noted that local projects that are not in cost-share may not be accounted for. More work will be needed to improve the accountability.

Kent Nelson of DWR reported on Special Projects. New Hope is in the CEQA process and no construction will take place this fall. In regards to the Sherman Island restoration program: it is expected that parcel 11 will be flooded within the next couple of weeks. This on-island work is mitigation for work that was done three years ago on Three Mile Slough. Land is being transferred from DWR to DFG to establish a conservation easement. Margit Aramburu asked that information on this project be presented at the next meeting. Margit expressed concern about the compatibility of enhancement projects adjacent to ongoing agricultural use. Chris Neudeck inquired about controlling seepage onto adjacent parcels. Curt Schmutte replied that adjacent parcels are used for grazing and are kept heavily irrigated. Kent also reported that the Hotchkiss Tract project is finished, and came in \$20,000 under budget; the total cost of the project is \$90,000.

### **3. Update on Department of Fish and Game AB 360 Activities**

Bob Orcutt of DFG reported that a Notice of Determination for Decker-Phase 2 has been approved. The salt marsh harvest mouse impact issue on Van Sickle Island has been resolved. The extension of the phase 2 channel design has been accepted as designed. A monitoring plan is being developed to watch for effectiveness of the design on habitat. Curt Schmutte noted that a UC Berkeley PhD candidate is interested in working with this project. Decker Island is the first project that deals with the problem of exotic submerged aquatic vegetation. What we learn on this smaller project can be applied to larger future projects. Some planting will be done to pre-empt establishment of invasive species, and some natural revegetation will be allowed. Chris Neudeck discussed the severity of the egeria infestation in the Delta, and he emphasized that mechanical harvesting is needed to remove it periodically. In addition to making the channels unnavigable, non-native fish are using egeria as cover for predation purposes, and it is affecting sedimentation rates. In response to a question from Margit Aramburu about funding sources for this monitoring work, Curt noted that there are plans to submit requests for funding to CBDA in the future.

Curt reported that the Dutch Slough, Franks Tract, and North Delta projects will be presented to the Reclamation Board on September 19, and Franks Tract and North Delta will be presented to the Delta Protection Commission the following week. Last week Curt, along with the U S Geological Survey, gave a presentation to BDPAC on Franks Tract. He described it as a huge salt mixing machine in the Delta. Planners are looking at the use of partial levees and salinity control gates. Margit urged that the Department of Parks and Recreation be consulted in the planning process.

Curt concluded his remarks by reporting that the North Delta project is moving forward: An internal draft EIR should be ready by the end of the year. This project involves partial degradation of the eastern levees on McCormick-Williamson Tract, and storage on Staten Island. A presentation will be made this month to the Delta Protection Commission. This project will require a delicate balancing act on Staten Island to protect agricultural use and also protect crane habitat.

### **4. Update on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers AB 360 Activities**

Paul Bowers of the Corps reported on a meeting with Patrick Wright of the CBDA and Pete Rabbon of the Reclamation Board, regarding federal funding for projects through the Corps of Engineers. Several U.S. Congressmen have contacted the Corps about federal funding to be included in the 2005 budget. Paul noted that funding will likely be considered for multiple use projects rather than single use projects. Letters to the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and the Army are being prepared.

**California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee  
Levees and Habitat Subcommittee  
September 12, 2003**

**1. California BDPAC Levees Subcommittee Co-Chair Report**

Tom Zuckerman chaired this portion of the meeting.

Patricia Fernandez reported on the status of the Year 4 work plan. The CBDA is dealing with staff and funding limitations. All general fund contract funding has been cut, and they are losing a contracts position as a result. The CALFED ROD goals are now considered unrealistic and out of date. The plan is to keep the same goals but spread out the implementation over a longer time period. Critical paths are being identified. CBDA role should be a coordinating one, and local entities should drive projects. A finance plan is being developed to predict how much funding will be needed for the next 20 years. Since the work plan was finalized in August, work has begun on the next plan. The Drinking Water Subcommittee has developed a framework, which was accepted by the BDPAC. It was recommended that all subcommittees do the same.

Tom continued the discussion by describing the dynamic nature of the Drinking Water Subcommittee. They have adopted the Equivalent Level of Public Health Protection (ELPHP) Strategy, and have recognized that it may not be practical to achieve bromide limits and total organic carbon limits due to natural processes. Local water users may have to look to other options to keep drinking water at safe levels, looking directly at the health effects of the water rather than the precursors. At the BDPAC meeting, it was recommended that each subcommittee should look at what collateral impacts the projects have on the realms of the other subcommittees. For the Levee Program, ecosystem enhancement is already in our sights. We also need to consider impacts to storage and conveyance, drinking water, environmental justice, and other areas as well. Tom asked Patricia to extract the portion of our work plan that deals with these and circulate that among the group. Marci Coglianesse noted that this presents an opportunity to point out the importance of the Levees Program.

Tom returned to the discussion of coordination with other subcommittees, which took place at the August meeting. The user fee proposal is coming up soon before the BDPAC. Tom has contacted Steve Hall of the Water Supply and Conveyance Subcommittee to set up a joint meeting of the co-chairs, possibly followed by a joint meeting of the two subcommittees. Margit mentioned that In-Delta Storage was discussed at the last meeting of the Delta Protection Commission. DPC would like to have some exploration of the possibility that the strengthening of one levee might impact other levees downstream.

Margit continued discussion of the previous day's BDPAC meeting, at which it was pointed out that the ROD was created in a time of fiscal bounty. Now, the fiscal reality dictates that we identify which projects have the best chance of succeeding, and concentrate on those. Eugenie Laychak asked if the goal of the meeting of the co-chairs of the two subcommittees is to eventually merge the two. Tom replied that it is possible,

but the endgame is not clear yet. Marci added that it's worth considering. The Water Supply and Conveyance Subcommittee meets during the months when BDPAC doesn't meet. The In-Delta Storage proposal was discussed as a topic of joint concern. Margit continued discussion on BDPAC: there is a report on the website of the Bulletin 160-California Water Plan Update. Risk analysis is mentioned, and it would be helpful to receive comments on this. A levees program risk analysis study wasn't included, but probably should be. Lynn O'Leary noted that the levees program originally called for a multi-million dollar study. Instead, a study (that is in contracting now), costing \$300,000, is focusing on the seismic risk. CBDA hopes to apply this strategy to other risks, but for now the seismic issue has the most attention. This contract has to be completed by June, 2004. After that, the funding evaporates.

Paul Bowers suggested that Tom prepare a framework paper to highlight the importance of Levees Program funding and integration. We should ask the other programs to quantify the effect that levee failures would have on their programs. Other programs assume that the levee program takes care of itself.

There will be a public meeting on In-Delta Storage on September 30, 2003, at the Jean Harvey Community Center in Walnut Grove. There will also be a public meeting scheduled for Sacramento. The CBDA website and e-newsletter have the details.

## **2. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting will be held on October 3, 2003, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., in Room 435 of the Resources Building.