

Delta Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee &
California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee
Delta Levees and Habitat Subcommittee
January 7, 2005
1416 Ninth Street, Room 435
Draft Meeting Notes

1. Welcome/Self Introductions/Announcements

The meeting began at approximately 9:05 a.m. Bob Orcutt of the Department of Fish and Game chaired the meeting. There were self-introductions. Margit Aramburu made an announcement that the Corps has adopted new mitigation regulations and passed around a document for review.

2. Minutes of December 3, 2004 meeting

Bob Orcutt asked if everyone had received the minutes from the December meeting. The subcommittee members have received the draft and final meeting minutes via e-mail. George Basye had comments on page 2 of the minutes. He requested that it be reflected in the December meeting minutes that the Flood Control Association supports an extension of the levee program beyond two years.

3. Update on Bay-Delta Levee Program SB 34/AB 360 Program

Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Dave Mraz of DWR passed out the Delta Levee Maintenance Subventions – Program Status handout. DWR is processing the '03-'04 claims. They have received 58 final claims totaling \$12.3 million dollars which is far in excess of what the program has available. Therefore, DWR is going through the prioritization scheme per the Reclamation Board procedures. He mentioned that last month DWR met with the Reclamation Board subcommittee. He feels that the reclamation board has a better understanding of the levee program. Changes will be implemented in June or July of this year. Tom Zuckerman and Marci Coglianese, the levee subcommittee co-chairs also attended the meeting and made a presentation about the program. Part of the presentation they gave was discussing a potential levee workshop. They asked if the Reclamation Board would sponsor a workshop and the subcommittee was enthusiastic about the idea. The workshop is proposed for early June at the University of Pacific. The Reclamation Board was interested in sponsoring the workshop as a joint effort with the Delta water agencies. George Basye suggested that Delta area engineers should also attend the Reclamation Board subcommittee meetings. Chris Neudeck had a concern about implementing new procedures in June when there will be a levee workshop in June. The timing may be problematic. Dave Mraz said the engineers should write a letter to Pete Rabbon, Reclamation Board General Manager, expressing their interest in meeting involvement and the effect new procedures will have on the reclamation districts. DWR

extended an invitation to the Reclamation Board to attend a claim inspection at McDonald Island so they can understand the claim process.

The Reclamation Board proposes a five year Subventions plan with letter applications on an annual basis and all placing all islands on the same datum.

Hazard mitigation grant program funds are available since the Jones Tract levee break. DWR is requesting \$1 million to be used for an electromagnetic anomaly survey for all islands in the Delta. Reclamation districts will file applications to DWR and the reclamation district's contractor will conduct the survey. The reclamation district engineer would work along with the surveyor to analyze results. A report would be filed with DWR and the cost would be partially reimbursed by DWR (75% FEMA, approx. 25% State). Dave passed out a sample letter to the reclamation districts to support the application to FEMA saying that District 1601 supports the Electromagnetic Anomaly Survey. Responses will go into the packet to show local support. Gil Cosio talked about the process of detecting magnetic anomalies. The device can detect pipelines, conduits or voids, as well as artifacts. The device goes around the crown of the levee three times and if enough data is collected can produce a 3-D view. The device must be calibrated to the soil type.

Chris N. mentioned that there is a high incidence of beaver dens in the Central Delta. Margit suggested documenting the locations. On Jones Tract and Roberts Island many have been found. Ridding levees of trees or any type of root balls could eliminate beavers building dens in the levees.

Curt Schmutte mentioned DWR's levee program has moved under the Division of Flood Management under the direction of Dr. Les Harder, Division Chief. He mentioned that CCC crews have been prepositioned in the western Delta to prepare for high wind events. The highest winds will be between noon and 5 p.m. today. He met yesterday with staff at the Flood Operations Center to talk about hydrologic and meteorological events. He has been in contact with a number of districts to discuss current work and assets in the Delta and number of barges available in order to be well prepared for a storm event.

DWR has been involved in the Contra Costa County grand jury investigation due in large part to Bethel Island. The investigation involves looking at all islands and talking about levee standards. This investigation is a new investigation following an original grand jury investigation from past years.

The North Delta project team met with Sacramento County to incorporate their alternatives into the North Delta project, specifically Lambert Road and modifications of 11F alternatives. The County is contracting with various agencies to fund some additional efforts.

Roberta Goulart sent out a draft memo last week on levee dredging issues. DWR is preparing a response to her memo and working on creating a Delta Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS).

A base report on the Flooded Islands study will be available for review soon. A one-year feasibility study should be ready this spring. There will be an emphasis on Frank's Tract, Big Break, and Lower Sherman Island. Tom Z. asked what effect the project would have on water supply and quality. It was suggested that Curt make a presentation at the next meeting to further explain the project. There is an effort to prepare an EIR for Frank's Tract. There is funding but not staffing available.

Margit mentioned that in the latest IEP newsletter there was an article titled "Historic Sedimentation in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta". She made copies for those interested. She also passed around a copy of the new Corps mitigation guidelines. She passed around a document titled, "Notice of Completion & Environmental Document Transmittal Proposed Revision to SIP, Revised Policy on Toxics Standards". This article is related to the types of issues talked about in the Delta Dredge Reuse Strategy. The final hearing on this policy will be in February.

4. Update on Department of Fish and Game (DFG) AB 360 Program

Bob Orcutt said that the role of DFG is to make sure there is no net impact and that there is net habitat improvement when levee work is performed in the Delta. He reported that 37 inspections have been completed and no mitigation was needed. They are assisting with four or five Work Agreement amendments. They completed three extensions on streambed alteration agreements and one routine maintenance agreement. They are beginning to look at possibilities for enhancement on the waterside of the Sherman Island setback levee. They are assisting with mitigation agreements on Bradford Island and New Hope Tract. Decker Island contract will be bid soon. January 18, 2005 is the bid opening for planting Decker Phase II. DFG has reviewed the draft Authority Annual Report to ensure it has "improving habitat" language.

Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee Levees and Habitat Subcommittee

1. BDPAC Levees and Habitat Subcommittee Co-Chairs' Report

Marci Coglianese chaired the meeting and a round of introductions was done again for those new attendees. Marci said that at the joint BDPAC/Authority meeting in December that the 10-year finance plan was adopted. It is considered a framework for further discussion. There is no significant provision for State Water Contractors (SWC) funding pending completion of the CPE. However, there is currently more interest now by SWC in the levee program. There was a comment made at the BDPAC/Authority meeting expressing great skepticism about the level of state and federal funding that the 10-year finance plan forecasts.

Tom Z. said that another item of significance is that the Delta Improvements Package incorporates the 10-year finance plan.

Tom Gohring mentioned that BDPAC will be more involved with the Authority. The next three meetings in February, April and June will be joint BDPAC/Authority meetings.

2. Bay-Delta Levee Program Update

Delta Improvements Package (DIP)

Ron Ott of the Authority talked about the DIP. He is in the process of reviewing program plans for 2005. Not all the actions in the DIP are in the program plans so therefore they need to be incorporated. The Finance Plan will include items from the DIP with costs for all actions. The DIP will go to the Authority in June so will need to be reviewed by April.

Tom Z. said that Federal participation is needed to come close to funding the program as stated in the finance plan. The appropriation process for federal participation needs to get rolling.

Comprehensive Program Evaluation (CPE)

Steve Verigin, the Deputy Director of Public Safety and Business Operations for DWR who oversees Division of Flood Management introduced himself and Les Harder, Chief of the Division of Flood Management. Steve mentioned that the fundamental source of funding for the levee program is Prop. 50 which is not enough to fund the levee program beyond two more years. The CPE came about to determine how much funding is needed and to evaluate additional sources of funding. The Risk Assessment study of which Phase I has been completed addresses seismic vulnerability in the Delta. There is an 18-month risk assessment work schedule and the Governor's office wants the CPE done in two weeks. Schedules must be coordinated and input must be obtained from this committee for the CPE.

Les handed out a draft CPE. He talked about objectives of going beyond seismic evaluation and reducing risk. Reducing risk would be an iterative process and milestones would need to be established. Risk Assessment Scope for Phase I of the Risk Study could be incorporated under Item 5 Risk/Hazard Analysis of the CPE. The Corps under HR 2828 is during a parallel study. The difference is that the Corps study would add levee prioritization and beneficiary pays. The Corps is invited to participate in the CPE.

Tom Z. doesn't want to lose momentum with the levee maintenance effort while preparing the CPE. He said we should identify unanswered questions and not "reinvent the wheel". We don't need precise answers before moving forward. Roberta G. said we should use available resources and mentioned studies being done by the Corps. Paul Bowers mentioned that the Corps is looking at experimental fast mobilization flood walls. The Corps is trying to put a proposal together to use the Delta as a test location for

some of the walls. Roberta also mentioned the Corps has been doing some dredging around the port.

Bob O. asked for clarification between the Risk Assessment Study and the CPE. Les went on to further explain the CPE which is briefly outlined as follows: You establish the Delta as it is today. You identify risks and consequences and end up with an annual cost associated with existing risks. Then you evaluate what can be done to reduce the risks. You look at ongoing risks and future risks (going beyond seismic risk). You develop a plan with associated costs. You have an independent review board evaluate the plan, prepare a draft report, receive public comments and finalize the report. The CPE is more than a simple risk analysis.

The AB 360 extension which is in draft legislation is contingent on completion of the CPE. Send any comments on the draft CPE to Les Harder at harder@water.ca.gov. He would like to start a scoping session after he receives some comments. Marci suggested that the co-chairs get a better understanding of the CPE and how they might best participate in a scoping process.

Workshop Planning

There is an effort to provide a basic overview of levees. Two possible approaches to a workshop were passed out by Marci. The Water Education Foundation was mentioned as an agency that could provide outreach and assist with planning the workshop. The Reclamation Board is a possible sponsor. There is a tremendous amount of infrastructure and ecosystem protected by levees. Curt said that ecosystem restoration, conveyance, water quality, land use, navigation, and recreation all have a strong connection to the Levee program. One approach is an informational workshop to get broad participation. The workshop could look at keeping what we have and explain how we will meet challenges in the future. We could address the science of sea level rise. We could show where we have foundation problems and peat soil problems and show how we have methodologies for coping with issues. Roberta said we could stress the lesser cost of maintenance vs. the higher cost of emergency response.

Another approach is to address immediate issues (funding, levee standards, program integration, emergency response, and technology needs) that need further review. The Levee Program could then develop a position statement and send it throughout the Delta for support.

Laura King Moon of the SWC thought it was a good idea to do both workshops. Prioritization is a good approach and could possibly be an idea for a third workshop. Send any comments on the workshop idea to Marci Coglianese at marci@rickadee.net. The workshop planning effort is ongoing.

Margit drafted a letter supporting funding of HR 2828. It was suggested she send the letter to the Federal Appropriations committee.

3. Public Comment

Roberta talked about her dredge reuse memo. She is trying to work through issues with the CVRWQCB. She is enlisting agencies help to push issue with the Governor's Office. The long term goal is to develop a Delta LTMS by working with DWR and the Corps. She will e-mail the revised draft memo.

Tom Zuckerman said he appreciates the expanded attendance at our levee subcommittee meeting.

Suggested agenda items for the next meeting are: Performance Measures by Tom Gohring, Frank's Tract by Curt Schmutte, and the Dredge Reuse memo by Roberta Goulart.

4. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approx. 11:15 a.m. The next meeting will be held Friday, February 4, 2005 in the Resources Building, 1416 9th Street, Room 435, Sacramento from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.