

Public Meeting Notes

Friday, May 6, 2005

Delta Levees Habitat Advisory Committee

Bob Orcutt, Chair

1. Announcements

Marci Coglianese and Margit Aramburu handed out brochures for the June 6 Levees Workshop in Stockton.

2. Minutes from April 1, 2005

Minutes were approved with change in fiscal year, page 1, paragraph 4: "FY 2004-05."

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

California Department of Water Resources: David Mraz, (DWR) provided a briefing on the Subventions Program status. The program is making payments as final claims are received. We are on track to have all normal payments complete by the end of May. There are several islands whose payment will be delayed for mitigation; payments on these islands will be complete after mitigation is fully addressed.

There was a briefing on progress for the Delta Risk Management Strategy study that DWR is conducting. Members of the subcommittee expressed concerns about the sources of funding for this study, which will use maintenance funds. Marci Coglianese suggested exploring other sources of funding, and that Curt Schmutte should bring a better explanation on how the proposed budget for the study will be used.

Members of the Committee opposed the use of maintenance funds to perform the DRMS study.

Margit Aramburu stated that she is willing to draft a letter of dissatisfaction from the subcommittee to the Resources Agency Secretary.

California Department of Fish and Game: Bob Orcutt (DFG) reported on Decker Island work. He stated that it is important to control invasive plants on the enhancement site, and provided visual details of the recently sprayed area. He thanked Mr. Junho Hyon, Decker Sand Company, for allowing the spraying of starthistle on about 37 acres of his property directly adjacent to the enhancement project. This will help prevent airborne seeds from being blown into the newly planted area of the project.

It was requested that DWR/DFG bring more details on the Decker Island project to some future meeting.

DFG is also assisting with the completion of mitigation agreements for past levee projects, and continues to write Streambed Alteration Agreements for reclamation districts.

California Bay-Delta Advisory Committee Levees Subcommittee

Marci Coglianese and Thomas Zuckerman, Co-Chairs

1. BDPAC Levee Subcommittee Co-Chairs Report

As of next meeting, the starting time for both meetings will be at the same time to avoid conflicts with publicly advertised schedules. Agenda items will be separate.

2. Program Plan

Dave Mraz provided a presentation of the Levees Program Plan. Some members praised the fact that Suisun Marsh is part of the plan. However, Marci Coglianese questioned the fact the subcommittee has not made a decision about formally including the Marsh as part of the Levees Program. The subcommittee requested CBDA staff to provide advise and background information on this issue.

It was noted that the program has not been funded sufficiently to bring Delta levees to a base-level of protection. It has been historically funded to provide basic maintenance. All base-level improvements are incidental. Without state funding, reclamation districts would need to pay the full price of maintenance.

Sergio Guillen (CBDA) will send the electronic version of the Program Plan to the meeting participants. Deadline to provide comments will be Friday, May 20, 2005.

3. Implementing Agencies Report

Department of Water Resources

Dr. Les Harder provided a briefing on the Delta Risk Management Strategy study. The projected completion date for the study is March – April 2007. The Steering Committee of the DRMS, which provides guidance for the direction of the study, will meet every-other month. Most of the work in the preparation of the DRMS will be performed by consultants with some DWR staff involvement. Funding for the study will come from the state, with hopes that federal funds will be available in the future.

Subcommittee members opposed the use of maintenance funds to perform the DRMS study.

Dr. Harder stated that he will discuss the study's scope of work at the CALFED's Independent Science Board meeting this month. He also said that DWR will hold public outreach sessions in the near future.

The question was posted on the role of the DRMS in making a decision to build the Peripheral Canal. Dr. Harder responded that the DRMS will include a set of scenarios, and that therefore the study will not give a specific answer to support projects like the Peripheral Canal.

Subcommittee members requested regular updates on the progress of this study at the monthly meetings. They also pointed out that public involvement is essential.

US Army Corps of Engineers

Eric Nagy reported on the Corps milestones and ability to receive funds. He stated that there is no reason to believe that funding will improve considerably over the previous years. He reported that the person from Washington in charge of authorizing budgets recently toured the Delta. Eric also provided a briefing on the Long-Term Management Strategy project.

4. Public Comment

Announcement: The Bay Planning Coalition will hold its 18th Annual San Francisco Bay Decision Makers Conference on Tuesday, May 24. The conference will be held at the Hotel Nikko, 222 Mason Street, in San Francisco.

Action Items

1) Delta Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee Meeting:

- Margit Aramburu will draft a letter of dissatisfaction for using levee maintenance funds to pay for the DRMS study.

2) CALFED BDPAC Levee Program Subcommittee:

- Sergio Guillen will send electronic version of draft Levees Program Plan to meeting participants, with comments due Friday, May 20, 2005.
- CBDA staff will advise the subcommittee on the inclusion of Suisun Marsh in the Program Plan.
- Provide more details on proposed budget for DRMS.

Future topics of discussion

- Delta Risk Management Strategy briefing