

Public Meeting Notes

Friday, August 5, 2005

Delta Levees Habitat Advisory Committee

Bob Orcutt, Chair

California Bay-Delta Advisory Committee Levees Subcommittee

Marci Coglianese and Thomas Zuckerman, Co-Chairs

1. Announcements

Linda Fiack, the new Executive Director for the Delta Protection Commission, introduced herself and provided a background of her career. Marci Coglianese acknowledged the attendance of Steve Macauley, a new member of the Bay-Delta Advisory Committee.

2. Minutes from June 3, 2005

Minutes were accepted with changes from Victor Pacheco (DWR) regarding the presentation on Suisun Marsh.

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

California Department of Water Resources

Dave Mraz from DWR provided a report on the Subventions Program. He provided a breakdown of expenditures for the Special Projects.

Responding to Tom Zuckerman's request for clarification, Dave provided a breakdown of how the funds are spent in the Delta Program: \$4.5 million for staff and agency contracts (DWR and USGS0); \$3 million for the Delta Risk Management Strategy; and \$11.5 million for both the Subventions Program and Special Projects split equally between the two programs.

Tom Zuckerman asked for DWR to provide a written response to the letter that was submitted to the Secretary of Resources expressing dissatisfaction of using Levees Program funds to pay for the Delta Risk Management Strategy. He asked Dave Mraz to track the response letter. The subcommittee had a motion for requesting the letter of response.

DWR briefed the group on the failure of the Suisun Marsh levee that occurred on Thursday, July 21st. The break took place on Wheeler Island, along a well-

maintained and fairly fortified section of levee. There were two water structures lost during the break. The 38' breach was closed on Monday. Early estimates indicate that about 1,800 acres were flooded, with a depth at the breach of about 12 to 15 feet. The area is mainly used as managed wetlands for habitat. Impacts to the area were mainly due to the depth of water rather than to salinity (TDS around 5,000 ppm).

Bob Orcutt of DFG commended the local district for contacting DFG immediately after the breach occurred, and doing all the necessary documentation on time.

The cause of the failure is unknown, but beaver holes are the main suspect since it was not overtopping. The estimated cost of the repair is between \$110,000 and \$150,000 not including internal repairs and pumping.

California Department of Fish and Game: Bob Orcutt reported that his department is dealing with a small number of mitigation efforts for the Program's claims. He also reported on the Decker Island fire, which destroyed most of the vegetation on the island around the 4th of July. The fire affected about one-third of the restoration site, but did not affect the irrigation system. DFG will evaluate the conditions and work necessary to restore the site. The cause of the fire is believed to be fireworks.

4. BDPAC Levee Subcommittee Co-Chairs Report

Tom Zuckerman provided a briefing on the July 14th CALFED workshop at the Bay-Delta Authority offices. The workshop covered mainly information on the refocus of the CALFED Program.

Discussion was held about holding these meetings every other month since BDPAC and the Authority Board are meeting monthly. The decision of the group was to continue holding monthly meetings until the Levee Program funding issues mentioned above were resolved.

5. Program Plan Update

The draft Program Plan presented by Dave Mraz reflects minor changes from the previous version. Dave mentioned that the only concerns have come from the Suisun Marsh. In response to the question about the document mentioning the lack of funding for the program after June 30, 2006, Dave stated that this issue is mentioned at least twice in the document. He also stated that DWR is preparing a Budget Change Proposal to cover for the Program's expenses after July 1 of next year.

6. Implementing Agencies Report

Department of Water Resources

The Delta Risk Management Strategy work has consisted of preparing contracts for the consultants that will produce the main part of the work. The Technical Advisory Committee will meet within a few weeks.

The US Army Corps of Engineers is waiting for DWR's Letter of Intent to move forward with a work agreement. The work agreement should be signed by the end of September.

US Army Corps of Engineers

The USACE started work on the Delta Long-Term Management Strategy. This project is funded 100% by the Corps. A private consultant is conducting interviews of key persons to gather feedback on how to approach the study. The Corps will have a study plan by the end of September. The Suisun Marsh will be included in the study.

7. Public Comment

There were no public comments at the meeting.

Action Items

- 1) Delta Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee Meeting:
 - Track letter of response from Lester Snow regarding Program funding issues
 - Confirm with DWR's Executive Division if there is a formal policy from the state to leave islands inundated
- 2) CALFED BDPAC Levee Program Subcommittee:
None