

CALFED Environmental Justice Subcommittee Meeting
April 8, 2005
Meeting Notes (Draft)

INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

The meeting began with self-introductions. This meeting included some new, first-time participants. Two of them were students from UC Berkeley conducting research on the Winnemem Wintu Tribe and the potential raising of Shasta Dam. They announced that part of their research included an interview with some members of the Tribe, m selected CALFED and Bureau of Reclamation staff.

There was a brief overview of the CALFED Program Plan process and efforts by some EJ stakeholders and CALFED staff to raise EJ issues at various subcommittee meetings. Meetings attended include the Water Supply, Drinking Water Quality, and Watershed subcommittees.

The EJ GIS project was briefly discussed. A fuller presentation is expected at the next subcommittee meeting which will demonstrate the project by showing how it might look in both a rural and urban setting. This project funded by the CLAFED Watershed Program and being implemented by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

CALEPA's Environmental Justice Activities (CEJAC) were discussed. The CEJAC is an effort that includes both an Advisory Committee which includes some CALFED EJ Stakeholders, and an Interagency working Group of which CALFED is a member. The previous CEJAC meeting was discussed by some attendees. There were concerns expressed that the CEJAC was not addressing tribal concerns effectively due to lack of appropriate tribal representatives. The previous CEJAC meeting highlighted several concerns of community members who felt that the process was not taking in to consideration the views of several underrepresented communities. It was also noted that the CEJAC pilot projects, one of the key outcomes of the CEJAC effort had been stalled due to lack of sufficient community input, but would be discussed again at the next CEJAC meeting sometime in June. CALFED and its EJ stakeholders agreed to remain involved in the CEJAC process and would continue to report back to the subcommittee on its activities.

Several CALFED EJ stakeholders are actively involved in a project funded by CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) referred to as the Fish Mercury Project. This is an effort by the San Francisco Estuary Institute along with the California Department of Health Services to better address concerns related to fish consumption, subsistence fishing and mercury contamination in the Bay and surrounding communities. The project has a well-defined EJ component that is represented through a diverse project steering committee. The steering committee has held one meeting thus far and has several others planned in the coming months. One of the first items expected to be addressed will be that of determining appropriate project goals and objectives related to

Environmental Justice. Many of those involved view this effort as a model opportunity for including EJ principles and policies the approach to educate and serve communities impacted by mercury contaminated through fish consumption.

The issue of this subcommittee lacking official BDPAC co-chairs was also discussed. At this point there are several other subcommittees that also are in need of one or more co-chairs, but the EJ subcommittee has no official BDPAC representation currently. This is a concern for the future direction of the subcommittee. It has been raised and discussed extensively with the CALFED director and others, as well as the chairman of the BDPAC. It is anticipated that new BDPAC member appointments will be announced, perhaps at the June meeting and it is hoped that these s new appointments will include at least one new member who will be asked to co-chair this subcommittee. The important role of Dr. Henry Clark was also discussed. He has served as an “acting interim co-chair” for more than one year, and in that role has provided important leadership and direction. Whether he is selected to the BDPAC or not, stakeholders expressed a desire for him to continue in a similar capacity with the subcommittee.

WINNEMEM PRESENTATION

Mark Franco and Gary Mulcahey of provided a comprehensive historical overview of the Winnemem Wintu. In short, the tribe was once federally recognized, but since 1979 (or earlier) have not been federally recognized. This reality affects the economic, social and cultural life of tribe, and limits their ability to participate in discussions and other processes with federal and / or state governments. The Winnemen Wintu (also known as the “middle river people”) are located in the McCloud River watershed at Kerekemet village near the city of Redding. Their ancestral homeland is on the McCloud River and is home to many sacred and cultural sites. They estimate that the original construction of the Shasta Dam caused the flooding of 90% of their original land. Many important cultural sites, including a burial ground, were lost. Franco stated that the remaining members of the tribe were “prepared to die” to protect their remaining land and way of life.

A draft resolution was presented to the subcommittee for consideration as a document to present to the BDPAC. It was explained that any such document would only be timely as an agenda item at the June meeting due to the CBDA/BDPAC timeline for meeting material submissions. The group still felt that whatever came out of the EJ meeting should be raised, at least as public comment at the April CBDA/BDPAC meeting. The resolution called for CBDA to “suspend and remove any further consideration of the proposed enlargement of Shasta Dam from the CLAFED project” until the Bureau of Reclamation addresses some of the seminal issues raised by the Winnemem relating to their status as a federally recognized tribe and responds to tribal concerns over past BOR and other federal agency actions related to status, sites and sovereignty. The subcommittee had a thorough discussion of the points raised in the resolution and unanimously supported the resolution as written. The subcommittee requested that the EJ Coordinator take all reasonable efforts top place this resolution before the CDBA/BDPAC at the next (June) meeting.

