

**California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee
Water Supply Subcommittee September 14, 2005 Meeting Summary
Bonderson Building Hearing Room
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

Introductions

The following Water Supply Subcommittee members and alternates attended the meeting: Steve Hall, Jerry Meral, Gary Bobker, Richard Denton, Bernice Sullivan, Alan Zepp, Dan Nelson, and Ron Jacobsma

The meeting focused on the following agenda items:

1. Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigations
2. South Delta Improvements Package Status Report
3. Common Assumptions
4. Future Delta Facilities

Discussion of Agenda Item

Co-chair Meral and Steve Roberts (DWR) announced that the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project presentation originally on the agenda for this meeting has been postponed to the subcommittee's January meeting because agencies will not be ready to present until then.

1. Upper San Joaquin River Basin Storage Investigations -- Presenter: Brian Zewe (Reclamation)

The presentation (see presentation material) gave a status of the Investigation and its findings from the June 2005 Initial Alternatives Information Report (IAIR). The Investigation was initiated under the CALFED Record of Decision's recommendations and Federal feasibility study authorization. The Investigation's primary and secondary study objectives were presented. Reclamation emphasized that its responsibility is to formulate alternatives that will contribute to San Joaquin River restoration but not to develop a river restoration plan. Six surface storage sites (each with multiple sizes) that could meet study objectives were retained from Phase 1. During the scoping process, additional surface storage measures were suggested to avoid power impacts. A two-step screening process was used on the surface storage measures (including those suggested during scoping), resulting in six surface storage measures retained for further evaluation as documented in the IAIR. Conjunctive management opportunities in the region are being evaluated by DWR (DWR will complete a report by the end of the year) and will be evaluated to determine if any meet Investigation objectives.

Comments:

A member of the subcommittee asked about the environmental impacts to the Fine Gold site because of its high environmental value; Reclamation staff responded that they will be evaluating these in much more detail in the next phase. For the IAIR, in order not to bias an outcome, a consistent level of information was used for each site. A member of the subcommittee next asked about the reliability of cost estimates. Reclamation responded that they have so far used the cost per unit of material indexed to 2005 levels; these costs will be updated in the next steps of the Investigation. A member of the audience asked what the calculation of yield was; Reclamation

answered that they are using a long-term average and that yield will vary based on operations. A member of the subcommittee then asked about the extent of flood control benefits; Reclamation responded that they had documented preliminary benefits in the IAIR. A member of the audience next raised the matter of what was used to simulate storms; Reclamation answered that they had used historic, probabilistic storms and hydrology. A member of the subcommittee suggested investigating models that account for climate change; a member of the audience noted that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers required an analysis of impacts due to climate change at French Meadows Dam. Next, members of the audience, subcommittee members, and Reclamation staff clarified the impacts that led to the elimination of raises of Friant Dam above 25 feet. A member of the subcommittee asked if conjunctive use would be included in combination with surface storage; DWR staff answered that they will look at such operations of conjunctive use projects after its opportunities study is completed. .

There was also some discussion on the need for more conveyance and surface storage to facilitate any additional conjunctive management in the study area. With additional conveyance and storage, the basin would be fuller and less pumping would be required, resulting in energy savings. Similarly, it was noted that with additional surface storage, it would be more economical to carryover surface storage and there would be less need for conjunctive management because of the high cost of pumping hence also resulting in energy savings. These issues will have to be addressed during the plan formulation stage.

2. South Delta Improvements Package Status Report -- Presenter: Paul Marshall (DWR)

The presentation (see presentation material) covered the staged decision and implementation process for the South Delta Improvement Program. The Draft EIR/EIS, scheduled for release in early October 2005, identifies the preferred structural alternative to be the four gate configuration. Each gate is set at the bottom of the channel where it is hinged. As tidal flows ebb, an air bladder is inflated and the gate is raised to retain higher water levels in the channel. The preferred operational alternative will be developed in Stage 2 as more information is available from pelagic fish studies. Current export operation rules (6,680 cfs) will apply until then. Stage 2 is scheduled to begin in mid-2006.

Comments:

There was discussion on whether the SWP contractors will support construction of the gates without increased pumping capacity (8,500 cfs). Other concerns were on water quality on the San Joaquin River pass the head of Old River and on boat passage through the gates. Water quality would probably improve with the gate at Old River in place because it would allow more flows down the San Joaquin River. Different mechanisms, i.e. a boat trailer, will be in place to address boat passage.

3. Common Assumptions -- Presenter: Sean Sou (DWR)

The presentation (see presentation material) began by covering the Common Model Package development timeline and the Plan Formulation Report Common Model Package implementation schedule (including revisions throughout the fall and completion in mid-March 2006). It then specifically covered updates in Revisions 3, 4, and 5 as well as items in this application. The final Common Assumptions package to support feasibility studies will be completed by May 2007.

4. Future Delta Facilities -- Presenter: Co-chair Jerry Meral

Co-chair Meral presented his concept paper on an isolated Delta facility (see attached). Under this concept, a pipeline would be constructed by general obligation bonds to convey water supplies around the Delta and an independent operating agency would be formed to contract with water agencies for the use of this pipeline. Revenue from these contracts would be used to maintain and improve Delta levees. He noted that several key issues needed to be addressed for this concept to move forward. Among them are: what would be the water quality improvements and how significant would they be; would contracts need to be in place before construction began; and would Prop 218 allow revenue to be used in this manner.

Comments:

The discussion following the presentation focused on the need to address the sustainability of the Delta system. The committee members agreed that the status quo is not acceptable and a strategy needs to be developed to address long-term needs. The main issues are the catastrophic threat of levee failure, the size of an isolated facility, and the vulnerability of any infrastructures.

A member of the subcommittee stated that California needs a broad strategy and package of actions for solving problems in the Delta and that this concept could be a part of those. In addition, greater reliance on the Delta for conveyance of water supplies makes California's vulnerability greater. Next, a member of the audience stated that area of origin stakeholders would want to be a part of any such new agency. Co-chair Hall concluded by stating that this concept is creative and that he wholeheartedly supports a new look at the Delta. He further stated that we need to re-assess our assumptions about the Delta and need new and stronger political leadership. A member of the subcommittee then agreed with the need to elevate discussions about problems in the Delta to a higher level of leadership. Another member of the subcommittee finally stated that we need to consider sea level raise and its impacts on the Delta.

Other Business:

During the meeting, co-chair Meral announced that the Winnemen Wintu tribe prepared a draft recommendation to curtail studies on a Shasta Dam raise (see attached). This environmental justice issue will be put on the next meeting agenda as an information item. Staff briefly discussed the presentation that had been given to the BDPAC (prior to the BDPAC's request that the subcommittee take up the item as well). A subcommittee member expressed concern about taking action on this item without first better defining the role of the subcommittee. A member of the audience then requested that Reclamation cover or at least review Shasta Dam's enabling legislation.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

Next Meeting:

The next BDPAC Water Supply Subcommittee meeting will be in November. This meeting will include an agenda item on the environmental justice issues affecting the Shasta Lake Water Resources Investigation.