



CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

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Agenda Item: 4B.iv
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BAY-DELTA PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

WORKING LANDSCAPES SUBCOMMITTEE

REPORT TO BAY-DELTA PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Status on Transition Report

(See Attached)

Date: November 22, 2006

To: Gary Hunt, Chair
Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC)

From: Denny Bungarz, Chair
Vance Russell, Vice Chair
Working Landscapes Subcommittee

RE: Status on Transition Report

Executive Summary

In the near future, Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee may choose to phase out a number of its subcommittees, including the Working Landscapes Subcommittee (WLS). Since its inception, the WLS Subcommittee has brought together a variety of interest groups with divergent points of view. It has tackled hard questions and successfully addressed many of its objectives. These have included recommending priorities that were incorporated into CALFED grant making, providing a forum for agencies to articulate project objectives and garner stakeholder and agency feedback, and working to develop recommendations or elevate public discussions on a host of issues of concern to agricultural and environmental stakeholders. The Subcommittee's priorities also included issues of statewide significance, including payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) and supporting efforts for conservation incentives to leverage federal Farm Bill funding.

CALFED's agricultural stakeholders, the environmental community, and a variety of state and federal agencies continue to be interested in issues associated with protecting and enhancing the environmental and economic values of working lands. In response to this sustained interest, and to the statewide nature of the interest, the Subcommittee makes the following recommendations. These recommendations are further detailed in Section E of this report.

1. **Establish a forum to address statewide working lands issues.** This recommendation is consistent with the proposal of the Secretary of Food and Agriculture and Secretary for Resources to establish a statewide working lands council that would advise the two agencies on supporting working lands stewardship; the Subcommittee endorses such an approach.
2. **Establish a CALFED Working Landscapes Technical Advisory Committee** as a technical and stakeholder forum for program managers and implementing agencies.

A. Introduction

Under its *Ten-Year Action Plan*, the CALFED program will be re-focused. Actions with a direct link to the problems and solutions in the Delta are "direct actions," while those

that have an indirect link are “coordinated actions.” Working landscapes actions are considered coordinated actions. Simultaneously, the Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC), which provides advice to the Secretary of the Interior, is considering re-organizing itself, and eliminating a number of current subcommittees, including Working Landscapes. State leadership is considering a proposal to re-constitute the Working Landscapes Subcommittee as a statewide advisory committee because the issues are important across California and are not limited to CALFED’s solution area.

To conclude the work of the BDPAC Working Landscapes Subcommittee, and facilitate its transition, committee staff and stakeholders have prepared this report on the status on transition. This memorandum provides a brief history of the Subcommittee, a summary of its accomplishments, and recommendations for continuing to involve stakeholders in aspects of CALFED implementation related to working farms and rangeland.

B. History of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee

The Working Landscapes Subcommittee was originally convened as the Working Landscapes Workgroup in March 2002 to address local government and agricultural stakeholders’ concerns with CALFED implementation. An initial charter, “Local Partnership Planning Process” was drafted by the CALFED Program leadership to guide the workgroup (see Attachment 1). The general areas of work outlined in this white paper included:

- **Regulatory assistance/streamlining** - Demonstrate ways to ease regulatory compliance for conservation activities on agricultural lands, while minimizing liability of, and economic impacts to landowners and neighboring lands;
- **Coordination of State and Federal assistance programs** - Demonstrate opportunities for funding coordination that complement existing programs, such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, the California Farmland Conservancy Program, Flood Protection Corridor Program, and others;
- **Selection of habitat restoration and enhancement projects that minimize impacts to agricultural lands** - Addresses issues of land acquisition, use public land first, purchase from willing sellers only, consider 3rd party impacts, favor conservation easements over fee title acquisition, adopt mitigation measures where appropriate;
- **Research and Monitoring** - Document the costs and benefits of wildlife friendly agriculture practices to achieve CALFED ERP goals;
- **In-lieu of Property Taxes** - Strategies to address CALFED implementation impacts on the local property base.

By the end of 2002, the workgroup developed a proposed BDPAC Working Landscapes Subcommittee description, mission and draft work plan. This mission statement was eventually reviewed and approved by BDPAC and the Workgroup was elevated by BDPAC to serve as one of its subcommittees. Under these documents, the Working Landscapes Subcommittee’s mission was to:

1. Provide advice on CALFED Program priorities, long-term plans, annual work plans and budgets, performance, balance and integration with respect to working landscapes, (as defined by the Subcommittee);
2. Assist landowners in helping to restore the ecological health of the Bay-Delta system by protecting and restoring native species of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats;
3. Avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to agricultural resources and local communities resulting from CALFED actions, consistent with the Record of Decision (ROD);
4. Assist in implementing CALFED ROD actions as they affect the attainment of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee vision;
5. Conduct voluntary local demonstration projects using a conservation toolbox approach that includes financial incentives, regulatory assistance, and technical and educational opportunities to landowners to manage their land as working landscapes;
6. Provide educational opportunities to broaden the understanding of the value of the working landscapes approach to CALFED, associated agencies, stakeholders and the general public; and,
7. Address institutional barriers that prevent or discourage the practice of conservation measures that contribute towards the achievement of working landscapes.

Since that time, the Subcommittee has served as a valuable forum for bringing together a diverse group of CALFED stakeholders over common interests in the intersection of CALFED implementation and the CALFED region's working landscapes, and in promoting successful approaches to address environmental problems in a manner beneficial to both agriculture and the environment. The full subcommittee description is included as Attachment 2.

C. Subcommittee Accomplishments

The Subcommittee has achieved significant accomplishments, including:

1. Working Landscapes workplan priorities. When the Subcommittee was first formed, it developed a workplan of core issues that should be addressed. The workplan was approved by the Subcommittee and forwarded to BDPAC in September 2002.

The Subcommittee's first workplan goals were:

1. Support locally based collaborative initiatives that provide opportunities for working landscapes to assist CALFED in meeting its program objectives
2. Minimize/Mitigate Adverse CALFED Project Impacts on Agricultural Resources consistent with the commitments in the CALFED Record of Decision
3. Coordinate Funding and Outreach to support a working landscape approach to meeting CALFED program objectives.

In May of 2005, the Subcommittee reviewed and reevaluated its priorities. They are:

1. Advise CALFED on ways that agricultural activities contribute to CALFED goals and ways that CALFED can address goals of agriculture
2. Advise CALFED on ways to reduce barriers and maximize opportunities for integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration
3. Advise CALFED on landowner assurances.

2. CALFED Working Landscapes Subcommittee meetings. To date, nineteen subcommittee meetings have been. The Subcommittee met to:

- (1) Learn about, promote and glean lessons from successful CALFED and non-CALFED initiatives that exemplify “working landscapes” (see sidebar) to achieving CALFED goals;
- (2) Receive presentations from CALFED staff on programs and projects of interest to the Subcommittee;
- (3) Provide comments to CALFED program or project managers in order to promote a working landscapes approach to CALFED implementation;
- (4) Share information with private landowners and local communities about tools available to promote the achievement of CALFED goals through a working landscapes approach; and,
- (5) Formulate recommendations to BDPAC that enhance a working landscapes approach to achieving CALFED goals.

The Working Landscapes Subcommittee also received presentations from CALFED Program staff on CALFED programs, plans and projects with implications for agriculture or opportunities for working landscapes approaches. These presentations ranged from CALFED program multi-year plans to In-Delta Storage and CALFED Science Program

priorities. The presentations were intended to inform the Working Landscapes Subcommittee on ongoing CALFED implementation where there are potentially significant impacts on, or opportunities to further a working landscapes approach to achieving CALFED goals. The presentations provided a venue for CALFED managers to receive input from Working Landscapes Subcommittee stakeholders including private landowner, local government and non-governmental organizations with an interest in conservation.

3. Recommendations to BDPAC on Prop 50 funds. In March 2003, the Working Landscapes Subcommittee forwarded a recommended framework for implementing a

What is a “working landscape”?

“A working landscape is a place where agriculture and other natural resource based economic endeavors are conducted with the objective of maintaining the viability and integrity of its commercial and environmental values. On a working landscape, both private production, as well as public regulatory decisions account for the sustainability of families, businesses and communities, while protecting and enhancing the landscape’s ecological health. The working landscape is readily adaptable to change according to economic and ecosystem needs”. (Source: California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee Working Landscapes Subcommittee Description, December 5, 2002).

What is a “working landscapes approach”?

Agricultural management practices can be undertaken to improve wildlife habitat, achieve water quality benefits, or improve other resource quality criteria relative to current conditions. And as agricultural resources themselves are increasingly threatened by conversion to non-agricultural uses, the role of productive agricultural lands in providing multiple benefits is becoming more apparent. Productive agricultural lands provide current and potential habitat benefits and can function as buffers of natural and restored habitat areas from developed uses. Indeed, many agricultural practices have the potential to address CALFED goals including ecosystem restoration, water use efficiency, or water quality. Projects that collaboratively address these CALFED and landowner objectives, then, are referred to as “working landscapes approaches.”

working landscape proposal solicitation process to BDPAC and the Ecosystem Restoration Program. Proposition 50, a bond measure that included authorization for CALFED's ecosystem restoration program, including at least \$20 million for projects that assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration. The Subcommittee provided BDPAC and the Ecosystem Restoration Program with a package of recommendations on how this money could be expended to advance projects that address CALFED ecosystem restoration goals in a working agricultural landscape.

4. Payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) - analysis and recommendations. The Working Landscapes Subcommittee formulated a series of recommendations on how CALFED could address its impact on local property related tax and assessment revenues. Because implementation of the CALFED Program sometimes involves the acquisition of private property, stakeholders have raised concerns about the potential for adverse impacts on city, county and special district tax bases due to a loss of taxes when properties become public and are exempted from property taxes.

Following on a report developed by graduate students at UC Berkeley's school of public policy, the Subcommittee convened a working group to develop recommendations. The Subcommittee's recommendations focused specifically on the existing PILT systems and formulas, and emphasized workable solutions. Attachment 3 provides the Subcommittee's report to BDPAC including background and recommendations, which were brought to BDPAC as an information item in June 2005, and are summarized as follows:

1. Request that the administration list state PILT payments owed to local governments as distinct line items in the state budget;
2. Recommendation that the state legislature consistently approve authorization for PILT payments to local governments for CALFED-funded land acquisitions;
3. Recommendation that the Governor work with California congressional leaders and the federal administration toward full PILT payment authorization by Congress;
4. Recommend that the State examine state PILT legislation to include all resource-related acquisitions as qualifying for PILT; and
5. Support of legislation or regulations to amend the state process for calculating PILT to include a regular periodic readjustment of the PILT payment amount similar to the practice used by the federal government in calculating PILT payments. This would eliminate the concern that once a property is acquired by the state, the PILT payment is fixed in perpetuity, without consideration of the changing values of similar properties.

BDPAC took no action on these recommendations, and CALFED refocusing efforts have diverted BDPAC's attention from this important stakeholder issue. Further, because stakeholder recommendations included outreach to Congress -- actions that are beyond the authority of a Federal Advisory Act-chartered entity such as BDPAC -- PILT issues appear to be more appropriate to a statewide forum such as the proposed Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Committee.

5. Independent Science Board recommendations. The Working Lands Subcommittee formulated recommendations to CALFED's Independent Science Board regarding the science expertise that should be represented on the ISB to support the implementation of a working landscapes approach to CALFED. The Subcommittee called for additional expertise in the scientific areas of sociology, human ecology and economics. The Subcommittee forwarded its recommendation for BDPAC consideration in the summer of 2005. Subsequently, the Independent Science Board embraced the need for representation from human ecology sciences.

6. Informational presentations. The Working Landscapes Subcommittee received informational presentations on CALFED and non-CALFED projects or initiatives that demonstrate a working landscapes approach or that provide examples of tools that promote a working landscape approach to wildlife habitat and water conservation. These presentations, for example, included the work being fostered on orchard and vineyard lands on the North Coast by resource conservation districts in partnership with the Fish Friendly Farming Program, and Audubon California on its Landowner Stewardship Program. These presentations give recognition and encouragement to local conservation partnerships, and inform the Subcommittee. For example, similar presentations in previous years influenced the WLS recommendations to the Ecosystem Restoration Subcommittee on a proposal solicitation process for projects that assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration. Attachment 4 presents a list of Working Landscape Subcommittee speakers, topics and contact information.

7. Outreach to Delta Working Landscapes stakeholders. In March 2004, the Working Landscapes Subcommittee held an outreach event directed specifically to landowners and local conservation groups in the Delta. The Subcommittee worked with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Delta Protection Commission, the San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, UC Cooperative Extension and the three Delta Water agencies to sponsor a workshop for Delta landowners on conservation technical and financial assistance available from USDA that have specific application to Delta landscapes and could assist in achieving CALFED goals. More than 50 participants registered for the half-day event, including 30 landowner or landowner agents. The NRCS made brief presentations about five USDA conservation program suitable for Delta agriculture. Following the formal presentations, Resource Conservation District (RCD) or NRCS representatives from each of the five Delta Counties (Sacramento, San Joaquin, Yolo, Solano and Contra Costa) described examples of actual uses of these programs in the Delta by growers. The workshop concluded with participants able to interact, one-on-one with conservation representatives from each county.

8. Provide stakeholders information on CALFED activities and recommendations to BDPAC. The Working Landscapes Subcommittee worked with the Environmental Justice Subcommittee of BDPAC to receive presentations from each CALFED Program manager on their proposed Multi-year Program Plan, and to develop comments for transmittal to BDPAC and the Program managers on how the plans impact or could improve CALFED implementation to address local concerns and address CALFED goals in an agricultural landscape.

The Subcommittee held a forum for Working Landscapes Subcommittee stakeholders on the draft 10-year Finance Plan to both inform stakeholders about the plan and provide a venue for CALFED to receive constructive comments from agricultural stakeholders. The forum was held on October 7, 2004 and stakeholder comments conveyed to BDPAC.

9. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program proposal. In 2003, the Subcommittee encouraged CDFA staff to explore with Delta stakeholders and USDA the development of a proposal for a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in the Delta. If approved by USDA, a CREP would enable growers in the Delta to receive technical and financial assistance for specified practices to conserve water quality and wildlife habitat. The Subcommittee developed and submitted an application to the USDA Farm Services Agency to establish a Conservation Priority Area for the Delta. The approval of the Conservation Priority Area was given by the Farm Services Agency, which is the necessary precursor to the establishment of a CREP. Staff met with pertinent agencies and stakeholders and determined that there was not a consensus among the necessary agencies of the need for, or efficacy of, a CREP in the Delta. It was concluded that the existing Sacramento Valley CREP was still in a fledgling stage and that the partners involved needed to better demonstrate capacity of the Delta CREP before returning to USDA for additional CREP funding. Therefore, continued work with stakeholders on the establishment of a CREP in the Delta was postponed.

10. Addressing the potential impacts of CALFED on agriculture. A working group was established in 2004 to evaluate and illustrate the agricultural mitigation measures in the CALFED ROD. The ROD includes 31 measures to avoid, reduce or eliminate potential adverse effects of the implementation of the ROD's Preferred Program Alternative on agricultural land and water use. The group evaluated these measures and sought to characterize and illustrate each measure's relevance to CALFED. The group also explored the applicability of the California Land Evaluation and Site Assessment system (LESA) for the assessment of CALFED project impacts on agricultural resources. The group began to prepare reports on past CALFED project impacts on working lands, the ROD's mitigation measures, and LESA, but suspended its efforts pending resolution of ongoing CALFED CEQA/NEPA litigation.

11. Working Landscapes Subcommittee's future: member survey report. In January 2005, Subcommittee Co-Chair, Denny Bungarz asked the Subcommittee's staff to interview a sampling of Subcommittee members about the direction of the Subcommittee. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain Subcommittee's public stakeholder satisfaction with the past work of the Subcommittee as well as its current direction. In addition, the interviews were conducted to gauge satisfaction with the structure and meetings of the Subcommittee. Sixteen non-agency stakeholders of the Subcommittee were selected for interviews. Interviewees were selected to reflect the diversity of interests on the Subcommittee. The survey results are presented in Attachment 4.

Before the Subcommittee could adopt final recommendations for BDPAC about subcommittee restructuring, the CALFED refocusing process commenced and further

work by the Subcommittee on this report was set aside pending completion of the refocusing process.

E. Recommendations on the Future: Addressing Working Lands in CALFED and Statewide.

CALFED refocusing, and the proposed new structure for BDPAC, proposes to phase-out the current BDPAC Working Landscapes Subcommittee. In the new structure, WLS stakeholders would be encouraged to contribute directly to the discussions in other re-constituted subcommittees (Ecosystem Restoration, Water Quality, Water Supply Reliability, Levee System Integrity, Program Performance and Financing).

In addition, per discussions at the May 2006 Working Landscapes Subcommittee meeting, a number of options could be further developed to engage CALFED directly on topics of related to CALFED implementation regarding working lands. (These options exist in addition to any statewide Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Council subsequently created by the Secretary for Resources and Secretary of Food and Agriculture. See recommendation number two, below.) Following are options considered by the Subcommittee and the recommended course of action for an ongoing presence in the CALFED Program for a working lands forum.

Options Considered:

1. No action. A reconfigured BDPAC subcommittee structure will no longer include the Working Landscapes Subcommittee. A working lands forum within the CALFED Program will cease to exist. Instead, former Subcommittee members are encouraged to participate in the other BDPAC subcommittees where they can continue to support a working landscapes approach to CALFED Program implementation.
2. Following dissolution of the BDPAC Working Landscapes Subcommittee, convene a CALFED working lands technical advisory committee to advise CALFED program managers and others on working lands issues related to program implementation.
3. Convene CALFED Working Lands Committee as a “virtual” group supported by periodic updates on CALFED activities of interest to working lands stakeholders. Preserve options to convene the group to engage on specific CALFED issues or priority topics.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Consistent with the CALFED 10-year Action Plan, dissolve the current Working Landscapes Subcommittee, but implement option 2, a Working Lands Technical Advisory Committee. This committee would use the apparatus of the existing Working Landscapes Subcommittee (e.g., membership, staffing) and act as a resource for the CALFED program, implementing agencies and BDPAC subcommittees, including the BDPAC Steering Committee (committee of all the BDPAC Subcommittee chairs). This Technical Advisory Committee would meet as needed, and would provide input on program plans, serve as a resource for program and project managers/implementing agencies and organizations to reach out to agricultural and environmental stakeholders, and serve as a resource to other BDPAC subcommittees.

The Technical Advisory Committee could also function as a standing committee of the proposed Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Council (see below), once formally established. The Advisory Committee would address CALFED working lands issues and can help ensure that adequate opportunities exist for integrating agricultural activities and interests with key CALFED program goals and objectives.

RECOMMENDATION 2. Support the Secretariat proposal to form a statewide Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Council. In 2005, Secretary for Resources, Mike Chrisman and Secretary for Food and Agriculture, A.G. Kawamura proposed the creation of a statewide working lands forum, the Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Council. While administrative action to establish the Council has yet to take place, this proposal has wide support among the Subcommittee's stakeholders, including the key federal working lands partner, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The proposed council could address many issues of statewide importance, create a closer working linkage with federal conservation programs, and provide advice to the Secretaries on conserving working lands. Attachment 6 more fully describes the proposed Council. Upon the Council's establishment, the Subcommittee recommends the following topics for it to consider:

1. Develop recommendations for implementation of the Conservation and related titles of the 2007 Farm Bill;
2. Develop a cohesive state strategy for the application of policies and resources in support of the environmental and economic sustainability of California's working lands;
3. Improve collaboration among local, state and federal agencies in support of the stewardship of privately owned working lands;
4. Continue the dialogue over PILT and formulate recommendations to address policy and stakeholder concerns;
5. Provide a forum to advance concepts related to the development and implementation of landowner conservation incentives;
6. Support the establishment of partnerships with USDA NRCS and other federal agencies such as US Fish and Wildlife Service;
7. Identify potential research priorities that include objective analysis of the interactions between agricultural activities and ecosystem restoration and other conservation projects; and;
8. Create new funding sources for such research.

Attachments

1. Local Partnerships Planning Process White Paper
2. Working Landscapes Subcommittee Description
3. Payment In Lieu of Taxes Recommendations
4. List of Working Landscapes Subcommittee Speakers/Topics
5. Member Survey Report
6. Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Council Description

CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

Local Partnerships Planning Process: Collaborating with Agricultural Landowners and Local Communities to Meet CALFED Goals and Objectives

Many landowners and local communities are concerned that they may be prevented from continuing to farm, ranch, or provide flood control on or near lands preserved or enhanced for habitat conservation purposes. To address this concern, among others, the Secretary for Resources and the Secretary for Food and Agriculture are facilitating and supporting a stakeholder working group that was convened to promote conservation partnerships between CALFED agencies, private landowners, local governments and conservation groups. The Secretaries believe that an approach that provides stakeholders with incentives and support, and assists them with bureaucratic and regulatory burdens, has the potential to result in a much greater level of success in returning ecological health to the Bay-Delta region. Toward these ends, the working group will explore and develop actions consistent with the following six strategies.

1. Regulatory assistance/streamlining. The CALFED agencies are encouraging local agencies and groups to develop long-term projects that, with the agencies' support, can be used to introduce mechanisms to ease regulatory burdens on landowners. The primary objective of the projects will be to demonstrate ways to ease regulatory compliance for wildlife conservation activities on agricultural lands, while minimizing liability of, and economic impacts on landowners of project and neighboring lands. In particular, the CALFED agencies will assist in implementing projects that address the regulatory issues of the state and federal Endangered Species Acts, California Environmental Quality Act, the Clean Water Act and other laws.

2. Coordination of State and Federal assistance programs. CALFED agencies will coordinate funding from their existing agricultural programs and activities with funding for related CALFED actions and other related funding sources. The CALFED Program has conducted an analysis of existing funding programs and opportunities for coordination. CALFED Program staff will work with the Department of Conservation, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Food and Agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and other appropriate agencies to take advantage of opportunities for funding coordination in ways that complement existing programs, such as the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, the California Farmland Conservancy Program, Flood Protection Corridor Program, and others.

3. Supporting a Working Landscape Approach. The CALFED agencies will take a flexible approach to habitat restoration and enhancement on agricultural lands that keeps agricultural land in production and in private ownership wherever possible. This approach makes use of a "conservation toolbox," relying on a variety of programmatic strategies and proven best management practices to promote working landscapes that are profitable for agriculture and beneficial for wildlife. This conservation toolbox will include processes and practices, but also technical and financial assistance, information and outreach, and institutional capacity-building.

The working landscape approach will be demonstrated through projects (see Item 1, above) with producers that are representative of their regions. For example, projects within the Sacramento River Conservation Area would be designed to demonstrate and build on existing knowledge in that region about "wildlife friendly" agriculture. CALFED agencies will also seek to showcase the store of existing voluntary habitat improvement work by agricultural producers, and facilitate the transfer of knowledge from that work to other landowners.

4. Selection of habitat restoration and enhancement projects that minimize impacts to agricultural lands. For projects that require acquisition of land interests, acquisition of fee title to land will be consistent with the adopted CALFED implementation plan for the affected region. Acquisitions will be

from willing sellers only, and limited to situations where neither available public land nor partnerships are appropriate or cost-effective for the specific need. Decisions regarding such acquisitions will consider the potential for third party and redirected impacts. In addition, to the maximum extent possible, the CALFED agencies will seek to implement the program through technical and financial assistance to locally based, collaborative programs. Project proponents will state whether the proposed project is consistent with the local city or county general plan, and has local government support; and, whether the acquisition is time sensitive. Decisions to acquire interests in agricultural land will include consideration of potential impacts on neighboring agricultural operations. These considerations will help identify projects that will minimize the Ecosystem Restoration Program's impacts, as well as other CALFED programs' impacts, on agricultural lands.

Finally, when adverse impacts on agricultural land and water resources are unavoidable, CALFED agencies will adopt, where appropriate, measures, including the use of agricultural land conservation easements, to mitigate those impacts.

5. Research and Monitoring. The CALFED Program will assist in developing wildlife-friendly agricultural systems and practices, as well as in documenting the costs and benefits of such systems and practices compared to those of conventional agricultural systems. Research will also be pursued on the development and documentation of agriculture-friendly habitat restoration methods. Research will include such topics as which types of agricultural practices (e.g., rice fields, winter flooding, partial harvest) are "friendly" for which species, the ecological benefits of wildlife-friendly agriculture as compared to single-purpose habitat, and effective strategies to mitigate the impacts of habitat restoration on neighboring lands.

Similarly, the efficacy for achieving program goals via fee simple public acquisition and public management versus the use of agricultural conservation easements and private management, will be explored. Other research will address the testing of a model for use in evaluating acquisition impacts and priorities; the use of alternative crops (e.g., energy crops) that benefit wildlife; and, the environmental justice implications of agricultural land retirement in rural communities.

6. In-lieu Property Taxes. Local governments and non-profit organizations like water companies depend upon property taxes, special assessments, property fees, water charges, and other similar financing mechanisms to provide operating revenues. When land is acquired by a State or Federal agency, these taxes, assessments and fees are provided inconsistently or not at all. In some cases, State and Federal agencies are authorized to pay fees to local government agencies in-lieu of the usual assessments. The CALFED agencies will examine the application of State and Federal in-lieu tax requirements and subventions to CALFED projects, and will attempt to maximize the payment of in-lieu taxes and subventions, and consider other approaches to minimize CALFED impacts on local revenues, including the use of easements rather than fee simple acquisitions.

CALIFORNIA BAY-DELTA PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE Working Landscapes Subcommittee Description

Approved by Subcommittee on December 5, 2002

Background

The CALFED Record of Decision (ROD) agreement calls for numerous projects to improve water quality, ecosystem quality, water supply reliability and Delta levee system integrity in the Bay-Delta and its watersheds. Private landowners and local entities, by and large, understand the need for these projects. Nevertheless, landowners and local communities are concerned with how CALFED projects will affect their economic sustainability. Paramount among these concerns is how the conversion of private agricultural lands to public habitat affects the long-term viability of regional agricultural economies and the tax revenues of local governments and special districts.

In the ROD, CALFED acknowledges that “implementation of the CALFED Program will affect some agricultural lands.” The ROD, however, also discusses implementing the Program while “minimizing impacts to agriculture.” (ROD, Page 33-34). In an effort to address landowner and local concerns with CALFED, the Secretaries for the Resources Agency and the Department of Food and Agriculture established a Working Landscapes Workgroup under the auspices of CALFED). The Workgroup was directed to promote partnerships between CALFED agencies, private landowners, local governments and conservation groups to address local concerns while achieving CALFED goals.

The Workgroup’s effort resulted in a recommended approach to Bay-Delta Program implementation called the *Local Partnerships Planning Process*. At its July 2002 meeting, Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee concurred with the approach set forth in the *Local Partnerships Planning Process* and established the Working Landscapes Subcommittee to implement it.

Working Landscape Defined (for the purposes of the CALFED Working Landscapes Subcommittee)

A working landscape is a place where agriculture and other natural resource-based economic endeavors are conducted with the objective of maintaining the viability and integrity of its commercial and environmental values. On a working landscape, both private production, as well as public regulatory decisions account for the sustainability of families, businesses and communities, while protecting and enhancing the landscape’s ecological health. The working landscape is readily adaptable to change according to economic and ecosystem needs.

With respect to CALFED, a working landscape is both an objective and a means to achieve it. A working landscape is efficiently managed largely by private

agricultural landowners and managers who are supported and encouraged to manage their lands in ways that fulfill CALFED goals, allowing them to pursue ecological health goals while yielding economic returns on investments, and generating tax revenues that support their local governments.

Official Designation

The Working Landscapes Subcommittee is a subcommittee of the California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC). BDPAC is a federally chartered and formal state advisory committee to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The Working Landscapes Subcommittee operates under BDPAC as a formal state advisory committee and adheres to state open meeting requirements.

Vision

The Subcommittee works towards the following best-of-all-possible-outcomes:

Californians understand the value of a working landscape for a vibrant economy and healthy natural environment. This, in part, stems from the actions of the Working Landscape Subcommittee, which provides the BDPAC with creative and practical strategies that: (1) enhance the sustainability of California agriculture; (2) are implemented with the enthusiastic participation of local communities, landowners and land managers; and, (3) significantly contribute to the fulfillment of a "long-term comprehensive plan [to]...restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial use of the Bay-Delta system" (CALFED mission statement, ROD, P. 9), while minimizing impacts to agriculture.

The working landscape is an economically and ecologically vital and sustainable landscape where agricultural and other natural resource-based producers generate multiple public benefits while providing for their own, and their communities', economic and social well-being.

Private land stewardship, with the support of good science, financial incentives, and technical and regulatory assistance, is the primary vehicle for achieving many aspects of the CALFED mission. Public and private partnerships are commonplace on both private and public lands. Private land owners and managers are recognized and fairly compensated for the public benefits they provide. These benefits include, but are not limited to, food, fiber, minerals, timber and energy, downstream flood protection, recreation, biological diversity, clean air and water, and scenic open space.

CALFED has a consistent and equitable process by which to partner with landowners for public benefits on private lands.

Organizational Purpose and Mission

The Working Landscapes Subcommittee reports directly to BDPAC. The purpose of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee is to provide advice and guidance to BDPAC to ensure that implementation of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program values the role of the private land owner and operator in meeting CALFED objectives to:

- “Provide good water quality for all beneficial uses;
- Improve and increase aquatic and terrestrial habitats...;
- Reduce the mismatch between Bay-Delta water supplies and current and projected beneficial uses; and,
- Reduce the risk...from catastrophic breaching of Delta levees.” (CALFED ROD, P. 9)

Consistent with the CALFED Solution Principles, the Subcommittee’s advice and guidance to BDPAC will:

- Reduce conflicts in the system;
- Be equitable;
- Be affordable;
- Be durable;
- Be implementable; and,
- Have no significant redirected impacts on other programs, stakeholders or regions of CALFED. (CALFED ROD, p. 9)

More specifically, the Subcommittee’s work will be guided by the following CALFED ROD commitment with respect to agricultural land acquisition:

“Successful implementation of the CALFED Program will affect some agricultural lands. As an important feature of the State’s environment and economy, agricultural lands will be preserved during implementation of the [CALFED] Program in a manner consistent with meeting program goals, minimizing impacts to agriculture. Some of the land needed for program implementation is already owned by the Federal or State government and that land will be used to achieve program goals. Partnerships with landowners, including easements with willing landowners, will be pursued to obtain mutual benefits if public land is not available for the intended purpose. Acquisition of fee title to land will be from willing sellers only, and will be used when neither available public land nor partnerships are

appropriate or cost-effective for the specific need. Such acquisitions will consider the potential for third-party and redirected impacts. In addition, to the maximum extent possible, the CALFED Agencies will seek to implement the Program through technical and financial assistance to locally based, collaborative programs such as the Sacramento River Conservation Area/SB 1086 program.” (CALFED ROD, pp. 33-34)

The Subcommittee will work to achieve integration of the Working Landscapes approach into the implementation of relevant CALFED Program elements.* Other activities of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee include encouraging broad public participation and strategic partnerships, exchanging information, analyzing issues, and fact-finding, as appropriate, on the implementation of all CALFED Bay-Delta Programs as they relate to working landscapes.

The mission of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee is to:

1. Provide advice on CALFED Program priorities, long-term plans, annual work plans and budgets, performance, balance and integration with respect to working landscapes, as defined above;
2. Assist landowners in helping to restore the ecological health of the Bay-Delta system by protecting and restoring native species of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats;
3. Avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts to agricultural resources and local communities resulting from CALFED actions, consistent with the ROD;
4. Assist in implementing CALFED ROD actions as they affect the attainment of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee vision;
5. Conduct voluntary local demonstration projects using a “conservation toolbox” approach that includes financial incentives, regulatory assistance, and technical and educational opportunities to landowners to manage their land as working landscapes;
6. Provide educational opportunities to broaden the understanding of the value of the *working landscapes* approach to the CALFED Program, its agencies, stakeholders and the general public; and,
7. Address institutional barriers that prevent or discourage the practice of conservation measures that contribute towards the achievement of a working landscape.

Membership/Participants

The Working Landscapes Subcommittee is co-chaired by 2 BDPAC members appointed by the BDPAC in consultation with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The co-chairs are Ryan Broddrick, Ducks Unlimited and Denny Bungarz, Glenn County Supervisor and BDPAC Vice-Chair.

The role of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee co-chairs includes the coordination and facilitation of the Subcommittee and interested members of the public. The co-chairs also act as liaisons between BDPAC and the Working Landscapes Subcommittee by communicating information and guidance to both groups.

The priority for the framework for membership of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee is to be inclusive of all participants so that issues can be adequately addressed to continue to advance the Working Landscapes approach in the CALFED Program. The initial recommendation is that the Subcommittee membership will be open to all interested parties and with no formal membership required. The Subcommittee wants to encourage participation by individuals representing a wide array of interests including agricultural, urban, environmental, labor, community organizations, recreational, fisheries and wildlife, universities, businesses, and local, tribal, state and federal government among others.

Decision Making

The Working Landscapes Subcommittee will use a collaborative approach for decision-making during its discussions. The Subcommittee will achieve a broad base of support for any recommendation forwarded to BDPAC. A summary of action items and major outcomes from each Subcommittee meeting will be presented to the Working Landscapes Subcommittee co-chairs.

Staff Resources

The California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Conservation, the Delta Protection Commission and the Department of Fish and Game will staff the Working Landscapes Subcommittee. Additional support will be provided by other CALFED agencies.

* CALFED program elements include: Levee System Integrity, Drinking Water Quality, Watershed Management, Environmental Water Account, Ecosystem Restoration Program, Water Transfers, Water Use Efficiency, Conveyance, Storage, Water Management, and Science.

Agenda Item: 5B
Meeting Date: June 8, 2005

Date: March 28, 2005
To: California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee
From: Working Landscapes Subcommittee
Subject: PAYMENT-IN-LIEU-OF-TAXES PROGRAMS (PILT)

Summary: PILT programs are intended to offset adverse impacts on local property tax revenues associated with state and Federal acquisitions of private property. Because implementation of the CALFED Program involves, in certain cases, the acquisition of private property to achieve its goals, it poses the potential for adverse impacts on city, county and special district tax bases.

The information presented herein- including the recommendations of a workgroup of the Working Landscapes Subcommittee- are for information only. The recommendations provide a strategy to help secure the equitable payment of Payment In-Lieu of Taxes to local governments when land is purchased for restoration or other activities related to the Program. The recommendations related to the payment of PILT are intended to lessen the burden on local governments, primarily in rural areas of the state, who are less able to absorb the loss of revenue from property taxes associated with land acquisitions.

Background

In October 2003, the Working Landscapes Subcommittee (WLS) appointed a workgroup to examine the performance of State and Federal payment-in lieu-of-taxes (PILT) programs. Through their research, the workgroup revealed that there is a similar, but slightly different, PILT program at the Federal and State level.

The Department of Interior (DOI) administers the Federal PILT program on behalf of all Federal land holding agencies. Based on a specific formula, a payment to local governments is calculated "in-lieu" of agency's direct payment of taxes. After the PILT is established, the DOI includes PILT funding in its annual budget request to Congress. If funding is appropriated, the DOI makes the payments directly to the counties. These PILT payments are perhaps the only Federal payments to counties that do not pass through the State Department of Finance.

At the State level, only lands acquired by the California Department of Fish and Game (Fish and Game) for wildlife management areas qualify for PILT. State PILT payments are based on appraisals that are made at the time of acquisition and are not adjusted for inflation, unlike Federal PILT payments which are

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adjusted based on the Consumer Price Index.

Historically, the congressional appropriations for PILT have fallen short of that owed to local governments by 40 to 50 percent, improving to a 30 percent shortfall in 2004. When appropriations are not sufficient, the DOI prorates available funds proportionately among counties based on their authorized amounts.

At the State level, PILT payments are included in the administrative portion of the Department of Fish and Game budget. Historically, the State has consistently paid the PILT payments, absent a budget shortfall. In adequate budget years, the Department has retroactively brought their payments current.

The WLS is now bringing forward to Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC) the workgroup's recommendations which are summarized below for information and discussion at this meeting. The WLS anticipates bringing forward similar recommendations, calling for appropriate action by BDPAC at a future meeting:

1. Request that the administration list State PILT payments owed to local governments as distinct line items in the State budget.
2. Recommendation that the State legislature consistently approve authorization for PILT payments to local governments for CALFED-funded land acquisitions.
3. Recommendation that the Governor work with California congressional leaders and the Federal administration toward full PILT payment authorization by Congress.
4. Recommend that the State examine State PILT legislation to include all resource-related acquisitions as qualifying for PILT.
5. Support of legislation or regulations to amend the State process for calculating PILT to include a regular periodic readjustment of the PILT payment amount, similar to the practice used by the Federal government in calculating PILT payments. This would eliminate the concern that once a property is acquired by the state, the PILT payment is fixed in perpetuity, without consideration of the changing values of similar properties.

For a more in-depth discussion of the activities and research of the workgroup, please refer to the attached full staff report to the WLS (Attachment 3) and a supporting document regarding benefit assessments (Attachment 2).

Following is a list of topics addressed by the Subcommittee by meeting date.

- July 22, 2003: - *Discussion*: A science agenda for Working Landscapes (Kim Taylor, CALFED);
- *Information*: The California Farmland Conservancy Program (Erik Vink, DOC)
- Sept. 4, 2003 - *Information*: Analysis of Payment of In-Lieu Taxes (PILT) (UC-Berkeley graduate students)
- *Discussion*: CALFED Agricultural Land Impacts Mitigation Protocol (Jeanne Blakeslee, DOC)
Discussion: Working Landscapes PSP recommendations to ERP – Next Steps
- Oct. 2, 2003 - *Information*: Fish Friendly Farming Program (Laurel Marcus, Laurel Marcus and Associates)
- *Information and Discussion*: USDA-NRCS Resource Quality Criteria (Diane Holcomb, NRCS)
- *Discussion*: Development of Land Acquisition and Database (Jeanne Blakeslee, DOC)
- *Action*: Establish PILT Work Group of Subcommittee
- Nov. 6, 2003 - *Discussion*: Use of the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) model as CALFED agricultural land impact significance threshold tool (Dennis O'Bryant, DOC)
- *Action*: Revisit and re-prioritize Subcommittee's Work Plan (Staff)
- Jan. 8, 2004 - *Information and Discussion*: LESA in Application – Cosumnes River Land Acquisition (Dan Ray, CALFED-ERP)
- *Information and Discussion*: State Water Plan (Bulletin 160) and Working Landscapes (Elizabeth Patterson, DWR)
- Feb. 5, 2004 - *Information and Discussion*: LESA in Application – Hamilton City Project (Sara Schultz, ACOE)
- *Information*: Opportunities for Reducing Pesticides on Working Landscapes (Larry Elworth, Center for Agricultural Partnerships)
- *Information and Discussion*: Conservation Security Program Rulemaking (Helen Flach, NRCS)
- *Action*: Approve Workshop on NRCS Conservation Tools for Delta Landscapes (Tom Zuckerman, Central Delta Water Agency)
- *Discussion*: Support of BDPAC Subcommittees for Working Landscape Subcommittee Recommendation on Social-Economic Expertise on Independent Science Board (ISB)
- March 4, 2004 - *Information and Discussion*: In-Delta Storage Project and Impacts (Pal Sandhu, DWR)
- *Action*: Approve Recommendation to BDPAC regarding Social-Economic Expertise on ISB
- *Action*: Next Steps on Application of LESA to CALFED Projects – Use, modify or reject
- *Discussion*: Staff Proposal for Joint Environmental Justice Subcommittee and Working Landscape Subcommittee Meeting on Third Party Impacts of Water Transfers (Ken McGhee)

- April 1, 2004 Joint Meeting of Working Landscape and Environmental Justice Subcommittees
- *Information and Discussion:* CALFED Multi-year Program Plans Presentation (Managers from Ecosystem Restoration, Water Management, Watershed, Science, Water Transfers and EWA, and Levee System Integrity programs)
- *Action:* Recommendation for BDPAC Approval of Multi-year Program Plans with Comments
- June 3, 2004 - *Information:* Delta Improvements Package Implementation Agreement and Schedule (Tina Cannon, Dept. of Fish and Game)
- *Action:* Revisit and Revise ISB Recommendations in light of Recent ISB Report to BDPAC
- *Discussion:* Draft Recommendations of Subcommittee PILT Work Group (Staff)
- *Information:* Audubon Society's California Landowner Stewardship Program (Vance Russell)
- July 2004 -- Presentation on CALFED Finance Options Report
-- Receive update and provide feedback on North Delta Improvement Project
-- Presentation and discussion on MSCS Biological opinion milestone report
-- Discussion and comment on ERP Program Solicitation Package (PSP) for "Assisting Farmers Integrate Ecosystem Restoration with Agricultural Management"
- Sept. -- Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes Work Group Progress Report
-- Agricultural Lands Protection Work Group Report
-- Independent Science Board membership recommendations
-- Update Working Landscapes Subcommittee Work plan and Priorities
- October -- Consider Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes Recommendations to BDPAC
-- CALFED 10-year Finance Plan discussion of recommendations
-- Presentation: Alameda County Resource Conservation District's Permit Coordination Project
- December--Adopt Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes Recommendations to BDPAC
-- USDA-NRCS approach to conservation – Presentation by NRCS
-- Farm Bill Programs: California accomplishments in 2003-04
-- Farm Bill Appropriation for 2004-05
-- Panel Discussion: 2007 reauthorization of Farm Bill
- March 2005 Discussion: Member survey on Future of Working Landscapes Subcommittee
-- Continued discussion on Payment-in-lieu-of-taxes recommendations
-- ERP PSP Update; report from ERP Subcommittee meeting on the "Assisting Farmers Integrate Ecosystem Restoration with Agricultural Management" PSP
-- ERP Multi-Year Program Plan presentation and discussion of agricultural activities benefiting ecosystem restoration
- April -- Report-back from BDPAC on Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes Recommendations
-- Continued discussion on ERP Multi-Year Program Plan
-- Continued discussion of agricultural activities benefiting ecosystem restoration
-- Future of Working Landscapes Subcommittee: Report of Goals and Objectives work group
- June -- Workshop: Work Group Report and Discussion on Subcommittee Annual Priorities

Date: March 10, 2005

To: Working Landscapes Subcommittee
Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee

From: Subcommittee Staff

In January 2005, Subcommittee Co-Chair, Denny Bungarz asked the Subcommittee's staff to interview a sampling of Subcommittee members about the direction of the Subcommittee. The purpose of the interviews was to ascertain Subcommittee public stakeholder satisfaction with the past work of the Subcommittee as well as its current direction. In addition, the interviews were conducted to gauge satisfaction with the structure and meetings of the Subcommittee. Finally, it was intended that the interviews would help point towards priorities for the future work of the Subcommittee.

Sixteen non-agency stakeholders of the Subcommittee were selected for interviews. Interviewees were selected to reflect the diversity of interests on the Subcommittee. An additional screening criterion was the length and consistency of participation on the Subcommittee.

Following are a few of the major themes that surfaced from the interviews. Next is a listing of the six questions asked of each interviewee, along with highlights of the responses to each question. Also, attached is the interview instrument used, including the six questions.

A full compilation the transcribed responses is available from staff. Staff conducting the interviews included Casey Walsh Cady and Ken Trott from the Department of Food and Agriculture, and Jay Chamberlin of the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program. Contact staff for copy of the full compilation of interview responses at (916) 657-4956.

RESULTS OF WORKING LANDSCAPES SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Performance And Future Directions Of Working Landscapes Subcommittee

Big Themes:

- The Subcommittee has provided value as a forum of bringing diverse CALFED stakeholders together who have a common interest in the “working landscape.” The Subcommittee has produced meaningful products, including recommendations on funding for “projects that assist farmers in integrating agricultural activities with ecosystem restoration,” and payment in-lieu-of-taxes. It also serves as a forum for information sharing about successful approaches to address agricultural and environmental concerns, tracking the activities of CALFED, and as a channel for providing input to CALFED (e.g., In-Delta Storage, Finance Plan).
- The Subcommittee started strong, but now seems to lack clear purpose and goals. The Subcommittee could do a better job of choosing and tackling concrete tasks consistent with its mission and purpose. While the Subcommittee appears to have had an impact on CALFED, participants may feel that the impact is limited.
- The Subcommittee’s structure is, in general acceptable. However, there is some concern that the Subcommittee’s “looseness” in attendance and how it conducts its business degrades its ability to function effectively. Specifically, because there are no appointed members, there is typically a different mix of participants at each meeting, which can disrupt continuity and result in shifts in direction or a rehashing of the same material from one meeting to the next.
- Subcommittee meetings are well run, but agenda items need to tie together better and support more focused goals and action items of the Subcommittee.

HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERVIEW RESULTS BY QUESTION

1. *Why do/did you attend the WLS meetings?*

- To be sure that rural and agricultural interests have a voice in CALFED.
- There is a lack of rural representation in CALFED and rural people have a lot to offer that hasn't been heard.
- To learn about CALFED and how it affects my constituency and members.
- To identify and resolve conflicts resulting from CALFED implementation on the working landscape.
- To share with CALFED decision makers the benefits of ranching and farming for the environmental goals CALFED hopes to accomplish.
- To have a chance to help mold CALFED policy and program implementation.
- The Subcommittee is a good forum for those interested in "working landscapes" to connect with each other, particularly those from the agricultural industry and the conservation community.
- The Subcommittee is one of the only CALFED Subcommittees with a tie to, or focus on agriculture.
- The Subcommittee is a good group of people where good information on agricultural issues pertinent to CALFED is available, and where it is easy for anyone to participate.

2. *In your opinion, what have been the main accomplishments or benefits of the WLS?*

- The recent workshop on the Finance Plan, though late in the process, was a good opportunity for agricultural stakeholders. If done in a timely fashion, this kind of opportunity for learning and input is a good thing for the Subcommittee to do.
- Good discussions of issues pertaining to working landscapes, but that need to be brought down to specific actions.
- Professional learning about strategies and approaches to conservation.
- The Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes recommendations.

- Recommendations on the agricultural component of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Proposal Solicitation Package (\$20 million+ from Proposition 50).
- Being a squeaky wheel within CALFED on behalf of those on the working landscape to integrate working landscape concepts into ecosystem restoration; raising the visibility of working landscape issues.
- Informative case study presentations from those doing working landscapes work.
- The Subcommittee's charter documents – Local Partnerships Planning Process white paper, work plan and vision/mission document (Subcommittee description).

3. *In your opinion, has the Working Landscape Subcommittee taken on the right issues?*

- Yes, but not much progress; the Subcommittee has a ways to go; not many accomplishments. Need action-oriented agenda items. Need to refocus and prioritize work plan.
- The discussions seem repetitious and too big picture, and there doesn't seem to be much progress.
- The Subcommittee needs to keep abreast of, and take on the issue of water user fees.
- The Subcommittee could work on documenting the contributions of agriculture to the goals of CALFED; i.e., the work already occurring on the landscape with and without CALFED funding.
- Recommendations on the agricultural component of the ERP PSP was a "right issue."
- Need to focus on getting agencies to collaborate more to support working landscape projects that involve partnerships with landowners; e.g., leveraging USDA conservation dollars with CALFED dollars. Need to champion local implementation.
- "Show and tell" parts of the agenda need to be related to focused actions that the Subcommittee has made priorities.
- PILT was a right issue, but the bigger issue is getting CALFED ERP projects to be able to "stand alone" in terms of mitigating economic, environmental and landowner impacts. Ecosystem Restoration and Working Landscapes Subcommittees should be required to be in agreement on ER projects that are funded.
- Need to find market mechanism to help growers have incentive and be rewarded for CALFED related public benefits they provide or could provide.

4. *How does the Subcommittee's structure work in your opinion?*

- The Subcommittee's structure works well; like the open and accessible nature of meetings due to the "anybody who attends is a member" structure of the Subcommittee.
- Major problem is that due to the fluid nature of the membership, there seems to be a different mix of people at each meeting, which requires going back over old material to catch people up. The Subcommittee structure does seem to contribute to a lack of continuity.
- An alternative could be a hybrid to the current structure where members are appointed to secure a more committed desired representation, but meetings are conducted as they are now; i.e., open participation.
- Need two co-chairs to help give structure and focus to discussions.
- No concerns regarding balance of agency versus non-agency participation, but agency staff should refrain from interfering with the free flow of ideas.
- Participation has declined; need everyone there. US Fish and Wildlife Service should be attending.
- Might consider merging Subcommittee with another CALFED Subcommittee such as the Watershed Subcommittee where there are common interest.
- Need better interaction with the Ecosystem Restoration Subcommittee.

5. *What do you think of Working Landscape Subcommittee Meetings?*

- Meetings are run well and the format is good. Agency reports need to be more focused to issues of interest to the Subcommittee's charter, shorter, and use less inside lingo that all can understand.
- What about holding a series of meetings in each of the CALFED regions to listen to working landscapes stakeholder concerns or ideas about CALFED implementation?
- Hold regional meetings and then one large annual meeting each year.
- Any presentations should support priority action items on the agenda.
- Hold meetings less frequently.

6. *Anything else you want to say about WLS?*

- Agriculture needs to do a better job of telling its story. Perhaps WLS could focus on putting together a compilation of stories about how private landowners are contributing to CALFED goals, including those efforts supported by CALFED.
- Need greater buy-in on the principals of working landscapes from other CALFED programs, including their willingness to work with WLS.
- WLS should work on an annual action plan over the next few meetings with a strong focus on no “redirected” impacts.
- Continue to be interested in the issue of agricultural land conversion as it related to CALFED.
- What can WLS to help CALFED be more accountable on its actions and expenditures with respect to the restoration of species?
- Need greater participation on the part of growers on WLS.
- Interested in North Delta wildlife and how growers could be paid to grow wildlife. Need to facilitate landowner participation in CALFED implementation goals.
- WLS could suggest future research that should be done to document benefits and costs of working landscapes approaches.

**TRANSCRIBED WORKING LANDSCAPES SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBER
INTERVIEW RESPONSES**

1. Why do/did you attend the WLS meetings?

- To get an introduction to CALFED and how its actions affect ranchers.
- The subject matter: the intersection between conservation and agriculture (was interesting initially and is part of my job) ... (I stopped coming regularly because meetings are frequent, they take up a big part of the day, and they are repetitious. Things aren't moving along...
- The reason I started coming was because the Subcommittee generally discusses issues related to work on conservation programs; what keeps me coming back is the ability to multi task during the meetings
- I got involved because the whole CALFED process – water issues – lacks public process, lacks grassroots environmental and tribal group participation. While the national (environmental) groups sometimes got involved in CALFED, people don't feel that they have a voice.
- Our organization has been involved since the inception because of a lack of rural representation at CALFED. Rural people have a lot to offer, but much of it hasn't been heard. Our people see a lot of opportunities to cooperate to develop more reasonable projects. We wanted to get economic issues on the table and find avenues to provide landowners who get involved with the assurances they need.
- I haven't been coming in the last 6 months because of other time-consuming projects and the issues being discussed don't pique my interest. Future involvement will hinge on subject matter being addressed, time availability, and bigger issues such as user fees.
- I originally attended because working landscapes are what we do. I thought that I'd have something to contribute to CALFED by providing some on-the-ground feedback, and something to learn. I attended for about a year or so, but stopped because I was trying to economize – my reasons for not attending were not critical of the committee – I paid attention to what was on the agenda, and I've been able to go to one or two meetings as the agenda items were interesting.
- To make sure that the benefits cattle ranching/rangeland management provides towards meeting CALFED goals are recognized.

- The WLS is a good forum for connecting with other folks interested in “working landscapes” issues, including folks from both industry and NGOs. She is interested in the general topic of working landscapes (my organization is not a major CALFED interest group), not just as the approach applies to CALFED. Attending WLS gives her a forum for better understanding how people view “working landscapes,” and to gauge their commitment/interest in the approach
- Come because CALFED is an important influence on the issues that RCDs work on and affects that work of RCDs. Important venue for information for RCDs.
- WLS is a valuable forum for meeting people who are important for doing CARCD job.
- An opportunity to promote the value of RCDs to key stakeholders.
- An opportunity to help mold policy and program implementation
- First started coming to WLS for an introduction to CALFED. Also, saw it as a forum to resolve negative impacts of CALFED implementation (specifically, ERP land acquisitions) on Northern California growers and communities.
- To meet people, network and conduct business
- I was assigned to attend by my boss to ensure that our organization’s interests are represented.
- Participating in WLS gives us a chance to do more than just monitor the “goings on” of CALFED, but to participate proactively in the process; a chance to be proactive rather than reactionary.
- WLS is the only subcommittee with a tie to agriculture, which is really important. It is also a subcommittee of the ERP, which is important to him in terms of his work with SRCAF. When CALFED began, he tried to attend all the meetings and rapidly gave up. Subsequently he became selective and narrowed his interests. WLS is one that he feels art of and deals with issues he relates to, particularly the conflicts between ag and ecosystem which he has strong feelings about. It is a good subcommittee with a good group of people.
- Several reasons. Felt it was important to have someone with farming and environmental perspectives and include voice that can reasonable represent farming community and understand the environment. Is also a source of information for what is going on in CALFED.

- Originally came because Steve asked him to. Continued come because as a critic of ecosystem restoration tendencies to buy land and not do anything with it, the WLS approach needs to be integrated into ecosystem efforts.
- Feel that WLS is trying to address issues that are important to farmers and ranchers, and their partners in meeting their own restoration and maybe CALFED goals. Understand that WLS was formed to figure out how restoration affects people around them. Was interested in seeing how CALFED was looking into that and learning what they are doing to address adjacent landowner and help landowners adapt to a changing landscape, as well as assist landowners. He often hears landowners say that they are willing to undertake restoration activities, but they are often pushed into it and then held back by the hurdles (such as tech assistance, cost, permitting). It should be easier for those to participate.
- She sits on the ERP subcommittee as an alternate member. Finds WLS to be a good meeting with good information and resources on agricultural issues. She keeps her employers informed of all activities as she covers of all of CALFED.

Related observations and recommendations:

- In the first few meetings, there were 40-50 people in attendance and a lot more landowners than typically attend now.
- Meetings started getting repetitious -- and momentum lost -- around the time Ryan left.
- Hold meetings once every six months or once a quarter.

2. *In your opinion, what have been the main accomplishments or benefits of the WLS?*

- She did not see any benefits to her constituency from her participation on WLS. Neither did she see that the WLS accomplished anything of importance to her constituents.
- She commented that there was a lack of direction and opportunities for specific engagement in action that would result in improving CALFED with respect to working landscapes. Everything was too “big picture.”
- Felt Finance Plan workshop was a good thing for WLS to weigh in on, but it was offered far too late for stakeholders to have any meaningful input that would result in change. The Finance Plan workshop should have been earlier in the process.
- There were no easy opportunities to engage in a way that could influence CALFED implementation that would be beneficial for CCA members on the ground.

- A lot of good discussion about the issues pertaining to working landscapes, but not much in the way of results or action. She doesn't feel that it is very clear where the Subcommittee is going; not a tight focus. There seems to be a lot of different agendas.
- Don't know of any accomplishments, but participation has been fairly recent. Feels there is value to have committees in our professional lives that aren't action oriented, but provide a venue for big picture discussion and exchanges that then, in turn, empower individuals and organizations to independently take action.
- Information and networking is a value to him.
- That said, senses that others feel a need for leaving each meeting with a sense of specific accomplishments by the Subcommittee
- Felt that WLS provides a good forum for stakeholders to raise their issues with CALFED implementation. For her, this has provided her with good education.
- Felt that the recommendations on the wildlife friendly agriculture PSP constituted a worthwhile accomplishment and there needs to be more of this kind of work by the WLS. But, in general, she is frustrated by the lack of action-oriented agenda items.
- Main benefit has been the networking and meeting folks who are interested in similar issues relative to CALFED.
- Can't put finger on specific accomplishments (i.e., actions resulting in positive change to CALFED). There is a lot of dialogue, which is good on its own merits, but not good enough to keep coming to WLS for by itself.
- The PILT may be the beginning of something, but no accomplishments, yet.
- The PILT recommendations because addressing this issue relates to the costs of agricultural land acquisitions and conversions, a CALFED concern of ours.
- The Finance Plan presentation and comment opportunity put together by the WLS gave us a chance to ask questions and have a say in a less formal setting.
- PILT recommendations,
- Recommendation on ERP funds for \$20 million;
- Early discussion of WLS principles (probably need to go back and review these). Somewhat disappointing that we have been without another co-chair for so long. The

recent involvement of CALFED staff Jay Chamberlin has enhanced the subcommittee. That is a nexus, which needs greater involvement, and makes WLS feel part of the process.

- Don't know of anything concrete. But it does keep alive the perspective of importance of agriculture. People who work on the landscapes have a very important perspective.
- Focus on WLS is important in the CALFED process. Trying to integrate WLS concepts into ecosystem restoration is important. WLS is a good forum for the exchange of ideas.
- Have not been there long enough to say.
- Accomplishments – is a good committee for many groups that do not regularly attend others to keep informed about CALFED activities relative to their interests.
- The (WLS) brought together these groups, put together these broad plans, and exposed people to what's going on in the state relative to this issue. It's been a great way to connect with others, the list is good. There's a great foundation – a lot more could be done with this.
- The committee that drafted the PSP “framework” did a good job; that was a pretty well-written document.
- The true value of the subcommittee has been when there's a presentation of some sort, however, there is value in meeting other participants.
- Before I participated, the committee crunched through some difficult tasks... like creating the charter documents. Those seem to be the main accomplishments of the Subcommittee.
- I don't really see a lot of accomplishments. A lot of what we do is hear presentations. Once the presentations are over it's like, “OK, now what?”
- Raising the visibility of the issues: For example the in-kind, participatory benefits provided by Northern California water rights holders. It has been a valuable forum; it has been an opportunity to form the message in a focused manner.
- The best thing is getting folks together, and CALFED acknowledging wildlife friendly farming, and had a strategy to work with Ag. It is a good locus for discussing the issues/ A good forum, but it's got a ways to go.

3. In your opinion, has the WLS taken on the right issues?

- The Finance Plan was an appropriate issue if only it had been taken up earlier.
- Subcommittee's Action Plan seems to include the correct issues, but it just seems that not much progress is being made on any of them.
- She believes that the WLS recommendations on the ERP PSP was the right kind of activity for the WLS to take on, but feels that even this work is pointless if CALFED generally, and ERP, specifically, is not willing to give the WLS' work serious consideration.
- She felt that the PILT work was necessary, but is not confident that it will be given serious consideration, but is more of a therapeutic exercise.
- She doesn't get a sense that the Subcommittee has a focused purpose. While she enjoys the informational presentations, she believes that they need to be given in support of specific action that WLS is pursuing. Right now, she feels that they are rather random and do not necessarily relate to any particular initiative of the WLS.
- Yes. Of priority to him is 'how do we make the best of all of our resources' to solve resource problems. Would like to see work on getting agencies and organizations to work together with landowners and RCDs; e.g., leveraging USDA conservation dollars with state dollars and money from foundations. Need to work on things that state government shouldn't take on, but is most appropriately championed and implemented locally.
- Earlier in the life of WLS there seemed to be more of a focus, but lately the WLS seems kind of lost, caught up in detail, and lacking enough attention to the "big picture."
- Believes that there is some common ground on which landowners and CALFED can meet together on, but we seem to be stuck. One of the problems is that landowners in the Sacramento Valley don't get credit for the work they do to address some of the issues that CALFED is trying to address. Assurances should be for more than just stakeholders who are water exporters. Each CALFED project should be able to stand-alone with respect to mitigation, assurances and benefits to CALFED. Believe that ERP and WLS should be in agreement on projects before they are funded.
- Feels that WLS should be taking on user fees relative to benefits that landowners provide to CALFED. Concerned about user fees on top of DWR's benefit's assessment district for flooding.

- WLS presentations often lack any coherent connection to what WLS is working on. WLS should recognize a few key goals/action items and develop proposals for BDPAC. Any “show and tell” needs to be connected to WLS’ work on identified, high priority action items.
- Yes. Is satisfied with the issues raised in the work plan and that have been brought before the Subcommittee.
- Yes!
- From what I can see, I think WLS has taken on right issues.
- Not sure about that; some yes but not sure.
- I think the subcommittee has taken on all the relevant issues, but it has maybe focused too much on certain issues. The “mitigation” issue (in the work plan) is just one goal, but the group spent a lot of time on it. It was just discussed over and over. (It may be interesting to people in one area but not in others...) “Coordinating funding and outreach” is another goal that we haven’t done much with and where efforts could be stepped up and that may have more broad appeal across the board.
- To me the biggest issue that hasn’t been (really) addressed is “how do you do this on the ground?” People have made presentations but the questions haven’t been specific enough. The Committee’s efforts have not focused on how to enable local projects – to me, that’s the number 1 goal of the subcommittee: to create/support policies that support the on the ground work.
- It comes down to the goals of the subcommittee. Is the subcommittee trying to solve problems? ...trying to reach landowners?trying to spend money? The big issues need to get broken down into bite-sized issues. Because they’re so big, the big issues can only be discussed theoretically. The subcommittee never really discussed the “sub-goals” of the subcommittee work plan in detail.
- What are our objectives? The subcommittee functions like many “think tanks”: people have a flip chart and people talk about keeping farmland viable... If that goal is to be achieved, people need to step back a few steps. Patching together a few programs won’t do. Everyone will continue to meet and talk about all of this stuff, but...developers will continue to develop and things will pretty much continue the way they’re going. We’re sort of a gnat on the ass end of a huge dog, with the total dollars we have and the fact that every dollar is in a quagmire. Is it working towards a much bigger initiative? We need to identify “point B” Something like a major federal appropriation to save ag habitat – multi-billion dollars to secure valuable agricultural habitat. Think about the Clean Air Act or RCRA. We keep talking about doing all these things and it’s not having much effect at all.

- The mission of the subcommittee sounds pretty focused, but a lot of what comes through the committee isn't necessarily applicable to that mission. I go in there and we're talking about programs and farmland protection (not the items in the subcommittee's mission). (see "Organizational Purpose and Mission," in Working Landscapes Subcommittee Description, December 2002).
- We don't know what the questions are. We haven't determined what we want our outcomes to be. The purpose is so vaguely defined. We talk, we talk again. We don't even go through the recommendations that were made in the previous meetings (example of a discussion in December that was exactly like one that was had in September).
- How do you go from ideas to actions? It's hugely complex. You have to tackle one or two topics – and have meetings in one or two locations. (And identify someone who's responsible). How realistic is it to provide advice on all of the things in our mission? If Working Landscapes chose just one issue – if we said to BDPAC we really want to tackle water quality – then we could accomplish something. Water quality and water quantity. Look at a stretch of the river as to where it will be most impacted in the next year. There are huge misconceptions about the needs of wildlife and fish; has restoration increased or decreased water quality and quantity?
- We haven't made any recommendations to BDPAC.
- The Committee is talking about the right issues. I'd like to see it doing a lot more. Incentive-based opportunities, legal certainty and economic opportunities. To the extent that certainty exists, it allows people to look at economic opportunities. The first step (returning control of management decisions to property owners) isn't there, you could have all the incentives in the world but people won't participate. The committee's work has been so general; it's hard to get to the assurances question.

4. How well does the Subcommittee's structure work in your opinion?

- No problem with Subcommittee structure. It is not the structure of the Subcommittee that is important, but how the issues are "Tee'd-up", managed and pushed forward that matters.
- She doesn't see WLS structure as an issue. She likes the current open set-up where anyone can participate. On the other hand, she recognized the lack of continuity between WLS meetings because the cast of participants changes from meeting to meeting. She wondered if a hybrid between an appointed membership Subcommittee and the current structure was possible. She would be OK with an appointed membership as long as it was representative and meetings would continue to be run as an open forum for all who come to participate. If we were to go that direction, she

cautioned that care must be taken to maintain a balance in appointments. She added that if the Subcommittee is to move to be a more action-oriented Subcommittee versus simply a forum for discussion and ideas, then an appointed board membership would make fore sense.

- Is fine with Subcommittee structure. Works well. Likes the open feel of the meetings.
- Leans towards an appointed representative Subcommittee to secure commitment on the part of members for regular, active participation. However, likes the open nature of the existing structure.
- Need two co-chairs, including one that will actively advocate on issues of concern to landowner stakeholders.
- WLS structure works well. Sometimes it seems a little too free-wheeling, but on the flip-side likes the fact that everyone feels like they can participate on an equal footing. Also likes the informality of the Subcommittee's proceedings. Feels that the co-chair and staff go out of their way to make sure that non-agency participants have a chance to be heard.
- Probably as far as it has gone, there are other issues out there to work on, but WLS may not be there yet (with respect to ag/eco conflicts). The SRCAF is making progress in these areas. It is unfortunate that the subcommittee has become somewhat of a battleground between DFG and CFBF.
- Came in to the subcommittee when an agenda was being pursued, but there are many other important issues that it needs to take on including the notion of farmers as environmental managers where an income is earned. The delta region is serious economic trouble but there are environmental benefits being accomplished. Need market mechanism to assist farmers in that vein and assist with the transition.
- Believes the current open membership structure works well, it is one that he is not uncomfortable with (Uses it in SRCAF LAC/TAC). This approach works as long as everyone participates, if not, then it can be problematic. Need everyone there.
- If positions were appointed then he wouldn't be there. Not sure how it works with the agencies. The biggest stakeholders appear to be the agencies, Farm bureau and himself. This is a bit of a problem. However the agencies are important stakeholders. The subcommittee needs a different strategy if it wants to really engage local stakeholder participation. Like maybe have regional meetings with RCD's and then have a grand meeting once/year.

- CDFA staff did great job, not as convinced that CALFED staff are as sympathetic to WLS approach. Staff needs to be strong enough to withstand the top-down approach, (prior CF staff perceived as "bossy". Staff should not interfere with the free flow of ideas.
- All subcommittees should have an open structure.
- See an increasing need for subcommittees to merge. WLS might consider merging with WRP, see Levees SC merging with W supply and conveyance; WQ and WUE could be blended together. It is useful to try and integrate at the SC level; however they may be other ways to accomplish it too.
- See pros and cons of both systems, he likes having the environmental agencies there and thinks FWS should attend. Feels like his participation is welcome and that is satisfying. Doesn't know if ERP SC would welcome his participation.
- Mixed feelings, sees benefits to having structured membership, sees a sense of higher stature, validity when recommendations come from those committees.
- The subcommittee is a moving target. There's not (really) a committee – if you look at the list there are 100+ people, and it's difficult to work that way, you need a core group of people. The idea of having voting members could work, but the real issue is consistent membership: if there was consistent membership, you could have a consensus process. My recommendation would be having the subcommittee organize a structure and governance for itself.
- Appointed membership could sturdy up meetings. Members should review the draft agenda; ask good questions about the function of the subcommittee. There could be discrete, concrete tasks, real staff analysis. This begs the question: is the subcommittee window dressing? Is there a true desire and need for the subcommittee to be functional?
- These meetings are supposed to be citizen-based, but it's only agencies at the meetings. Normal people can't sign up and come down for these meetings in the middle of the day. We have to chose topics and have meetings in one or two locations (outside of Sacramento).
- It's hard to get people coming until people see a direct value to their participation. The drinking water subcommittee, for example – where you apply to participate – is more stakeholders based.
- A lot of what it comes down to is the scope of the projects that the committee tackles. It is a little challenging focusing on issues that it can really tackle. A lot of it comes down to issues, and a lot of those issues come down to finance.

5. What do you think of WLS meetings?

- WLS agenda structure is fine, although some agency reports seem duplicated. Sometimes agency reports seem inaccessible to non-agency people who come for the first time; the reports need to be relevant to non-agency stakeholders and presented in a way that all can understand the significance.
- No complaints about meeting time, location, duration, frequency or staff.
- She is OK with current Subcommittee meeting staff, location and process. She did comment that while she appreciated agency reports, many of them go over her head in jargon, acronym and detail. Agency reports should not assume that everyone is up-to-speed and knowledgeable about agencies and their activities.
- She felt that if the Subcommittee were to switch to a more action oriented body rather than strictly a forum for information exchange and discussion, the agenda should be focused on action items. Any presentations should be related to or support the identified actions.
- Fine, just need more WLS members who are willing to take the lead on identifying and tackling issues of relevance to stakeholders and CALFED.
- Process is fine; WLS just needs to do something. Need to spend less effort on process and more on a game plan being implemented by several smaller work groups. Forget the pomp and circumstance.
- Meetings are run well. Sometimes they feel too loose, but also like the feeling of freedom to participate. No comments on arrangements, time, format of meeting.
- Pretty well on all aspects.
- Fine, likes the informality
- Good!
- Run well, likes having info speaker each time, helps him understand what's going on and who to network with. CALFED ERP staff (JC) is very accessible. Would like to know others better too.
- Excellent meeting logistics; minutes are particularly well done.
- Minutes and follow-up are good, but agendas seem repetitive and similar. Agenda should be streamlined: some of the agency reports are interesting, but that part of the

meeting goes too long. I'm always amazed that it takes 4 hours to cover the agenda. It would be good to revisit the committee's goals and see if the format is accomplishing those goals.

- Staff relationships should be clearly defined. Staff should help with the day to day work, work with committee chairs. What is the role of the Department of Food and Agriculture? They answer to the Deputy Director of Food and Agriculture, but what's their relationship to CALFED?
- It would be nice to have the meetings elsewhere. Once a year or once a quarter, have a meeting in the Delta, San Joaquin region or Redding. We're talking about ag, but there aren't many farmers showing up.
- The discussions of the committee are mostly people getting their air time and voicing their opinions.
- It's an extremely loose setting. No one's got a gavel keeping a parliamentary setting. People begin to talk, and they keep talking until they're done. There's no-one making sure that people stay on point. The subcommittee should not allow story telling. If people can't get to the point that's useful within a couple minutes, they should be cut off.
- Compare this subcommittee with the air resources board. You know why they're meeting. With the Working Landscapes Subcommittee, I quite frankly don't know what the purpose is. If you wanted to name it as a "technical forum" I don't think it would change: you show up and learn something. It's not apparent that the committee does more than that. (Respondent 2)
- I don't see the structure. The structure we have is everybody comes, talks about things, then leaves. We need to determine what we're going to focus on for the next several months. We need a really good facilitator, need a more focused agenda, need follow up. People understand – let's start at square 30 not square 1.
- The case studies (of working lands approaches) help highlight the cultural values that farmers provide.

Related observations and recommendations:

- The Watershed Subcommittee has consistently vetted funding opportunities and has responded to opportunities. They seem to really know what's going on with funding, and PSPs. Part of that may be because the staffing of the watershed subcommittee is provided by JSA.

6. Anything else you want to say about WLS?

- Agriculture doesn't do a good job of telling its story with respect to its contributions to conservation and the environment. This is part of the reason she attended on behalf CCA. Perhaps WLS could focus on putting together a compilation of stories about how private landowners are contributing to CALFED goals both with CALFED assistance and on their own.
- Part of the challenge of WLS is that it supposed to be tackling issues that are only peripheral issues to other CALFED Program elements. Need greater buy-in to the principals of working landscapes from other programs and a willingness to work with WLS.
- Need real dialogue over next several meetings to develop a WLS action plan for the year and convey to BDPAC for buy-in via a formal letter. Would like to see a strong WLS focus on principle of "no redirected impacts" and how that is being addressed in real terms by CALFED. Would like to see a focus on the benefits that private landowners contribute to CALFED, and vice versa, the impacts of CALFED on landowners. Feels that private landowner issues are not on the radar screen with BDPAC and WLS needs to change that.
- Continues to be interested in the topic of agland conversion as it relates to CALFED, but understands the limits that the lawsuits place on discussion.
- Wants the WLS to keep abreast of, and engaged in the implementation of the finance plan and user fees.
- Wonders what WLS can do to help CALFED be more accountable on its actions and expenditures; i.e., what is CALFED actually accomplishing for the restoration of species that warrant the expenditure of \$150 million?
- Often folks bemoan lack of participation of farmers in subcommittee. He is part-time farmer and a sizable part of his income comes from farming. Part time farmers are important to the process too. The subcommittee has done pretty well really, looks forward to gaining perspectives from folks in different regions.
- Accomplishments depends on goals and objectives
- Would like to explore the concept North Delta Wildlife – why not just pay farmers?
- The issue of corporate management when management is a non-profit, concern about TNC/Staten Island. Local knowledge and history is very important.

- It is good for committee to take on contentious issues; maybe some folks thought this was a place for “yelling”. Need to move past controversial issues and acknowledge problems. But focus should be more on how to facilitate landowner participation in CF goals (and individual landowner goals). There are a lot of folks out there who are willing to be involved; but we need to figure out how to better help them. Need to focus more on “silent minority or majority depending on the county) and help them get through the process. WLS could suggest future research that should be done.
- Perhaps WLS should be more involved with the ERP SC and follow their goals more closely, how do the WLS activities support the ERP?
- The biggest thing is that there’s so much potential – but it needs to be tapped. There’s still time for this committee to have a say, but that time is now and is running short. (Respondent 1)
- My picture of the committee is so much bigger than it’s supposed to be. I was surprised that the mission of the Subcommittee was connected with CALFED. When you just show up and listen to the presenters, I think it’s about working landscapes in California. It absolutely does not focus on CALFED. It has the feel of the NRCS state technical committee.
- I’d like to think that this forum can take these issues on... I also know it’s really hard. The building is 25 stories high and somewhere between floors 5 and 6 there’s a crack in the mortar. It’s hard to get to the fix, given the enormity of the issues this committee talks about.

Related observations and recommendation:

- We have to identify the questions. Have a meeting in Willows, one in Stockton, put up a list of concerns that we hear there. Then come back to the group with some more directed suggestions.
- We really need to look at the whole process and expenditure

DISCUSSION PAPER

CALIFORNIA WORKING LANDS STEWARDSHIP ADVISORY COUNCIL November 2005

SUMMARY

The Secretaries of the California Department of Food and Agriculture and California Resources Agency recommend the creation of a “Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Council.” The purpose of the proposed Council, a statewide stakeholder body, will be to advise the Secretaries on policies that advance the protection and stewardship of California’s working farms, forests, and range lands statewide.

BACKGROUND

California has approximately 43 million acres of private farm, forest, and rangeland. Multiple state, federal, and private programs support voluntary conservation of these “working lands” through mechanisms such as conservation easements, wildlife habitat enhancements, and soil and water conservation practices. However, the state lacks a central forum to address issues and opportunities across working lands conservation programs. Several examples of existing or prior efforts to coordinate and promote private lands stewardship and conservation illustrate the need:

- The Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee’s (BDPAC) Working Landscapes Subcommittee was established in 2002 to advise BDPAC on implementing components of the CALFED Program that affect agricultural and other working lands. Its work has demonstrated the need for enhanced tools supporting voluntary protection and stewardship of working lands, but the Subcommittee is limited to the CALFED solution area, and will likely be taking a lesser role in CALFED implementation as the Program narrows its focus under current CALFED refocusing.
- The Resource Conservation Commission is authorized by the Public Resources Code to coordinate state and federal conservation programs by working locally through resource conservation districts, but has been inactive since the mid-1970’s.
- The Biodiversity Council, the State Board of Forestry, and the State Board of Food and Agriculture, among other state level councils and boards, touch upon the issue of private working lands stewardship; however, none make this issue a central focus of their work.

The Secretaries have evaluated their options to address the need for a statewide council to focus on working lands conservation issues. They recommend building on the work of the CALFED BDPAC Working Landscapes Subcommittee by creating the Working Lands Stewardship Advisory Council. Its proposed purpose and membership is summarized below.

PROPOSAL

Purpose. The purpose of the Council would be to advise the Secretaries on options to:

- Position California to garner more support from the Farm Bill to enhance the environmental and economic sustainability of its working lands;

- Advance a more cohesive state strategy for the application of policies and resources in support of the environmental and economic sustainability of California's working lands; and,
- Foster improved collaboration among local, state and federal agencies in support of the stewardship of privately owned working lands.

Membership. The proposed Council will be comprised of non-government members appointed to represent the breadth of experience in working lands conservation and stewardship in California. Membership would include both practitioners (farmers, ranchers and foresters) and partners (non-government organizations, conservationists and local government officials) with demonstrated interest and experience in reducing conflict over the management and conservation of working lands. Members will be chosen for their demonstrated knowledge, experience and vision. The Council will also have state and federal government agency members who will serve in an *ex officio* capacity. On the state side, this is proposed to include Cal-EPA. Membership would be limited to twenty-one, including the two Secretary co-chairs, three state and three federal agency members, and thirteen public stakeholder members. Other agencies and stakeholders will be invited to participate in discussions as appropriate. (*See attached proposed membership summary.*)

Products. The Council will be responsible for: (1) developing a shared position for California on the Conservation Title of the 2007 Farm Bill; (2) improving collaboration and appropriate coordination among the state and federal programs supporting working lands conservation and stewardship; (3) supporting new and enhanced conservation mechanisms (e.g., market opportunities); (4) supporting new research needed to support working lands stewardship.

Structure. Co-chaired by the two agency Secretaries, the Council will meet quarterly, with meetings open to public and agency participation. *Ad hoc* and standing committees will meet more frequently, and may seek appropriate advisors to provide expertise in developing policy options. On-going coordination with the California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee can be provided through a standing committee or through regular reporting or cross-membership as appropriate. Staffing will be provided by the California Department of Food and Agriculture and California Resources Agency.

Next steps. The Working Landscapes Subcommittee of BDPAC has provided input on the development of this proposal. The California Department of Food and Agriculture and California Resources Agency will continue to engage stakeholders and agencies in a discussion of the proposed Council. The Council is anticipated to be formed and active in early 2006.

PROPOSED WORKING LANDS STEWARDSHIP ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP (21)

Agency Ex Officio Membership – State (5)

Secretary, Food and Agriculture, Co-Chair
Secretary, Resources Agency, Co-Chair
Director, Department of Fish and Game
Director, Department of Conservation
California Environmental Protection Agency

Agency Ex Officio Membership – Federal (3)

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Public Stakeholder Membership (13)

Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners (minimum of seven)
Practitioners/professionals knowledgeable of working lands conservation
Local Government – counties, special districts, RCDs and agricultural commissioners
Environmental and conservation interests

Desired Public Membership Criteria

- Be a **recognized leader** in the conservation and environmental enhancement of working farms and ranches.
- **Represent multiple interests**, areas of expertise and stakeholder communities;
- Provide **regional representation** from across California to the extent practicable;
- Where possible, **link to key related state boards**, commissions and councils;
- **Active in respective industry** organizations or interest groups;
- Embrace a **collaborative approach** to problem-solving;
- **Are leaders** in their respective communities of interest/professions; and,
- Will be **active and engaged** in the activities of the Council.