

CALFED Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC)  
Water Quality Subcommittee Meeting  
Draft Minutes  
January 24, 2008

**Minutes** – The October 30, 2007 meeting minutes were approved without change.

**Environmental Water Quality Session**

The session was introduced by Greg Gartrell. The Water Quality Subcommittee now covers both environmental and drinking water quality and both are inextricably linked in the Delta and its watersheds. This meeting was the first in which environmental water quality topics have received much attention. Terry Macaulay presented suggested questions for the discussion to follow the presentations and introduced the speakers. Speakers and the key points of their presentations are as follows:

**Tina Swanson – Overview of Delta Water Quality Issues** (PowerPoint presentation)

**Key Points:**

- ◆ Water quality parameters can be roughly grouped into chemical and physical parameters but the system and its effects on aquatic species must be looked at holistically. Flow and temperature are especially important.
- ◆ Water quality affects organisms, ecosystems, and human uses.
- ◆ Some of what is taking place in the Delta can be thought of as “ecosystem engineering”, modification of habitat by organisms such as Corbula.
- ◆ We still have much to learn about Delta water quality but we probably know enough to prioritize the issues.

**Sam Luoma – Bioaccumulative Contaminants** (PowerPoint presentation)

**Key Points:**

- ◆ Selenium is arguably the most important of the bioaccumulative contaminants in the system. It is present in concentrations that may adversely affect important fish and wildlife species.
- ◆ Selenium in the Delta is linked to San Joaquin Valley agricultural drainage and this problem must be solved to improve conditions in the Delta.
- ◆ Mercury is still a problem for people and possibly wildlife.
- ◆ PDBEs are an emerging issue. They behave in ways similar to PCBs and other halogenated organics.

**Matt Nobriga – Fish and Water Quality Linkages** (PowerPoint presentation)

**Key Points:**

- ◆ Water quality is a fundamental characteristic of fish habitat
- ◆ Every species and sometimes life stage has different water quality requirements and preferences.
- ◆ Delta Smelt like slightly saline turbid water (except when spawning/larvae)
- ◆ Interactions and synergies among constituents matter.

## **Karen Larsen – Toxicity and Pesticides**

### Key Points:

- ◆ There has been significant aquatic toxicity in the Delta for at least 25 years. There seems to be less in recent years and the pesticides present have changed.
- ◆ The RWQCBs are addressing these problems through the Basin Plans process. A more generalized Central Valley pesticides TMDL is in progress.
- ◆ There is still a lot to learn about the linkage between the Pelagic Organism Decline (POD) and pesticides/toxicity.

## **Wim Kimmerer – Water Quality and the Foodweb** (PowerPoint presentation)

### Key Points:

- ◆ Salinity, temperature, nutrients, turbidity, organic matter, and contaminants all are linked to the foodweb.
- ◆ The Delta is light limited and not very productive.
- ◆ Delta brackish and freshwater foodwebs are fundamentally different.

## **Karen Larsen – Water Boards Delta Strategy** (PowerPoint presentation)

### Key Points:

- ◆ SWRCB, SF Bay Regional Board, and Central Valley Regional Board have formed a Delta Team.
- ◆ The SWRCB and CVRWQCB have approved a resolution to proceed with development of a Delta Strategy. SF Bay will take it up at 1/30/08 meeting.
- ◆ The resolution outlines a list of existing Water Board actions and new initiatives for the Delta.

**Discussion** – The suggested questions and notes from the discussion are attached (Attachment 1)

**Program Manager’s Report** - The program manager’s report was given by Terry Macaulay and Sam Harader. Copies of the slides were distributed.

**Central Valley Drinking Water Policy Update** - Karen Larsen gave the update. The policy work is now shifting into analysis of baseline conditions and treatment costs. There is a meeting to discuss issues related to Delta pathogen monitoring on 1/30/08. CEQA scoping meetings will begin by this coming summer.

### **Public Comment/Announcements:**

The CVRWQCB Drinking Water Policy Workgroup’s Special Pathogen meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, January 30, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the California Bay-Delta Authority, 650 Capitol Mall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Delta Room.

The California Water and Environmental Modeling Forum (CWEMF) is holding a one-day technical workshop “Overview of Delta Nutrient Water Quality Problems: Nutrient

Load – Water Quality Impact Modeling” scheduled for March 25, 2008 in the Secretary of State Building Auditorium, 1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento. The details of the workshop agenda and a list of speakers are available at <http://www.cwemf.org/workshops/NutrientLoadWrdshp.doc>. To register, please email your name and affiliation to [technicalworkshop@cwemf.org](mailto:technicalworkshop@cwemf.org). For more information you can also contact G. Fred Lee at [gfredlee@aol.com](mailto:gfredlee@aol.com).

**Action Items:**

1. Evaluate the concept of combined environmental and drinking water quality and analyze gaps.
2. Post the “Drinking Water Quality” report on the Water Quality section of the CALFED website.
3. Email the Conveyance Assessment information matrix to the subcommittee.
4. Show proposal for use of \$3.4 million program funding at the next Subcommittee meeting.
5. Revise the WQ Subcommittee membership list to include both environmental and drinking water quality interests.
6. The Water Quality Subcommittee meetings will be held quarterly. The next meeting will be at the end of April.

## Attachment 1 – Discussion Questions and Notes

1. What are environmental water quality priorities?
  - Selenium is a priority – there are current regulatory actions.
  - Mercury is also important.
  - Need measurable objectives for ecosystem needs.
  - Need better understanding of how important organic carbon is to the ecosystem.
  
2. Are there specific actions that should be taken now?
  - Look for “reversible” actions that can be taken now to improve water quality.
  - San Joaquin River Comprehensive Monitoring Plan would provide input for Water Quality Performance Measures.
  - WQ Subcommittee should consider tools (conceptual models) - DRERIP and BDCP – in analyzing conveyance alternatives.
  - Integrate DWR conveyance into BDCP and WQ program (DCC, Franks Tract, TDF, and recirculation)
  
3. Are there emerging water quality issues?
  - Need to assess ammonia impacts to Delta species.
  - Organic carbon needs discussion (Eco and DW).
  - Need to determine priority contaminants.
  - Need to study how flow and Delta hydrodynamics affect water quality.
  
4. How does the Subcommittee want to engage in the Water Board’s Strategic Plan development?
  - Perform a gap analysis between BDCP, Delta Vision, and the Water Board’s Strategic Plan.
  - Address any comments/issues/concerns from the subcommittee to the Regional and/or State Water Resources Control Board at their meetings.