

**CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Working Landscapes Subcommittee
November 7, 2002
California Department of Food and Agriculture, Room A-477
1:30 – 5:00 pm**

Draft Meeting Summary

Subcommittee web site:

<http://calfed.ca.gov/BDPAC/Subcommittees/WorkingLandscapesSubcommittee.shtml>

1. Introductions

Co-chairs Ryan Broddrick and Denny Bungarz were unable to attend the meeting. Steve Shaffer of the California Department of Food and Agriculture chaired the meeting in their absence. Self introductions were conducted.

2. Meeting summary

The summary of the October 3 meeting was reviewed and approved by consensus.

3. Chair's Report

None

4. Agency Reports

CALFED – Patrick Wright, Director of CALFED announced that with the passage of Proposition 50, activity has begun in earnest on clarifying agency allocations. Patrick also noted that the language of the bond included \$180 million for the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program, with no less than \$20 million going to assist farmers with implementing wildlife friendly agriculture. He is looking to the Working Landscapes Subcommittee for help with allocation and program integration. The Subcommittee should be working to develop its workplan and priorities for approval by the Bay Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC).

Patrick also discussed the new CALFED Bay Delta Authority. He reported that there are five regional appointees (appointees must reside in the region). He asked that ideas for candidates for the appointees be forwarded to him. The Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee will meet on December 4. Patrick also provided clarification on CALFED's position on CALFED Category A/B programs and how to improve coordination with complementary programs

The Department of Conservation (DOC) – Dennis O'Bryant reported that the Department of Conservation has finalized its agreement with CALFED for an additional year of funding for its Watershed Coordinators within the CALFED Solution Area. Patrick said that with \$90 million from Proposition 50 for watershed work, he is confident of continued funding for the program.

Delta Protection Commission (DPC) – The application for the Resource and Conservation District (RC&D) has been submitted to USDA.

Department of Food and Agriculture – Steve Shaffer reported that, on behalf of the subcommittee has submitted a Conservation Priority Area Application to USDA - Farm Services Agency for the primary zone of the Delta. This is the first step for a subsequent

application to USDA, with significant cost-share from California, for the development of a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in the Delta. Steve hopes to hear a response from USDA in the early 2003.

5. Informational Presentations – USDA NRCS Endangered Species MOU

Luana Kiger with USDA/NRCS presented background information the NRCS-led effort, initiated in 1998, to make the Endangered Species Act (ESA) more "user-friendly" for private landowners. The MOU involved the USDA/NRCS, NMFS, US FWS, US EPA, CARCD and the State of California. Once the MOU was signed, an ESA Section 7 Review of the USDA/NRCS Field Office Technical Guides (FOTG's) would be initiated. The result of the review and consultation was to be the production of an updated set of management practices that growers could voluntarily implement. Landowners would then be assured that conservation practices implemented in accordance with the standards and specifications of the FOTG's would not be deemed to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat.

According to Luana, the MOU was not signed by the USDA/NRCS because the US FWS wanted to focus primarily on larger scale conservation planning and lacked the resources to carry out this intensive local planning process. The NRCS State Conservationist for California would not sign the MOU without being able to carry it out, so the MOU was withdrawn.

Subcommittee members felt that with a new administration, there may be a new opportunity to undertake the effort again. Luana stated that there is also a need to educate the new NRCS State Conservationist about the issues involved and the need for the MOU, and that some of the original reasons for the MOU have changed. For example, the State's 231 process was not in place at the time, and it is now. In addition newer legislation has passed which deal with some of the farmer's concerns. All of these issues would need to be considered and the MOU reviewed.

Luana also said that simply conveying a copy of these minutes expressing interest would suffice. The Subcommittee voiced its support for a renewal of the effort.

When asked about successful models in other states, Luana replied that there have been similar successful efforts in Oregon, Idaho and Washington, though the issues are somewhat less complex in those states. *(While reviewing the minutes, Luana clarified that the MOU only pertains to producers who are working with NRCS. It does not establish a blanket agreement that covers other activities).*

6. Working Landscapes Subcommittee (WLS) Description

The subcommittee reviewed the recent draft of the WLS subcommittee description including the mission, vision and definition of a "working landscape". Henry Rodegerdts with the California Farm Bureau felt that the definition needed to focus more fundamentally on a working landscape as a viable agriculture operation. He stressed that when one talks about a working landscape, it should be clear that the landscape infers a dynamic working agricultural operation. Others felt that the vision was not

weighted toward the ecological aspect of WLS at the expense of an economic agricultural operation. The subcommittee spent a good portion of time reviewing and revising these aspects of the description.

Dennis also noted that the Potential Performance measures section of the document could be improved to focus more on outcomes and less on output. Subcommittee staff will revise this area in the next draft using examples provided by Dennis.

As the subcommittee discussed its vision for the future, the following concepts and ideas were suggested:

- A WLS has intrinsic value as a part of all CALFED solutions
- Enhanced environment through agricultural practices
- WLS should result in a decrease in the number of listed species
- With improved regulatory processes, private land stewardship, rather than public ownership, results in greater ecological health
- Maintain the maximum amount of agricultural lands
- CALFED meets its goals and agriculture is stronger
- Healthy agricultural economy and improved environmental performance
- Multiple products are produced with multiple benefits
- Flexibility is preserved for future as conditions change
- Through incentives and assurances, agriculture will want to participate in meeting CALFED objectives

In terms of the subcommittee: its vision is to solve problems and facilitate CALFED meeting its goals and objectives through the willing participation of landowners and operators

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the CALFED Working Landscapes Subcommittee was set for Thursday, December 5, 1:30 – 5:00 P.M. A final date, time and location will be announced by e-mail and posted on the CALFED Working Landscapes Subcommittee website.

9. Public Comment

No public comments were received.