

**CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Working Landscapes Subcommittee
March 6, 2003
California Department of Food and Agriculture, Room 102
1:00 – 4:00 pm**

Draft Meeting Summary

Subcommittee web site:

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

1. Introductions

Introductions were made. The meeting summary for the February 6, 2003 meeting was approved without changes.

2. Co-Chairs Report

Denny Bungarz, co-chair of the subcommittee announced that fellow co-chair Ryan Brodrick would be unable to attend the meeting. Bungarz also announced that the next Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee (BDPAC) meeting will be in Chico on March 25 and 26, 2003. A tour will take place on the 26th. The meetings are open to the public.

The draft framework developed by the Subcommittee at its prior meeting is under review by the co-chairs. Brodrick and Bungarz will submit their comments to the Subcommittee. The co-chairs believe the framework should be reviewed by three other BDPAC Subcommittees (Ecosystem Restoration, Delta Levees and Habitat, and Drinking Water) before going to BDPAC for review and possible adoption. By having other subcommittees review the framework, they hope to resolve potential issues before it is taken to BDPAC. The co-chairs will report to BDPAC on the Subcommittee's efforts to develop the framework.

The Subcommittee Description that was finalized in December 2002 will be forwarded to BDPAC for review and adoption.

3. Agency Reports

California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA)

Dan Castleberry provided an update on the California Bay Delta Authority. The Authority is moving to new offices in April, they will be located at 650 Capitol Mall on the 5th floor. Aside from Marc Holmes with the Bay Institute, no additional members have been named to the Authority.

CA Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) CDFA is continuing its conversations with landowners and agencies regarding the development of a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in the Delta.

Dan Ray questioned the overall purpose of the CREP since the program sets aside lands for habitat improvement. Shaffer said that it is an opportunity for farmers to develop habitat on marginal lands where receiving an economic return is problematic; however the payment must be sufficient for growers to participate.

Shaffer also introduced two new members of his staff, Pat Akers and Syed Khassimuddin. Pat will assist in the implementation of the Ecosystem Restoration Program and the development of

the Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan. Syed Khassimuddin will assist with the Drinking Water and Water Use Efficiency Programs.

CA Department of Conservation. No reports were offered.

CA Department of Fish and Game (DFG). No reports were offered

CA Delta Protection Commission (DPC) Margit Aramburu reported that DPC's application to USDA for the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is still under review. The good news is that the Federal Budget has been approved with the authorizations for the RC&D program.

4. American Farmland Trust Sacramento San Joaquin River Delta Agricultural Viability Project

John McCaull, California Regional Director of American Farmland Trust (AFT) presented an update on their efforts to conduct a research and planning effort in the Sacramento - San Joaquin River Delta to evaluate the long term viability of agriculture in that region. In partnership with the Delta Protection Commission, the project's goals include:

- Limit the loss of productive agricultural lands
- Develop a strategy to promote economic stability and viability for Delta farmers
- Develop recommendations, funding mechanism and demonstration projects for promoting private land stewardship in the Delta.

AFT is establishing baseline information and creating an agricultural profile of the region. They are also working with the agricultural community, local land trusts and public agencies on strategies and criteria for the protection of agricultural land, as well as improving existing maps of lands protected by easements or fee title. For more information on the project, contact McCaull at (530) 753-1073.

McCaull clarified that AFT will not be doing the projects, but will partner with other organizations to deliver conservation funds to the Delta. Margit Aramburu invited members of the subcommittee to become involved in the review of the project.

Dan Ray, CBDA asked how they could factor levee maintenance into their viability evaluation since loss of agricultural lands in the past has been due to levee failure. McCaull replied that(*Help, I was gone here...*)

5. Private Land Stewardship Project

Ben Wallace with the California Wilderness Coalition provided an update on the Private Land Stewardship Project. This effort has a number of organizations working together, including California Association of Resource Conservation Districts and California Futures Network, to promote the viability of agriculture and the viability of species to deliver mutual benefits and make good conservation profitable. To date, 13 organizations have signed on to the project's objectives.

Wallace also reported that the project is working on bringing the Conservation Security Program of the 2002 Farm Bill to California. This new Program is an entitlement program with open eligibility; however it is capped at \$3.7 billion over the 10-year life of the Farm Bill. It is a new approach and is still under development. USDA/NRCS has released an Advanced Notice of

Proposed Rulemaking with 15 questions designed to shape the development of the program. (Casey Walsh Cady with CDFA will inform the Subcommittee participants on where they can review the notice and provide their comments. The deadline for receiving comments was originally March 20, 2003 but was extended to April 3, 2003). It was also noted that comments on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are due on March 20, 2003. Dave Smith with DFG and Jeff Goebel, USDA NRCS both commented on the need for investment in direct technical assistance. There is concern about the ability of California NRCS having the infrastructure in place to deliver CSP with existing staff resources. Wallace reminded the members of the significant negative disparity in the amount of Farm Bill funds that come to California versus the significance of California agriculture. There is also the potential to use California's significant investments in conservation to attract a larger net share of federal funds. The Partnership is working on developing a roadmap to accomplish this.

Wallace also mentioned that the 2002 Farm Bill included another new program called Partnerships in Cooperation. This program may potentially for leveraging coordinated conservation delivery of funds. It is being modeled after the CREP program and could draw upon any of the other Farm Bill programs or inter-mix programs with easements, to provide a flexible program adapted to regional/local needs. The rules for this program have not been released yet.

6. CALFED Working Landscapes Subcommittee Draft Workplan

Cady distributed a draft workplan prepared by staff along with revisions suggested by a few of the Subcommittee members. This is an effort that the Subcommittee will prepare and then provide as recommendations to BDPAC. The effort to date includes three goals and a number of actions. The three goals have been previously approved by the Subcommittee and have been adopted by BDPAC.

Steve Shaffer directed interested Subcommittee participants to form work groups to flesh out the workplan in greater detail and prioritize action items. Some members felt that this could be handled via e-mail instead of meeting face-to-face. A number of people volunteered to be in the small groups. Cady will send out a message to the larger list to solicit greater involvement from those who were not present today. (Appendix 1 includes a list of the small groups and their members).

It was agreed that there will be no meeting of the subcommittee in April, giving participants a chance to work on the action plan instead. The Subcommittee will meet on May 1 to review the efforts to date on the action plan.

Shaffer commented that this effort is complimentary to another planning effort under way in the CBDA. CDFA has been tasked with preparing 2 planning documents including a workplan for next year and a workplan for the end of Stage 1 (years 5-7). This initial draft is due to the Authority on March 26. CDFA will provide the document to the Subcommittee participants for review

7. Public Comment

Vance Russell, of Audubon California, will host a field tour of their on-farm efforts in the Willow Slough watershed where they working with farmers and ranchers to design and implement conservation projects on their properties. Russell requested RSVP's by March 18.

8. Next Meeting

Bungarz announced that the next Subcommittee meeting would be on Thursday, May 1 at 1:00 P.M., location to be determined. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 P.M.

Appendix 1 –CALFED Working Landscapes Action Plan Contact List

GOAL I Support locally based collaborative initiatives that provide opportunities for working landscapes to assist CALFED in meeting its program objectives.

Beale, Chris
CALFED - Resources Law Group

Burkholder, Brad
Department of Fish and Game

Cady, Casey Walsh (CDFA LEAD)
Department of Food & Agriculture

Geyer, Bill
Resources Landowners

Neale, Bob
Sustainable Conservation

Russell, Vance
Audubon California

Smith, Dave
Department of Fish and Game

Wallace, Ben
California Wilderness Coalition

Zezulak, David S.
Department of Fish & Game

GOAL II - Minimize and mitigate adverse CALFED project impacts on agricultural resources consistent with commitments in the Record of Decision.

Aramburu, Margit
Delta Protection Committee

Beale, Chris
CALFED - Resources Law Group

Blakeslee, Jeannie
Department of Conservation

Burkholder, Brad
Department of Fish and Game

Cannon, Tina R.
California Dept. of Fish & Game

Delfino, Kim
Defenders of Wildlife

Hodgkins, F.I. "Butch"
Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency

Hogan, Phil
NRCS-Yolo County DC

Lucas, Ronda
California Farm Bureau

O'Bryant, Dennis
Department of Conservation

Trott, Ken (CDFA LEAD)
Department of Food & Agriculture
(916) 651-9445

Wehri, Tom
CARCD

Zeulak, David S.
Department of Fish & Game

GOAL III - Coordinate funding and outreach to support a working landscape approach to meeting CALFED program objectives.

Akers, Pat (CDFA LEAD)
Department of Food & Agriculture
(916) 657-9449

Kiger, Luana
USDA - NRCS

McCauil, John
American Farmland Trust

Wallace, Ben
California Wilderness Coalition

Wehri, Tom
CARCD