

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.