



# Responses to Questions from Meetings #1

*All responses are considered preliminary as we plan to adjust the planning efforts according to the needs and feedback from all CVFMP engagement venues, including forums, work groups, interest groups, briefings, and public comments.*

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### 1. Understanding of the legacy and scope of the system

Many work group members requested the legacy of the flood control system to be clearly stated in the Regional Conditions Summary Report because the history of development is highly relevant in discussing intended use and adequacy. Also work group members in the Lower Sacramento Region highlighted the importance to clearly identify the facilities within the State Plan of Flood Control in order to clearly delineate the potential liability and responsibilities.

We agreed with the importance of the understanding of the legacy of the flood control system and the potential liability of the State. As mentioned in Meeting #1, we are in the process of developing the State Plan of Flood Control Descriptive Document and the Flood Control System Status Report. Both documents are to be used as companion documents with the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP).

The State Plan of Flood Control Descriptive Document will include the inventory of current facilities of the State Plan of Flood Control. We anticipate that we will be able to share a preliminary working draft of this document with the work group members in October. As part of the Flood Control System Status Report, we are also preparing a history document of the flood control system. Similarly, we will share a preliminary draft document with the work group members when it is available.

### 2. Participation of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) is a critical partner in the CVFPP development because of their authority in flood protection. COE representatives were present in the meetings of Lower San Joaquin and Lower Sacramento Regional Work Groups; however, other work groups expressed concerns over absence of a COE representative.

Congress has appropriated funding for COE to initiate a watershed study, the Central Valley Integrated Flood Management Study (CVIFMS), as a companion study of CVFPP. DWR and Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) are expected to be local cost-sharing partners for COE in CVIFMS; the cost-sharing agreement is on the agenda of August 28 CVFPB meeting. It is anticipated that COE participation will be more consistent with a signed agreement.

We plan to use the CVFPP to develop as many joint products to satisfy the need of CVIFMS, as the main strategy to provide local cost-share for the study and to promote

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consistency in information used in these two studies. The CVIFMS fact sheet is included in the information distributed for Meeting #2.

### **3. Need for environmental documentation**

Many asked about the environmental documentation for the CVFPP. DWR has not determined the adequate level of environmental compliance for the CVFPP. However, DWR counsel has suggested that the first version of the CVFPP would not require an environmental documentation for CEQA compliance because the 2012 CVFPP would not have specific recommendations that could lead to direct implementation without more detailed site specific study. However, it is possible that the Central Valley Flood Protection Board may need to prepare a CEQA document for adopting the 2012 CVFPP.

The counsels of DWR, CVFPB, and COE plan to meet in the next month to discuss and decide the required level of environmental compliance. The reason for including COE counsel in the discussion is to promote coordination with the CVIFMS, the companion study of CVFPP. We will report back to the work group once we have any update on this topic.

### **4. Concerns over the agricultural communities being overshadowed by the need for urban protection**

Many work group members expressed concerns over decision making based purely on quantitative benefit cost analysis that could favor urban protection. We recognize that agricultural and rural communities are an integral part of the Central Valley and we want to identify thoroughly the problems, opportunities, goals and objectives for them in the Regional Conditions Summary Report. As we begin to identify and evaluate potential solutions later in the CVFPP process, we will discuss and evaluate different strategies for benefit cost consideration, appropriate levels of protection, and viable actions to help sustain legacy towns.

Based on the input from agricultural interests, we are formulating focused group discussion on agricultural stewardship scoping. Separately, we are formulating an interim erosion and levee repair cost share program that can directly benefit the protection of agricultural and rural communities.

Based on the request of agricultural communities, we are formulating a strategy to develop scoping efforts for agricultural stewardship for consideration in the 2012 CVFPP. One possibility is to form another work group, and an alternative is to gather

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agricultural representatives from various work groups and invite additional people with expertise related to agricultural stewardship to form a Regional Workgroup subcommittee to develop the recommended scope for agricultural stewardship in the CVFPP.

### 5. Planning area and regional boundaries

A planning area is the geographic area taken into consideration when formulating a plan. The CVFPP planning area is the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley, which is defined in Government Code Section 65007 as the following.

*“Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley” means any lands in the bed or along or near the banks of the Sacramento River or San Joaquin River, or any of their tributaries or connected therewith, or upon any land adjacent thereto, or within any of the overflow basins thereof, or upon any land susceptible to overflow therefrom. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley does not include lands lying within the Tulare Lake basin, including the Kings River.*

There are several questions associated with regional boundaries.

- The southern boundary of the Central Valley, excluding the Tulare Lake Basin and Kings River (as the legislation defines): The question was raised whether the Fresno metropolitan area is excluded from the planning area of CVFPP.
- The northern boundary of the Upper San Joaquin Region: Currently, the Merced River is used as the boundary; the Upper San Joaquin Work Group requested a revision of boundary based on watershed delineation.
- The western boundary of the Lower San Joaquin Region and of the Lower Sacramento Region: Several work groups requested the inclusion of the entire legal Delta in the planning area by re-examining the identified confluence point of the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River.
- The northern boundary of the Lower Sacramento Region: The Lower Sacramento Work Group requested re-examination of which region to place the Cache Creek Basin. Currently, Clear Lake and the area upstream of the Cache Creek Basin are in the Upper Sacramento Region.

The five regions were formed to help organize and facilitate discussions and gather information for CVFPP development. We have reviewed the current regional boundaries based on changes suggested by the work groups. Therefore, we propose a

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new approach to delineate the planning area and associated regions based on the Watershed Boundary Dataset (WBD) from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The WBD was developed in compliance with the Federal Guidelines, Requirements, and Procedures for the National Watershed Boundary Dataset (U.S. Geological Survey Techniques and Methods 11–A3, 2009). The WBD defines hydrologic units (the aerial extent of surface water drainage to a point) in 6 levels: region, subregion, basin, subbasin, watershed, and subwatershed. The available subwatershed information is beneficial to the delineation of CVFPP study boundary and regional boundaries, especially in areas with relatively flat topography.

Based on the WBD, the planning area (Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley) and associated regional boundaries were redefined. That is, subwatersheds were grouped together and merged by watersheds defined in the work group boundary descriptions. Several changes included in this delineation:

- The southern boundary of the planning area is defined by the boundaries of subwatersheds that drain into Fresno Slough, then to San Joaquin River. The WBD allows a more refined delineation of this boundary. A similar concept was used to include the subwatersheds on the west side of the valley.
- The entire Merced River basin is included in the Upper San Joaquin Region.
- The boundaries of the Upper Sacramento Region were redefined at northeast and southwest corners to better conform to the watershed delineation.
- The entire Cache Creek Basin is included in the Lower Sacramento Region.
- The only deviation from the NRCS data occurs at the western extreme of the Delta Region, which is shared by Lower Sacramento and Lower San Joaquin Regions. The watershed delineation would leave a small area of the Legal Delta out of the planning area and work group regions. The Delta is a critical area for the CVFPP and other Delta-centered programs, and projects often use the Legal Delta as the boundary. To avoid unnecessary confusion, we included the entire Legal Delta in the planning area and Delta Region. The inclusion of the western extreme of the Delta Region does not imply extension of CVFPP planning area into the Suisun Marsh area.

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With these changes, the delineation of planning area and regions are based on certified watershed information endorsed by federal and state agencies and users on a national level. A display map is provided in Work Group Meeting #2 for member review. We plan to finalize the boundary delineation after Meeting #2.

**Supplemental Information:** Additional background on WBD is provided below for your information.

In the last decade, NRCS worked with other federal and state agencies and with the Subcommittee on Spatial Water Data of the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) to establish a federal interagency standard covering mapping and delineation of hydrologic units that would be suitable for all agencies. The database is the WBD. The members of the subcommittee include representatives from the American Society of Civil Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service, National States Geographic Information Council, NRCS, Texas Water Development Board, COE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The goals for the WBD effort are to create a nationally consistent, seamless, and hierarchical hydrologic unit dataset based on topographic and hydrologic features across the country, and to provide more detailed delineation (watershed and subwatershed) in a digital format that is consistent with other national seamless databases. The georeferenced data and associated attributes were created in accordance with the *Federal Guidelines, Requirements, and Procedures for the National Watershed Boundary Dataset* (USGS and USDA, 2009).

A hydrologic unit defines the aerial extent of surface water drainage to a point. The WBD-defined hydrologic units establish a baseline drainage boundary framework, accounting for all land and surface areas, determined solely upon science-based hydrologic principles, not favoring any administrative or special projects nor particular program or agency. At a minimum, the hydrologic units are delineated and georeferenced to the USGS 1:24,000 scale topographic base map meeting National Standards for Spatial Data Accuracy (NSSDA), and integrated with both the USGS National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) and the National Elevation Dataset (NED).

In WBD, the hydrologic units in the nation were delineated in 6 levels: region, subregion, basin, subbasin, watershed, and subwatershed. A system of 2, 4, 6,

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8, 10, and 12-digit codes are used to assign a unique identifier for each unit. Prior to the WBD, the hydrologic units were only delineated to subbasin level, which is often reported by USGS as cataloging unit.

The State of California also contributed to the development of the WBD, and the information was developed as a collaboration among DWR, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the California Department of Fish and Game, the State Water Resources Control Board, the U.S. Forest Service, USGS, USEPA, NRCS, the U.S. Department of the Interior (including Bureau of Reclamation, and the Bureau of Land Management). The California watershed boundary data has received a full certification by NRCS for inclusion in the WBD in December 2008. The dataset is archived at the NRCS's National Cartography and Geospatial Center, and can be downloaded from the USDA's Natural Resources Geospatial Data Gateway via <http://datagateway.nrcs.gov/>. The data is also distributed through the California Spatial Information Library (CaSIL) via <http://www.atlas.ca.gov/download.html>.

### **6. Access to the reference collection**

Many work group members complemented the reference list presented in Meeting #1, and recommended DWR establish a repository for these references. DWR considered this service will provide great benefits for the community, and thus agreed to do so. We will report back to the work group for additional details about the Web-based repository as it develops.

When launched, DWR does not endorse all documents in the list except those prepared by DWR. When possible, a Web link will be provided to access the document as it may be originally posted.

### **7. Access to the work group member list**

Many work groups requested a member roster for all work groups. We will ask all work groups in Meeting #2 for their approval for posting their information, including the name, organization, organization represented, and professional contact information. Upon approval, we plan to include the member information on the CVFMP Web site under their corresponding work group heading in the Meeting Materials section. The Delta Work Group has provided their approval in the Meeting #1.

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### 8. Environmental justice and tribal representation

Some work group members expressed concerns over the representation in work groups for environmental justice and tribes.

We are aware of the importance of these two areas in our planning effort. We do have representatives from economically disadvantaged communities such as the City of Firebaugh. We have one tribal representative in the Environmental Stewardship Scope Definition Work Group. We will engage economically disadvantaged communities and tribal communication through Barbara Cross, DWR Government and Community Liaison. If you have any specific concerns, please let any of us know or you can contact Barbara Cross at [bcross@water.ca.gov](mailto:bcross@water.ca.gov).

### 9. CVFPP period of analysis

The Lower San Joaquin Work Group asked about the period of analysis for the CVFPP.

For CVFPP, the period of analysis is set approximately 40 years to 2050 although certain facilities would last beyond 2050. This period of analysis would allow the development of a long-term vision for flood management in the Central Valley, sufficient time for adoption and subsequent actions, and the proper incorporation of climate change effects as mandated by legislation.

Several considerations have been incorporated in this determination. The length of the period of analysis is often associated with economic analysis as part of a planning study, especially when investment planning for facility construction and modification is involved. Projections for plan development become extremely speculative beyond 2050. Furthermore, the amortized benefit and cost information becomes relatively insensitive to the length of the planning period beyond 30 years. However, a period of at least 40 years is important to consider climate change effects.

### 10. Dialogues between Regional Work Groups

Many work groups asked for opportunities to have direct dialog with adjacent regions. Therefore, we plan to facilitate four joint meetings in the later part of the regional work group sessions: (1) Lower and Upper San Joaquin Regions, (2) Lower and Upper Sacramento Regions, (3) Lower Sacramento and Delta Regions, and (4) Lower San Joaquin and Delta Regions. However, these joint meetings will require some adjustments of previously scheduled meeting dates. We will discuss these in Meeting #2.

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We also plan to have two valley-wide forums (one in Sacramento Valley, and another in San Joaquin Valley) in early December to allow additional communication among regions, and to collaborate with other interested parties and the public. We will provide additional information in future meetings when more details are available.

### 11. Compliance requirements of local jurisdiction

Many work group members requested additional clarification on compliance requirements of local jurisdiction after the CVFPP is adopted. While the members understood that the CVFPP is not a feasibility-level study, they were also wondering how local jurisdictions could revise their general plan to include information consistent with the CVFPP without more details on what the CVFPP will recommend.

For the 2012 CVFPP, the outcomes of the study are likely several potential solution sets to improve integrated flood management in the Central Valley, rather than one final solution. Additional refinements are expected in the subsequent update, while some implementation actions will begin during and after the 2012 plan development and subsequent update. Regardless of the level of details in the final 2012 plan, we plan to include a set of guidelines for local compliance requirements. Based on the guidelines, the local jurisdiction will have specific criteria to prepare the necessary materials to demonstrate compliance.

DWR is also preparing a user guide for local jurisdictions to assist their understanding of the responsibilities and requirements in relation to the law and regulation changes due to the 2007 flood management legislation. The public draft is scheduled in late November 2009. If possible, we will use sections for work group review and reference prior to that. In addition, we plan to have the draft available in the public regional forums scheduled in early December 2009.

### 12. Differences between the CVFPP and the Comprehensive Study

Many work group members have questioned how the CVFPP will be different from the Comprehensive Study, which ended prematurely despite a large investment of time and money.

Although it ended prematurely, the Comp Study generated a significant amount of information that we can use today, and provided good references in improving our approach to develop the CVFPP. There are several differences between CVFPP and Comp Study:

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- The 2007 package of flood management legislation provides the State a much clearer direction in preparing the CVFPP in terms of scope and requirements.
- The voter-approved Propositions 1E and 84 demonstrated broad public support for flood management improvement and planning, and more importantly, they provide funding for plan development and implementation.
- We have taken a different approach to develop the CVFPP based on experience from the Comp Study and other processes of a similar scale. The CVFPP approach includes the following features:
  - We are focusing on promoting broad understanding of different perspectives on problems, opportunities, goals and objectives in integrated flood management, rather than a primarily quantitative modeling study.
  - We are including the Delta explicitly in our planning area for plan development.
  - We are encouraging collaboration and engagement from the beginning to invite interested parties into the planning process. That is why we are here.

We feel that we have a much better chance of success with these differences, resulting in an engagement strategy to develop a broadly supported CVFPP.

### **13. Coordination with BDCP and other Delta activities**

Many work group members requested clarification on how DWR is coordinating the CVFPP, with the Bay Delta Conservation Program (BDCP), and other Delta activities.

DWR has assigned Steve Bradley as FloodSAFE executive coordinator for the Delta, signifying the keen awareness of the needs in coordinating all DWR activities in the Delta including CVFPP and BDCP. The BDCP environmental review requires sufficient impact analysis for BDCP (including facilities and resources management plan), including evaluations of potential flood impacts. The members in the Delta Work Group requested a written confirmation from Director Snow and Secretary Chrisman to acknowledge that the input to the Regional Conditions Summary Report will be used in the other related planning processes. Based on this request, conversations with DWR Executive Managers about how DWR can improve coordination among the several



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major efforts in the Delta are underway and we will provide an update as soon as possible.

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