

The following is a summary of the comments and questions asked, along with the answers given at the Galt landowner meeting hosted by the Department of Water Resources on August 12, 2008

Q: The predominant land use in the Delta is agriculture. Is agriculture represented on the conservation plan steering committee?

A: The State Farm Bureau is on the steering committee, which is a group of people that will be regulating actions in the Delta or who volunteered to be on the steering committee. When we had the initial meetings in Stockton, organizations had an opportunity to be a part of the process and opted not to be at the time. It is a voluntary process.

Q: Nobody in my district in Clarksburg heard that this process was about to take place.

A: One of the reasons we are down here is to try to do better at outreach. The Secretary of Resources will be conducting meetings with local electeds on a monthly basis to make sure that local voices are heard throughout this process.

Q: Is there anything in the historical records about the effects of the 1906 earthquake in the Delta area?

A: We do have the Delta Risk Management Study that has been going on for the last couple of years, and I'm pretty sure that they have looked at this. In 1906 the Delta was a different place. There was some reclamation going on; a lot of the Delta levees were not built yet and the ones that were there didn't have near the pressure they have today. When we look at the maps in terms of risk, it is mostly the western Delta islands and as you get further to the east the seismic risk lessens.

You take the historic record as a starting point and you look at the effects from the various faults and translate those out to the various areas of the Delta. So that entire area has been looked at from the context of the historic record of earthquakes going as far back as we can from the data we have. That information is what was used in this study.

Q: What are the probability percentages that the endangered and threatened species will survive if the conveyance and habitat plans are implemented?

A: The data available is from the PPIC report. If you create a canal then you improve the chances for endangered and threatened species and if you stop all exports and do massive restoration the chances for survival go up. The PPIC is a report by scientists on what could happen with all of the factors to consider.

Q: We're two years into this process now and I find it interesting that you are just starting to hold public meetings. Why haven't you talked to us long before tonight?

A: We are being criticized now for starting the environmental review process because we don't have a plan yet. But we wanted to start engaging stakeholders as early as possible. It is a tough call to determine when to bring in the public into the process. We also didn't have anything to talk about until we got something done in terms of what we might want to do as far as conveyance.

Q: I was at the Delta Town Hall in Walnut Grove and at that time we were told if we had questions that the answers would be on the website. Where are the answers going to appear from this meeting?

A: The questions and answers to the Town Hall meetings are currently on the DWR website and the answers to this meeting will be posted there as well, under Delta Initiatives.

Q: How do you decide what types of studies to conduct?

A: This is the starting point for collecting that information. We look at other studies that have been conducted to determine where data gaps exist. We are asking for temporary entry permits so that we can go out and do these studies.

Q: How do you know that this is the place where the canal will be?

A: This is a preliminary idea of where the canal could be located. However, we need to do these studies to know what is on the ground. The study area may be expanded depending upon what we find.

Q: When you decide what you're going to be looking for and where on the ground you will be looking, how do you know where to look for it? Whose views about what is actually out there are you following besides aerial photographs and things like that?

A: There's a study area that has been identified. At this point in time this is where we are starting the process of the data collection. We have people who are trained in this field and people that do levee work all the time. A lot of the data that we have about fish is collected by work that we have funded with the Department of Fish and Game and our own biologists. We use that information to help guide us to do the kind of work and field surveys we do.

Q: When you talk to the people who own the land and they reveal things to you that might jeopardize some operations on their property, are they going to have liability? Is the information going to be kept confidential?

A: The information that is gathered will be put into the California Natural Diversity Database, which shows information on a quad map and does not show information at the parcel level. The public does not have access to that information. We do have to disclose finding endangered species. However, what you're going to see reported is very general. If through these surveys we identify an endangered or threatened species on your property, your ongoing operations would not be effected by that discovery. The environmental document will indicate that endangered species are there. As long as your ongoing operations have been there, it is not going to have any effect on those operations. We have coordinated this with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish & Game.