bdcpcomments

From: Charles [sushibar@excite.com] **Sent:** Sat 5/9/2009 5:24 PM
To: bdcpcomments
Cc:
Subject: in re BDCP (Please strike Peripheral Canal from proposal! Just say no to So-Cal aquagreed! Remember Lake Owens!)
Attachments: Bay_Delta_Conservation_Plan_Comment.doc(66KB)

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Thank you for the opportunity, here this day, to provide Comment on this matter of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). Now, it has recently come to my attention that an elaborate plan intended, ultimately, to plunder Northern California of her water to such an extent as has not been seen since the plunder of Lake Owens at the hands of the Los Angeles Dept. of Water & Power (LADWP), under the leadership of William Mullholland, working hand in hand with Frederick Eaton, was being cleverly cloaked in the inclusion of it in a conservation initiative, the stated purpose of which was to preserve the Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta against eventual calamity. And when this information came to my attention, I set about the task of enquiry into the matter. Researching claims made & collecting some documents for purposes of more thorough review, I went about the business of ascertaining whether the information earlier received be truth or fiction. What I eventually found did give rise to quite some concern.

Indeed there is a plan intended, ultimately, to plunder Northern California of her water to indeed quite an alarming extent, as I will show in the remainder of this Comment. But before I go on here, I must herenow pose the following question, “Cannot any threatened species listed for protection under the Federal ESA & / or under the California ESA by properly protected without bringing about the likely wholesale decimation of agriculture & ecosystems north & upstream of the Delta AND without imposing great hardship on agricultural & non-agricultural end-users north & upstream of the Delta?” Of course! But that is manifestly not the purpose of the BDCP, as this Comment clearly shows. Another question, “Cannot the Delta & Estuary ecosystems be properly protected without bringing about the decimation of ecosystems north & upstream of the Delta AND without imposing great hardship on agricultural & non-agricultural end-users north & upstream of the Delta?” Of course! But that is manifestly not the purpose of the BDCP, as this Comment clearly shows.

Now, looking at the Delta Vision website, et al, I found the phrase "Peripheral Canal" to have mysteriously disappeared somehow from any official discussion. Instead, what is found is a cavalcade of glowing rhetoric extolling the alleged virtues of the so-called Delta Vision, rhetoric that is almost quasi-messianic in tone. Much effort at review of the documents collected was required before the first mention of any kind of peripheral canal was found, at all. Of course, the exact phrase "Peripheral Canal" appears nowhere in the official discussion. Rather, terms such as "conveyance," "dual conveyance," & "Delta Fix" are used. Only such descriptions as are light on detail are to be found anywhere inside the avalanche of propaganda favorable to the promoters of the idea of a Peripheral Canal, there at the Delta Vision website. And that was not the only such propaganda-laden webpage.

Eventually, I came across the U.S.F.W.S. announcement of a certain comment submission deadline in re the BDCP. It came in the form of pg.s 7257 - 7260 of the Federal Register / Vol. 74, No. 29 / Friday February 13, 2009 / Notices.

The language thereof, though significantly more sober, in tone, than any portion of the Delta Vision webpage, nevertheless is more favorable to the Peripheral Canal than not. It is manifestly designed to lead the reader of it to deduce that in order to preserve the environment in one part of the State, one must agree to the likely ecological decimation of parts north & upstream of the area in question. Remember Lake Owens!

Thereafter I came upon the BDCP webpage. It was at this point that I hoped to finally get to the proverbial heart of the matter. I was rather disappointed upon the finding of there only being a small percentage of the chapters of the actual BDCP Draft Scoping Plan posted to the website. Most of the rest of what was there consisted largely of what can only, ultimately, be described as so much propaganda. So I examined what I could, to the end that I might have a more accurate picture of the situation. Some of what I found in portions of Ch. 3 of the Draft Scoping Plan certainly gave rise to quite some concern.

For instance, there is that which is identified as the "Major Plan Element." It calls for, inter alia, "[...] new water diversion facilities [to] be designed, constructed, & operated[.]" Further on therein 'tis said, "An isolated canal facility [...] to convey water from the new diversion facilities to the South Delta[.]" At twenty-seven lines of text thence, "Various isolated canal facility routes are under consideration including routes on the east & west sides of the Delta." And at three lines thence, "The isolated canal

facility would include above & below ground portions and would connect to the existing South Delta SWP & CVP facilities[.]"

On pg. 3-10, ln.s 13-15, "Completion of North Delta diversion facilities, the isolated canal facility, and associated project components would mark the beginning of the long-term implementation period of the BDCP." Behold the Peripheral Canal. Yikes! And according to the above citation, without the Peripheral Canal, there is essentially no BDCP. God forbid! Indeed, 'tis quite telling. Isn't it? Essentially what is being admitted to is that the BDCP is really nothing more than an elaborate smoke screen designed to obscure the real purpose & intent of the whole bloody enterprise.

And it's now being done in the name of protecting those species listed as endangered & / or threatened under both the Federal ESA & the California ESA. But is there substance to all the messianic promises being made in this attempt to set parts of Northern California well on their way to each potentially becoming another Lake Owens, for all practical intents & purposes? Well, there are certainly a great deal of promises & propaganda, but that certainly doesn't prove much. Couple that with the following admission of anticipated inefficacy of the proposed Peripheral Canal from pg. 3-8, "[T]he population level response of covered species to this parameter is uncertain[.]" Now, non-flow factors are there cited as reasons, but, be that as it may, 'tis apparent that the authors of the Draft Scoping Plan simply can't bring themselves to admit that the stated purpose of the Peripheral Canal may never be thereby fulfilled. Let's list a few factors: food limitation, invasive species, discharges of contaminants, temperature trends, etc. Again from pg. 3-8, "Even if construction & operation of North Delta facilities completely eliminates negative effects to covered species [...], other stressors may ultimately result in failure of these species to recover." Even if? What's this "even if" business? Is it not an admission, at least of sorts, that the Peripheral Canal likely cannot deliver on its promises? Also, from pg. 3-11, "There are also uncertainties related to how covered species will respond to various operational aspects of a North Delta facility[.]"

Going back to pg. 3-8, "Because significant infrastructure would be constructed, this 'conservation' measure is not easily reversible." Essentially, any Peripheral Canal that is constructed is permanent (& that by design).

Now, as to rationale behind the Peripheral Canal, here is something from pg. 3-4, "[W]ater has been diverted directly from the South Delta through SWP & CVP facilities to meet agricultural & urban water demands south of the Delta." What's this? Drying up Lake Owens & turning it into an alkali salt flat does not suffice for So-Cal? "Rob from Nor-Cal to give to So-Cal" seems to be the order of the day, as regards this issue. Indeed, waters conveyed via the Peripheral Canal to parts farther south would certainly reduce demand on Southern California water sources by Southern California end users. And that is the true purpose of the Peripheral Canal! Not any of this other business which is now being cited as reasons & rationale. No. The real reason is that Southern California covets Northern California water. The So-Cal mentality can be best summed up in the words of the late William Mullholland where he said, at a ceremony marking the completion of the L.A. Aqueduct in Nov. 1913 (speaking of Lake Owens water) "There it is! Take it!" And, indeed, that is the purpose of the Peripheral Canal, in re Northern California water.

And from pg. 3-10, "The operation of new facilities may require modifications of the operations of upstream reservoirs. This would require modification of the various agreements & licenses governing the operation of these reservoirs. This may require changes in minimum instream flow requirements, minimum drawdown levels, flood control operations, temperature standards, & riparian & geomorphic flow requirements. Such modifications may require modification of Clean Water Act § 404 permits for these projects, as well. Additionally, hydroelectric facilities may need modification to their FERC licenses." Translation, greater demands will inevitably be imposed on upstream water supplies north of the Delta, thus jeopardizing end users north of the Delta as well as hydroelectric generation capacities severely, not to mention jeopardizing upstream ecosystems, all in the event of the construction & operation of the Peripheral Canal. Thus the purpose & intent of the Peripheral Canal is further revealed.

Now, in the course of this Comment several references have herein been made to Lake Owens. And in

the following three paragraphs is a brief history of Lake Owens & of Mono Lake, using information taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owens_Lake and from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Water_Wars. Similar information can be found at many other places & websites, and the following is a partial listing thereof: http://www.gbuapcd.org/owenslake/index.htm, http://www.kevinroderick.com/dust.html, http://www.desertusa.com/mag98/april/owens/owenslake.html, http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/d_h/eaton.htm, http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/i_r/mulholland.htm, etc.

What was it like before the L.A. Aqueduct dried up Lake Owens (a progress of 11 years from completion of the aqueduct in 1913 until 1924 when the lake had finally dried up)? It was an area supporting numerous & diverse waterfowl. According to a 1917 report by Joseph Grinell of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology in Berkeley, "Great numbers of birds are in sight along the lake shore -- avocets, phalaropes, ducks. Large flocks of shorebirds in flight over the water in the distance, wheeling about show in mass, now silvery now dark, against the grey-blue of the water. There must be literally thousands of birds within sight of this one spot." The area was one that included several farms & ranches & even the occasional example of heavy industry. Before that, the Paiute (a tribe of North American indians) inhabited the area, making use of the natural resources, including that done vis à vis their techniques of irrigation. However, by 1901 the irrigation systems then in use were reportedly so poorly designed that several areas of land in the north of Owens Valley became over-saturated to the point of nearly becoming unsuitable for many agricultural purposes. The south of Owens Valley, by contrast, was more arid & less irrigated than the north, a situation that lent itself to the kind of ranching that indeed was characteristic of south valley agriculture, then. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation reportedly started formulating plans for an irrigation system designed for better water efficiency than the then extant systems. But then came Frederick Eaton of Los Angeles, along with William Mullholland of LADWP. Mr. Eaton lobbied then President Theodore Roosevelt urging him to stop all such plans, so that the planned diversion of Lake Owens water toward the greater L.A. area via the then yet to be constructed L.A. Aqueduct could take place. Mr. Eaton got what he wanted. And the rest, they say, was history.

But that was not enough to satisfy L.A.'s aquagreed. In 1970, LADWP completed a second aqueduct. Two years thence, they were diverting yet more surface water & were pumping groundwater at the rate of several hundred thousand acre-ft. / yr. Owens Valley springs & seeps dried up. Groundwater – dependent vegetation started dying off. And that isn't all. Not too many years after Lake Owens first dried up back in 1924, LADWP went about looking for additional water sources.

So they acquired water rights in Mono Valley. They did this during the Depression, when they knew many parties to be in dire monetary need. By 1941, the aqueduct extensions were complete. Water bodies that once fed Mono Lake were then feeding L.A.'s ever insatiable aquagreed. Mono Lake once served as an important ecosystem link, where gulls & migratory birds would nest. But the lake level began to fall beyond the extent that tufa formations were being exposed. Lake water salinity & alkalinity increased, threatening native brine shrimp. And the birds nesting on Negit & Paoha Islands came under increasing threat. For not only were alkalinity & salinity levels rising as lake levels declined, but a land bridge was beginning to form between the lake shore & Negit Island, much to the relish of local predators. 1979 saw the beginning of litigation against LADWP in re the situation at Mono Lake. And the rest, they say, is history.

In the preceding three paragraphs was presented a brief history of Lake Owens & of Mono Lake. Now, that is not the sum - total of So-Cal aquagreed, for entire volumes of work would need to be written to give a more full account.

In 1982, an initiative was put on the ballot, which initiative provided for the construction & operation of the Peripheral Canal. Fortunately, it was rejected by the voters.

And today, we have before us yet another Peripheral Canal proposal. So how, exactly, will the Peripheral Canal do its work? It will draw water away from the Sacramento River at points north of the Delta. The water thus diverted will then be conveyed to points south of the Delta, freeing up San Joaquin

River water sources for use in supplementing So-Cal water supplies for So-Cal's exclusive benefit.

By the way, how is it that "Public Trust" gets trampled under foot by So-Cal aquagreed, all whilst being oppositely described by its proponents, in the name of conservation? Take a good, hard look at Ch. 3 of the BDCP Draft Scoping Plan, as well as at the Delta Vision!

Getting back to how the Peripheral Canal does its work, not one drop of benefit accrues to the North. Because major flows & flow rates are diverted away from the Delta thus, increased demands are imposed on upstream reservoirs to increase discharge rates, lest river levels be suffered to wane. Some upstream reservoirs were recently fitted with river temperature control devices designed to automatically increase discharge rates whenever river water temperatures start to exceed a preset number of degrees Centigrade. This was done to promote salmon spawning. But because of the mandated use of these devices, whenever major flows are diverted away from the Delta (thus reducing river levels by the rate of diversion, less any increase in upstream reservoir discharge rates), reservoir levels drop even faster than would otherwise be the case. Thus less water is available for end-users upstream of the diversion points. Drought or not, the Peripheral Canal is an abominably bad idea. But in the midst of such a drought as we now suffer, the Peripheral Canal is not only an abominably bad idea, it is also categorically insane! And as water is diverted upstream of the North Delta, Delta salinity naturally increases, thus placing Delta & Estuary ecosystems at increased risk. To counter this, bypass flows must needs be suffered to increase. And indeed the BDCP calls for exactly that. However, bypass flow rates cannot, ultimately, be made to increase, except that upstream reservoir discharge rates likewise be made to increase. And this is because even if diversion rates are ever reduced below the upper limit of diversion capacity, under no diversion plan now being contemplated will rates ever be brought down to zero.

After all, who builds a canal who does not also intend for it to be used at all?

And the South Delta (along with reservoirs upstream of it) will continue to be exempted from any additional burdens. For this is wholly consistent with the whole idea of a Peripheral Canal. Needless to say, with the construction & operation of the Peripheral Canal, discharge rates for reservoirs upstream of the North Delta will inevitably increase, which during a drought is at the height of folly. And with higher reservoir discharge rates comes reservoir levels lower than otherwise would be the case.

On the heels of that comes reduced hydroelectric generation capacity. It's only natural for that to be. For the rotational speed of hydroelectric turbines is entirely dependent on the force exerted on each turbine blade by the water. Force, incidentally, is the product of pressure multiplied by volume, and pressure is a function of depth. Where depth is reduced, pressure is reduced. Where pressure is reduced, force (relative to volume) is reduced. Where force is reduced, the rotational speed of each hydroelectric turbine is reduced, and where that is reduced, the electrical output of a given hydroelectric generator is thus reduced. Lo, another facet of the manifest purpose of the Peripheral Canal!

And of all the several means by which electricity is generated for a given population of rate payers, which means are contemplated to be suffered to proliferate, solar, water, and wind result in lower levels of emissions of so-called greenhouse gases (GHGs) than any other such means by which such electricity is to be generated. And of these, water is in the greatest jeopardy, in the event of the construction & operation of the Peripheral Canal, & that by design. Where hydroelectric generation capacity is reduced, an electricity deficit is thus created. That deficit must be made up somehow, or else the risk of area – wide utility service failure, of one form or another, escalates considerably. Additional sources of electricity are time consuming to bring on-line, needless to say. It is so for additional sources of low carbon electricity sources as it is for additional higher carbon electricity sources. When hydroelectrical capacity is reduced, the only two ways to make up the resulting deficit, at least in the shorter term anyhow, are to: (a) allow reservoirs levels to sufficiently increase (a thing that will likely never be allowed to happen, in the event of the construction & operation of the Peripheral Canal); (b) generate more electricity from higher carbon sources; and / or (c) institute rolling blackouts. And given the policy goals of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (commonly identified as AB32), the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), etc., and given the emerging such policy goals of Congress & of the White House, the idea of the Peripheral Canal is especially repugnant. The Peripheral Canal is manifestly

designed to increase statewide GHG emission rates, and may therefore (at least in theory, anyway) be classifiable as an indirect gross polluter. To paraphrase a popularly known anti-drug slogan "Just say no to the Peripheral Canal!"

In conclusion, after having reviewed the documents I have, pursuant to my composition of this Comment, and after having considered both the manner & its implications, I must categorically reject the very notion that protecting the Delta's ecosystem, per se, necessitates any satiation whatsoever of Southern California's rank aquagreed! Indeed, threatened species are better off without the Peripheral Canal.

Now, since the Delta Vision manifestly cannot long endure absent the Peripheral Canal, the Delta Vision must wholly be defunded, decommissioned, disbanded, discarded, abandoned, etc. once & forever!

And if the BDCP cannot long endure absent the Peripheral Canal, then the BDCP must needs be treated likewise, & must remain so unless & until it is reconstituted, minus any notion whatsoever of the Peripheral Canal! And it can be so reconstituted, & without much bona fide difficulty! Endangered species are counting on it. Please, remember Lake Owens, and strike the Peripheral Canal from the BDCP (once & forever)! Thank you.