

Meeting Notes
North Delta Agency Team
November 6, 2001

The following provides a summary of the North Delta Agency Team Meeting held on November 6, 2001. The group agreed to meet again on **December 4, 9:30 - 11:30**, at the Resources Building, Room 133.

Attendees:

Kerry Wicker - DFG	Margit Aramburu - DPC
Mike Coleman - CALFED	Chuck Vogelsang - CALFED
Aimee Dour-Smith - J&S	Dennis O'Bryant - DOC
Rob Cooke - CALFED	Rosalie del Rosario - NMFS
John Thomson - USFWS	Paul Bowers - USACE
Travis Hemmen - J&S	Jeannie Blakesler - DOC
Bellory Fong - CALFED	
Jeff Stuart - NMFS	
Tony Frisbee - CALFED	
Patricia Fernandez - CALFED	

Members Invited but not Present:

Frank Wernette - DFG	Carl Werder - Bureau
Lorna Burks - SLC	Ryan Olah - USFWS
Matthew Reischman - RWQCB	Mike Aceituno - NMFS
Diane Windham - NMFS	Terry Mills - CALFED
Peter Rabbon - DWR/Rec Board	Steve Shaffer - CDFA
Dennis Majors - CALFED	Rod Johnson - CALFED
Jim Starr - DFG	Gwen Knittweis - DWR
Ron Ott - CALFED	Scott Cantrell - DFG
Marina Brand - DFG	Donna Podger - RWQCB

Notes:

- Aimee Dour-Smith provided the group with a project update.
 - The regional Hydraulic Modeling Group review of information available through existing models (including models for low flow conditions) is still underway. MBK has developed a draft scope of work for that effort and the group should complete their review of it within the next two weeks.
 - Development of a regional model is being initiated between the Department of Water Resources (DWR), Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), and Sacramento County Water Agency (SCWA). A memorandum of understanding MOU for participation and cost-sharing of this regional model is currently being finalized by the participating agencies.
 - Margit commented that other communities (e.g. San Joaquin) should participate in the process to obtain "buy-in" on the regional model approach. Other members agreed with this recommendation.
 - Regarding the McCormick-Williamson Track, The Nature Conservancy is requesting UC Davis to provide assistance to the DWR planning efforts on McCormack-Williamson. UC Davis will use their Mike11 model to help evaluate restoration and flood control measures on McCormack-Williamson Track. There are some issues with allocating funds to UCD for additional modeling work (totaling ~\$100,000) from the existing Category 3 funding. There was a discussion of the relationship between the NDIP and the McCormack-Williamson Tract project. Aimee confirmed that the McCormack-Williamson Tract project would be an element of the NDIP, and therefore, will be permitted as part of the NDIP. Aimee agreed to have a separate discussion with TNC, USFWS, and CALFED regarding permitting and modeling for the McCormack-Williamson Track project.
 - The revised schedule was provided to the NDAT. The revised schedule reflects the timing of development and peer review of the regional hydraulic model.
 - Review of alternatives for the NDIP EIR/EIS by the NDAT is anticipated for next spring.

- Donna Podger has left RWQCB to work for CALFED. Matthew Reischman will replace Donna.

Aimee Dour-Smith requested comments/additions to the draft permit consultation chart.

- Margit suggested that permits from local reclamation districts may be required and should be included in the chart. Additionally, she recommended that the Reclamation Board be involved in the NDAT meetings.
- The State Lands Commission and requirements for a state lands lease should be included in the chart.
- National Marine Fisheries Service should be included under consultation with the Corps during Section 7 for anadromous fish.

Aimee Dour-Smith lead a discussion of the ASIP process as it relates to the Draft EIR/EIS.

- Under standard conditions, a draft biological assessment (BA) is prepared by an applicant during application of a Corps 404 permit. After Corps initiates consultation, a biological opinion (BO) is prepared by USFWS, NMFS, and DFG.
- For CALFED projects, an action specific implementation plan (ASIP) is prepared through a coordinated process between the applicant, USFWS, DFG, and NMFS. The ASIP serves as the BA and theoretically provides a streamlined process for endangered species compliance. The final ASIP is approved and is similar to the biological opinion. Conservation measures identified in the CALFED programmatic BO are included in the ASIP.
- Aimee stated that Jones & Stokes would prepare a chart explaining the ASIP process and other permit processes as they relate to the project schedule. Also, Chuck Vogelsang stated that experience from the South Delta project should be used to understand the challenges and relationships between the ASIP and NEPA/CEQA process.

Aimee Dour-Smith lead a discussion of the geographic scope.

- A handout was provided to the group describing two alternatives to the geographic scope of the area.
- Kerry Wicker also handed out an email of comments from Frank Wernette at DFG on the geographic scope.
- Margit commented that it would be appropriate to focus on a specific (i.e., smaller) area and that potential ecosystem restoration activities should be clearly linked to the flood control alternatives or actions. There needs to be a strong ecological and hydrological connection between flood control and ecosystem restoration.
- The group discussed that the physical area for analysis of direct project impacts would be narrower than the area in which hydraulic modeling must take place. It was recommended that a map of the watershed area and the modeling area be prepared to provide context for the geographic scope.
- Rob Cooke recommended that the group focus on the lands CALFED already controls/owns (e.g. McCormick-Williamson Tract and Staten Island). With a combined area of over 10,000 acres, there is great potential for restoration on those two islands.
- Margit suggested the boundary should include the Stone Lakes/Beach Lake areas at the northeast end of the map. This may provide more options for restoration on lands that are designated for ecosystem improvements.
- Paul Bowers suggested that the boundary be determined using hydrology and the project's effects on hydrology. The boundary should be drawn where outside the boundary, the project would not affect volume, duration, frequency, and WSEL during floodflows.
- Rosalie del Rosario stated that the geographic scope will be determined by the project objectives. All agreed.
- Kerry asked about the relationship between the NDIP project area and the ERP "Eco-Zones". Michael Coleman stated that he thought there may be some changes to the Eco-Zones and he would find out more from the Steering Committee.
- Chuck suggested that we use the terms used in the CALFED Program EIS/EIR when defining the area: Problem Area and Solution Area. Aimee agreed to explore this option.
- The geographic scope issue was not resolved at this meeting but many useful suggestions were made. The NDAT will continue to discuss the project area at the next meeting.

Action Items:

1. Jones & Stokes will draft a chart of permit requirements by phase of the project and provide to NDAT for review.
2. NDAT will review permit chart provided by Jones & Stokes before the next meeting and be prepared to discuss the relationships between the permitting processes.
3. DWR/Jones & Stokes will invite the Reclamation Board to the NDAT meetings.
4. Jones & Stokes will provide a map showing the boundaries of the regional hydraulic model to NDAT.

5. Michael Coleman will report back to group on the use of the "Eco-Zones" by the Steering Committee.
6. Jones & Stokes will investigate the use of CALFED's "Problem Area" and "Solution Area" designations for the NDIP.

Next meeting:

- Review permit/consultation requirements and schedule chart
- Discuss relationships between NEPA/CEQA process and permit/consultation processes
- Follow up on discussion of geographic scope and results of action items
- Discuss lead agency