



FRANKS TRACT PROJECT

NEWS UPDATE 1

SEPTEMBER 2008

Greetings!

We are pleased to share with you this first news update for the Franks Tract Project and to invite you to participate in the public input process.

The Franks Tract Project is one of several actions being proposed to improve the health of the Delta ecosystem and the operational reliability of State and Federal water projects. The project is proposed to protect fish resources, particularly species of concern, such as the delta smelt and longfin smelt, and to reduce seawater salinity intrusion into the Delta. The project involves installing operable gates to control the flow of water at key locations (Threemile Slough and/or West False River) to limit the movement of these fish species and higher salinity water into Franks Tract during certain times of the year.

We are currently conducting surveys of recreational usage in local waterways and reaching out for public input on the project. We encourage you to attend one of the upcoming public scoping meetings, which are scheduled for October 6 in Sacramento and October 7, 8, and 9, 2008, in the Delta. (Please see back for details.) We look forward to seeing you,

The Franks Tract Project Team

FRANKS TRACT PROJECT - PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

October 6, 2008

10 a.m. - noon
Sacramento

October 7, 2008

6 - 8:30 p.m.
Rio Vista

October 8, 2008

6 - 8:30 p.m.
Antioch

October 9, 2008

6 - 8:30 p.m.
Stockton



PROJECT HISTORY

FROM FLOODED ISLANDS STUDY TO THE FRANKS TRACT PROJECT

The CALFED Record of Decision (August 2000) identified Franks Tract as the location of one of 600 programmatic Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) actions. The action described for Franks Tract was intended to provide improvements in ecosystem restoration, recreation, and Delta water quality.

DWR, under CALFED funding, carried out a feasibility study of the ecosystem and water quality benefits associated with restoration of Franks Tract, Big Break, and Lower Sherman Lake. This study investigated several alternative strategies to benefit water quality (e.g., reducing salt trapping and mixing), the ecosystem (e.g., increasing habitat values for fish and wildlife, including protected species, and inhibiting invasive plants), and recreation (e.g., retaining boat access, maintaining sport fisheries, improving amenities). The analysis performed for the Flooded Islands Pre-Feasibility Study Report (June 2005) resulted in the identification of four alternatives that involved installing operable gates in certain river channel(s), restoring levees, or implementing a combination of gates and levees.



Recreation surveys are documenting boat traffic in Threemile Slough and West False River to understand potential impacts on recreational users.

Using their knowledge of Delta hydrodynamics and how seawater moves into the Delta, DWR modelers looked into a new alternative that involves installing an operable gate in Threemile Slough. Threemile Slough, located northwest of Franks Tract, connects

two major waterways in the western Delta: the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. The gate in Threemile Slough could be operated to increase net flows in the San Joaquin River, resulting in reduced seawater movement into the central and south Delta. In addition, the gate could be operated to enhance conditions for fisheries.

The Franks Tract Project team evaluated and added this new alternative in 2007.



A Value Engineering Team composed of fish, environmental, engineering, and construction experts (2007) evaluated these operable gate and levee alternatives and recommended further evaluation of the alternatives involving installation of operable gates in Threemile Slough and/or West False River.

PLANNING THE DELTA'S FUTURE

There are several large-scale planning efforts underway in the Delta, including Delta Vision (<http://deltavision.ca.gov>) and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan development (<http://www.water.ca.gov/deltainit/bdcp.cfm>).

The Franks Tract Project is one of several interim actions (<http://www.water.ca.gov/deltainit/action.cfm>) to address fish and water quality concerns in the near future. It would be consistent with longer term planning efforts for the Delta to help balance competing uses and create a more sustainable system for the future.

PURPOSE & FUNCTION OF THE GATES

The proposed gates would be operated to reduce movement of seawater into the central and south Delta and to positively influence the movement of sensitive fish species (e.g., delta smelt) to areas in the west Delta and Suisun Bay/Marsh that provide favorable habitat conditions at certain times of the year. By improving water quality and providing enhanced conditions for sensitive fish resources, this project could increase operational reliability of the State Water Project and Central Valley Project because curtailments (pumping restrictions) in water exports may be less frequent.

PROJECT GOALS

- 1 Modify hydrodynamic conditions to protect fish species of concern, particularly delta smelt and longfin smelt.
- 2 Improve operational flexibility of the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project by protecting Delta fish resources; reducing higher salinity water intrusion resulting from normal tidal influences, sea level rise, or catastrophic levee failures; and protecting water quality during extended closures of the Delta Cross Channel.
- 3 Develop water quality and fish protection measures consistent with long-term planning efforts.



SCHEDULE & MILESTONES

Preparation of a joint environmental impact statement/environmental impact report (EIS/EIR) for the project is underway, and public input is strongly encouraged.

Fall 2008

Scoping and public outreach to solicit input on the project*

Spring 2009

Draft EIS/EIR released for 45-day public comment period*

Fall 2009

Final EIS/EIR released*
EIR certification and Record of Decision

Winter 2010

Issuance of regulatory approvals and permits

Summer 2010

Construction to begin

* *Public participation opportunity*

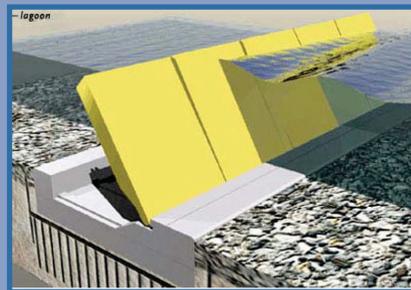


The proposed gates would be operated seasonally and during certain hours of the day, depending on fish and tidal conditions. Several gate designs are being considered. Boat passage facilities would be included to allow for passing of watercraft when the gates are in operation.

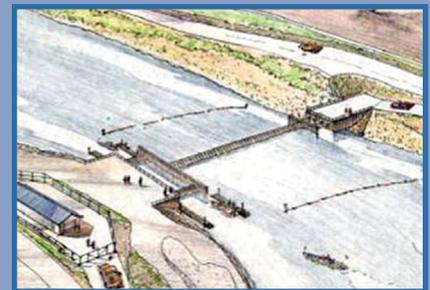
GATE EXAMPLES



The existing radial gate at Suisun Marsh with boat passage facility



Bottom-hinged gate example



A conceptual design of proposed gates for South Delta Improvement Plan

LOCATIONS OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS



October 6, 2008

10 a.m. - noon
Federal Building
Cafeteria Conf. Rooms
C-1001 & C-1002
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 94236



October 7, 2008

6 - 8:30 p.m.
Memorial Building
610 St. Francis Way
Rio Vista, CA 94571



October 8, 2008

6 - 8:30 p.m.
Contra Costa Library
501 W. 18th Street
Antioch, CA 94509



October 9, 2008

6 - 8:30 p.m.
Stockton Memorial Civic
Auditorium, North Hall
525 North Center Street
Stockton, CA 95202



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Please e-mail or call us or sign up on our Web site if you would like to be on the mailing list to receive future updates. For more information, please visit: <http://baydeltaoffice.water.ca.gov/ndelta/frankstract/index.cfm>.



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