



**Interagency
Ecological Program**
COOPERATIVE ECOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATIONS SINCE 1970

Meeting Notes of the Interagency Ecological Program

Stakeholder Group

May 2, 2012 9:00 - Noon

Department of Water Resources
3500 Industrial Blvd, Room 119
West Sacramento 95691

Present: Anke Mueller-Solger, Deanna Serrano, Kurt Ohlinger, Kim Webb, Rich Breuer, Gregg Erickson, Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse, Lee Case, Gary Bobker, BJ Miller, Stephani Spaar, Dean Messer, Tom Mongon, Val Conner, Ted Sommer, Roger Fujii, Kelly Souza, Shelia Green and Kristal Davis-Fadtke.

1. Welcome and Introductions – 10 min
Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse, USBR
2. IEP Science Update – 30 min
Anke Mueller-Solger, DSC
3. State and Federal Water Contractors Agency Science Projects and Priorities/Update on the CWEMF Estuary Monitoring Portal – 10 min
Val Connor, SFWCA
4. Update on Adaptive Management of Fall Outflow for Delta Smelt Protection and Water Supply Reliability – 15 min
Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse, USBR
5. Update on Delta Smelt 'First Flush' Migration Study – 10 min
Roger Fujii, USGS
6. Rio Vista Estuarine Research Station –5 min
Ted Sommer, DWR
7. Group Discussion on 2013 IEP Work Plan – 90 min
Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse, USBR
8. Wrap up/Future Topics – 10 min
Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse, USBR

The Interagency Ecological Program Stakeholder Group (IEPSG) consists of IEP agency representatives and stakeholders who do not participate regularly in IEP activities, but use information and data developed by the IEP to manage and regulate the water quality and biological resources of the Bay-Delta. The IEPSG meets approximately twice a year to get updates on current IEP monitoring and research activities, to offer suggestions for future monitoring and research and to discuss issues of concern.

The IEP staff is very interested in communicating with IEP stakeholders. This agenda reflects a renewed focus on providing stakeholders with updates on IEP activities and on soliciting suggestions for future activities. Feedback is encouraged. Meetings of the IEPSG are open to the public. Times indicated in the agenda are approximate. The order of agenda items is subject to change.

Participation by teleconference is available by dialing 1-888-808-5102 and entering all four digits of the attendee access code: 0077.

ITEM:	1		Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION		10 minutes
Background and Purpose:	Introductions, consideration of agenda, recap of previous IEPSG meeting.		
Desired Outcome:	Information Exchange		
Attachment:			
Contact Person:	Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse	EVanNieuwenhuyse@usbr.gov	
Notes:			
Decisions:			
Action Items:			

ITEM:	2	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	IEP Science Update	30 minutes
Background and Purpose:	The IEP Lead Scientist will provide a summary of the IEP annual workshop held April 18-20 and updates on the POD synthesis effort, the Management Analysis and Synthesis Team (MAST), and two upcoming program reviews: (1) the Delta Juvenile Fishes Monitoring Program and (2) the Delta Juvenile Salmon Survival Studies program.	
Desired Outcome:	Information Exchange	
Attachment:	 Mueller-Solger_IEP Science Update Stakeholder	
Contact Person:	Anke Mueller-Solger	ANKE.MUELLER-SOLGER@DELTA COUNCIL.CA.GOV
Notes:	<p>After describing some of the hydrologic characteristics of 2011, Anke explained that the primary focus of the MAST is to figure out what changes in habitat conditions in 2011 led to favorable responses among the POD species? Anke also discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organizational structure and work flow of MAST- stressing that there is lots of interaction that goes on; even though the model may not necessarily reflect that. It was purposefully built without a lot of “spaghetti” and with the simplified idea that the bottom half of the model are data-producers and the top half are data-users. ▪ The updated delta smelt conceptual model – noting that there are still holes we need to fill in such as food in the winter time and first flush toxicity. ▪ The new and very drafty assessments cards – which will be tricky for us (as it is with anyone taking on this type of reporting exercise) because we need to establish our baseline conditions. <p>Providing input:</p> <p>Dean Messer suggested creating a formal avenue by which the stakeholders could provide input. BJ Miller asked if stakeholders could be part of the MAST. He further explained that there is not conflict in the quality of science that is being conducted, but where we run into conflict is in the interpretation of results. BJ also mentioned that the water contractors have lots of resources that they could bring to the table. Anke explained that stakeholder/public input is received via the IEP Project Work Teams and by way of the Stakeholder Group meetings, and not during the agency–efforts such as the Management Team, POD, MAST or the Coordinator’s meetings. Stephani Spaar acknowledged that the MAST is in its pilot year, things can change, and these are the concerns that we will be considering (i.e. how to incorporate stakeholder interpretation into the process).</p> <p>Cache Slough:</p> <p>Shelia Green asked what it was about Cache Slough that delta smelt like. Anke explained that we don’t necessarily study what “attracts” them as much as the conditions that make it suitable for delta smelt. Ted noted that observations about Cache Slough include a second estuarine turbidity maximum (USGS data, Schoellhamer), higher food abundance (IEP data, Steve Slater) and favorable suspended sediment (USGS data in review at SFEWS, Tara Morgan).</p>	
Decisions:		
Action Items:		

ITEM:	3	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	State and Federal Contractors Water Agency Science Projects	10 minutes
Background and Purpose:	The State and Federal Water Contractors Agency Science Coordinator will provide a brief summary of science projects in 2012 and priorities for 2013. An update on the Estuary Monitoring Portal will also be provided.	
Desired Outcome:	Information Exchange	
Attachment:	 IEPstakeholders_Val Connor.ppsx	
Contact Person:	Val Connor	vconnor@sfcwa.org
Notes:	<p>Valerie Connor reported on the progress of the Estuary Monitoring Portal which delivers information derived from monitoring programs and displays that information in a way that is understandable for a non-technical audience, the general public. The focus of the Portal that Val (with lots of help from Igor Lacan, Bill Templin and Karen Gehrts) is working on is: "Are Our Aquatic Ecosystems Healthy?" This Portal deviates from the others in that it does not have a state-wide focus but rather a regional focus, which could change in time. The first goal is to make the EMP reporting requirements under D-1641 more dynamic and streamline efficiencies by displaying EMP information on the Portal instead of in annual reports. The next goal will be displaying FLaSH and MAST data, so the workgroup will be waiting for the MAST team to hand them data. The next work group meeting is scheduled for June 19th.</p> <p>Val does not have an update on SFWCA science projects, but she will at the next Stakeholder meeting. At this time, specific projects have not been identified. They just have placeholders at this time. As Val learns more about what science activities others are conducting, she hopes to have some that are jointly conducted.</p>	
Decisions:		
Action Items:	Val will present an update on science activities at the next stakeholder meeting.	

ITEM:	4	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	Adaptive Management of Fall Outflow for Delta Smelt Protection and Water Supply Reliability	15 minutes
Background and Purpose:	The 2008 Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion on the long term operation of the Central Valley Project/State Water Project included an RPA action that requires the adaptive management of Fall outflows to improve physical habitat conditions for delta smelt in wet and above-normal water years. In 2011, a wet year, IEP coordinated an enhanced monitoring and special studies effort to document the physical and biological conditions that prevailed before, during and after the Fall 2011 outflow event. A brief summary of the preliminary findings of this effort will be provided as well as a time line for independent scientific review and publication of results.	
Desired Outcome:	Information Exchange	
Link:	http://www.usbr.gov/mp/BayDeltaOffice/index.html	
Contact Person:	Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse	EVanNieuwenhuyse@usbr.gov
Notes:	Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse reported that the 1 st draft of the FLaSH report will be completed later this month. At the same time, Reclamation will be revising the associated Adaptive Management plan. There is an additional layer of review this year, since the FLaSH report is being authored by Larry Brown (USGS). The report will have to go through a USGS colleague review, which may preclude it from being released to the public prior to and during the Independent Science Panel Review to be convened by the Delta Science Program. There is a meeting scheduled today at 1 PM to determine the best way to work this out. Larry Brown is currently investigating if there is a work-around that will enable the DSP to have a public workshop for the review, which is the usual mode of operation.	
Decisions:		
Action Items:	Val will be in attendance at the afternoon meeting and will report back to the stakeholders about what was decided.	

ITEM:	5	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	Delta Smelt 'First Flush' Migration Study	5 minutes
Background and Purpose:	An update will be provided on this 4-year study to provide information on the extent to which changes in salinity and turbidity trigger the spawning migration of delta smelt.	
Desired Outcome:	Information Exchange	
Attachments:		
Contact Person:	Lee Case	HLCASE@USGS.GOV
Notes:	Lee Case reported that the Smelt Turbidity work plan not implemented in 2012 will be implemented in 2013. The 2013 work plan remains unchanged from the 2012 work plan, with the exception of dates. The Delta Smelt Turbidity Report has been written and is being reviewed by the Fish Migration Project Work Team (PWT), scheduled to meet on May 8, 2012.	
Decisions:		
Action Items:		

ITEM:	6	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	RIO VISTA ESTUARINE RESEARCH STATION (RVERS)	5 minutes
Background and Purpose:	An update on progress toward implementing the RVERS initiative will be provided.	
Desired Outcome:	Information Exchange	
Attachment Links:		
Contact Person:	Ted Sommer	TSOMMER@WATER.CA.GOV
Notes:	Ted Sommer reported that an MOU among the co-locating agencies has been signed. The focus is now on writing a contract that would transfer federal money to the State, so the state can take the lead on much of the planning (EIR/EIS). The federal funding stipulated that the RVERS project be conducted in conjunction with two other USFWS efforts; a Fish Technology Center and a conservation hatchery. Therefore, the funding for planning (EIR/EIS) will cover the environmental documentation for all three efforts. Ted noted that the help from Congressman Garamendi has been instrumental. Most recently, his help enabled the USFWS to be able to lease space once the facility is constructed.	
Decisions:		
Action Items:		

ITEM:	7	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	Group Discussion on 2013 IEP Work Plan	90 minutes
Background and Purpose:	This discussion will provide stakeholders with a better understanding of the IEP and the research it is coordinating. This will be participatory process that enhances communication, coordination and collaboration. This discussion is intended to explore what types of information and input both IEP and stakeholders would find valuable, and determine how to best achieve that objective with existing resources.	
Desired Outcome:	Information Exchange	
Attachments:	 FLaSH and 2013 Work Plan Schedules.	
Contact Person:	Erwin Van Nieuwenhuysse	
Notes:	<p>For this discussion, the group focused on slide 12 of Anke's presentation (embedded above). Erwin explained that the Federal Task Force is meeting in May and will be discussing its science priorities. The IEP will be considering priorities from the Task Force, as well as from this Stakeholder Group meeting. The FLaSH review panel comments are expected in July so those recommendations will inform the selection of final proposals but will be too late to affect the selection of PSP subject areas.</p> <p>BJ finds the topic list to be confusing because there is a distinction between fish habitat and then food web and predation, which are both part of habitat. Anke recognizes this and suggests renaming topic 1 'abiotic' or 'physical/chemical habitat' – for clarity.</p> <p>Gary Bobker suggests that it would be good for transparency's sake, to articulate how our PSP topics match with certain priorities (i.e. explain why things rise to the top). Does the subject fill a data gap, inform management, inform a model, etc. This will help to secure agreement from the interested parties. On the flip side, if there is something that the scientists think is just a really important piece of information to have, and it doesn't necessarily meet agency priorities, identify that too.</p> <p>Val notes that our PSP subject areas do not address BDCP or habitat restoration. Even though the IEP has not done this in the past, there may be a way to guide how habitat restoration occurs. How will the IEP deal with that in the future, if at all? Val also suggests that really understanding the distribution of longfin smelt and delta smelt is difficult, but compounded when you are using data from a monitoring survey designed around striped bass. It would be nice if this could be addressed.</p> <p>Deana Serrano likes that we started collecting phytoplankton coincident with EMP cruise data, but suggests that we consider adding a downward-looking ADCP on the boat because without knowing the boat's real velocity, it is not possible to determine how much water was really sampled or whether the same water mass was sampled twice. She feels this is crucial to really understanding transect cruise data and offered to show us how to interpret that data. Anke intends to talk with the Wilkerson/Dugdale folks on how they use that data because they have an ADCP on their cruises.</p> <p>Deanna suggested that hydrodynamic modeling will help with any efforts to modify fish sampling programs, but that there are still problems in calibrating them. For example, the UnTRIM 3-d model used by McWilliams is not accurately simulating salinity at the Martinez and Mallard Slough stations. She suggested that one confounding factor in trying to match actual salinity in the Suisun Bay area is the release of salty water from duck club drainage in Suisun Marsh. Rich added that the modelers need to provide the results of sensitivity analyses back to the biologists so that they</p>	

	<p>know where most of the uncertainty resides; where are the black holes.</p> <p>Deanna asked how the GRTS (Generalized Random Tessellation Study) of EMP was funded and what will happen to it in the future. Rich explained that DWR is planning on conducting another GRTS in May and October of 2012. This will be the sixth year of data collected and then the priority will switch to reporting. This program is funded under the Core portion of IEP.</p> <p>BJ adds that more could be done to investigate substrate conditions (how delta smelt spawn and how eggs attach). If it is generally accepted that there is density dependence in winter and spring, then should we investigate whether there is a shortage of clean sand/cobble for spawning or if something else going on down there like predation on eggs? Anke informs the group that we may be able to get at some of this from Joan's lab group, which is why we hired a post-doc to write up previously conducted experiments from the FCCL. The IEP has tried to look at substrate before – with a Remotely Operated Underwater Vehicle (ROV) and also via adhesive egg deposition tiles. Neither of the efforts was successful.</p> <p>BJ suggests that there may be more of an effect from the smaller wastewater treatment plants discharging into Upper Suisun Marsh. They are discharging from rapidly growing urban areas (Fairfield, Colfax) into areas with less dilution potential. Anke notes that the Delta RMP will help address this kind of issue, but it has not come online yet. She also adds that it's a little tricky since of the two Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment discharge locations, one is in the vicinity of the Delta RMP, and the other discharge location is in the Bay RMP vicinity (two different regional water quality control boards). Anke also mentioned that there was a proposal to study contaminant interactions between the Suisun Marsh and Suisun Bay. It was very costly and didn't get funded. Val would like to see the proposal.</p> <p>BJ suggests that his hierarchical analytical approach could be a useful tool for organizing and synthesizing these massive amounts of data and for determining which of the many possible interacting factors are really driving delta smelt or other fish population abundance trends. He suggested that his approach would also help get at actual mechanisms. Anke agreed that understanding mechanisms is what everyone is after. Anke also explains that she thinks that the draft MAST conceptual model is already doing that – organizing based on large scale drivers that affect delta smelt, and things that affect those drivers, and so and, and so forth.</p> <p>Lastly, BJ mentions some of Dave Fullerton's work indicating that many of the stations sampled by the Fall Midwater Trawl survey and San Francisco Bay Study have deepened over time. This would affect salinity and delta smelt distribution and perhaps catch.</p> <p>Erwin announced that any PSP subject areas of interest to the Stakeholders should be emailed directly to him and Kelly Souza by May 23rd, 2012. Also provide a short justification on why this subject is of interest. For instance, does it inform a model, management action or data gap?</p>
<p>Decisions:</p>	
<p>Action Items:</p>	<p>Anke will send the unfunded proposal studying contaminant interactions in Suisun Marsh and Bay to Val.</p> <p>Stakeholders will send PSP subject areas to Erwin and Kelly by May 23, 2012.</p>

ITEM:	8	Approx. Time:
Title of Topic:	Wrap up	10 minutes
Background and Purpose:	Summarize action items and solicit topic ideas for next meeting.	
Desired Outcome:	Information exchange	
Attachments:		
Contact Person:	Erwin Van Nieuwenhuyse	EVANNIEUWENHUYSE@USBR.GOV
Notes:		
Decisions:		
Action Items:		