

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)

Steering Committee (SC) Meeting

February 25, 2010, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

California Farm Bureau Federation Conference Room

2300 River Plaza Ave, Sacramento, CA

Draft Meeting Notes

Associated documents/handouts:

- *Agenda*
- *Draft Steering Committee Meeting Agendas*
- *Draft BDCP SC Meeting Notes December 3, 2009*
- *Draft List of BDCP Activities to be Evaluated in the Effects Analysis*
- *Draft BDCP Conservation Land Targets [Preliminary, Version 2]*
- *Summary of SAIC Proposed Covered Species Habitat Mitigation and Conservation*
- *SAIC Draft Work Product - Covered Wildlife and Plant Species Biological Goals and Objectives (December 17, 2009)*
- *SAIC Draft Work Product - BDCP Natural Community Biological Goals and Objectives (December 17, 2009)*

Action Items and Key Decisions

- Approved *Draft BDCP SC Meeting Notes December 3, 2009* with corrections
- Approved draft list of BDCP activities for evaluation in the Full Effects Analysis, including additional edits

Updates

- On March 9, 2010, the California legislature will request an update on the status of the implementation of the Delta water package.
- On February 26, 2010, DWR will announce water allocations for the year.
- DWR announced that Delores Brown will be retiring and Russ Stein will take over her role on the BDCP EIR/EIS.
- On February 26, 2010, USBR will release an initial water supply forecast.
- USBR reported that Lake Shasta is at 98% of normal for this time of year.
- On February 18, 2010, two Klamath Basin agreements were signed that could result in the removal of four dams from the Klamath River.

Process and Schedule

Karen Scarborough discussed the *Draft Steering Committee Meeting Agendas* handout. Discussion followed regarding the upcoming decision on terrestrial resources target acreages and the checklist of tasks created from the January 29, 2010 meeting, including scheduling the “Modeling-for-Modelers” meeting.

Public Outreach

There are several meetings scheduled in upcoming weeks with the surrounding local government sponsors of HCPs and NCCPs. There is much local interest in the conservation measures related to improvements to the Yolo Bypass. Next steps include meetings between BDCP representatives and local interests groups, DWR engineers, and consultant SAIC to discuss and gather technical information on various options for Yolo Bypass improvements.

Presentation: Natural Communities and Covered Species Conservation Targets

Kim Delfino, of Defenders of Wildlife, described the recommendation developed by the Terrestrial Workgroup to have SAIC work with DFG and USFWS to outline the rationale connecting BDCP biological goals and objectives and the target acreages reflected in the draft conservation measures. DFG and USFWS agree that it would be beneficial to document the large amount of work that went into developing the terrestrial component of BDCP. A point is made that the terrestrial component of the BDCP may affect surrounding HCPs and NCCPs. The BDCP Public Outreach workgroup is tasked with coordinating with the sponsors of surrounding conservation plans to work toward compatibility between the BDCP terrestrial resources strategy and these other plans.

Paul Cylinder presented an overview of the status and process of development of the conservation strategy for terrestrial and wetland plant and wildlife species. A map of the BDCP conservation zones is provided in this presentation online at the BDCP website. Dr. Cylinder went over the *Summary of SAIC Proposed Covered Species Habitat Mitigation and Conservation* handout. Some of the numbers have changed because the all-tunnel option was chosen for the Full Effects Analysis (prior analysis evaluated the east canal alignment). Much of the likely direct impacts on wildlife and plants would be attributable to proposed tidal habitat restoration measures and not from the development of new conveyance facilities. Impact acreage numbers are still preliminary and are expected to change on the basis of the outcomes of the Full Effects Analysis.

The BDCP Planning Area was discussed. Dr. Cylinder reminded the Steering Committee that the Planning Agreement states that the legal Delta is the BDCP Planning Area, but that draft conservation measures extend to locations beyond the legal Delta (e.g., Suisun Marsh, upper Yolo Bypass). As such, the final boundaries of the BDCP Plan Area may extend beyond the legal Delta. Dr. Cylinder went over the *Draft BDCP Conservation Land Targets [Preliminary, Version 2]* handout. This is a revised version from the February 4, 2010 draft. The rationales in this handout point out which BDCP covered species were the drivers for each natural community conservation acreage target.

Discussion followed regarding BDCP conservation actions that are likely to overlap areas covered by surrounding regional conservation plans. How this overlap in plan areas will be addressed will vary by species and will be guided by natural community distribution. A complicating factor is that plan goals differ among these surrounding plans. Two of the overlapping plans are NCCPs with goals to provide for the conservation of species and three are HCPs with goals of mitigating for impacts to species.

The next steps for developing BDCP terrestrial conservation measures include working with DFG, FWS, and species experts in reviewing draft habitat preservation and restoration acreage targets and rationales. A point was made that defining rationales is of the utmost importance. Other issues raised include the ranges of species relative to the BDCP Planning Area, interactions between BDCP and non-BDCP covered activities, the potential impacts of BDCP activities on various land uses, and how these factors affect BDCP decisions and implementation. A request was made for definitions of several terms: “preserve,” “conserve,” and “maintain.”

Public Comments:

Petrea Marchand (Yolo County) expressed appreciation for the efforts of the BDCP to work with local governments and overlapping HCP and NCCPs programs and stressed that a significant amount of work is still to be done as local governments engage with the BDCP regarding the future implementation of conservation measures. Karen Scarborough responded that the BDCP will continue to meet and work with the local governments.

Jonas Minton (Planning and Conservation League) asked how an effects analysis is conducted without quantifying biological objectives. Mr. Minton acknowledged the BDCP target acreages, but questioned how acreages translate into biological outcomes. Mr. Minton gave an example of a restoration project that did not reach its species recovery goals despite successful implementation of the physical restoration, and asked where metrics are included in the BDCP process for determining if the conservation measures have the intended effects on species recovery. Karen Scarborough pointed out that the *Draft Steering Committee Meeting Agendas* handout includes future reviews of draft BDCP metrics and monitoring. Mr. Minton then asked when the results of the effects analysis will be ready in relation to the release of the draft monitoring metrics. Laura King Moon responded that the initial results of the hydrodynamic modeling will be ready in April, and the results of the Full Effects Analysis should become available in June.

Discussion: Proposed Covered Activities List (Chapter 4)

Paul Cylinder presented the *Draft List of BDCP Activities to be Evaluated in the Effects Analysis* handout. This handout reflects changes made per the requests of BDCP Steering Committee members. Approval of this list would mean that these actions will be included and considered in the BDCP Effects Analysis. There is overlap between covered activities and the BDCP conservation measures because a number of conservation measures may adversely affect certain covered species, even though their purpose is to benefit other covered species.

Additional actions that are not covered activities will be evaluated in the Full Effects Analysis. For instance, actions upstream of the Delta (such as changes in reservoir operations) that are an indirect result from BDCP covered activities will be assessed in the analysis. BDCP conservation measures that will not have an adverse effect on species under State and federal endangered species laws are not on the list of covered activities. It is pointed out that other entities may be approaching the BDCP Steering Committee about the potential to add their activities to the covered activities list. How BDCP will approach requests for new covered activities is under consideration. There was discussion about other planned Delta diversions (e.g., East Bay MUD Freeport plant, and the City of Stockton diversion) and their potential inclusion in the BDCP Full Effects Analysis in terms of effects on species, despite their separate permitting processes. The potential effects of these other diversion projects will be taken into account in the Effects Analysis as part of the existing conditions (also known as the “environmental baseline”) in the Delta.

Several changes to the list were requested, and the BDCP Steering Committee reached general concurrence on the proposed covered activities list, with proposed edits.

Public Comment:

Petrea Marchand (Yolo County) asked about the timetable for adding activities to the proposed covered activities list. Laura King Moon responded that the window of opportunity for adding activities is narrowing, since the Full Effects Analysis is getting underway.

General Public Comments:

None

Attendees

Management and Representatives

Karen Scarborough (Chair, The Natural Resources Agency)

Laura King Moon (State Water Contractors)

Karla Nemeth (The Natural Resources Agency)

Jerry Johns (DWR)

Cindy Tejada (USACE)

Jason Peltier (Westlands Water District)

Randall Neudeck (Metropolitan Water District)

Melinda Terry (North Delta Water Agency)

Anthony Saracino (The Nature Conservancy)

Richard Roos-Collins (American Rivers)

Kim Delfino (Defenders of Wildlife)

Cindy Kao (Santa Clara Valley Water District)

Carl Wilcox (DFG)

Jim Fiedler (Santa Clara Valley Water District)

Ara Azhderian (San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority)

Federico Barajas (USBR)

Patti Idlof (USBR)

Chris Scheuring (California Farm Bureau Federation)
Dan Castleberry (USFWS)
Michael Tucker (NOAA/NMFS)
Paul Cylinder (SAIC)

On phone

Greg Gartrell (Contra Costa Water District)
Ann Hayden (Environmental Defense Fund)
Steve Ottemoeller (Friant Water Authority)
Greg Thomas (Natural Heritage Institute)
Peter Landreth (Mirant)
Elke Rank (Zone 7)
Pete Rawlings (SAIC)
