

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Conservation Strategy (CS) Subgroup Meeting

March 5, 2007, 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
The Resources Agency, Room 1131

Draft Meeting Summary

Associated documents/handouts:

- Agenda
- Relative Potential Benefits of Conceptual Conservation Strategies for Proposed Covered Fish Species (Working Draft Table)
- Preliminary Relative Assessment of Preliminary Conceptual Alternatives to Achieve Planning Agreement Goals and Objectives (Working Draft Table)
- Potential Relationship between Preliminary Conceptual Conservation Strategy Alternatives (CSA's) and Key Environmental Stressors affecting Covered Species (Working Draft Table)
- Comparison of Delta Configuration Requirements and Hydrological Conditions among the Preliminary Conceptual CSA's (Working Draft Table)
- Preliminary Conceptual CSA's (Working Draft Table, revised to incorporate new alternatives recommended at the 2/26/07 meeting)
- Potential Criteria for Screening Preliminary Conceptual CSA's

Announcements from the chairs

In two weeks, we will have a presentation from one or more outside scientists on the range of current scientific thinking regarding a fluctuating versus stable hydrology in the Delta ecosystem and how that informs CSA's. Peter Moyle, Chuck Hanson, Tina Swanson, and/or BJ Miller are possible presenters.

Meeting Purpose:

To discuss draft Conservation Strategy Alternatives and preliminary draft Screening Criteria. To receive input from Subgroup on the framework, process, and new tools, and produce recommendations for next steps in CSA development and screening process.

Action Items and Key Recommendations

- Each Subgroup member shall assign an alternate; a request for each member to identify their alternate will be sent out electronically, followed by a complete roster.
- The "key elements" from Draft CSA's will be broken out by the consultant for review by the Subgroup at the next meeting.
- PRE's, NGO's and agencies will provide names and contact information of their key biologists to the consultants; consultants will work with those biologists to ensure that the best available science is utilized throughout CSA development and screening.
- Additional stressors will be included in tables as appropriate, based on those identified in Bay-Delta Ecological Restoration Plan and recommendations from members.
- SAIC will initiate work on a matrix of stressors and covered fish species using PRE, NGO, and fishery agency biologists to assist in development.

Discussion:

The consultants (Paul Cylinder and Pete Rawlings- SAIC) reviewed six documents they created this week based on recommendations from the CS Subgroup 2/26/07 meeting. Four of the documents reviewed at the meeting provide additional detail and/or new “cuts” of the preliminary Conservation Strategy Alternatives that were presented for the first time at the 2/26/07 meeting. A document with updated Draft CSA’s was also provided; it includes two new options (Bifurcated canal and Dual conveyance) and described Key Assumptions in greater detail. Lastly, SAIC reviewed a preliminary list of Screening Criteria that, when in final form, would be used to select elements and Draft CSA’s to be recommended to Steering Committee to be carried forward. Consultants received feedback on the framework and new tools.

The conversation was focused on whether the current framework for developing and analyzing Draft CSA’s, as presented by the consultant, is acceptable to the Subgroup. Preliminary BDCP Draft CSA’s, presented at the 2/26/07 Subgroup meeting, were based broadly on strategies recommended from other Delta planning processes and reports. In the current framework, those CSA’s are to be redesigned based on members’ input and ecological and feasibility analysis conducted within BDCP. The “key elements” of the current Draft CSA’s would be combined in to craft several CSA’s to be recommended to the Steering Committee.

Several members contended that broad themes, based on management problems and/or ecological issues, should be used to develop CSA’s from the ground up. Others were comfortable with the current process, which builds on analyses conducted by other entities (e.g., PPIC, CalFed). Several members pointed out that more information and detail will be needed for each of the Draft CSA’s and their elements before the CS Subgroup can begin to choose which CSA’s BDCP will carry forward.

Members acknowledged that, due to a condensed project timeline, multiple planning activities (e.g., CSA development, Covered Activities identification) are happening concurrently in BDCP process that would happen consecutively in a typical planning process. There was a range of opinions among members on how best to work within that timeline, which greatly informs the CSA analysis and selection process.

Consultants will work with other biologists, identified by Subgroup members, to increase level of scientific analysis of Draft CSA elements. Consultants will include more detailed analysis of affects of stressors and CSA key elements on covered species and in future drafts of these documents. Additional stressors to include in Draft CSA documents will be based on ERP documents as well as recommendations from biologists and members. Several were recommended today: turbidity, out-flow, and X2.

Public Comments

No members of the public chose to comment at this meeting.

Next Meeting

Monday, March 12, 2007, same location.