



yolo basin foundation

#39

August 30, 2011

Mr. Jerry Meral  
Deputy Secretary  
CA Resources Agency  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Meral:

Thank you for our most interesting and engaging recent meeting. The Board of the Yolo Basin Foundation (YBF) is pleased to answer your question "What do you want?" Per your request, attached is a brief memo that outlines our fundamental position and concerns in answering this question. We have used the existing Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) Land Management Plan (LMP) as the starting point for our position because it reflects the most important facts, namely: 1) the bypass is first and foremost a flood control project; 2) the management plan reflects the importance of fisheries in a balanced ecosystem approach—we recognize the importance of addressing this issue now; and, 3) the location of the YBWA makes it unique and a highly visible location to showcase the Gateway approach to the Delta and the State's policy of habitat restoration and securing a reliable water supply. The LMP was approved in 2007, after ten years of interaction, and its adaptive management strategies to balance the primary flood control function of the bypass with habitat restoration (both upland and fisheries), agriculture, education, and public use activities are key to YBWA management and our vision of the future.

Preserving the LMP's integrity, and the integrity of the adaptive management, ecosystem-based process it embodies and shapes, can be accomplished in a cost effective manner consistent with the Biological Opinion (BO) if all parties act in good faith with a commitment to ecosystem management and good science. As we discussed we are willing to look at various approaches that will accomplish the current uses and activities in the YBWA and the goals of the BO for fisheries, which is driving Conservation Measure 2 of the BDCP including mitigation for all impacts.

We estimate the costs associated with the YBWA in accordance with the LMP and the BO are one-time costs of \$2.9 million for equipment, facilities, and studies—thereafter, \$1.8 million annually, composed of: \$1.3 million for DFG land and resource management programs at full staffing to meet LMP goals and \$0.5 million for YBF educational and facilitation activities. The YBF support of the new Delta Gateway/Pacific Flyway Center is part of these costs. The cost of Center construction and, if needed, land acquisition would be additional costs. The YBF firmly believes that the location of the Center near I-80 and in close proximity to the Capitol will allow a strong showcasing of the State's twin goals of Delta restoration and a secure water supply with the added benefits of highlighting the flood protection role and the ongoing education programs for which YBF is well known. The YBWA is a showcase of the cooperative approach to wildlife friendly farming, fisheries and habitat restoration plus full public use and educational opportunities for school children and adults. This project can have it all: full public use and education all within a flood control area—a microcosm of what the Delta plan and the BDCP are all about!

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present the YBF position on Conservation Measure 2 of the BDCP and the full list of what not only we want but what we believe is achievable and will meet the goals of the BDCP, the BO, and the LMP in a highly visible manner to demonstrate that the State's twin goals in the Delta are also being met. It is as always a pleasure to work with you.

Sincerely,

Betsy Marchand  
Chair

Pete Bontadelli  
Vice-Chair



## **Yolo Basin Foundation Position Regarding Conservation Measure 2 of the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan**

The 2007 Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Land Management Plan is the basis for Yolo Basin Foundation's (YBF) position on the future of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA). The Plan's central focus is the use of an ecosystem-based approach to manage the diverse mosaic of managed and natural habitat communities in the YBWA in a manner that is fully compatible with the first priority of flood control for the Bypass. More than a decade of adaptive management has resulted in a successful mix of flood protection, habitat, agriculture and multiple public uses.

All restoration at the YBWA is designed and managed with flood protection in mind. Any proposed projects, including fisheries projects being considered in the BDCP, need to keep the current Bypass design and limitations for flood control at the forefront.

From the early days of the YBWA, the role of agriculture has been integral in managing the YBWA. Wildlife friendly farming, in a manner compatible with critical flood control functions, generates income that provides a significant source of YBWA operations and maintenance funds.

The public--including the farming community, the hunting community, the bird watching community, the education community, and the flood protection community --benefits from this integrated ecosystem approach.

In light of the needs of the Biological Opinion driving the current process, the YBF Board of Directors is committed to working with BDCP partners to refine and implement a fisheries program for the Bypass that includes the following actions:

- 1) Develop fish management scenarios that are compatible with the ongoing ecosystem approach to management of the YBWA including the role of flood management and, to the degree feasible, are not locked in through the BDCP process and allow their full development in the follow-up CEQA analysis.
- 2) To the extent that complete avoidance is not possible, provide full and complete mitigation for any impacts to the current integrated benefits of the area's ongoing management for flood protection, diverse wetland habitat, agriculture, and public use for both function and value.
- 3) Secure a long-term funding base for ongoing operations and maintenance costs at the YBWA especially if the current agricultural activities are impacted.
- 4) Develop a highly visible Delta Gateway/Pacific Flyway Center associated with the YBWA with partners committed to the long term funding (possibly through an endowment) for operation

and maintenance of the facility. The Center will showcase the YBWA as a microcosm of the Delta. It will also encourage public support for a wide variety of programs by providing a greater "sense of place" for the Sacramento River watershed and the critical function of the Yolo Bypass and its role in meeting the twin State goals of restoration of Delta habitat and a secure water supply.

5) Provide ongoing funding for environmental education and public use programs provided by YBF in partnership with Department of Fish and Game, recognizing that such programs will likely expand with the Center.