

Bay Delta Conservation Plan Working Groups and Technical Teams Purpose and Scope Statements

Section 4 of the BDCP Points of Agreement (November 16, 2007) described the formation of a number of working groups and technical teams which the BDCP Steering Committee either has already organized or anticipates organizing in 2008 as it moves further into the planning processes for 2008. To assist in the execution of the work of each of these groups and teams, the BDCP management team has prepared these proposed charges for each group. These are intended as drafts which are open to refinement by each of the groups and the Steering Committee at the outset as each group develops its approach and overall plan of work. These assignments would be subject to modifications as the work of each group matures over time and the needs of the planning effort evolve. Comments and refinements are welcome and encouraged, and are offered here to stimulate a productive focus on how best to move the planning process forward efficiently and effectively.

Biological Goals and Objectives Working Group

The principal charge for this working group is the development and refinement of the biological goals and objectives for the BDCP that will address the needs of covered species and their habitats in satisfaction of the requirements of the ESA, the NCCPA and other applicable requirements. The work of this working group is likely to continue through the planning process in 2008 as the subject matter elements of the BDCP mature.

This working group is to focus on the biological goals and objectives for the Plan as a whole. The lead responsibility for framing the specific conservation measures and the performance standards and metrics that may accompany those measures will lie with the specific working groups and technical teams which will be developing the substantive program elements. However, as the conservation measures and metrics are developed, they will be influenced by and will, in turn, influence these biological goals and objectives for the Plan. There will therefore be a continual iterative developmental process between the work of this working group and that of the other working groups and technical teams. In addition, once all the conservation measures have been tentatively identified, this Working Group can compare the measures to the biological goals and objectives to identify potential gaps.

Key Linkages: Close coordination with the Habitat Restoration Program and Other Conservation Actions Technical Teams and the Conveyance Working Group as program elements develop to identify the need for refining draft biological goals and objectives.

Conveyance Working Group

The purpose of the BDCP Conveyance Working Group is to:

- (1) Develop, analyze, and recommend proposed actions related to conveyance systems and their operations for consideration by the Steering Committee.
- (2) Review and comment on the draft preliminary plans for actions developed by the PREs or others on proposed Conveyance System actions with new points of diversion to move water from North of the Delta to South of the Delta as set forth in the November 2007 Points of Agreement of BDCP.

- (3) Develop criteria for water project operation, ecosystem restoration and species conservation¹ under the proposed Conveyance System in consultation with the Habitat Working Group that incorporate hydrodynamic conditions necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of BDCP.
- (4) Review and comment on preliminary plans developed by the PREs or others on early implementation activities and actions that could take place between the time the BDCP is signed and the construction and operation of the proposed Conveyance System in (1) above.
- (5) Develop criteria for water project operations, ecosystem protection/restoration and species conservation related to early implementation activities in consultation with the Habitat Restoration Working Group that incorporate hydrodynamic and water quality conditions necessary to achieve the early implementation goals and objectives of the BDCP.

Key Linkages: Close coordination with the Water Quality Working Group and the Analytical Tools, Habitat Restoration Program, and Other Conservation Actions Technical Teams.

Implementation Structure/Governance Working Group

Section 2.8 of the Points of Agreement recognizes that the BDCP will describe a structure and schedule for implementing the Plan itself. It anticipates the formation or designation of an entity or entities to assume responsibility for implementing the Plan, including the conservation measures, the adaptive management and monitoring program, and plan funding, oversight and reporting. There are a variety of options that may be appropriate for shaping a reliable, effective and efficient implementation regime for the BDCP and its several program components. The core charge for the Implementation/Governance Working Group is to recommend the institutional mechanisms and assignment of responsibilities for implementing the BDCP within the context of other ongoing Delta regulatory or planning processes. The working group may elect to approach the topic comprehensively, seeking to design an overall single entity with broad responsibilities for the plan in its entirety, or it may elect to approach the governance topic on a program element-by-element basis, reflecting that implementation structures and responsibilities for habitat restoration, conveyance, exotic species and water quality may differ.

The Implementation/Governance Working Group will want to coordinate closely with the other working groups and technical teams charged with the formulating the content of the substantive plan elements to ensure that the implementation structures and strategies are well suited to those substantive plan elements. Hence, the work of the group may need to continue over the course of the planning effort as the substantive program elements take shape.

¹ Criteria for water project operation related to conveyance for the BDCP are criteria for the operations of the SWP and CVP necessary for the protection of covered species and the ecological processes that support these species. Other criteria exist in the Delta for the protection of other beneficial uses that affect the operations of the SWP and CVP. While BDCP may suggest modification of these criteria for modeling purposes, these other criteria are outside the purview of BDCP to change.

Habitat Restoration Program Technical Team

Section 2.1 of the Points of Agreement anticipates the development of a habitat restoration and enhancement program to increase the quantity and quality of the habitat to help achieve the conservation objectives for covered species. Section 2.1 further anticipates a phased strategy for such a program with initial efforts focused on those areas offering the greatest near term conservation benefits, while others may await the completion of new conveyance facilities that may, in turn, open up other important habitat opportunities in the Delta.

The purpose of the Habitat Restoration Program Technical Team is to develop and recommend habitat-related conservation measures (protection, enhancement, restoration) for implementation within the BDCP planning area and Suisun Bay/Marsh that are designed to achieve BDCP covered species biological goals and objectives for adoption by the BDCP Steering Committee. The technical team anticipates addressing three broad topics related to development of habitat-related conservation measures:

- A. Locations within the Delta and Suisun Bay/Marsh that present opportunities for protecting, enhancing, and restoring covered fish species habitats.
- B. Priorities for implementing habitat-related measures.
- C. Methods for enhancing and restoring habitats and defining the ecological attributes to be provided by enhanced and restored habitats.
- D. Provide information that will assist the Biological Goals and Objectives Working Group in developing quantitative objectives, including open water and wetlands.

The scope of the Habitat Restoration Program Technical Team encompasses the following items.

- 1. Identify and prioritize important species stressors that should be addressed through habitat-related conservation measures, including uncertainties.
- 2. Develop and describe habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration concepts that will address key stressors, including uncertainties.
- 3. Based on the needs identified under Item 1, identify potential Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) within the Delta and Suisun Bay/Marsh where habitat-related conservation measures can be implemented.
- 4. Identify the range of habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration opportunities within COAs.
- 5. Based on Items 1-4, develop draft conservation measures that implement habitat-related conservation measures designed to achieve biological objectives including identification of the uncertainty related to these measures.

6. Coordinate with the Analytical Tools Technical Team to identify analytical tools appropriate for evaluating:
 - the efficacy of habitat enhancement and restoration concepts and
 - the suitability of COAs for enhancing and restoring habitats.
7. Coordinate with the Conveyance Working Group to identify the best approaches for addressing hydrodynamic modifications to benefit covered species.
8. Coordinate with the Biological Goals and Objectives Working Group to identify revisions to draft biological goals and objectives that may be warranted through findings of the team.
9. Following completion of draft conservation measures, the technical team may be reconvened on an ad hoc basis to revise conservation measures as needed based on new information and to ensure consistency with other components of the Conservation Strategy as they are developed.
10. The Team should coordinate closely with other existing Delta habitat initiatives to maximize the efficiency of the planning effort.

Key Linkages: Close coordination with the Conveyance Working Group and the Analytical Tools and Other Conservation Actions Technical Teams.

Analytical Tools Technical Team

Section 4 of the Points of Agreement anticipated the formation of an Analytical Tools Technical Team to assist in the identification of analytical tools to support the BDCP planning effort and its implementation. The purpose of the Analytical Tools Technical Team is to develop recommendations to the BDCP Steering Committee regarding analytical tools and analyses that would be useful for the development and evaluation of the BDCP. The team will also be responsible for recommending where additional independent science advice would be useful for evaluating the use and potential development of analytical tools for BDCP. The team will consider three functional categories of analytical tools:

- A. Tools that could be employed in 2008 for development of the BDCP;
- B. Tools that could be used to evaluate and assess the sufficiency of the BDCP in meeting ESA and NCCPA permitting requirements; and
- C. Tools that would be useful for implementation of the BDCP.

The scope of the Analytical Tools Technical Team encompasses the following items.

1. Work at the request and in support of the BDCP working groups and technical teams to help identify specific topics that could be appropriately evaluated through the use of certain analytical tools and techniques.

2. Assess the suitability of existing, available tools for meeting specific BDCP needs (both for planning and implementation) and provide advice to the Steering Committee and the other BDCP planning teams.
3. Formulate recommendations for the BDCP Steering Committee pertaining to procuring independent science advice regarding suitable analytical tools for BDCP planning and implementation, including a review of the November 2007 Independent Science Advisors recommendations pertaining to analytical tools and models.
4. Respond to requests on an as-needed basis from other workgroups regarding potential tools or their application for addressing specific needs.

Key Linkages: This team may provide an important supporting role for other working groups and technical teams. Analytical tools will be used by the Habitat Restoration Program and Other Conservation Actions Technical Teams to develop draft conservation measures and by the Conveyance Working Group to evaluate various conveyance design and operations scenarios. As these teams engage in their charge, they may require additional guidance regarding the application of appropriate tools or they may identify the need for additional analytical tools to inform their deliberations. The co-chairs of these other teams will notify the Chair of the Analytical Tools Technical Team as these needs are identified. On notification of such needs, the Chair of the Analytical Technical Tools Team, working with the Management Team, may reconvene the Team to coordinate with the requesting Team to develop appropriate solutions. In addition, the Analytical Tools Technical Team will keep informed and stay coordinated with other on-going regulatory and planning processes on the issue of analytical tools as they relate to BDCP.

Other Conservation Actions Technical Team
(to be constituted)

Water Quality Working Group
(to be constituted)