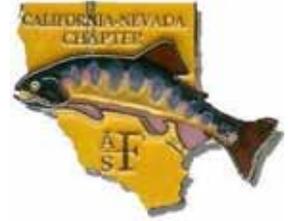




AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

California-Nevada Chapter



December 15, 2008

The Honorable Mike Chrisman and Members of the
Delta Vision Committee
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Comments on the Delta Vision Committee Discussion Document

Dear Chairman Chrisman and Committee Members:

The California-Nevada Chapter (Chapter) of the American Fisheries Society represents over 500 professional scientists in California and Nevada involved in fisheries research, management, and policy. The mission of the Chapter and our parent society is to apply and promote the use of science to improve conservation and sustainable management of fishery resources and the aquatic ecosystems upon which they depend. Since its establishment, the Chapter has provided technical analysis, interpretation, and policy recommendations on many regional fishery issues, including endangered species protection, invasive species control, and water resource management. In 1990, the Chapter filed the petition to list delta smelt as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Many of our members are actively engaged in aquatic habitat restoration, working in ecosystems throughout California and Nevada to enhance, protect, and conserve fish populations.

Delta Vision has a unique opportunity to set a new course for California resource management, one that provides for true balance between ecosystem and human water needs. The Chapter's members are ready to facilitate development and implementation of such a vision.

Building a new water conveyance system (whether it be an isolated or dual conveyance facility) has the potential to benefit the ecosystem as well as provide a more flexible and therefore more reliable water supply, but its success will depend upon how these facilities are operated. It is critical to recognize that, by itself, an "isolated diversion facility" is not a conservation measure; it must be part of a management strategy that truly considers ecosystem and water supply goals to be equal. Ecosystem recovery and sustainability goals must be established before a facility is funded, built, or operated. Therefore, facility operational details such as conveyance capacity, total allowable diversions and minimum bypass flows needed for a healthy Delta must be determined as part of a robust and objective evaluation of its impacts. Following a rigorous, science-based process will

ensure that ecosystem functions will be restored and the sustainability of ecosystems and water supplies are met.

After reviewing Delta Vision documents, we are troubled by the current lack of specificity regarding future water diversions from the Sacramento-San Joaquin basin. We wonder, will Delta Vision specifically recognize our finite water supply and recommend necessary actions for ecosystem restoration and water supply? Will Delta Vision have the courage to formally recognize that meaningful and lasting Delta ecosystem restoration (and species recovery) is fundamentally incompatible with ever-increasing demand for and removal of water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Basin? The answer to each of these questions, so far, is unclear.

Delta Vision must recognize and embrace the challenge of finite water supply directly and forcefully to win the support of the Chapter. We recognize the Delta can never again be the pristine system that it was before large-scale human settlement. With proper balancing however, it can be managed to sustain both human and natural communities.

Thank you for your efforts to improve Delta management and fully considering our comments. Please contact me if you have any questions or if we can provide any additional data or information on California's aquatic resources.

Sincerely,

**Bradley
Cavallo**

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