

## **Delta Vision Stakeholder Coordination Group Meeting Survey**

**Meeting #9, February 14-15, 2008**

CALFED Building  
650 Capitol Mall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA

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### **Welcome and Introductions**

Leo Winternitz, CALFED, welcomed the group, thanked them for their input which will be important to the development of the strategic plan.

Greg Bourne, Center for Collaborative Policy, reviewed the plan for the Stakeholder Coordination Group (SCG) and the four work groups that the Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) has asked to be set up to provide input into their strategic planning phase.

### **Overview and Discussion of the Proposed Strategic Planning Process**

John Kirlin, Delta Vision Executive Director, reviewed the strategic plan process. He thanked the SCG for their participation during the Vision phase. He explained how the BRTF process will look at things from a statewide perspective. The draft workplan involves input from the SCG, although the timeline is even more aggressive than for the Vision phase. Understanding the capacity of public and private institutions as well as the political context is ongoing during the process and will be challenging.

The Strategic plan has been organized into seven categories.

- 1) Near Term Actions follow up (including through Delta Vision Committee)
- 2) Ecosystem function: The Delta as integral part of a healthy estuary
- 3) Reliable water supply for California
- 4) Delta as a unique and valued place, warranting recognition and special legal status
- 5) Governance and strategic finance
- 6) Other (any additional work needed to satisfy Executive Order)
- 7) Assessment of dual conveyance as preferred direction (complete by June 2008)

This process is front loaded and has put a lot of pressure on staff. The near term actions and dual conveyance assessment are being worked on now. The strategic plan will have a rough first draft at the June BRTF meeting because a plan will be presented in October to the Governor. That is another reason all is happening now through May in a very fast pace.

The next steps are to drive all the work from the vision – especially the parallel processes. Other relevant work and data will be brought in and common

structures will be used for each work area. The common structure includes goals from the vision, setting performance measures, assessing capacity of the system to achieve the goals, proposed changes to the system if needed, and testing proposals and evaluating them.

Current structures that are in place will be used to complete this process. These include science advisors, the SCG, specific work groups, workshops, joint fact finding, and focused invention from outside experts. Additionally, the Task Force will invite outside submissions of proposals for different perspectives and insight.

Media and outreach efforts in addition to legislative hearings are also happening concurrently with the strategic plan process.

Formal relationships are being set up with other specific processes such as BDCP and DWR. Less formal relationships with other agencies such as CALTRANS are also being explored to gather information that will be helpful in the development of the Strategic Plan.

Director Kirilin anticipates 4 full meetings of the SCG to provide input during this process.

*SCG Comments and Questions:*

Q. Why are governance and finance linked together?

A. The choice to link them was to try and make things manageable, but also because they need to work together to be successful. You need to find a way to get public and private interests aligned, so it will succeed. In the vision, governance was called out specifically with some suggested recommendations that need to be explored in more detail. Arguably finance and governance could be part of all the work group discussions. In the vision, the Task Force called for a new governance structure so this work group can determine options to consider in that area.

Q. How is this going to be organized and held together to succeed?

A. The design and structure of the process will hold it together. The process is transparent, staff are trying to cover all the bases to make sure there are no disconnects, organizationally they are increasing capacity by setting up formal relationships with the other agencies and processes. The Project manager has experience with large processes, and there is a lead for each area. However, it will still be an awkward process that will hopefully come together by August. The SCG will be informed of all aspects of the process as it moves forward.

Q. How do various groups get involved and provide input?

A. Once the work groups are finalized, SCG members will be notified of their meetings so you can attend. Also, the SCG will meet periodically to provide input as well.

Q. How do we respond if the Governor has already determined his decision?

A. There is no answer to that since no one tells the Governor what to do. However, the Task Force believes that the Governor is only one actor in this as is Senator Perata and others. The Task Force will be influential since it will have significant support from various constituencies, making it a powerful voice. The Governor does not have the ultimate decision and neither does the Task Force.

One SCG member commented that if the political context drives things toward one area such as the bond or a peripheral canal, then some stakeholders may not have the resources to participate in both the SCG process and the political venue.

It was suggested that a common set of data and knowledge is critical to the success of the program. Director Kirilin confirmed that they are working to get that information pulled together and be done quickly.

Q. What about cities and counties – will they be involved in a formal or informal way?

A. Several of the counties do have someone assigned and they will be added to the list of collaborative agencies.

Q. What is the status of DRMS?

A. Greg Bourne briefly reviewed the status of DRMS. He noted it is winding to a close for its initial charge. They are finishing up the response to the Independent Review Panel (IRP) comments. In the meantime, a sub-group has been looking at ways to deal with levee protection in certain areas given various scenarios. Some of the problems that DRMS has encountered relate to the hasty process of Delta Vision. For example, one of the key DRMS members was pulled to the Task Force.

Q. What do we do about the central Delta islands and what are the impacts of a potential inland sea if they fail?

A. This topic could be one of the fact finding aspects.

Q. Where is the transparency? When are the SCG meetings?

A. The SCG will likely have two meetings between now and May and have yet to be scheduled. As for transparency, everything that is before the Task Force is public and posted on the Delta Vision website. The challenge is the timing – getting things done two weeks prior to a meeting is very difficult since meetings are happening every month, with numerous meetings happening every week.

Comment: In the absence of meetings, more work could be done to communicate information and materials to SCG members and the public. It was agreed that materials that are handed out at meetings should also be posted more quickly and that the SCG will be notified of all work group meetings.

Q. Will there be a Task Force member assigned as a liaison to each work group?

A. Task Force members have not expressed an interest in that, however they are very engaged in the process and the work they need to do in between meetings would likely not allow their participation additionally on the work groups. As the work groups progress, that information will be presented to the Task Force members at their monthly meetings as well.

Q. The science advisors noted that we will lose the western Delta islands and to some extent the central Delta islands and this assumption needs to be incorporated into the strategic plan – will that be considered?

A. That assumption came out just as the Task Force vision was completed, so more exploration of that will be done this year. There is not firm consensus that this is the case yet.

Q. How will the workgroups be organized and how will SCG members be kept in the loop?

A. The current concept is that work groups need to be small since they will be meeting every other week. We will let the entire SCG know about these meetings so you can attend. The resource support idea is that someone with expertise on something like recreation or tourism can integrate that knowledge into the work groups. During the full SCG meetings, members may also comment and provide input.

Q. If some of the information is not to be complete until after August how will it help provide meaningful input for the Strategic Plan?

A. We're not going to launch new processes to complete information that may not yet be done, but we will do as much as we can with the information we have compiled, through joint fact finding, expert testimony, etc. There will still be some information not known when the Strategic Plan is finished. The expectation is that this plan will focus more on specific policy issues rather than specific operational issues, so the expectation is that we can work through the difficult issues. It is important to note that the information we have today is better than it was 10 years ago, but even though in five years there will be better information, we are not tasked with waiting.

Q. What about areas not included such as Delta infrastructure and floodplain management?

A. The four broad work groups will include specific aspects such as floodplain management and they are noted as topics under each work group charge.

Q. The second two workgroups do not have anyone assigned yet – when will that happen and who will be dealing with dual conveyance?

A. Staff are still working with the Task Force to determine the work group members for Governance and Water. The dual conveyance assessment is being done separately by CALFED. The water workgroup will focus on water quality

and other issues not related to conveyance, although conveyance will still be a part of the discussion.

### **Confirm the Role of the SCG in the Strategic Planning Process**

Leo Winternitz reviewed the role of the SCG in the Strategic Plan process and the charge that the Task Force has approved. The report on dual conveyance is expected to be completed in May. He reminded the SCG that the vision recommendations are integrated and linked and the work of the work groups should also present integrated and linked work groups.

Q. Hydrologic modeling that is being done with results in May are due. Since assumptions and underlying interests of those running the models affect the outcome of those models, the hope is that there will be time for others outside those doing the models will have time to provide input since the results of the model won't be taken at face value when they are presented. There will need to be time to review the runs, evaluate, etc. Can that be done?

A. Yes, Environmental Defense may have resources to review the models, but NHI does not, so some may be reviewed, but likely not all of them. Usually these models are run to review small aspects of things, but they are being considered for larger scale iterations and it may not work. BDCP is also doing modeling, that may need to be monitored.

Comment: the sequencing of information gathering also needs to be laid out so that as more information comes in two years from now, five years, etc. it can be included and be useful.

### **Update on Litigation, Legislation and Bonds**

Chris Stevens gave an update on the Judge Wanger decision. He remanded back to the Fish and Wildlife Service the biological option due September 15. The status report to the court is due on April 30.

Starting soon, NRDC and others have asked for the rescission of four clusters of long-term water contracts, so there will be a legal battle soon. This is something that will happen in the next few months. Regarding the permanent injunctive release case, there is a companion case on salmon that will be rendered soon.

On the state side, the case of watershed enforcers v. DWR includes monthly status reports on the federal cases are informing this one. The CALFED Programmatic EIR case has been pending for some time now as well.

There could be a decision whether to list the Delta smelt as a federal endangered species coming soon.

The State Board is doing a strategic plan on the competing interests for water in the Delta. It is not known if they are relying on current processes for information or if they are gathering new data.

Kurt Miller gave an update on legislation and noted that the majority of legislators approved the Delta Vision process.

SB 1102 would delete the statutory repeal of the Bay Delta authority.

SB1108 would have the Coastal conservancy run a Delta conservancy program. The purpose is to have them manage programs such as farming, water quality, ecosystem, economic improvements, etc. that are traditionally done by others.

Assemblywoman Wolk is expected to introduce a bill on governance prior to February 22 - the deadline for new bills.

Senator Simideon – SB 27 contains amendments that address governance including managing the State Water Project (SWP), ecosystem protection, and other details.

The Chamber of Commerce has proposed a bond that contains \$2.4 million for Delta improvements including money for levee improvements, conveyance, etc. The administration has not taken a position on this bond.

Also, the expectation is that the legislature won't submit major governance restructuring until the Delta Vision process is complete.

### **Key Issues to be addressed in the Strategic Plan**

Greg Bourne reviewed the charge to the work groups and the setup of these groups. He noted that the groups meet every two weeks between now and the end of April. They are small and will submit their work to the Task Force every month and periodically to the SCG as well.

The charge for each work group is taken from the Task Force vision and the work of the groups will be related to the 12 integrated and linked recommendations of that vision.

Q. What is the role of the SCG before the work group information goes directly to the Task Force? How can we remain effective?

A. The work groups are not spinoffs of the SCG rather they are committees of the Task Force. Each work group involves some SCG members, but the groups are separate from the SCG. The products of these workgroups will come before the full SCG to gather continued input. SCG members are encouraged to provide input to the workgroups and the Task Force directly as well.

Q. There is a concern about not having a common set of assumptions about water. Since we're not sure how much water there is in the system won't there be problems later if an incorrect assumption is used as the base?

A. In the Vision there is a recognition that the system is overtaxed. There will need to be some fact finding on that issue. Currently, the state board has applicants for an additional 4 million acre feet of water – this information needs to be brought forward. The next Task Force meeting is focused on water efficiency and conservation, which will provide some information as well. The challenge is how to integrate that information with the work group input.

Q. What if the assumptions are wrong? What is the purpose of improving water efficiency?

A. There will never be perfect information. Efficiency of water delivery is important for a variety of reasons.

It was also noted that this is a strategic plan, not an implementation plan. Although it will have some specific policy suggestions, it will not contain operational suggestions.

Q. Does the ecosystem group lack an in-Delta representative?

A. We can consider adding a Delta representative to this group.

Q. How does improving water efficiency improve the Delta system? The ecosystem should be more of a driver than the issue of water efficiency and conservation.

A. Politically it needs to be addressed up front before any other management options would be considered. Also, should conservation measures be linked to benefits in the Delta? That is something else to be considered.

**Comments, additional data needs and information for the workgroups:**

SCG members broke up into four work group areas to provide input to the charge for each topic. These comments will be brought into the discussion at the first meetings of each group.

**Work Schedules, Assignments and Next Steps**

The Delta and Ecosystem work groups will meet Friday, February 15 and begin to develop performance measures as well as evaluation of current programs and policies.

The other two committees should be named in the next few days. As soon as the meeting dates and selection are set, we will send that information to everyone and post it online.

The full SCG will likely meet twice between now and May to get feedback and interaction on the work groups.