

California Bay-Delta Program Independent Science Board
August 28-29, 2007 Meeting Summary

Actions:

Individual Board Members:

1. Meyer and Mount to write memo to the DWR/DRMS team, requesting response to comments from IRP report on Draft DRMS Phase 1 Report.
2. Healey and Mount will verbally forward information to Delta Vision on DRMS review.
3. Mount to draft letter advising Lead Scientist regarding sea level rise. It will include acknowledgment that IPCC estimates are conservative, Ransdorff's analysis gives better first order approximation of a range of values, and that neither account for dynamic ice sheet instability which also must be factored into planning.
4. Mount, Baptista, Goodwin, and Healey to write two-page paper outlining the potential ISB role for advising, guiding the strategic planning process of Delta Vision with observation, assessment, and forecasting. Paper will be distributed via email for comment.

All Board Members

1. Conference call meeting in late September to discuss next steps after hearing back from DRMS team. Clarify involvement of IRP in rest of process.
2. Half-day Performance Measures Workshop proposed on 10/25 after ISB meeting. (Note: PM Workshop scheduled for all day 10/23)

Meeting Summary August 28, 2007

Attendance

Antonio Baptista	Peter Goodwin	William Glaze	Jack Keller
Daene McKinney	Judy Meyer	Jeff Mount	Richard Norgaard
Duncan Patten	Paul Smith	Bob Twiss	

Board Update – Mount

Independent Science Board Chair, Jeff Mount updated the board on activities since the June meeting including: July presentation to the Delta Vision Task Force by Mount and CALFED Lead Scientist Mike Healey on ecological principles underpinning the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; Comments from several ISB members on the *End of Stage 1* document have been returned to CALFED staff. Mount commented that there was still time for additional comments from board members.

Mount also presented testimony to US Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) during the August 21, Delta Water Summit in Southern California. The summit was an interesting process, when pressed by Schwarzenegger and Feinstein for the best option, Mount told them that this was not the job of science. A webcast of the Water Summit is on the CALFED website.

Director's Report – Grindstaff

Deputy Secretary for Water Policy and Director of the California Bay-Delta Authority, Joe Grindstaff discussed the Delta Water Summit, the state budget, and pending federal court cases.

Discussion Included:

Next steps after the Delta Water Summit, held August 21, is to finish the Delta Vision Process, and have some kind of cabinet level meeting to present the findings of the Delta Vision Task Force to Feinstein in December or January. Delta Vision and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) will be combined during this cabinet level meeting.

The Courts are getting close to ruling on the US Fish and Wildlife's biological opinion regarding smelt. It is thought that the ruling will find the opinion inadequate. Grindstaff will ask the ISB what kinds of things science should be doing based on the judges ruling.

Lead Scientist Report – Healey

CALFED Lead Scientist, Mike Healey discussed science coordination, communications, and the Science Program conveyance workshops. He also noted that with Mount, he will advise the Delta Vision Task Force how to use the Delta Risk Management Strategy (DRMS) Draft Phase 1 Report. The Science Program has also assembled a Delta Vision Assessment Team to evaluate submitted visions with the intent to stress positive aspects of the visions and to also identify potential shortcomings.

ERP Conservation Strategy – Wilcox

California Department of Fish and Game Deputy Director Carl Wilcox briefed the ISB on Ecosystem Restoration Program's biological vision for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Discussion Included:

The process is about 25-30 percent complete with the best-developed work within the Delta. Data collected for adaptive management will be through a performance measures process still to be fully worked out. The use of DRERIP models is important to the process for establishing development of critical habitat and the benefits of those habitats. The process has not yet looked at climate change.

Independent Review of Delta Risk Management Strategy Phase 1 – Moore

Johnnie Moore, chair of the DRMS Independent Review Panel (IRP) briefed the ISB on the review panel's assessment of the Draft Phase 1 Report. He stated that there were substantial reasons for concern about the report. Major issues noted by the IRP include lack of transparency of analyses, limited actual analyses carried through to the end, limited treatment of uncertainty, lack of integration of analyses, lack of robust methodology for assessing impacts on aquatic resources.

The IRP was concerned that, unless major issues are addressed, this document would not be a good basis for informing the DRMS Draft Phase 2 Report or other high-level policy decisions. The ISB received the report from the IRP and requested a response from the DRMS authors regarding the major issues in the IRP report (Tier 1).

Documents associated with this review can be found at the Science Program website at:

http://science.calwater.ca.gov/sci_tools/drms_irp.shtml

Public Comment

None.

Meeting Summary August 29, 2007

Attendance

Antonio Baptista	Peter Goodwin	William Glaze	Jack Keller
Daene McKinney	Judy Meyer	Jeff Mount	Richard Norgaard
Duncan Patten	Paul Smith		

Absent: Bob Twiss

Board Update – Mount

The are now four candidates for recruitment of the next CALFED lead scientist. Interviews will begin in late September through October. Mike Healey’s term will be up at the end of the year.

Alternative Statistics for Delta Smelt – Smith

ISB Board Member Paul Smith presented an alternative way to measure Delta smelt and other endangered or threatened species using a non-biased index. Smith advised decision-makers to consider the precision of incidence as primary controller and keep it in mind when looking data.

A draft paper is being developed by Randy Baxter of the Department of Fish and Game.

Sea Level Rise Memo – Mount

The CALFED lead scientist asked the ISB to evaluate the current science surrounding sea level rise for use in state planning. The current practice is to use the estimates of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for estimating sea level rise in the future. However, the most recent IPCC numbers, the fourth assessment, have lessened the amount of increase of sea level rise and do not address the dynamic instability of the polar ice sheets. This has led many to regard the IPCC numbers as too conservative. The ISB discussed the topic and will send a memo to the CALFED Lead Scientist highlighting their concerns about the adequacy of current sea level rise models with recommendations to consider in future planning efforts.

ISB Strategic Planning – Mount

The ISB discussed actions for the next year based on their strategic plan. Actions included:

1. Continue review of the DRMS reports.
2. Look at elements for building an observation, assessment, forecasting system that can be used by Delta assessment.
3. Developing science to allow utilizing an ecosystem focus rather than species focus for informing decision-makers.
4. Work with the ERP conservation plan.
5. Delta Vision, look at and comment on scientific foundations of the vision. Potentially develop a paper defining a process for strategic planning of the Delta Vision.

Discussion Included:

The ISB is still interested in lessening their review role and strengthening their role in providing foresight to decision-makers for understanding the Delta. They can assist in identifying the unknowns and direct science toward developing methods for understanding them. They can also help define and identify research needs critical to implementing the Delta Vision and Stage 2 of CALFED. The ISB felt that their strength was not in responding to the "species in crises of the moment."

Public Comment

None.