

ATTACHMENT A

**Lower Yolo Bypass Planning Forum
BDCP Conservation Measures Subcommittee**

*Conservation Measure Impacts, Challenges, and Objectives
February 28, 2009*

At the February 28, 2009 meeting, participants were encouraged to focus the meeting discussion on the following:

- BDCP Objectives,
- BDCP proposed Measures to achieve these Objectives,
- Subcommittee comments on potential impacts from proposed Measures (including necessary / desired impact analyses and studies), and
- Subcommittee proposals of other ideas that can minimize impacts and still meet BDCP Objectives.

The following is a summary of the discussion outcomes.

BDCP Objectives

- Establish seasonally inundated shallow expansive floodplains that results in tule dominant vegetative communities, extensive delivery of dissolved organic carbon, high availability of lower trophic level food sources, and transport flows for fish rearing.
- Create and maintain these habitats geographically dispersed throughout Delta.
- Develop Conservation Measures that contribute to the recovery of listed species.
- Create conditions to improve fish growth rates in the Yolo Bypass.
- Define a baseline target for species recovery similar to the species abundance of the mid 1960's to mid 1980's.
 - *NOTE: No set environmental condition has been established yet for / by BDCP.*
- Create a functional adaptive management approach to inform/adjust long-term measures
- Local inundation periods should be linked to yearly hydrologic conditions. These are variable. In wet years, inundation should last longer; in dry years, shorter.
- Ensure that BDCP actions are consistent with/supportive of broader CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) goals
- Stay compatible with current/future flood management system
- *Potential Objective: manage to create a move variable salinity gradient*

Following the identification of proposed objectives, the facilitator posed the question:

- *How might Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) actions impact other CALFED habitat species goals (including the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, Lower Yolo Bypass grasslands, etc.)?*

Potential Challenges/Concerns Defined by Subcommittee Members

- The breadth and accuracy of current data used as the basis for recommendations is questionable by affected stakeholders and admitted to be limited by BDCP consultants.

- The role of agricultural lands as a surrogate to produce shallow flooded habitat will require changes to current land management practices in the Yolo Bypass. What happens if agricultural land is lost in the Yolo Bypass?
- What is the status of a BDCP peer review? Who will do it? DRERIP is the most current analysis, but an additional peer review of BDCP information will have to be done.
- Future stakeholder involvement is necessary to include local knowledge and representation in the development of Conservation Measures.
- Need to define high/low inundation target times and ensure that they are memorialized in the BDCP Conservation Measures.
- Uncertainty in current flooding targets is untenable:
 - Such uncertainty will almost certainly permanently impact rice/agricultural production. This could result in a negative impact to local HCP/NCCP planning targets/horizons.
 - There is currently \$20 million in agricultural revenues from the Yolo Bypass.
- Loss of rice has significant impact to food sources for wintering waterfowl
- Local Yolo Bypass rice growers need access as early as March; increased inundation could delay their ability to plant.
- Why is BDCP a conservation plan for just aquatic species? Will it ever expand to include upland/holistic Delta approach?
- Flooding to managed marsh in December/January will be catastrophic to duck clubs and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.
- The current Conservation Measures could increase salinity levels further upstream than Suisun Bay (e.g. Rio Vista, Cache Slough). How will these effects be mitigated for?
- What is meant by “predator control”? When will that be defined?
- Vector control/public health issues that may be exacerbated by shallow inundation must be considered in the Conservation Measures.
- Current information suggests that organic carbon/water quality issues may be exacerbated by tidal restoration and floodplain inundation.

Comment [s1]: Please confirm this dollar amount.

Possible Impacts/Studies Needed

Answer: It is the BDCP’s intention to study such impacts and protect current land uses to support CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) goals. Key impacts to consider or studies to carry out should include the:

- Gradient of seasonal value from different actions.
- Impact to the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area from different flooding scenarios.
- Possibility that food transport will be negatively impacted by existing conditions.
- Impacts from local flooding to current land uses based on speculative benefits
 - What are the changes don’t work? How will impacts be mitigated?
- Comprehensive biological survey of potentially inundated areas
- Species-specific inundation scenarios. The Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan (DRERIP) analysis might inform these scenarios.
- Assessment of how local flooding will affect flood capacity of the bypass. What happens if major natural flooding events coincide with local flooding?
- Assessment of impacts of conservation measures to Delta sport fishing (i.e. Stripped Bass)
- Impacts of conservation measures to CVPIA goals re; other fish species
- Possibility that flooding after February will adversely affect marsh management (vegetation composition) and ground nesting birds.

Alternatives

- Create other flow sources other than notching the Fremont Weir (MWD and others are currently studying this possibility).
- Develop a functional window/duration/frequency/volume of local flooding that recognizes the current land uses in the Yolo Bypass.
- Design alternative flooding options through Yolo Bypass tributaries, such as the Putah Creek realignment.
- Construct floodplain habitat projects in other locations (e.g. Sac River Mainstem).

Outcomes

- Impacts should be completely avoided whenever possible
- Where impacts are inevitable, they should be fully understood before project implementation.
- When impacts occur, they must be fully compensated and mitigated for.
- BDCP should take steps to build trust in local communities. Assurances that structural/operational changes will support long term benefits/goals must be developed to achieve this.
- BDCP staff should develop a formal process to address local mitigation and integrate local feedback throughout the entire process.
- An overlay or timeline of land uses and flow scenarios will help BDCP staff and stakeholders to better understand the potential ranges of impacts.
- Discussion of land form management/options between engineers and local land managers would help integrate local knowledge in the Conservation Measures.
- Conservation measures should include a formal recognition of local values beyond “blue book” land value. This includes a respect of cultural values, recreational resources, and local heritage.
- Impacted parties must be kept whole beyond the CEQA meaning of “whole” (i.e., not just a No Action Scenario)
- A formal commitment in the Conservation Measures to monitor the hydraulic properties of the Yolo Bypass and to pledge no net negative impacts would help build trust with local stakeholders.
- Understand that impacts to Yolo Bypass agricultural also impact flood management.
- Concise objectives will lead to easier understanding and implementation of the Conservation Measures.