

**San Joaquin River Dissolved Oxygen TMDL  
Steering Committee Meeting – Draft Notes**  
March 6, 2002

**Attending:** Chris Foe (RWQCB), Mark Gowdy (RWQCB), John Herrick (SDWA), John Hewitt(CFBF), Mary Hildebrand (SJFB), Dan Hinrichs (City of Modesto), Bill Johnston (Modesto Irrigation District), Jeff Lafer (Jones and Stokes), G. Fred Lee (Directed Action PI), Debra Liebersbach (Turloch Irrigation District), Lee Mao (Bureau of Reclamation), Joe McGahan (Grassland Farmers), Bob Murdoch (Stockton), Lowell Ploss (SJRGGA), Tom Quasebarth (CDM, City of Modesto), Warren Shannon (City of Manteca), Herb Stone(WID), Alice Tulloch (Tulloch Engineering), Kevin Wolf (facilitator and notes 530-758-4211, [kjwolf@dcn.davis.ca.us](mailto:kjwolf@dcn.davis.ca.us)) William Wong (City of Modesto)

**Next Steering Committee Meeting:**  
April 3, 2002 9 am - 12:30 pm

**Next Executive Committee Conference Call**  
March 20, 2002 8:30 - 10:00 am Calling number to be announced.

**Next Technical Advisory Committee**  
March 12, 2002 9 am - 12:30 pm (RWQCB offices on Routier Rd, Sacramento)

**Handouts:**  
CALFED Federal State Management Group ROD Action Item Summary for the SJR DO Depletion - Revised 3/5/02

**A. Peer Review**

1. Barbara Marcotte from CALFED was unable to attend the meeting. Lisa Hunt with URS reported that URS has received some interim funding to help with the Peer Review and expects a larger contract will be signed soon. In the meantime, they are helping. Steve Richie is calling the peer reviewers and has confirmed with three of the six so far.
2. The earliest the Peer Review could occur is mid-May. More likely it will be mid-June. It must be before the end of June or the delay will cause funding problems with the end of the fiscal year.
3. The schedule the TAC developed at its February meeting was reviewed by the Steering Committee. (See [http://www.sjrtmdl.org/committee/2002/technical/tc\\_notes\\_feb19.pdf](http://www.sjrtmdl.org/committee/2002/technical/tc_notes_feb19.pdf)). Some of the issues raised by the Steering Committee included:
  - a. How much time will the peer reviewers need to write up their comments so that the Principal Investigators can respond? If the Peer Review occurs in mid-June, will there be enough time for the PIs to write their final reports before the end of the fiscal year?
  - b. Do we have a backup plan for alternative peer reviewers if our selected ones cannot make the workshop date?

4. The issue of an aeration expert on the Peer Review was raised. URS will work with CALFED to find one. Fred Lee reported that he approached Bill Boyle Ph.D. as a well-respected expert in river aeration. Lisa will pass this along to Steve and Barbara Marcotte.

### **B. Planning Coordinator**

1. URS will continue to help as the Interim Planning Coordinator. Funding and contract problems are almost over and URS should be able to devote more time soon. The first priority will be to help with the Peer Review. The next is to update the Plan of Action schedule and work plan for the next nine months.
2. Bill Johnston reported that he has drafted Scope of Work for the Planning Coordinator. He wants to get Barbara Marcotte's thoughts on it before circulating it widely. There is also an issue over whether the draft Scope of Work is for the Interim or long term Planning Coordinator. If it is for the long-term contract, URS should not be involved in reviewing the draft as they are interested in applying for the long-term coordinator contract. As soon as he gets feedback from Barbara, Bill will send the draft to the sjr-tmdl list for review. The Steering Committee will review a final draft at its April meeting..
3. Chris Foe meets with Barbara on March 14 and will talk to her about the coordinator contract and scope of work. The important thing is how to get help from now through when a long-term planning coordinator contract signed. The RFP and decision making process may take a long time. How can the interim position be funded?

### **C. Funding more information and analysis in 2002.**

1. The lateness of the Peer Review has created a bottleneck that needs to be gotten through before decisions can be made on what additional studies should be done. CALFED will not fund further projects without the peer review being completed. With completion now not likely until the end of June, there is little time for projects to be selected and in the field by September when there is still low DO conditions in the DWSC.
2. Without more monitoring and analysis in 2002, the data and analysis that is going into the Strawman Analysis will be the basis for the load allocation decision by the Regional Board in June 2003.
3. Chris will talk with Barbara and see if there are any other options for getting some important field research underway this summer/fall.

### **D. Impacts of Salt TMDL on DO TMDL**

1. Fred Lee said that the Salt TMDL that the Regional Board is deciding upon now will likely affect how water districts in the southern end of the watershed operate. The resulting operational changes will likely impact DO levels downstream. For example, there is talk about Grasslands shutting off all flows to the San Joaquin from June through August. This may help DO conditions in the summer but could exacerbate problems in September if the summer's delayed flows were released in greater volume in September or October. If though, all flows could be kept from the river until flows were high enough, Grasslands may

no longer contribute loads that impact low DO conditions during the key problem times of the year.

2. The Steering Committee is interested in being kept informed about the progress of other TMDLs. It did not make any decisions on what exactly it will do regarding the salt or other TMDLs. The Executive Committee can address this at their next meeting.

#### **E. Implementation Plan**

1. What is the role of an Implementation workshop? Is it to gain outside reviewers' expertise on what options should be evaluated in each of the implementation areas – aeration, flows and load reductions? Should it come after a call for stakeholder suggestions on what should be evaluated? Should it help decide on the screening criteria that would help determine which proposals are funded? When should it occur?
2. The role of the implementation workshop needs to be reviewed in concert with the detailed schedule of how we proceed from now through the end of the year and then through 2003 and beyond. URS will help with this as soon as possible. Hopefully by the April meeting they will have a new draft timeline, objectives and tasks for review. It will help the Steering Committee to know what decisions it will need to make and the sequence in they should address the key issues.

#### **F. CALFED Record of Decision (ROD) Update**

1. Chris Foe distributed the latest draft update for the ROD that affects the DO problem. CALFED wants our help in crafting the language to reflect what is expected and when. Chris has helped CALFED include the important dates that the Regional Board has set for developing the TMDL and implementation plan. Barbara Marcotte was not at the meeting to help clarify what the draft language was specifically meant to convey.
2. The proposed new draft ROD 50 language stated:  
“Finalize Initial Phase investigations of methods to reduce factors that cause low DO by the end of June 2003 to be included in the June 2004 Basin Plan Amendment recommendation to the CVRWQCB. Complete studies to evaluate the effectiveness of interim control actions for CVRWQCB consideration of a final Basin Plan Amendment control program if needed, by 2011.”
  - a. There was concern that this could be interpreted that studies of implementation options have to be finished by June of 2003 and that this would be impossible. The “investigations of sources and causes” could be finished by that date, though there may be interest in further investigations in 2003 based on what the peer reviewers conclude in June 2002.
  - b. (Note from Kevin: Maybe the draft ROD referred to finalizing the projects that will investigate the methods/options for solving the problem by June 2003. This would entail having PIs selected by this date who will investigate the different implementation options including pilot projects. This is possible to accomplish, though it depends on how long it will take CALFED to decide among projects after an RFP is developed and circulated.)

- c. Chris will work with Barbara to clarify what exactly is due by June of 2003.
- 3. There needs to be a better understanding of the long term timeline and what exactly is expected by June 2003, June 2004 and the end of 2005 and how this is reflected in the language of ROD 98 and ROD 99. For example, how and when will a final Basin Plan Amendment be written and what does it mean to an adaptive management implementation plan for solving the low DO problem?
- 4. The Steering Committee will review the ROD language again in April.

#### **G. Aeration Committee**

- 1. The Steering Committee's main focus was on the tasks and schedule of the Aeration Committee. The committee is not expected to take a lead in reviewing the Jones and Stokes report because it is being reviewed through the TAC process and in the Peer Review. (There was some concern about whether the final aeration report would be available in time for the peer review because Fred doesn't believe the existing draft provides the information that the peer reviewers will need. More will be known as the internal TAC review of the 2001 reports is done in the month of March. The Steering Committee will hear an update on this at their April 3 meeting.)
- 2. The Aeration Committee will not likely have to meet or do any work as a committee until after the Peer Review in June. At that time, the committee should help develop the RFP guidelines that could be used by CALFED in selecting a contractor to do the pilot work and monitoring program needed to test aeration options.
- 3. The Aeration Committee may need a new chair. Jay Jahangiri has left the Port of Stockton and is working on his own as a consultant. He expressed interest in continuing to be on the committee but it is unknown if he would be the chair and if he has an interest in bidding on future aeration proposals (which may preclude him from being the chair). The Steering Committee will address the chair issue after talking with Jay.

#### **G. Recirculation Committee**

- 1. Mary Hildebrand reported on a meeting with the Recirculation Committee members and Bill Jennings. There was a good exchange of information with the committee understanding Bill's concerns and vice versa.
- 2. There is general agreement that low head pumping at the Grantline Barrier should theoretically provide a significant increase in flows down the San Joaquin River. Pumping would be needed because the modeling currently shows that barrier operations alone has limited flow benefits. Pumping over the barriers should not be expensive because there is little lift required to move the water over the barrier. Additional modeling will help clarify this and related issues.
  - a. Can the needed modeling be done in 2002 with a renewal of the DWR-CALFED 2001 contract? Chris will talk to Barbara about this when he meets with her about how other studies potentially needed in 2002 can be funded.)

3. Will an NPDES permit be needed to pump South Delta water into the San Joaquin River? Bill Jennings thinks a permit will be needed because it is discharge of water with pollutants in it to another hydrologic basin. John Herrick was not so sure that a permit would be needed. For example, USBR does not need a NPDES permit to export delta water south, some of which then returns to the San Joaquin. There was no conclusion on this issue. More information is needed.
4. More studies and modeling on the potential of barrier operations and low head pumping on water quality issues will be needed to meet CEQA requirements. What will be the quality of the water that is exported? Will stagnant water that now develops in the South Delta be eliminated by the increased circulation and if so, will this significantly decrease the BOD and algal loads in South Delta water that would end up recirculating to the SJR?

#### **H. US Army Corps of Engineers, USBR and DWR Involvement on the Steering Committee**

##### 1. USACE

- a. Mary Hildebrand reported that a meeting with Senator Machado has been set for Friday March 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am. Anyone is interested in attending should call her. The purpose of the meeting is to see how he might help bring the Corps to the Steering Committee and help get more of their support on solving the low DO problems that the DWSC has helped cause.
- b. Mary will also attempt to schedule a meeting with Congressman Pombo and his staff. They have been helpful in the past in getting funds for the Corps to help in DWSC issues. Mary will also see if there is anything that Congressman Condit can help with given that he has lost some clout since he lost the March primary election.

##### 2. State Water Contractors and DWR.

- a. It was suggested that the best persons to contact for involving the state water exporters with the Steering Committee were John Colburn with the contractors and Kathy Kelly with DWR. Kevin will follow up and invite them to the April Steering Committee meeting.

##### 3. USBR

- a. Lee Mao with the USBR's CVP planning division attended the meeting. He reported that USBR is determining how they should be involved in the stakeholder project and who should attend the Steering Committee meetings. Lee will be an interim liaison and will report on the USBR's decision at the April meeting.

#### **K. Draft Interim Performance Goal and Final Target Analysis Report**

1. Mark Gowdy reviewed the key issues in the draft report. (See [http://www.sjrtdml.org/regulations/target\\_reports/target\\_report\\_feb27.pdf](http://www.sjrtdml.org/regulations/target_reports/target_report_feb27.pdf)).
2. Mark and Chris have renamed this as a Performance Goal instead of an interim milestone as they talked about at the February Steering Committee meeting. The concept is the same. The goals laid out in the report will guide the Regional Board in evaluating the effectiveness of the load allocation and implementation plan.

- a. It is not clear whether the specific target DO levels would become operating criteria for running aerators or barrier recirculation pumps. Should the design and operational criteria for an aeration system be based on ensuring that the performance goal is not violated for different water years?
3. Right now Regional Board staff interprets the 5.0 DO standard to mean at any time of the day and at any place in the DWSC. Thus the performance goal would also need to meet this interpretation. Some Steering Committee members pointed out that the existing language on the standard though does not have to be interpreted in this way. It could be interpreted to be an average for time and location. How and when will the interpretation be finalized by the Regional Board? This will be discussed at future Steering Committee meetings.
4. Where will measurements take place to evaluate how progress is being made towards achieving the performance goals? Will a lot of monitoring devices need to be distributed through the DWSC or can one or two monitors do the job?
5. Mark showed his evaluation of historic data in relation to the Streeter-Phelps model for DO levels in rivers. One of his main conclusions is that DO levels upstream of Channel Point are important to the level DO reaches in the DWSC. Thus it will be important to monitor DO upstream. His analysis also indicates that flow levels into the DWSC will change the location of the low DO point and this will impact our understanding of where monitoring should occur and how it will predict low DO conditions at other points in the DWSC based on incoming flows.