

SJR DO TMDL Steering Committee Notes - Draft
May 22, 2003
Newmiller-Beardslee Offices, 509 West Weber, Stockton CA

Attending: Paul Bowers (USACE), Jim Curtis (Kennedy Jenks), Mark Gowdy (RWQCB), John Herrick (SDWA), Alex Hildebrand (SDWA), Mary Hildebrand (SJFB), Lisa Hunt (URS), Paula Landis (DWR), Gary Litton (UOP), Barbara Marcotte (Bay Delta Authority), Lee Mao (USBR), Lowell Ploss (SJRGGA), Will Stringfellow (LBNL), Herb Stone (WID), Tom Trexler (JSA), Kevin Wolf (facilitator and notes 530-758-4211, kevin@wolfandassociates.com)

Next Meetings:

Steering Committee: June 26, 2003 (9 am - 12:30 pm)
Newmiller-Beardslee Offices, 509 West Weber, Stockton CA

Executive Committee: To be Announced.

Conference call number will be announced with the agenda.

Meeting Handouts

1. Work Assignment 17 - Draft (extension of the Aeration Demonstration Project)
2. Work Assignment 19 - Draft (extension of the facilitation, communication and coordination assignment)

Note: Both of these will be located at

<http://www.sjrtmdl.org/implementation/coordination/index.htm>

3. San Joaquin River Group Authority Concept Proposal to the SWRCB entitled -

A. Planning and Coordination Team

1. Work Assignment 4 – (facilitation, communication and coordination)
 - a. All is going well with this Assignment. Funds are expected to run out by the end of June so it is important that its extension (see Work Assignment 19 below) occur soon.
2. Work Assignment 5 – Demonstration Aeration
 - a. The criteria for selecting among the different possible aeration devices are being developed. Tom Trexler will post the draft criteria to the listserv for comments.
 - b. The demonstration aerators will be selected based on their ability to meet the worse case scenarios of loads and flows including negative/upstream flow conditions.
 - c. Stakeholders will be involved in all aspects of this work assignment by being invited to participate in the working group and by being able to review drafts and final products on the website and via the email listserv. (Note: Stakeholders will have similar opportunities to be involved in all work assignments.)

b. Work Assignment 5 will lead to Work Assignment 17 (see below).

3. Work Assignment 6 (Implementation Planning)

a. Lisa Hunt reported that URS is making progress on the integration of the different planning elements of these work assignments and the steps that will need to be taken by the Regional Board to include a long term implementation plan in a 2008 or 2009 Basin Plan Amendment. URS expects to have a draft available for stakeholder review around June 10.

b. The schedule will identify major milestones and products. For example, URS will note when a lead agency needs to have committed in order to have the aeration demonstration project move forward. Explanations will accompany these milestones.

c. Lisa said that URS is also developing presentation materials to explain everything to the stakeholders and the public. They are seeking brochures, power point presentations, articles and other information that can explain different parts of the TMDL and the implementation plan. If you have any materials notify her at Lisa.Hunt@urscorp.com.

d. URS is also developing the roles and responsibilities document. The notes from this and the next meeting will be help with this assignment.

e. From this master schedule, a tentative schedule of meetings will be proposed for agreement at the June 26 Steering Committee meeting.

f. Meeting participants requested that URS also clarify how the flow of money will work within the integrated schedule. How will Prop. 13 funds be allocated? Where will funds for the Regional Board's CEQA process come from?

h. The interim implementation work plan for the next five years will not be going to the USEPA at the end of June. Only the technical TMDL and load allocation will be provided though Mark Gowdy's has been keeping them informed about the implementation aspects of the project.

i. An extension of this work assignment will need to be drafted and approved in order for all the work involved to be completed.

j. This integrated plan and timeline will be a living document that will change over time.

4. Assignment 7 (Non-Aeration Feasibility Studies)

a. Unfortunately the General Services Administration had not completed its review of the Work Assignment by the start of the meeting. Jones and Stokes cannot begin to work on the contract until it comes back from GSA and is signed. This should happen soon because the GSA is supposed to finish in 10 days, which they have now exceeded.

b. As soon as the contract is signed, the Coordination team will work with Mark and Barbara and other stakeholders through a Working Group process to develop the details

for how the Non-Aeration Feasibility Studies will get to the point that a Focused PSP can be released for funding requests. (Note: URS will incorporate the impacts of the delay of Assignment 7 in the integrated timeline.)

c. Discussions have been going on between Mark Gowdy, Tom Trexler and Barbara Marcotte about how broad WA 7 should be. There is agreement that it should evaluate alternatives in the three load allocation categories - channel geometry, stream flows, and load reductions. In addition, WA 7 seems the logical place to evaluate other important scientific questions that could affect which feasibility options made the most sense in the long run. Examples of this include:

Changes in algal transport in DWSC, Central and South Delta.

Other key studies that could be done inexpensively and quickly.

Link's to existing studies that are already underway on these issues. Assignment 6 will help find these other studies

d. Work Assignment 7 will need an extension to complete all of this work.

5. Work Assignment 17 – Extension of the Aeration Demonstration Project process (DRAFT)

(*Note that this work assignment is draft until approved by the Bay Delta Authority.)

a.. This extension follows the work plan that has developed over the last year and will provide the needed funds to complete the tasks through to the time that bids can be pursued for the final demonstration aeration project.

b. One change in the Work Assignment is that funds would be provided to Gary Litton (UOP) and JSA to research NH₃ degradation rates and other technical questions that have been raised in the past and that will be important to answer in order to properly design the aeration project.

d. A second change is that funds would be made available for Carl Chen (Systech Engineering) to apply his computer model of the DWSC to questions needed for the selection of the best aeration system and its placement in the channel. For example, his model will be able to help evaluate how different flow regimes and algal loads affect the amount of aeration that should be needed to meet different D.O. targets. Steering Committee participants requested that the modelling review the likely hydraulics of system that will occur with the installation of the operable South Delta barriers and for scenarios where they are not in place. There will be opportunities for public and peer review of the operating scenarios that will be modelled.

e. The Steering Committee agreed to support Work Assignment 17.

6. Work Assignment 19 – Extension of the Facilitation, Coordination and Communication task. (DRAFT)

a. This assignment allows the continuing support of stakeholder meetings whether they are work groups or some form of a Steering Committee. The budget will allow flexibility so that different meetings can be provided support.

- b. The website will gain ongoing support.
- c. The last subtask will allow consultant staff to participate in up to 36 meetings of different agencies that overlap and may be impacted by or have an impact on the DO situation.
- d. The Steering Committee supported this Work Assignment.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Stakeholders are important to the ongoing work needed to develop a long term implementation plan. They can play the following roles:
 - a. Bring political clout to the project for a wide variety of purposes.
 - b. Can help find funding and other resources.
 - c. Will be needed to make some funding commitments (e.g. Maintenance and Operation of the aerators)
 - d. Provide advice to Regional Board in the BPA process including the selection of alternatives to be included in the functional equivalent of an EIR for the long term implementation plan.
 - e. Be the lead agency for the aeration project.
 - f. Participate in the development of non-aeration feasibility studies.
2. Stakeholders will have opportunities to be involved in the 2004 Basin Plan Amendment "functionally equivalent EIR" process that will begin this summer and conclude in a Regional Board approved Basin Plan Amendment in June of 2004.
3. Uncertainty over how the Ag Waiver issue will play out causes concern in the farm community on the importance of and their role in the DO TMDL stakeholder process. As this is clarified in the months to come, it will be easier for these stakeholders to determine their roles and responsibilities and how integrated this should be with the stakeholder processes that will be needed for other water quality issues with the end of the Ag Waiver.
4. There are a number of short term reasons for the stakeholders to meet on policy related issues and to have at least a June meeting. These include:
 - a. Reviewing work assignments 18 & 20
 - b. Providing input into the schedule and milestones for next 5 years.
 - c. Providing feedback on the screening criteria for allocating funds in the non-aeration Focused PSP.
 - d. Evaluating how to integrate the DO efforts with the changes that are coming with the end of the Ag Waivers
 - e. Determining who should be the lead agent for the aeration demonstration project.
5. There will be technical working groups associated with the aeration and non-aeration tasks that will be open to all. Exactly how these technical teams will be organized will be

determined based on what happens with the upstream studies proposal and what the URS developed schedule indicates.

C. Concept Proposals

1. The Steering Committee would like to know who has presented concept proposals to the SWRCB that may help or impact DO issues. If anyone knows of such proposals, please have the proponents send them to Kevin who will summarize them to share on the email listserv. A couple of reasons were expressed for why sharing this information would be important.

a. The Steering Committee or stakeholder organizations may be willing to send a letter of support of the final application.

b. There may be synergies available among proposals that could improve each one's chances of being funded.

2. The SJRGA submitted a concept proposal for monitoring on eastside of the San Joaquin, education of local stakeholders and organizing to improve water quality.

3. Will Stringfellow said that Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory researchers submitted a number of proposals that overlapped in some areas with D.O. For example, one proposal has a primary focus on Total Organic Carbon from wetlands and drinking water quality. TOC though also affects DWSC DO levels. Will will send the proposal to the group and attempt to find other LBNL proposals that also overlap with DO issues.

4. Central and South Delta Water Agencies turned in a concept proposal to identify who is measuring what and where in their region so that they can determine what is not being monitored that should be. A primary focus will be to help determine their pesticide contribution.

5. A significant issue discussed by the participants is the importance of collaboration between all of the water quality monitoring and research that will be occurring in the San Joaquin watershed. Without good coordination, duplication and wasted effort will occur. It is expected that the SWRCB will help with this coordination but it is not yet known how this will occur.

D. South Delta Improvement Project (SDIP)

1. Paul Marshall gave a summary of the SDIP. In essence, this proposal would install permanent operable barriers at the Head of Old River and at three other locations in the South Delta. These barriers would be operated in conjunction with the tides to improve water supply and quality in the South Delta and to allow for increased exports to Clifton Court and to the State Water Project. They will also be operated so that they don't harm threatened and endangered species. Right now the SDIP "8500 cfs" working group is working out the details of the different Operational Plans that would be included in the EIR with the hope that they can select a Preferred Alternative. The Alternatives on the table are the:

- a. Low yield plan – 6000 cfs at extra yield (Bay Institute)
 - b. Revised Fishery Plan – modest yield (Fishery Agencies)
 - c. Exporter Run Plan – high yield
 - d. USBR / CVP run plan – not yet formalized
 - e. No action alternative – same regime as now
2. The Barriers could be tidally pumped to allow flow to go out of Old River and increase flow in the SJR. Increase flow in the SJR will improve DO conditions, especially because the water entering the SJR from Old River will have lower algal load levels.
3. The SDIP also calls for dredging in Middle River and West Canal to allow better circulation in these areas.
4. Stakeholders in the project are still working out the alternatives for increased export pumping so that they can be included in the EIR on the project. Key issues include how the system will be operated, who will get any increased exports, and when the project will be shut down because of fish are being harmed (fishery agencies are concerned that central and south delta fish such as the Delta Smelt will be pulled south towards the export pumps and will experience increased harm).
5. When the Head of Old River Barrier is in place, more water flows through the DWSC and DO conditions improve. When the HORB will be allowed to do this will depend on how the fishery agencies operate it as they consider fish conditions in the region.
6. A Draft EIR for the SDIP is expected to be out in November. More details will be available then.
7. Alex Hildebrand provided some additional background on the SDIP and explained why he thought that the operable barriers in combination with low head pumps to increase circulation would be the best solution to the problems that occur in the area under the existing export regimes.
- a. Sacramento River water needs to flow downhill in order to get to the export pumps, thus the south delta hydrology has radically changed.
 - b. CVP pumps operate around the clock, predominantly April through September and are not coordinated with the tides.
 - c. SWP pumps stop during low tides but in other tidal conditions pump water into the Clifton Court Forebay from which water is exported around the clock.
 - d. Increased spring flows in the SJR to meet VAMP conditions end up reducing summer flows which harm South Delta water users.
 - e. When Friant diverted water to the south and the downstream SJR farmers began using Delta export "exchange" water, increased salt loading occurred as the water recirculated in the system. This increase of salt harms all users of the water.

- f. New Melones water has been used to dilute the salt to meet the Vernalis TDS standard but it doesn't remove the salt from the system.
- g. The SDIP operable barriers are the best solution to the harm that these changes have cause to South Delta farmers.
- h. Currently fish removed from the export pump fish screens are trucked to release locations and have low survival rates. Alex believes that the operable barriers in conjunction with low lift, fish friendly pumps and recirculation will reduce the fish kill associated with export pumping. This option though is not yet being officially considered.

F. Upstream Studies

1. Barbara Marcotte gave an update on the status of the Upstream Studies. Three peer reviewers have completed their evaluation and their reports are in. These reviewers do not feel they are expert enough to judge the isotope section of the studies. Barbara is searching for an additional expert to help evaluate this part of the studies.
2. Once the peer review is complete, it needs to be pulled together and sent to Bay Delta Authority's ERP selection panel which will have a Regional Board staff person on it. Hopefully this will occur by mid-June.
3. After this, there will be a 30 day public comment on their recommendation.
4. When this is complete, it will be sent to the August BDA meeting for final approval.
5. It is possible that the decision can occur sooner than August if the BDA at their June meeting gives Patrick Wright the authority to make a final determination about the studies. (Note: The June BDA may not occur because the governor has not yet appointed all of its members. Stakeholders might want to write to the governor to encourage him to make these appointments soon.)