

# **Delta Long Term Management Strategy Interagency Working Group August 18, 2005**

## **Draft Meeting Summary**

The Interagency Working Group (IWG) of the Delta Long Term Management Strategy (Delta LTMS) met at the Regional Water Quality Control Board in Sacramento at 1pm on Thursday, August 18. Purposes of the meeting were to:

- receive updates on the survey process
- discuss the Charter process framework
- discuss future scientific studies and resources

Participants included:

Eric Nagy, USACE  
Sue McConnell, CVRWCQB  
Bob Yeadon, DWR  
Sergio Guillen, CALFED  
Brian Ross, USEPA  
Charles Gardiner, CirclePoint  
Sonja Wadman, CirclePoint

## ***Survey Update***

Sonja provided a handout of people who have been interviewed thus far, those that need to be scheduled, and others that have been suggested by interviewees. Stakeholders that still need to be surveyed include additional DWR management (Curt Schmutte and Les Harder), Tom Zuckerman, the North Delta Water Agency, engineers representing the Reclamation Districts, Port of Sacramento (Tom Scheeler), DeltaKeeper (Bill Jennings), Fish and Game (Brian Finlayson), and Fish and Wildlife (Ryan Olah). Others that have been recommended by more than one interviewee include Lauren Hastings (CALFED ERP Delta Coordinator), a representative of the State Water Contractors (Laura Moon Knight), and the Nature Conservancy (Mike Eaton). Sergio recommended interviewing Donna Podger at CALFED along with Lauren Hastings (at the same time if possible). CirclePoint will contact these additions and follow-up with others to schedule final interviews.

The group discussed methods of involving DWR management, which has proven to be challenging (promotions are increasing the responsibilities of key people with Delta dredging knowledge). It was recommended to keep working with Dave Mraz to schedule a “sit down” with Curt and Les, and if need necessary get help from CALFED and the Corps (an encouraging email from executives). Sergio suggested calling Linda Cooper, DWR executive assistant, to arrange meetings (653-6055).

Charles provided a summary of areas of agreement and challenges identified thus far by interviewees. Every survey participant stressed that the goals of the Delta LTMS need to be compelling to keep stakeholders engaged, ensure management buy-in, help secure funding, etc. Five main goals were listed in order of “compelling-ness.” They are:

1. maintain/stabilize levees
2. dredge to maintain navigation, flood control, water conveyance, and recreation
3. protect surface and ground water quality
4. protect fish species and habitat
5. facilitate beneficial re-use of dredge material

Other points of agreement addressed issues of education (what are the benefits of what action to whom), the need for streamlining the permitting process, identifying and understanding impacts, and ensuring a LTMS process that is focused yet inclusive. Some interviewees suggested developing a conceptual plan first then including others. Many commented that a collaborative process works best, while at the same time acknowledging that finding consensus among conflicting mandates and interests is often challenging.

Other challenges that were identified through the interview process included developing political and executive management commitment and support, keeping a focused scope while considering the whole picture, lack of adequate funding and resources, and conducting the LTMS in the context of the pelagic fish decline. Land use planning roles, authority, and impacts in the Delta was mentioned as a challenge that the SF LTMS didn't face since the BCDC has land use authority in the Bay. There is an issue of upland dredge material disposal in the Delta. The coordination with and role of CALFED in the process was debated by many interviewees. There must be a link between what is developed by this effort with the Levees and Ecosystem Restoration programs. Other challenges included developing a process for emergency conditions (if material is needed, where get it from) and considering cumulative impacts (provides background, promotes interconnectivity).

IWG members agreed that an open, transparent process with ample opportunities for public input is the best way to create an objective process that is procedurally correct.

It was noted that many felt a need to broaden the scope of the LTMS away from just dredging. Eric speculated that he would need to sell the “holistic” approach to fixing the Delta to the Corps when future funding is needed—funding for this stage of the process has been secured on the notion of facilitating dredging for navigation in the Delta. Bob commented that funding might be procured from DWR if the goals and scope of the project are broadened.

The group discussed the possibility of involving the Governor's Office because of economic issues (the channel to the Port of Stockton is the economic lifeline for Central CA). It was noted that the Governor's Office was not a part of the SF LTMS. It was suggested that because the Port of Oakland was in jeopardy at that time and they are such a big player California's economy, a representative from the Governor might not have seemed necessary in the SF LTMS. There is competition among the Ports. IWG meeting participants commented that the Governor should look at this as the state supporting dredging activities regardless of which port it benefits.

The role of the State Water Board in the Delta LTMS and in relation to the Regional Board was discussed. Charles noted that the State Board participated in the SF Bay LTMS and was the CEQA lead agency. Tom Howard (SWRCB) indicated that he expected to commit two people again (one staffer and one policy level person). Tom also assumed that the State Board would be the CEQA lead on the LTMS when environmental documentation is needed. Differences between the SF and CV Regional Boards were mentioned during some interviews with some frustration. Sue acknowledged that the Regional Boards are different; issues within their boundaries vary and influence their Basin Plans.

### ***Charter Process Discussion***

Charles distributed a handout describing the proposed purposes of and key topics to include in the Process Framework and Program Charter. He explained that by the end of September, the process framework should be developed with key stakeholders. CirclePoint will initiate drafting the key topics of the framework, which will detail what the Delta LTMS strategy would entail. The program charter will likely be developed afterwards over a period of 4-6 months, and will be the document that is signed by the appropriate parties.

Charles asked if the IWG would want to help draft the framework. Eric responded that he expected the members of the IWG to commit to reviewing drafts and offering assistance by providing examples when possible.

Eric explained that he needs an internal/external marketing brochure for his management that explains the framework or LTMS. Brian agreed and suggested developing a briefing booklet to describe the framework. He said that some details should be provided in the briefing document, but wondered if detailing the structure, participants, roles, authority, and decision making might be premature until the Charter or an MOU is developed. He cautioned against developing something that appears as a “done deal” before others can provide input.

Eric recommended that CirclePoint and the IWG draft some language for the briefing document, then offering it to the heads or quasi-management of the respective agencies. He suggested a road-show where buy-in is sought from the agencies and some stakeholders. Agreement on the goals and main points of the framework is needed before it is reviewed by a larger group. Sergio reminded the IWG of CALFED’s Agency Coordination Team meetings where many agency executives already convene. The group speculated that the ACT might have more players at the table than needed for the purpose of the Delta LTMS.

Brian offered to send links of example charters to Sonja and the team. He mentioned that the DMMO of the SF LTMS had a charter, as does the LA Contaminated Sediment Task Force. The National Dredging Association has links to various agreements.

Bob complimented the IWG for taking a pro-active approach to addressing Delta issues. Staff at most agencies operates in a “crisis management” mentality.

### ***Future Studies***

Sue commented that the Regional Board has serious concerns with the proposal submitted by Todd Bridges. In particular, John Marshack has concerns with the phasing of studies and testing in anaerobic conditions. The Regional Board questions the notion of tests based on disposal sites. They feel that field validation is needed. How is it known what test is most appropriate? Sue said that there will be a conference call about the proposal and Regional Board concerns tomorrow (8/19). Eric informed the group that some funding for the studies and future work with CirclePoint is available. He has received approval to roll money into the next year or phase of work. The IWG must try to determine the technical activities that are needed to answer the questions currently being asked.

### ***Meeting Wrap-Up***

The next meeting of the IWG is tentatively scheduled for September 8<sup>th</sup>. Location and time will be determined later.