

DELTA LTMS TECHNICAL WORK GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, May 25, 2010
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MEETING NOTES

MEETING ATTENDEES

Christine Boudreau – Boudreau and Associates

Steve Cappellino – Anchor QEA (via phone)

Tricia Craig – Bay Planning Coalition

Matilda Evoy-Mount – USACE SPK

Phil Giovannini – CVRWQCB

Roberta Goulart – Contra Costa County

Michael Hoover – USFWS

Bonnie Hulkower – USACE SPN

Ellen Johnck – Bay Planning Coalition

Misty Kaltreider – Solano County

Cory Koger – USACE SPK

Gilbert Labrie – DCC Engineering

Tina Lunt – MBK Engineers

Susan Ma – USACE SPN

Jack Malone – Anchor QEA

Steve Michelson – Applied Water Resources

Mark O'Brien – Env. Risk Services

Al Paniccia – USACE SPN

Tom Scheeler – Port of West Sacramento

Jeff Wingfield – Port of Stockton

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

FUTURE MEETING DATES

- The next Delta LTMS TWG meeting is scheduled for **July 20, 2010**. The group suggested a potential backup date of July 27, 2010 in case the proposed date doesn't work for Bill, Kate, and Brian. Bonnie suggested that the meeting start time be changed to 10 a.m. instead of 9 a.m., so the July meeting will start at this time as a trial to determine whether it works for the group.

DELTA LTMS BUDGET

- Al reported that the reprogrammed funds of \$150,000 from the Bay LTMS were approved, which would allow the Delta LTMS to make it through the fiscal year with the usual meetings but there will not be funding available for special studies or other projects.
- At this time, the Delta LTMS is still listed as receiving no funding in the FY 2011 budget. Ellen and Roberta are working on behalf of the LTMS to secure funding and Roberta stated that she had been calling USACE HQ to advocate through SPK and SPD and she reported that it sounded like there was impetus to find extra funding but she has not received recent updates on this issue. Al said that he had not heard any new updates about additional funding. Ellen reported that Nancy Pelosi is supportive of the Bay LTMS.
- Roberta stated that there was some discussion that the official name of the Delta LTMS (Pinole Shoal Management Study) is awkward and not descriptive of the LTMS effort, which could make it more difficult to encourage recognition of the project when lobbying for funds. She reported that there was also discussion that perhaps the Delta LTMS should be combined with the Bay LTMS. There was a general discussion within the TWG about potential concerns and benefits associated with combining the two LTMS projects.

MEETING REMINDERS AND REPORTS

Dredging 201

- Cory said that he found the meeting useful and informative and that it gave him a better understanding of the permit process for dredging projects.
- Roberta stated that in the future it would be better to have the meeting notice and email notifications include a more detailed description of the meeting content and goals to inform potential attendees' decisions of whether to allocate their time to attend. She suggested this would also help to draw the target audiences. Christine stated that the workshop was well attended.
- Ellen said that she thought the meeting was well attended but didn't focus enough on sediment disposal and placement and that the Bay Planning Coalition was going to have their own meeting on sediment disposal and placement on June 29. (The meeting announcement will also be posted on the Delta LTMS website.)

Bay LTMS Science Symposium

- Christine reported that the symposium was less well attended than the Dredging 201 Workshop but there were very informative reports on technical topics from ongoing projects.

Previous Delta LTMS Meetings

- Susan reported that Frank Wu has incorporated the recent Delta Biological Opinions into the hydrodynamic modeling and has scheduled a meeting with other agencies in June to discuss the modeling.
- Jack summarized the action items from the previous TWG meeting. There was discussion about the status of the RWQCB Emergency GO and Phil stated that the DWR is still working to fund the background study that Steve Michelson proposed and that he would work on the GO in conjunction with that study because the results of the study could potentially inform decisions on the GO. Steve Michelson reported that Sherman, Twitchell, Brannon-Andrus, and potentially Jersey Islands will be involved in the background conditions study and that funding is supposed to be on the way from DWR. They are still working on the contract language with Jersey Island.
- Jeff suggested that it might be necessary to look to other islands in that area if Jersey is not amendable to the contract language. The consensus was that if they are not comfortable with the background sampling contract, reaching an agreement for them to accept dredged material would be even more difficult.
- Steve M. reported that of the 10 islands DWR had listed as potential sites for the study, 6 did not want to participate for various reasons. He stated that he had explained the potential benefits to the island representatives and that there would be potential long-term benefits in facilitating the receipt of free dredged material in the future even if there is a small cost for the background study.
- Ellen suggested that it might be valuable to contact the Association of Reclamation Districts to see if there are other entities who might be interested. Gil explained that there are immediate financial reasons that the islands might not want to participate in this effort with DWR. There was general discussion that the current financial status of the RDs might make it impossible for them to spend even small amounts of money “up front” at this time. Tom observed that with the water supply for much of CA at stake, maintaining the Delta levees should be a priority and not all of the costs should be placed on the shoulders of the RDs.
- Roberta stated that large rock has been stockpiled to dump into channels in the event of a levee failure to protect the water supply. However, there has not been an effort to

stockpile levee repair material to safeguard the levees themselves and the land. The RDs are left with responsibility for the levees and land. There was discussion that the overall strategy is evidently to rely on the Peripheral Canal project in the future.

PROTOCOLS WORK GROUP

SACRAMENTO RIVER DWSC PROJECT

- Susan gave a brief summary of the overall Sacramento River DWSC project schedule and stated that they are still on schedule for construction to begin next summer (2011). She reported that they are currently 75% complete on all draft documents at this stage. Susan reported that they anticipate release of the public draft EIS/EIR in September 2010 and that there is a plan formulation meeting involving SPD and USACE HQ scheduled for July 2010 to address this project.
- Tom reported that they are working very hard on the draft environmental document in an effort to make it as complete and defensible as possible. Phil said that they can begin working on their application for waste discharge and submitting material at any time and the Regional Board staff can then start working on the order. For scheduling purposes it would be beneficial for them to start working on it sooner rather than later and they can then prepare the final order for Board review once the NEPA/CEQA document is complete. This strategy would mean conducting the review in parallel. Phil advised submitting the application this summer because there are requirements for public review periods and coordinating inclusion on a Board agenda (meetings are held every two months).
- Mike Hoover stated that the biological assessment needs to be completed so that the USFWS can review it in September.

Revised Sediment Testing Report

- Bonnie reported that there is a revised report from April 2010 and that there were a few exceedences for metals but that the Regional Board had not expressed great concern.
- Bonnie also reported that there have been updates to the hydrodynamic modeling but the overall change in the X2 increase is only slightly greater than expected from the 50 year “without project” results. She said that there were interesting results with regard to the effects of rainfall and the associated hydrologic changes in the future. Mike asked what the sea level rise expectation was in the model and Bonnie explained that the USACE uses three curves representing different sea level rise scenarios in their models.

- Ellen explained that the Governor’s Climate Action Plan team uses the following levels of sea level rise statewide: 16 inches by 2055 and 55 inches by 2100.
- There was a general consensus that the local conditions would vary with any change in sea level and Michael Hoover explained that with any sea level rise the tidal effects would be magnified so water velocities and the associated erosion rates are increased, making hydrodynamic modeling even more complicated.

Sediment Beneficial Use Report

- Steve M. presented a summary of the sediment placement and reuse options in the vicinity of the SRDWSC projects and showed the group a map of potential sites that could accept dredged sediment in various forms.
- Steve M. explained that the area analyzed is approximately 700 square miles for the Sacramento DWSC project and 800 square miles for the Stockton DWSC project. There is an area of 200 square miles common to both projects.
- The area of the study was described as being 15,000 feet from the DWSC. The area was defined with the assumption that a hydraulic dredge would be performing the work and could deposit sediment at a distance of 15,000 feet without use of a booster pump.
- Steve M. reported that there are 56 RDs and Tracts in that area and they spoke to 40 of them while preparing the report. They spoke to 84 government agencies and groups to identify potential beneficial use and project opportunities.
- Steve M. explained that the sediment placement sites are really “stockpile” sites in which the sediment is placed on the ground and allowed to dewater and then is subsequently moved to sites like levees to be used. He explained that they defined three types of sediment sites for the purposes of this study:
 - Stockpiles: sediment is placed and dewatered and then transported to another site to be used
 - Placement and reuse: water and sediment is discharged directly to a site where it is used. Wetland restoration projects or some levees in which the sediment and water can be applied directly to the back of the levee are examples of this type of site.
 - Reuse Site: accepts only dry sediment. Examples include residential sites or some levee sites.
- The variety of beneficial uses considered include levee repairs, filling deep channels, habitat development and restoration, landfill daily cover, railroad levees, fill for residential development, subsidence reversal, and Caltrans road work. Some of these

sites and uses can only receive dry sediment, potentially limiting their utility for the DWSC project.

- Steve M. explained that the map depicts areas from each of the three categories described above that could potentially accept dredged sediment in different forms. It also depicts areas that are too sensitive because of habitat or farmland that are not suitable for dredged material placement.
- Steve M. pointed out that there are no currently identified potential beneficial use sites in the northern part of the Delta along much of Reaches 4 and 5 of the DWSC approaching the Port. There are vast areas of the Delta that would potentially be available for habitat restoration in the western portion of the Delta.
- While conducting the study, they received estimates of available capacity from approximately 75% of the identified sites. Sites from which they received no capacity data were assigned a capacity of 0. Comparing estimated dredge volumes from each project reach with available capacities identified in the study suggests that Reaches 1-3 of the Sacramento River DWSC have sufficient capacity within 10,000 feet of the DWSC. Reach 4 requires extension to 20,000 feet to accommodate the projected dredge volume. Reach 5 currently has no identified capacity.
- Roberta asked for clarification about the efforts to identify sediment placement sites and Steve M. reported that the USACE is having internal discussions about potentially raising existing levees or removing existing sediment at the placement sites to create more capacity in Reach 5.
- Al asked if O&M dredging volumes were included in these calculations and Steve M. replied that they were not. He suggested that there is sufficient capacity for the O&M dredging and the DWSC dredging in the lower 3 Reaches of the Sacramento DWSC. There was a general discussion of potential placement sites in the northern Delta and Tom explained that there are restrictions on sediment placement locations because in addition to the Navigation Channel there is the Yolo Bypass and flood control infrastructure. There are concerns on the eastern side of the DWSC involving high value farmland.
- Steve M. reported that the estimated dredging volumes by reach are:
 - Reach 1 350,000 cubic yards
 - Reach 2 3.7 million cubic yards
 - Reach 3 250,000 cubic yards
 - Reach 4 3.7 million cubic yards
 - Reach 5 1.9 million cubic yards

- Susan and Cory explained that there are both deepening and widening components of the DWSC dredging as well as some O&M dredging volume included in the reach that was dredged previously. Susan reported that the USACE is having internal discussion about sediment capacity issues including potentially raising the levees.
- Ellen asked Phil for clarification about the Regional Board's policies on stockpiling versus permanent placement of sediment. Phil explained that there was no fundamental difference in terms of compliance to the regs, and they would address issues on a case by case basis as needed. Ellen asked about the potential of developing a GO for the potential stockpile sites and Phil explained that they generally just need to know what sediment will be placed at specific sites.
- Tom explained that all of the proposed placement sites were included in the previous O&M dredging placement authorizations. Cory added that additional sediment and water quality considerations come up when proposing in-water placement versus upland placement.
- Roberta suggested that with the fish Biological Opinions it would seem that there would be interest in obtaining sediment from restoration project proponents that need sediment. Steve M. reported that they had not been able to identify these sorts of opportunities and that the DWSC project timing might be inconsistent with these restoration efforts.
- Phil asked what the next steps will be in identifying sediment placement sites and Bonnie and Steve M. stated that they are moving forward with the project using this "snapshot in time" because of overall project scheduling requirements. They will continue to work with the other agencies on sediment placement issues.
- Cory reported that the USACE, dredging contractors, and the Regional Board TMDL staff met to discuss methyl Hg from dredged sediment effluent and have been conducting a monitoring study since last year. The goal is to reduce methyl Hg and the USACE has drafted a proposal of practical methods to be used in the field to prevent or reduce methylation. Phil added that maximizing use of existing placement sites and managing return water would be useful. He suggested that there might be value in identifying other sites or processes in which methylation could be reduced to compensate/offset for methylation at dredged sediment placement sites.
- Tom stated that he is concerned with potential Hg methylation issues as they might affect the DWSC project. He cited a seeming inconsistency in methyl Hg policy when there are currently plans to create 65,000 acres of wetlands in the Delta where methylation would be occurring while concern is being expressed about methyl Hg issues resulting from the DWSC project.

- Ellen said that they had been dealing with this issue in the Bay and Christine explained that with the Hamilton Wetlands project, the decision was made that the overall benefit from the project outweighed potential concerns about Hg methylation. Michael Hoover concurred that there are concerns about Hg issues related to the USFWS-managed wetlands and that there are typically initial elevations in Hg methylation when wetlands are created and these levels generally decrease over time. Cory added that it is important to know the current “background” conditions at potential sediment placement sites when considering wetland creation and dredged sediment placement. He said they are working to be consistent with the Hg TMDL process but there are outstanding issues to be resolved such as use of credits for removing Hg from the system to offset other projects that might result in increased temporary Hg methylation. An overall question is how total Hg compares to methyl Hg in this balance.
- Michael explained that there is so much Hg left in the entire Delta system as a legacy of gold mining that as it is removed from the lower reaches of the system it will be replaced by Hg flowing from upstream sources. Jeff stated that there are currently efforts to address many of these upstream sources.
- Ellen stated that the Bay TMDL was for total Hg rather than methyl Hg but that they worked out methods for credit for removing PCBs from the system. Cory said that he expects that monitoring requirements will provide additional information on this issue and Jeff added that there is an initial 7-year phase where effective methods will be identified with the eventual goal of controlling methyl Hg by 2030.
- Tom stated that this issue will have to be addressed robustly in the EIS/EIR to avoid potential challenges.
- Cory and Jeff explained that their pilot project last year only involved baseline sampling and chemical characterization and this year they are planning more involved studies regarding discharges and potential BMPs.
- Phil stated that he advised the Regional Board TMDL staff to incorporate flexibility into their process to accommodate new developments as questions are answered through individual studies and projects.
- There was a general discussion about concerns related to Hg methylation including direct placement site impacts versus downstream/water column impacts. Tom and Jeff stated that they have been working proactively with the USACE and the Regional Board to address Hg issues while still moving forward to meet their project timelines. Phil explained that the RWQCB TMDL unit doesn’t have the answers to all of the Hg issues either.

- Steve M. explained that this Hg issue is very important because it affects the capacity calculations for dredged sediment placement. If no return water is allowed, far larger placement site volumes are required to retain all water with no discharges. If return water is allowed, the required placement capacity is far lower (on the order of 10 times lower).
- Phil asked if there are dredging/placement sequence methods that could be used such as multiple passes to produce thin layers of sediment and increase infiltration rates. The consensus was that such a method would greatly increase project cost and time. It is also likely that increasing all of the placement sites to retain all of the return water wouldn't be logistically feasible. There will be further discussions with the project proponents and the regional board on these options.

STOCKTON DWSC PROJECT

- Susan reported that the USACE project team is gathering existing biological resources information and that June 9, 2010 is the due date for the sediment placement/beneficial use site report for the Stockton DWSC project. The identified sites would inform decisions about vegetation and habitat surveys proposed for the summer of 2010.
- She added that hydrodynamic modeling efforts have been completed and will be presented at their next meeting with the Port of Stockton.
- Susan said that engineering studies are moving forward and they plan to draft a sediment SAP, which would be presented to the Delta LTMS but they are currently still deciding who will draft the SAP.
- She said that they requested \$2 million and they are on a waiting list for excess funding. If successful in obtaining funds, they will be applied to the SAP task. The current schedule shows construction starting in May 2013, which would be consistent with the Port's plans to take advantage of State grant funds. If they receive no funding the project schedule will likely be delayed.
- The USACE is considering various depths for the Stockton DWSC project as they relate to economic analyses and navigation needs.

ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT WORK GROUP

- Matilda reported that they are currently working on 6 Project Management Plans and Federal Cost Share Agreements (FCSA) for the Levee Stability Program. The Bethel Island project is waiting for the FCSA from HQ.

- DILFS is now called “Delta Study” and the USACE is currently meeting with DWR and they are considering including other agencies in their meetings, potentially beginning in July.
- The USACE has contracted a 3D sediment transport model (from Dynamic Solutions) and will be meeting in June to discuss it.
- Ellen asked whether Delta Study arose from issues related to Hurricane Katrina and Roberta replied that although it gained impetus after Katrina, it was around prior to that time as a line item.

PERMITTING WORK GROUP

- Phil explained that the new draft GO may be viewed as a sequel to the previous maintenance dredging project GO and that this GO is also exempt from CEQA because it is not a “project” as defined by CEQA. This “new work” GO has been developed to be consistent with the previous maintenance dredging GO and Phil asked that the LTMS group review the draft GO documents as soon as possible and provide comments and suggestions to him as soon as possible.
- Phil explained that the GO is also a good transition into the DDRMT discussion because it is crucial that the agency members involved in the DDRMT process review and comment on the GO.
- There was general discussion about the proposed volume of 100,000 cubic yards that would be authorized in the GO. Roberta and others asked whether the maximum volume could be increased and there was some discussion about the difficulty in determining “typical” project volumes.
- Jack suggested that the group look more deeply to identify potential projects and their needs that could better inform the development of the new work GO.
- Christine suggested that perhaps the exact volume limit isn’t the critical factor and the volume itself isn’t going to result in denial or approval of a project. There was a general discussion about ways to craft the GO to describe a process for approval without a specific volume limit.
- Christine suggested that perhaps another focus would be to create a small project GO that might be different from a new work GO that could include larger projects. Volumes, project depths, and locations could also be parameters to structure the new work GO without specifying a maximum volume.

DDRMT

- Jack reported that he has been working to incorporate the RWQCB's revisions to the DDRMT Operating Procedures and will schedule an IWG teleconference to move forward on the document after reminding the other IWG members to provide their comments. The goal would be to discuss the document at the July TWG meeting after first discussing it at a June IWG teleconference.

MERCURY DISCUSSION

- Phil said that they will be meeting with the USACE to discuss the O&M dredging and Hg methylation issues in June. Members of the LTMS group would be invited to attend the June meeting as well. Through the near-term O&M dredging discussions, some of these Hg issues and questions can be addressed, which would be helpful for the DWSC projects.

CLOSING BUSINESS

- Jack reviewed the meeting action items and confirmed that there was no outstanding business to address before the meeting was ended.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Ellen will make discreet inquiries on issues related to combining the two LTMS efforts.
2. Anchor QEA will schedule an IWG teleconference in June.
3. Susan and Bonnie will distribute a summary report for the hydrodynamic modeling to those who are interested. Bonnie will forward the FTP site address for the report information to Mike Hoover.
4. Susan will review the Sacramento River DWSC project schedule and work with Phil to make sure that the WDR review schedule and process fits.
5. Anchor QEA will coordinate with Bonnie to arrange for distribution of the hydrodynamic modeling report and information to the larger LTMS distribution list as appropriate.
6. Phil will continue to work with the TMDL unit to coordinate with them regarding the DWSC projects. Anchor QEA will work with Phil to determine whether it would be worthwhile for the TMDL staff to attend the July TWG meeting and make a presentation on mercury issues.
7. Roberta will send Ellen a fact sheet on the Delta Study (formerly known as DILFS).

8. The group will review the draft new work GO and provide comments to Phil via email by June 30 to facilitate discussion at the next TWG meeting. The draft documents are currently available on the Delta LTMS website.
9. Anchor QEA will post the BPC sediment placement workshop information on the Delta LTMS website.
10. Anchor QEA will contact Brian Ross, Bill Brostoff, and Kate Dadey to confirm that the proposed TWG meeting date and time is acceptable.