

Teleconference Summary

July 30, 2012 (9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. PDT)

1. Welcome

The teleconference was called to order at 9:07 a.m., July 30, 2012, by the Chair of the Delta Independent Science Board (ISB or the Board), Dr. Richard Norgaard. One member of the Board was present: Richard Norgaard. Eight members attended by phone: Brian Atwater, Elizabeth Canuel, Tracy Collier, Edward Houde, Judy Meyer, Jeffrey Mount, Vince Resh, and John Wiens. No members were absent.

Collier reported that he was appointed to the position of Science Director for the Puget Sound Partnership but that this should not present a conflict. None of the other Board members reported new conflicts or disclosures.

Delta Science Program (DSP) Staff in attendance: Peter Goodwin, Lauren Hastings, Marina Brand, and Joanne Vinton.

Goodwin reported that a candidate has been identified to fill the vacancy on the Board. The candidate will be nominated at the next Delta Stewardship Council (Council) meeting, which will be followed by a 30-day public comment period, and possible appointment at one of the September Council meetings.

Norgaard briefly discussed the Board's review of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). Each Board member will review one chapter of the administrative draft of the BDCP Draft EIR/EIS and report their findings at the Board's August 16-17 meeting. Board members asked to be sent an updated version of their [tentative review assignments](#).

2. Continue discussion of the Board's review of science programs in the Delta that support adaptive management

During its July 9-10 meeting, the Board decided to approach reviews of science programs in the Delta by grouping programs by the following themes:

- Habitat restoration and climate change
- Water reliability and climate change
- Fish/foodwebs and flows and climate change
- Levee security and climate change
- Delta as place

The first theme Board members will consider is habitat restoration and climate change. Norgaard emphasized that the Board will *not* be reviewing climate change programs, but will ask questions such as:

How are restoration projects likely to be affected by climate change, sea-level rise, or other environmental drivers? (in other words, are current and planned activities likely to be effective in 10-80 years, given the projections for environmental change?)

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Meyer said that another theme—water quality, nutrients, and contaminants—needs to be added to the themes listed above.

For Board members who were not able to attend the July 9-10 meeting, Goodwin and Norgaard explained that the reasons Board members decided to review science programs by theme is that grouping the many programs into themes will be more helpful, interesting, and efficient, and will enable the Board to assess the amount of collaboration and coordination among programs.

Board members discussed a [draft memo](#), “Draft Questions to be used by DISB for Program Reviews.” Wiens will shorten the questions in the memo and make them more focused. The purpose of the questions is to alert program managers to the types of information the Board would like to discuss during the reviews. The information collected by the Board needs to reveal how the programs work, how the work might be done better, and how all programs can be pulled together into a single science. Board members agreed that a question about how decisions are made needs to be added to the list. They want to know if modeling is used for decision-making.

Goodwin suggested the following questions:

What are the basic sources of information used for climate change?

How does the program modify or downscale the climate information to the scale of the restoration project?

Is there interagency collaboration and consistency, or are different approaches used?

How is flexibility incorporated into the design and management of habitat restoration?

Regarding the approach that is used in the habitat restoration project, is there uniformity within the program? Or do different projects use different approaches depending on their start dates, current thinking at the time, and collaborators?

How does the design of monitoring plans account for climate change?

How will performance of the restoration project be measured in the future?

Wiens suggested other questions based on those listed in the [draft memo](#):

What is being done? What is being planned? Are monitoring and adaptive management included in the project? How is the project informed by science?

How are decisions made? How is leadership exercised? How much collaboration is there with other programs?

How is information communicated? How are stakeholders incorporated into decision-making?

How will the project be affected by climate change?

Wiens will send his questions to other Board members for comments.

The Board will not collect information unless it will be used. Managers will not be expected to write responses to the questions for the Board’s August 16-17 meeting. Norgaard noted, however, that it could be difficult for the Board to justify their assessment of programs without written materials to cite.

Mount said that deciding what the Board’s final product will be could help to shape the questions. Meyer said that the final report probably needs to describe the Board’s process and

the habitat restoration programs that it reviewed. The report should be specific about findings and recommendations.

For some programs, habitat restoration is just one component. Managers of these types of programs might find it difficult to separate their programs into the individual components that the Board plans to review. Managers are concerned that they will be asked to come before the Board several times to answer questions about each component of their program.

Public Comment

Mark Rentz, Association of California Water Agencies—Rentz said that it was exciting to hear that the Board plans to review habitat restoration programs. Coordination and integration are important. The Board should ask what the policy drivers are behind the habitat restoration, how the funding mechanism drives the priorities, and if there is a common understanding about what constitutes habitat restoration – is it a mitigation requirement or something else? Rentz suggested that the Board’s [cover letter to agencies regarding habitat restoration program reviews](#) explain why the Board is doing its review, what the desired result is, what will be done with the information collected, and what benefit the agency will gain from the review. Rentz likes the five steps listed in the Board’s [draft procedures](#) for conducting its reviews. He asked that the Board’s meeting in November be a multi-agency workshop that includes the California Rice Commission. He recommended the following review questions:

What are the policy drivers for the restoration project? Is it a recovery project mandated by the Endangered Species Act or some other legislation?

What is the funding mechanism?

How do agencies collaborate and coordinate?

Does habitat restoration include mitigation and remediation?

How does climate change affect restoration?

What is working and what is not working in partnerships between the public and private sectors?

Audrey Patterson, San Joaquin Tributaries Authority—Patterson said that the Board is asking the right questions, and Rentz’s questions are important, too, especially regarding collaboration because restoration projects should be reviewed together instead of in isolation. She is concerned about reviews of large programs where habitat restoration is just one component. It is important to know what the program’s goals are. Patterson wanted to know which agencies will be participating and how the Board is deciding which agencies to include. She supports including a question about modeling in program reviews.

3. Discuss the programs to be reviewed under the Habitat Restoration and Climate Change theme

The agencies included in the habitat restoration and climate change program reviews will include:

- California Department of Fish and Game, which includes the Ecosystem Restoration Program
- California Department of Water Resources, specifically the FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office (FESSRO) and the Division of Environmental Services
- Delta Conservancy

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- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- Solano Land Trust
- State and Federal Contractors Water Agency, which has a habitat restoration unit

Board members discussed the draft [cover letter to agencies regarding habitat restoration program reviews](#) and the draft [cover letter to organizations regarding habitat restoration program reviews](#). Norgaard will work with DSP staff to edit the letters.

Norgaard will identify the two-member teams that will visit science program representatives. The teams will be established as formal committees at the Board's August 16-17 meeting.

It is anticipated that the vacancy on the Board created by the departure of Michael Healey will be filled soon. In late August, the nominee's resume and qualifications will be circulated and an appointment will be made by the Delta Stewardship Council in September.

4. Public Comment (For matters that were not on the agenda, but within subject matter jurisdiction of the Delta ISB.)

None

5. Preparation for Next Delta ISB Meeting

Representatives from the agencies and organizations listed under item 3 above will be invited to the August 16-17 meeting. The Board will also continue its discussion of the review of the BDCP Draft EIR.

11:02 a.m. – Adjourn