

March 3, 2013 12:47 PM

Dear Dan:

I very much appreciate receiving your lengthy memo dated February 20, sent March 1, and all the good effort you put into composing it. Vince Resh and Elizabeth Canuel have shared their very favorable responses to your memo with me and we will be sending it out to the rest of the board on Monday.

The first thing we learned from your memo was that we should have had you speak directly to the board, not as the Chief Deputy Executive Officer of the DSC but as someone with considerable experience at the interface of science, policy, and management with respect to ecological restoration in other parts of the country. Your memo helps correct this mistake. If we were not trying to bring this review to a close, I would propose that we use your briefing memo as background to a rich exchange during a board meeting.

Let me respond briefly, simply as one member of the board, to several of the points you have made.

The role of the universities and their scientists: I have continually tried to bring this out, for we center our focus on the agencies and then more weakly catch the universities in our peripheral vision. As I read the 2009 legislation, I keep reading "science" not "agency science" and when we were thinking of our reviews more along institutional boundaries rather than issues, I was keeping the universities on the review agenda. Yet, as we switched to reviewing scientific issues, we again focused on the agencies. To be sure, the agencies have their science programs somewhat better organized around management and policy issues than do the universities, as you point out. Yet in spite of this, and sometimes because of this, the universities and their scientists play incredibly important roles. I am sure that we will be making some corrections in the final draft, thanks to your pointing this out.

You raise several other issues, also with respect to the boundaries of our reviews, and with respect to one in particular, I am going to take issue with you while also acknowledging that your memo helps us make our job clearer.

You argue for sticking to the science, even using the "adaptive management circle" as a way of framing our reviews. You suggest focusing on the science and avoiding policy, noting, for example, that our discussion of implementing a restoration credit system seemed more clearly a policy question. Let me argue that we should always focus on the interfaces of science with policy and management (while looking forward as much as possible). The "adaptive management circle" in fact very much helps us do this. But, it is a model that, like all good models, is a simplification. While it focuses on steps in time, i.e. illustrates a temporal dynamic, it is silent on how things work spatially. Restoration credit policy is important because it facilitates a better use of scientific ecological restoration across both space and time. I am sure that the next draft will make this point clearer.

In any case, promoting the use of better science entails promoting the institutional conditions within which better science can in fact be used. This is the essence of our review of Chapter 7, for example.

Thank you for sharing so much with us. Let me express my apologies for our not having picked up on the cues available to me and to others and incorporated your wisdom into the restoration review sooner and more richly.

Sincerely yours,

Dick

Richard B. Norgaard

Chair, Delta Independent Science Board