

Delta Smelt Working Group Conference Call Minutes

August 16, 2005

Participating: Bruce Herbold (USEPA), Gonzalo Castillo (USFWS), Jim White (CDFG), Ryan Olah (USFWS), Kevin Fleming (CDFG), Mike Chotkowski (USBR), Victoria Poage (USFWS)

Original Agenda:

1. Finalize minutes from WY 2005 meetings
2. Update on delta smelt survey data
3. Improving DSWG communications
4. Summary of WY 2005 fish actions
5. Outlook for WY 2006

Recommendation for WOMT:

There was no recommendation for WOMT.

Item of interest: a settlement in the Farm Bureau litigation has been announced. We can expect more scrutiny for the technical bases and timing of EWA actions.

1. Victoria circulated draft versions of the minutes of previous meetings via e-mail. Final comments are due by Monday, August 22. The finalized minutes will be posted to the web.
2. The Summer Tow-Net Survey is still underway. (The 2005 STN index was the lowest on record at 0.3, nearly an order of magnitude lower than 2004.) Survey 4 collected more fish than earlier surveys, but still not very many; all were in Suisun Bay. DFG is working on updating the website, but the CPUE information is up-to-date. One more survey will be conducted, beginning next week (August 22).
3. Doing a better job of communicating with our agency management teams will help them to be better-prepared to discuss issues pertinent to delta smelt. The DSWG will prepare a joint issue-oriented brief for agency management. It may be appropriate for the DSWG to send a delegation of its membership to WOMT meetings when it offers a recommended action. It would be timely to remind agency management that the DSWG can always be available at their request for management briefings, given the appropriate lead time.
4. Victoria circulated a handout via e-mail summarizing the use of EWA assets in WY 2005 (attached). All figures used are to be considered draft at this time. EWA has acquired approximately 63 TAF of debt to the SWP in WY 2005; however, SWP pumping on EWA's behalf is reducing that debt at a rate of just approximately 1000 AF per day. The State share of San Luis Reservoir is expected to fill early in WY 2006, possible as soon as December, in which case the remaining EWA debt would spill.

5. Budget concerns may result in a scarcity of EWA resources in WY 2006. The State budget for EWA has been cut about in half, to a little over \$9 million, some of which must go to staffing costs. The Federal budget for EWA may be in the range of \$5 to \$10 million, but may be less; some of that must be dedicated to staffing, power and conveyance costs. Due to economies made by the EWA Team, some 2005 funds will be available for use in 2006, resulting in the EWA having roughly the same amount of assets as in the last couple of years (depending on hydrology), but not as much as envisioned in the CalFed ROD. Due to these constraints, the DSWG will need to carefully explain the technical basis for their recommendations, and note particularly when they would be expected to have a minimal impact on Project deliveries. We will be going into WY 2006 with probably-high concern for delta smelt.

Some discussion was held on the POD effort and its potential effect on the DSWG with regard to its purpose and charge. USFWS believes that the purpose and charge will not change, as the DSWG was established to advise the USFWS with regard to the operations of the CVP and SWP specifically. If the POD research indicates that the formation of other advisory groups is necessary, it is likely that there would be some overlap in function, requiring that the DSWG coordinate closely with any such groups in the future.

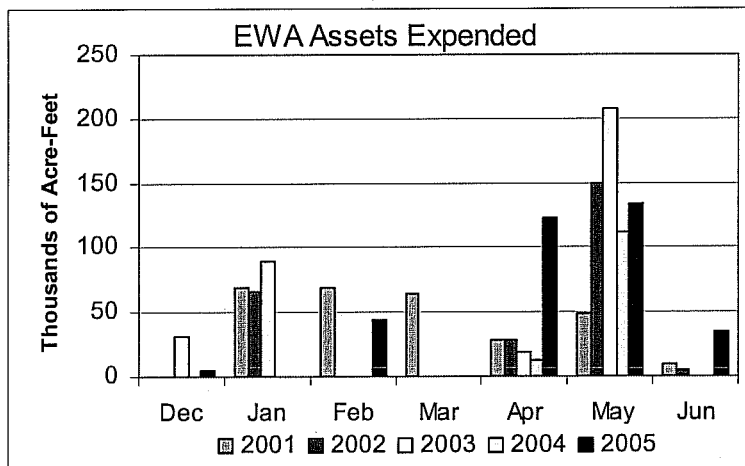
Submitted,
VLP

One attachment

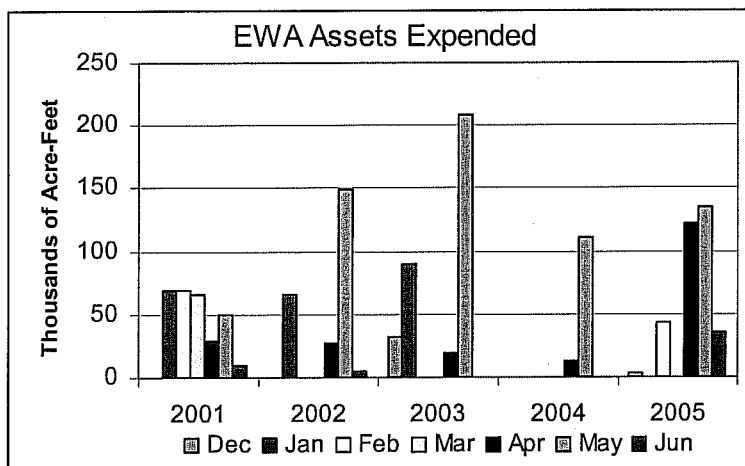
Attachment 1. Handout dated 16 August 2005.

Preliminary summary of fish actions using EWA assets in Water Year 2005

Action #	Dates	Facility	Amount in TAF	Species Benefited
1 (Delta Action 8)	Dec 6-15	SWP	4.2	WR Chinook
2	Feb 2-7	SWP, CVP	44.3	Delta Smelt
3	Apr 17-30	SWP	121.9	Delta Smelt
4	May 1-31	SWP	134.0	FR Chinook, Delta Smelt
5	Jun 1-8	SWP	34.7	FR Chinook, Delta Smelt
Total for WY 2005			339.1	



Comparison of monthly expenditures across years



Comparison of annual expenditures, by month