

## Delta Smelt Working Group Meeting Minutes

August 31, 2005

Participating: Bruce Herbold (USEPA), Matt Nobriga (CDWR), Mike Dege (CDFG), Kevin Fleming (CDFG), Ryan Olah (USFWS), Jim White (CDFG), Victoria Poage (USFWS); Gonzalo Castillo (USFWS) and Mike Chotkowski (USBR) participated via telephone

### Agenda:

This special meeting was called by Kevin Fleming to formally seek comments from the DSWG on the Delta Smelt Action Plan.

The August 16, 2005 draft of the Delta Smelt Action Plan was circulated to the DSWG via e-mail to facilitate the discussion. The DSWG made the following recommendations:

1. The work plan submitted by the IEP's Pelagic Organism Decline Project Work Team (POD PWT) should be implemented, and agencies and other parties should expect further actions based on the results of the POD investigations.
2. Relevant projects already initiated by the California Bay-Delta Authority should be completed. Implementation of all actions not currently underway should be contingent upon the outcomes of the POD work, i.e., these should be re-written using an "...if...then..." format.
3. Actions to be implemented should fall under the three categories identified in the POD work plan:
  - a. Environmental contaminants
  - b. Invasive species
  - c. Water operations
4. The DSWG recommended that actions not connected to the POD work plan not be included in the Action Plan, since the only elements excluded from the 2005 POD work plan were those for which scientific data indicated no relevance to the pelagic organism decline. The screening of small diversions was the only example of such unsupported actions in the recent version of the work plan but any further suggested actions should be held to the same criteria.
5. In order to be as effective as possible, fish actions taken under the USFWS' 2005 OCAP biological opinion regarding the operations of the SWP and CVP should be considered and acted upon promptly by the Water Operations Management Team and, if an action is to be taken, it should be implemented as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours. It may be desirable to use a portion of the "Pelagic Organisms Decline Account" recommended in the Action Plan to reimburse the SWP if there are power costs resulting from changing operations immediately.

The DSWG should strive to improve connections amongst the various work groups and projects with which it is involved.

The DSWG also discussed plans to post the DSRAM on CDFG's Bay-Delta Branch website. The posting on the USFWS website would be generally static, while the CDFG posting would be more dynamic, with links to CDEC and other data sources. The DSWG also discussed potentially lowering the threshold of concern for incidental take of adult delta smelt from the median (50%) value of the ratio of winter salvage to the Recovery Index to the first-quartile (25%) value for WY 2006. It was decided that, rather than make this change, the DSWG would carefully track incidental take and keep decision-makers advised as incidental take rises. This, together with improved communication with the WOMT, should be an effective means of ensuring a greater awareness of the DSWG's concerns for incidental take of pre-spawning adult delta smelt and result in more timely consideration of recommendations and implementation of approved actions.

Submitted,  
VLP