

## Meeting of Central Valley Flood Protection Board – Conservations Strategy Advisory Committee

### Permitting and Multi Benefit O&M workgroup notes

#### Overview:

The workgroup started with a discussion of past efforts to improve permitting such as the Sutter HCP and Lower Feather corridor management plan.

It was agreed that we should explore the potential to establish geographic areas, such as the RFMP regions, and identify a vision for the landscape that identifies all the projects that are being considered to improve flood management and the ecosystem. The concept is that if we could establish a baseline, and track ecological uplift, then the suite of projects could be advanced with permitting and mitigation simplified so long as the area had net positive ecological uplift. This approach would need to cover routine O&M activities. It is understood that repair, rehabilitation and replacement of flood management infrastructure would require permitting that would be more typical of a capital project.

#### Specific discussion points:

- Need for a **programmatic permitting approach** that would Seek to achieve/ Include:
  - O&M included in projects from the outset and fully funded
    - DWR is developing a technical memo that is identifying other areas in California where multi benefit O&M is being implemented. This will be provided to the CSAC when completed.
  - Design of both flood components and eco components of projects complete up front, funded up front and permitted together as a single project
  - Quantitative standards for eco performance to facilitate consistent permitting, understanding of project benefit relative to baseline, ability to differentiate and track mitigation as opposed to uplift, etc.
    - Central Valley Habitat Exchange (CVHE) has developed project level habitat standards for key species and associated quantification tools. These could be applied as test cases and additional needs identified and developed.
  - Measurable objectives – for regions that expected and measured outcomes from specific projects can be contextualized in/ related to
- Would be useful to develop and apply a **framework** that could integrate:
  - Feasibility Studies
  - CEQA requirements
  - Project Formulation and design
  - Project Tracking at the regional level
    - E.g. possibility of RFMPs leveraging CVHE to quantify benefits of individual projects and track progress against objectives relative to baseline

- Could take a **dual approach** that includes both 1) **focusing on existing projects** and resolving key issues and 2) **advancing one or two new projects** forward as pilots/ case studies for this new more integrated approach and framework.
  - Draw on report being prepared that looks at programs outside the CV and how they are approaching some of these opportunities.
  - Specifically look at the examples/ opportunities related to:
    - Objectives in all categories of desired outcome
    - Programmatic permitting
  - Consider the possibility of the Flood Board as a CEQA lead
- **System for tracking and coordination across agencies** will be critical for effective programmatic permitting, application of objectives, measurement of mitigation vs. uplift, etc.
  - Request presentation from DWR on proposed system for tracking progress against CS measurable objectives.
- **Strong leadership with funding** both from and for RFMPs
  - Critical if RFMPs are to house the individual plans where system level objectives and project level uplift come together
- Consider **approach where ecological uplift happens in advance of impacts**
  - Would significantly facilitate environmental permitting