THE CCMP: 14 YEARS DOWNSTREAM

Major Accomplishments, Challenges, and Revisions in the 2007 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary

What Is It?

The CCMP is an agreement—a formal document—produced in 1993 by over 100 representatives from federal and state agencies, local governments, environmental groups, business and industry, academia, and the public about what should be done to protect and restore the Estuary.

How Will It Be Used?

The CCMP will be used as a blueprint for restoring the Estuary's chemical, physical, and biological health. It assesses problems and provides corrective recommendations and compliance schedules for protecting the Estuary. In 2006-2007, over 80 participants worked to refresh and refine it. They updated seven program areas, revised 98 of the 1993 CCMP actions and wrote 66 new actions.

Some Accomplishments Since 1993

In the process of revising the CCMP, participants reflected on major accomplishments and new challenges since the original document was drawn up.

- Close to 67,000 acres of wetlands —including 28,500 acres of salt ponds in San Francisco Bay—have been acquired and are being restored throughout the Bay.
- The Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals report was completed and is guiding many acquisition and restoration projects.
- Increased access to the Estuary via the Bay Trail and other trails and parks, as well as shoreline cleanups, and restoration work have led to greater appreciation of and advocacy for the Estuary.
- More funds for watershed management have become available through state bond measures.
- A Long Term Management Strategy for the Placement of Dredged Material in the San Francisco Bay Region was created and implemented; in-Bay disposal volumes have been reduced by more than 50 percent since the LTMS was put into action.
- Although more can be done, water use efficiency throughout the Estuary watershed has improved, with many urban water conservation programs and water recycling projects implemented.
- The Regional Monitoring Program has evolved from a program that tracks status and trends of pollutants to one that provides a better overall scientific understanding of the Estuary and its watersheds.

Challenges Ahead

- The climate is changing, and sea—and Bay—levels rising. Wetlands need time to get established and provide a buffer against rising waters, so they should be preserved, acquired, and restored sooner rather than later.
- As sea level rises, a better understanding of sediment movement throughout the Estuary will be needed, as well as a regional approach to sediment management.
- The decline of pelagic organisms—including Delta smelt, longfin smelt, threadfin shad, and striped bass—has accelerated. The Delta smelt is close to extinction.
- Keeping enough freshwater flowing into the Estuary—so that it stays an estuary, where salt and freshwater mix—continues to be a challenge, as the human population grows, and more water is diverted for both urban and agricultural uses.
- Seasonal wetlands, transitional habitats, and riparian areas are still being lost to development.
- Legacy and emerging pollutants are impacting water quality.
- Sustainable funding must be found for restoration and watershed management work, instead of relying solely on bond measures.

Major Revisions/New Recommendations Made in 2007

- The amount of freshwater needed to support freshwater/brackish aquatic species in San Francisco and San Pablo Bays and Bay Area streams needs to be determined.
- Subtidal and benthic environments should be restored and trash in the Estuary reduced.
- Seasonal wetlands, uplands, and riparian habitat need better protection.
- More recycled water projects and water conservation are needed.
- Better preservation of streams and wetlands, which filter many pollutants, will result in improved water quality, provide fish and wildlife habitat, and beautify the landscape while reducing flood damages.
- A Pollutant Release Minimization Strategy—that would encourage manufacturers to take into account the full environmental life cycle of their products—is needed.
- The CCMP should guide regional agencies and local governments in establishing watershed goals and protection policies.

What Can You Do?

1. Drive less—reducing CO_2 emissions will help combat climate change and sea and Bay level rise.
2. Don't flush medications—save them for a pharmaceutical take-back day sponsored by Save the Bay, EBMUD, or other wastewater utility district.
3. Reduce the amount of plastic you use, tie your trash bags tightly, and volunteer on Coastal Cleanup Day (http://www.coastal.ca.gov/).
4. To learn how to restore riparian habitat, contact the Urban Creeks Council (510) 540-6669 (http://www.urbancreeks.org).
5. Unplug appliances—use less hydropower and save water for the fish in our rivers.
6. Install a low-flush toilet and a native plant garden that will use less water.
7. Design your own stormwater garden to intercept runoff. See http://www.raingardennetwork.com/. Advocate for your local planning department to implement greener stormwater measures. See http://www.smartgrowth.org/newpartners/np2005_104.pdf.

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