

CSPA Advisory / 3-15-07

This Advisory has three important components:

- (1) The Resources Secretary Appoints an Angler to the Delta Vision Process
- (2) Letter on the Delta Crisis to the LA Times by Dorothy Green that speaks clearly to the benefits of using water conservation practices,
- (3) Water For Fish Press Conference that kicked off a critical effort to acquire and organize angler support for obtaining the water vital to our fishery populations.

Delta Vision Process

Following the Resources Agency's establishment of the Delta Vision Process to develop "a strategic vision" of those actions necessary to restore Delta, while ensuring water supply reliability, Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman appointed a Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force. Chrisman was quoted in the Stockton Record as saying,

"Common among the task force's members is a strong ability to understand and solve complex problems, starting from the premise that 'business as usual' will not - and cannot - work in the Delta any longer. Californians must protect this natural system, for the sake of our drinking water and our economy. Delta Vision is about finding that balance."

Unfortunately the task force lacked any representation of the recreational anglers or the sport fishing industry that generate millions of dollars of economic activity annually in the Bay-Delta estuary. Yet, given the prolonged decline of many of the estuary's fisheries and those that originate in its tributaries, it's hard to understand why anglers were not appointed to the task force. Clearly, given the value anglers place on the estuary's fishery resources and the millions of angling days they still manage to spend annually utilizing its fisheries, our community warrants representation. Perhaps, as some have suggested, it's a kind of pay back for anglers opposing the South Delta Improvement Project so vigorously?

Close on the heels of the task force appointment came the selection of the "Stakeholder Group" to work with task force. This group also lacked representation from the angling community, nor was anyone selected from the native American tribes in Northern California. However, during this past week the Resources Secretary decided that recreational anglers should be represented in the Delta Vision process and appointed me to the Stakeholder Group to represent CSPA and the Allied Fishing Groups. This appointment can be read as an admission that the use of the Delta fisheries by anglers is important to the Governor's shop. Just how important remains to be seen.

The Delta Vision process is a direct administrative response to Senate Bill 1574 (Kuel) past last year by the State Legislature that requires the Secretary of the Resources Agency to convene a committee to develop and submit to the Governor and the Legislature, on or before January 1, 2009, a Strategic Vision for a sustainable

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

It's hard to be optimistic about the ultimate outcome of such a process given the past failure of the government to fulfill their many promises to restore the estuary and its fishery resources. It would also serve us well to remember that the agenda of the Governor's shop is pro water development; note his recent endorsement of building of two dams we've been opposed to since they first surfaced in CALFED, Temperance Flat in the San Joaquin River drainage and Sites Reservoir that would store lower Sacramento River water.

According the Department of Water Resource's, both of these dams are not necessary to meet our state's water needs. Their document called the California Water Plan (found in Bulletin 160) states this would not be necessary if the state government would develop and properly fund a statewide water conservation plan.

However, my participation on this inside track will be closely coordinated with CSPA's efforts, and possibly those of the Allied Fishing Groups, outside of the process where we will be using our legal and administrative abilities to work for equitable solutions to the Delta crisis. The sky is falling and it falling on our fisheries!

John Beuttler, Conservation Director
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance
1360 Neilson Street
Berkeley, CA 94702
510-526-4049
JBeuttler@aol.com

A Letter From Dorothy Green to the L. A. Times

From: Dorothy Green
Date: February 9, 2007 10:31:05 AM PST
To: <letters@latimes.com>

Subject: Another Warning of Sacramento Delta Crisis

It is a fact that the Sacramento Delta is unsustainable as it is managed, and we must change how it is managed now to protect both our drinking water supply and the delta ecosystem. However, hard engineered solutions like a peripheral canal are not the answer. What makes much more sense, both economically and environmentally, is to change how we manage and use this precious resource, water. We can substantially reduce the amount of water pumped out of the delta by maximizing the use of our local resources by conservation, wastewater reclamation and reuse, and by capturing storm water where it falls, and getting it into the ground for use later in the season.

Studies by the Pacific Institute have shown how we can save about a third of indoor residential use, with existing technology, cost effectively. Outdoor urban use can be reduced by 10% with the installation of sprinkler controllers that automatically respond to the weather, and are programmed to optimize existing landscapes. Over half of

outdoor use can be saved by changing landscape materials to California friendly plants: natives and plants that grow in Mediterranean climates like our own instead of tropicals or plants from other wet climate areas.

We have just begun to tap into the benefits of wastewater reuse. It should be used to recharge our overdrafted groundwater, using the soil as a final cleanser of this readily available water source. The Bureau of Reclamation has studied the potential in Southern California and it is enormous.

Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council is engaged in a massive study with nine other partners to quantify how much storm water can be used to augment our drinking water supply by capturing it where it falls, and getting it into the ground instead of running off to the sea. There are no numbers yet, but worries about impacts on groundwater quality have now been laid to rest. One local water district, the Inland Empire Utility Agency, is working toward a goal of total self sufficiency based on all of these concepts.

The agricultural sector can also make great contributions to better management. Because of giant agribusiness' insistence, groundwater is not managed at all except where the courts have adjudicated who owns how much of the groundwater and how much they each can pump out. As a result, many groundwater basins are overdrafted, resulting in the inability of the state or anyone else to use these groundwater basins to store wet year surpluses against dry year need, or winter and spring floods against summer and fall need.

There are also over 200,000 acres of land that should never have been irrigated. The land has naturally occurring selenium which leaches out in the drain water to poison wildlife refuges and local groundwater. Also in the same region are many more acres that have a clay lens underground, holding the drain water within the root zone of crops. All of this land should be purchased by the state, and retired from irrigation. Then the two million acre feet of water now used for irrigating these lands can be left in the delta to help deal with the problems there.

There is more than enough water in the state to meet our growing population, meet agriculture's legitimate needs, and put a lot of water back into the ecosystem. Only by reducing the pressure on the delta to provide ever more water for export, can we begin to address the real problems that exist there: the levees, the collapse of the delta ecosystem, sea level rise due to global warming, and the considerable water quality problems that exist there. This most important estuary on the coasts of both Americas deserves no less.

Dorothy Green, Secretary
California Water Impact Network

Water for Fish campaign fights for restoration of the Bay-Delta, Klamath River
by Dan Bacher

A broad coalition of recreational fishing organizations, fishing businesses and boat and tackle manufacturers, as well as representatives of the Klamath River Indian Tribes, officially kicked off the “Water for Fish” Campaign in a press conference held on February 15 at the Fred Hall Fishing Tackle, Boat and Travel Show at the Cow Palace.

Water for Fish, a grassroots effort to restore California’s besieged fisheries, is different from most past projects in that it looks at the “big picture” of why our fisheries are declining. Too many efforts to restore fisheries have been piecemeal – and the consequence is that one fishery is helped while another is hurt.

This campaign is based on the premise that you cannot separate the problems of ocean fisheries from those of our rivers and lakes and the fisheries of the Klamath River from those of the Sacramento River. What happens on the Klamath River impacts the ocean fishery on the Central Coast down to Morro Bay – and what happens on the Sacramento River impacts what occurs in the Klamath Management Zone.

Dick Pool, campaign coordinator and owner of the Concord, Calif. based tackle company, Pro-Troll,” explained the reason behind the campaign.

“Dams, diversions and (water) mismanagement are leading to a massive fisheries failure in California and we must take action now to save our fisheries,” said Pool. “Fish and fishermen are being left out of water policy decisions of the state and federal governments. This campaign gives anglers a way to be heard politically.” The goal of the campaign is to get a minimum of 50,000 signatures on petitions or letters to a number of officials in Washington over the next several months.

Gordon Robertson, governmental affairs coordinator for the America Sportfishing Association, underlined the economic importance of sportfishing in the U.S. and California.

“Recreational fishing contributes \$116 billion to the national economy each year,” disclosed Robertson, “while California sportfishing contributes \$12 billion per year to the state’s economy and supports 43,000 jobs.”

The 2.4 million anglers in the state also generate \$456 million in state and federal taxes. Fishery closures and restrictions threaten to undermine this economic engine.

“Clean water is important to a healthy fishery in California,” he emphasized. “If you want to fish, anglers will have to get active in the political process. It takes persistence and tenacity, but the days of sitting back and letting somebody else do the job are over.”

Chris Hall, the president of the 13,110 member Coastside Fishing Club, emphasized that “fighting the lawmakers for fish is not the answer.”

“We need to mitigate the problem all together. We need to save the fish, save our economy and save our future, and the plans laid out by Water for Fish are a giant first step,” said Hall.

Hall recounted how Coastside Fishing Club, along with other groups including ASA and

United Anglers, engaged in a successful battle last year to save the salmon season from being closed by the federal government. The water issues in California, primarily the Delta and Klamath, are having a tremendous increasingly devastating impact on our fisheries, according to Hall.

“Although we recognize the need for water for agricultural use, our fishery needs to be given an equal consideration,” he said. “The mismanagement of the Klamath River is a blinding indication of the reality of this, leaving us with a parasitically infested river that threatened to shut down salmon fishing all together last year.”

John Beuttler, conservation director for the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance and spokesman for the Allied Fishing Groups, commented on the alarming food web decline and fishery declines in the Bay-Delta Estuary, the West Coast’s most important estuary.

“Its food web and many of its fisheries are in, or near, a collapse that if not reversed soon could be terminal to key estuarine species such as striped bass, Delta Smelt, threadfin shad, critical runs of salmon and other species vital to the estuary’s ecology.”

“Anglers are now the last line of defense for the estuary and its fishery resources,” added Beuttler. “We must hold our government responsible for a half century of broken promises they made to the public about protecting a restoring these important public fishery resources.”

Ron Reed, cultural biologist for the Karuk Tribe, said his tribe and other Klamath Basin Tribes have been hurt dramatically by the decline in Klamath River water quality and fisheries.

“The Karuk, the second largest tribe in California with over 3000 members, caught only 200 salmon last year in our traditional dip net fishery last year,” said Reed. “This impacts not only our health, but our culture and way of life. The Karuk Tribe is in dire straits. We suffer from obesity, diabetes and hypertension three times the national average.”

However, he noted that it is not just the Karuk and other tribes that are impacted, but farmers, the commercial fishermen, recreational anglers and everybody affected economically by fish declines.

“Now is the time for all of us, to come together,” said Reed. “We can’t solve the problem by single species management – we need to manage all of the species. If we don’t restore the Delta and the Klamath, we will not be able to save our fisheries. I’m very much proud and honored to be part of Water for Fish.”

Troy Fletcher, Yurok Tribal member and the tribe’s consultant on natural resource issues, emphasized the need to remove PacifiCorp’s Klamath River dams, now owned by billionaire Warren Buffett. He invited recreational anglers to go on a trip with the tribes and commercial fishermen to Berkshire-Hathaway, Inc. headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska, this year to pressure the Warren Buffett-owned subsidiary to remove its dams.

“If you don’t take down the dams and restore the Klamath, there won’t be thriving any salmon fisheries left. The good thing is that the Klamath River can be restored,” Fletcher concluded.

Gary Adams, president of the California Striped Bass Association, whose members collected thousands of signatures on Water for Fish petitions at the sports shows, noted that the current problems on the Delta are a result of the exclusion of fishermen and those most impacted by Delta diversions when the CalFed process unfolded beginning in 1994.

The Water For Fish petition calls for specific actions, including:

- Removal of PacifiCorp’s dams on the Klamath River and increased water flows.
- A moratorium on any California Delta or Klamath water development project or water contract unless it can be proven it will have no negative impact on fisheries.
- A moratorium on any increases in water exports from the Delta until the estuary’s fishery resources have been restored to self sustaining population levels including all species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- Full funding and compliance with the provisions of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act that requires the doubling of salmon, steelhead and striped bass populations.
- A freeze on any Federal government funding which would divert, allocate or increase any water diversions or construction of facilities which would allow these activities until all impacted fish runs show increases for at least five years in a row. We hope to receive increasing help from recreational anglers, commercial fishermen, Indian Tribes, conservation groups and others to spread the word about our campaign. The petition and letter count now totals 9,004, with the Fred Hall Cow Palace Show generating 2,179 signed and certified Water for Fish petitions. Volunteers from the California Striped Bass Association and Coastside Fishing Club gathered the signatures.

The coalition includes over 60 companies and fishing organizations including the American Sportfishing Association, California Striped Bass Association, Coastside Fishing Club, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, Federation of Fly Fishers, PCFFA, Pro-Troll and the Fish Sniffer. For more information and to sign the petition, see the Water4Fish website by going to <http://www.water4fish.org/>

#

CSPA is a nonprofit fishery conservation organization that actively works to restore fisheries and their habitat. You can support our efforts by becoming a member. Donations are tax-deductible, greatly needed and appreciated. Send checks to CSPA at 1360 Neilson Street, Berkeley, CA 94702-1116. Annual membership starts a \$30. Questions? 510-526-4049.