

8. STUDY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This chapter summarizes the study management and public involvement for the NODOS Investigation. Specifically, this chapter describes public and agency involvement and stakeholder outreach to date and discusses plans for future public and stakeholder involvement.

8.1 STUDY MANAGEMENT

As described in previous chapters, DWR and Reclamation are conducting feasibility-level engineering and environmental studies for the NODOS Investigation. CEQA and NEPA require environmental analyses of local, state, and federal actions for feasibility-level studies. For the NODOS Investigation, DWR is the lead agency under CEQA and Reclamation is the lead agency under NEPA.

The first of two CALFED ROD milestones directed DWR and Reclamation to enter a MOU with local water interests and develop a joint planning program. Beginning in November 2000, 12 local, 2 state, and 3 federal entities signed an MOU and began meeting to provide local, state, and federal input in NODOS planning. MOU signatories are listed, as follows:

- ❖ California Department of Fish and Game
- ❖ California Department of Water Resources
- ❖ Colusa Drain Mutual Water Company
- ❖ County of Colusa
- ❖ Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
- ❖ Maxwell Irrigation District
- ❖ Natomas Mutual Water Company
- ❖ Orland Unit Water User's Association
- ❖ Princeton-Cordora-Glenn Irrigation District
- ❖ Provident Irrigation District
- ❖ Reclamation District No. 108
- ❖ Sutter Mutual Water Company
- ❖ Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority
- ❖ United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- ❖ United States Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Pacific Region
- ❖ Western Area Power Administration
- ❖ Yolo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

For the NODOS Investigation, a study management structure has been developed that consists of the Project Management Team (PMT) (a subset of the MOU Partnership) and the Study Team, as described below:

- ❖ Project Management Team – DWR, Reclamation, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District, and Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, all signatories of the Sites Memorandum of Understanding, serve as PMT members. The PMT provides overall guidance to the Study Team for the NODOS Investigation. In addition, the PMT periodically consults with and reports to the MOU Partners on planning activities and progress made toward key milestones in environmental review and documentation.
- ❖ Study Team – The Study Team consists of the Project Managers from DWR and Reclamation, and technical experts in various disciplines. The Study Team manages the investigation and directs work performed, coordinates study results into the overall NODOS Investigation, and directs and coordinates public, agency, and stakeholder involvement. The Study Team also

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maintains project files, tracks expenditures and technical progress, and provides technical study status reports to the Project Management Team.

The Project Managers participate in the Project Management Team and the Study Team, providing a communication link between the two.

Other work groups, such as technical work groups, are established as needed. These work groups focus on specific study areas such as environmental studies, engineering studies, benefit analysis, impact analysis, and hydraulic and hydrologic modeling. Work groups consist of staff members from Reclamation and DWR, and their contractors.

8.2 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

A federal FS requires acquisition of primary data and the participation of public agencies and entities and the general public to develop a preferred plan from a range of alternative courses of action to meet recognized needs, problems, and opportunities associated with the planning area of concern. Public involvement has been an integral part of this NODOS Investigation. To encourage general public and stakeholder participation and satisfy the NEPA and CEQA public involvement requirements, the NODOS Investigation includes public outreach activities and information dissemination. This section describes past public involvement in the NODOS Investigation and presents plans for future public and stakeholder involvement.

DWR has briefed local entities and held public workshops throughout the course of the NODOS Investigation. Following adoption of the CALFED ROD, scoping was initiated for the NODOS EIS/EIR. The scoping process was used to help identify the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in depth in the environmental documentation.

8.2.1 Scoping

On November 5, 2001, the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was filed with the State Clearinghouse and on November 9, 2001, the federal Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register. The NOI and NOP notified the public of the proposal, announced the dates and locations of public meetings, and solicited public comments. Public notification was also made through direct mailings to local landowners near the Sites and Newville reservoir locations, and by advertisements in four local newspapers, prior to the public meetings. In addition, a news release was placed on the DWR Website homepage. The formal scoping process for the NODOS Program began with the publication of the NOI and NOP, and concluded on February 8, 2002. During the 2001/2002 scoping period, one tribal and three public scoping meetings were held.

The Study Team received 57 comments that addressed program alternatives. Some comments were specific suggestions related to the types or range of alternatives, such as water-use efficiency, conjunctive use, land fallowing, wastewater reclamation and recycling, and Shasta reservoir enlargement, which should be considered in the environmental documents. Others discussed more generally what alternatives should or should not be developed, or what some of the possible benefits or impacts might be for certain alternatives. A complete summary of the comments received during the scoping period can be found in “*North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Investigation Scoping Report*” (October 2002, DWR and Reclamation).

Additional involvement with stakeholders, Native American tribes, state and federal agencies and other groups are briefly described below.

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8.2.2 California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee Water Supply Subcommittee Briefings

The NODOS Study Team has been briefing the California Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee Water Supply Subcommittee (BDPAC WSS) regularly on the planning and status of the NODOS Investigation, modeling tool development (Common Assumptions) and technical findings. The BDPAC WSS meetings are open to the public. The meetings are typically attended by DWR and Reclamation staff members, staff members from other state and federal agencies, environmental interest groups, water users groups, and members of the public. Briefings to the BDPAC WSS will continue as the investigation proceeds.

8.2.3 Stakeholders/Interested Parties Briefings

The NODOS Study Team provided briefings to stakeholder groups and interested parties between September 2003 and February 2004. The briefings included presentations and discussions on the NODOS study objectives, technical studies underway, potential benefits and impacts, and status of the NODOS investigation. Briefings were provided to the following groups:

- ❖ Bay-Area Environmental Water Caucus
- ❖ Chico Environmental Caucus
- ❖ Colusa County Board of Supervisors
- ❖ Glenn County Board of Supervisors
- ❖ Sacramento River Conservation Area Forum
- ❖ San Luis Delta & Mendota Water Authority
- ❖ State Water Contractors
- ❖ Tehama County Flood Control and Water Conservation District

Briefings to stakeholders and interested parties will continue as the NODOS Investigation proceeds and will be presented at the time key milestones are reached.

8.2.4 Landowners Meetings

DWR and Reclamation staff members have had numerous meetings with the Sites Reservoir landowners to brief them on the proposed project features and the status of the investigation. These meetings allow landowners opportunities to voice issues of concern. The landowners meetings will continue as the investigation proceeds and when major milestones are reached.

8.2.5 Sacramento River Flow Regime Technical Advisory Group

At the request of the NODOS Project Management Team, the Sacramento River Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was formed in 2002 and held meetings regularly from 2002 through 2004. The TAG was asked to consider the flow regime of the Upper Sacramento River. Specifically, the TAG was asked to help identify potential NODOS flow regime impacts and benefits, as well as improve the overall understanding of the flow regime of the Sacramento River and related ecosystem processes. The TAG consisted of the NODOS study team, technical staff members from other state and federal agencies, technical staff members from various environmental interest groups, and university researchers. With input from the TAG, the NODOS study team prepared the draft *Sacramento River Flow Regime Status Report and Evaluation*. The report describes the historic changes in the Sacramento River flow regime

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and presents preliminary concepts that might improve the habitat and ecological processes of the Sacramento River, both with and without NODOS. The report also documents the need for additional studies related to flow regime and ecosystem processes.

Efforts are underway to reconvene the TAG to expand the study of the flow regime and the ecosystems of the Sacramento River beyond the NODOS study area and develop a plan for improving the river's flow regime and ecosystem.

8.2.6 Interagency Coordination and Involvement

An interagency team consisting of technical staff members from DWR, Reclamation, California Department of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was formed in May 2002 to review the completed biological field surveys for Sites Reservoir, to discuss scope and level of analysis for Endangered Species Act compliance and how to deal with changes in species survey protocols for a long-term planning effort, to discuss strategy for evaluating downstream impacts, and to discuss mitigation planning. The interagency team will continue to meet as the investigation proceeds.

8.2.7 Coordination with Native American Representatives

The NODOS Study Team has been coordinating with Native American tribes (including Colusa Indian Rancheria, Cortina Indian Rancheria, Grindstone Indian Rancheria, and Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians) in the Sites Reservoir area. The tribes, DWR, and Reclamation developed, "Guiding Principles: Working with Indian Tribes On North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage," to direct planning activities. The Team met regularly with tribal representatives through March 2004, on an informal basis to provide updates on the NODOS Investigation progress and to encourage input on issues of concern from the tribes. Through the completion of the IAIR, eight coordination meetings, in addition to the tribal scoping meeting and one field tour of the Sites Reservoir and facilities and cultural resource sites, were held with tribal representatives.

In 2004, Reclamation provided funding to the four tribes to develop "appraisal level tribal water resource studies" to assess future water needs and availability within the context of how NODOS could benefit or impact the tribes' trust water resources. The studies were not intended to be an analysis of tribal water rights claims, but instead were intended to appraise future water needs and availability, and whether NODOS potentially impairs or enhances that water availability.

As the NODOS Investigation proceeds, coordination with the tribes will continue and briefings will be provided whenever key milestones are reached. Formal consultation will be initiated when a preferred alternative is identified and the area of potential effects is determined.

8.2.8 Study Area Tours

DWR staff members have been conducting tours of Sites Reservoir to agency staffs and interested stakeholders. During each tour, the DWR staff provided updates on the investigation status and technical findings. The tours provided interested parties firsthand views of the Sites Reservoir area and locations of proposed facilities. DWR staff members will continue to conduct Sites Reservoir tours for interested parties as the investigation proceeds.

8.2.9 Common Assumptions Ad-Hoc Stakeholder Technical Workgroup

At the request of the BDPAC WSS in October 2003, an ad-hoc technical stakeholder workgroup was formed to help provide informed feedback to the WSS members. Feedback was to be on Common Assumptions activities, specifically, on activities relating to the development of the Common Assumptions “common model” package. The ad-hoc workgroup consists of technical participants from environmental interests groups and water user groups. The common model package is of a suite of models (hydrologic, hydraulic and hydrodynamic, water quality, temperature, and economics) that represent the future no-action baseline condition that NODOS and all other CALFED surface storage projects will use for benefits and impacts analyses in the environmental documents. To date, the NODOS Study Team and the Common Assumptions Technical Team have held five meetings with the ad-hoc group to provide updates and technical information on Common Assumptions activities.

8.2.10 Future Public and Stakeholder Involvement Plans

The NODOS Study Team will continue to involve the public, stakeholders, agencies, and Native American tribes in the NODOS Investigation. Meetings and briefings will be held whenever major milestones are reached. When the public draft feasibility report and environmental documents are completed, they will be made available to the public and agencies for review and comment. Public meetings will be held to facilitate public comments on the draft feasibility report and environmental documents.

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