Section 6: Report Summary

This section summarizes the findings and conclusions of this milestones assessment and provides several recommendations for consideration by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) during re-consultation on the CALFED Bay-Delta Program; this document also provides the necessary information for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) who are participating in the re-initiation in order to amend the Conservation Agreement regarding the Multi-Species Conservation Strategy (MSCS). The *Conservation Agreement Regarding the Multi-Species Conservation Strategy* may be accessed via the Internet at http://calwater.ca.gov/Archives/GeneralArchive/rod/5.pdf.

Assessment findings are briefly recapped using the summary syntheses format from each ERP region. Milestones are noted separately for processes, habitats, and stressors within each ERP region. Findings also briefly summarize the EWA assessment.

Conclusions are presented that describe several key areas in which additional work would need to occur to more completely address the current milestones. Information is also presented to help put the status of progress on the milestones in the context of the entire ERP using information contained in the 2003 CALFED Program annual report.

Recommendations are also provided for consideration by the regulatory agencies that address areas that could not be predicted when the ERPP and MSCS were developed and milestones prepared.

Assessment Findings

During this assessment, more than 450 contracts were reviewed: 416 ERP contracts from 1995-2003; 68 Anadromous Fish Restoration Program contracts from 2000-2003; and more than 50 Watershed Program contracts. Non-CALFED Program activities that could potentially help to make progress toward substantial implementation of the milestones were also evaluated and included in the assessment. Milestone review "roll-up summary sheets" (Appendix A) should be reviewed for more detailed information on the contribution of various contracts to the milestones reviewed. Appendix B contains a statement about the scope of each contract and a listing of those milestones that the contracts were deemed to have contributed to.

In determining the progress toward substantial implementation of the milestones, this section employs four categories: behind schedule, on schedule, ahead of schedule, and under evaluation. For this assessment package, the following understandings for these categories are used:

- **Behind schedule.** No ERP-related efforts were started; other entities have started projects related to the milestone. As appropriate, there may be a description as to why this designation was chosen, e.g., the milestone does not apply to this region therefore no projects were started.
- **On schedule.** Some ERP-related efforts started projects or studies; other entities started projects or studies related to the milestone. For example, studies to purchase land for habitat restoration—a critical step to restoration—would be part of being on schedule toward progress in substantially implementing a restoration milestone.
- **Ahead of schedule.** Some ERP-related efforts have been completed; other entities have completed projects that have met one or more aspects of the milestone.
- **Under Evaluation.** Evaluation is continuing for assessing progress toward substantially implementing this milestone as information is being collected and analyzed. Most likely this would be used in those cases where there are few or no ERP-related actions and staff were unable to determine if another entity has a project related to the milestone and to what extent.

Delta Region – 37 Milestones

Processes. Four of five ecological process related milestones are on schedule. Progress toward

substantially implementing Milestone 3 is behind schedule; Milestone 3 is to provide a fall or early winter outflow that emulates the first "winter" rain through the Delta, is behind schedule.

Habitats. Ten of the 11 habitat related milestones are on schedule and the eleventh is ahead of schedule. Restoring slough habitat, non-tidal emergent wetland, and seasonal wetlands shall continue, with emphasis on restoring riparian habitat in the Eastside Delta Tributaries EMZ on the Calaveras River and riparian restoration in the Delta EMZ, especially in the South Delta EMU.

Stressors. Nine of the 21 stressor related milestones deal with fish screens, fish barrier and fish passage issues, and stream flow and temperature issues. Four of these nine are on schedule and five milestones are behind schedule.

The other 12 stressor milestones for the Delta Region address water quality and toxicity issues, many of which are repeated in the other regions. Six of these water quality stressor milestones are on schedule; the other six milestones are still under evaluation, including assessment of other regulatory programs with authority over water quality and pollution issues.

Bay Region – 16 Milestones

Processes. There are no ecological process related milestones for the Bay Region.

Habitats. All six habitat related milestones for the Bay Region are on schedule.

Stressors. There are 10 milestones that deal with stressor reduction in the Bay Region. Milestone 44, addressing unscreened diversions in Suisun Bay, is the only non-water quality or toxicity milestone in the Bay Region and it is behind schedule. Three of the remaining nine water quality stressor milestones are on schedule and six others are under evaluation.

Sacramento Region – 30 Milestones

Processes. All seven ecological process related milestones for the Sacramento Region are on schedule.

Habitats. Three of the five habitat related milestones for the Sacramento Region are on schedule and two are ahead of schedule.

Stressors. Seven of the 18 stressor milestones in the Sacramento Region address fish screens, fish barrier and fish passage issues, and stream flow and temperature issues. Six of these are on schedule and the remaining one is behind schedule. The other 11 stressor milestones for the Sacramento Region address water quality and toxicity issues, many of which are repeated in the other regions. Four of these water quality stressor milestones are on schedule, one is behind schedule; the other six milestones are under evaluation, including assessment of other regulatory programs with authority over water quality and pollution issues.

San Joaquin Region – 28 Milestones

Processes. Six of the seven ecological process related milestones for the San Joaquin Region are on schedule and one is behind schedule.

Habitats. Four of the five habitat related milestones for the San Joaquin Region are on schedule and one is ahead of schedule.

Stressors. Four of the 16 stressor milestones in the San Joaquin Region address fish screens, fish barrier and fish passage issues, and stream flow and temperature issues. Three of these four milestones are on schedule and the remaining one milestone is behind schedule. The other 12 stressor milestones for the San Joaquin Region address water quality and toxicity issues, many of which are repeated in the other regions. Four of these water quality stressor milestones are on schedule, two are behind schedule; the remaining six milestones are under evaluation, including assessment of other regulatory programs with authority over water quality and pollution issues.

Research Milestones—8 Milestones

Five of the eight Research Milestones are on schedule and three are behind schedule.

Findings for the Environmental Water Account (EWA)

Significant progress has been made implementing the Environmental Water Account (EWA) and achieving its purpose of providing protection to the at-risk fish species of the Bay–Delta estuary through environmentally beneficial changes in State Water Project and Central Valley Project operations at no uncompensated water cost to the projects' water users. EWA has also been successful in creating a forum for broader discussion of fish protection actions, fostering cooperation between various Agency staff and stakeholders and decreasing the potential for conflict over limited resources.

Progress includes successfully establishing Interim Protocols for Operation of the EWA, completing the necessary environmental documentation, acquiring assets necessary to implement EWA, and monitoring fish and interpreting data to guide the use of EWA assets. Another progressive step is the independent scientific assessments of EWA success.

During the evaluation period, the EWA management structure was formed including the EWA Team (EWAT). EWAT is responsible for coordinating all EWA activities, including a wide range of activities involved in acquiring, managing and accounting for assets, completing environmental review requirements, and preparing documents for the California Bay-Delta Authority and the EWA review panel.

In 2001 – 2003, EWA budgeted an average of $48.8 million per year. The ROD anticipated that EWA funding would be $50 million per year. Actual expenditures for water ranged from $60.1 million in 2001 to $28.3 million in 2002, and $31.0 in 2003 for an average of $38.9 million. Water acquisitions ranged from 336 taf in 2001 to 240 taf in 2002, and 215 taf in 2003. Other costs of

implementing the program averaged $2.7 million and covered expenditures for power purchases, water conveyance and storage fees, environmental documentation, and support for some agency staff assigned to EWA implementation.

Different monitoring methods were used successfully to obtain information on the various life-stages of species targeted by the EWA as well as their abundance and distribution in the Delta and Central Valley rivers and tributaries. Monitoring includes such methods as fall mid-water trawl, spring Kodiak trawl, a springtime "20-mm survey" for delta smelt and rotary screw traps, beach seining, and trawling for salmon.

EWA has been used almost exclusively to reduce the impact of project operations in the Delta on fish species such as the threatened Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon, Central Valley steelhead, delta smelt and endangered Sacramento winter-run Chinook salmon. For instance, EWA was used successfully to simultaneously protect delta smelt and fall-run Chinook salmon from both the Sacramento and San Joaquin basins during the April-May period. Besides the fish species typically targeted by EWA fish actions, other fish species in the Delta, both native and introduced, may have also derived benefits.

Assessment Conclusions

Conclusions are presented first based on the ERP contract review and reviews of ERP-related projects and activities, second the EWA review, and finally information presented about the ERP originally printed in the 2003 Annual Report for the CALFED Program.

Project Review

Delta Region. An important priority for this region is to synthesize hydrodynamic and hydraulic modeling information to guide preparation of ecologically-based restoration plans for restoring aquatic resources (Milestone 1) and to achieve the Delta outflow objectives (Milestone 3). Notable progress has been made with respect to improving the understanding of the Delta hydrodynamics and refining water operations models. Even with the progress to-date, additional work still is needed to increase the scientific understanding of what flow conditions and processes are required to support all life stages of anadromous and estuarine fish species and to support lower trophic level ecological processes. Continued interaction among fishery agencies and water management agencies and improved coordination among EWA, Environmental Water Program (EWP) and the Water Acquisition Program (WAP) are essential for addressing fishery needs at water management facilities.

Continued planning and subsequent implementation and monitoring of several large scale restoration and resource management projects in this region within an adaptive management context will contribute to meeting the remaining habitat- and processes-related milestones. Meeting milestone components for specific species may require additional research to determine essential life history information. Currently, there is no habitat restoration project planned for the South Delta Ecological Management Unit (EMU). Restoration potential for the South Delta EMU should be evaluated.

Bay Region. Securing the gains in North Bay aquatic and wetland habitats (Milestones 41 and 42) and Jepson Prairie vernal pools (Milestone 43) that ERP investments have made possible is an important priority. Cooperating with others implementing these projects and supporting monitoring and adaptive management of these projects is a key ERP task. Additional effort to restore riparian habitats in creeks and rivers tributary to these areas is needed. Research about listed plants that should be benefiting from these projects can provide a more adequate basis for assessing these species' recovery in these restored marshes and vernal pools and, if necessary, for actions to rebuild their populations in these areas (Milestone 40). In Suisun Marsh, near term activity will emphasize completion of the Suisun Marsh Charter Group's *Habitat Management, Preservation, and Restoration Plan for Suisun Marsh.* Ecosystem research and pilot scale restorations that can guide larger scale marsh restoration in the future also are needed. Actions to achieve the Delta Region water management milestones can help attain the ERP's vision for providing more natural freshwater outflows to Suisun and the Bay. Bay Region water quality milestones should be pursued in coordination with other regions and through water quality management actions of the San Francisco and Central Valley regional water quality control boards and the San Francisco Bay Regional Monitoring Program. Studies about the extent and impact of low dissolved oxygen conditions in Suisun Marsh channels and on actions to reduce fine sediments and associated contaminants that flow into the Napa and Petaluma rivers, Sonoma Creek, and other Suisun-North Bay tributaries may be warranted.

Sacramento Region. While there has been considerable progress on numerous milestones in this region, very few can be considered completed at this point. A few of the milestones need some reconsideration and additional analysis. Given the broad nature of a number of the milestones for this region, assessments by watershed would assist on focusing next steps. Coordination with associated programs such as the EWP and the Anadromous Fish Screen Program are particularly important.

ERP efforts should focus on floodplain habitats to maximize habitat benefits for targeted fish species, while reducing or eliminating existing fish stranding. Other actions to enhance upstream and downstream migration of anadromous fishes have been taken and will continue. Cooperative efforts with multiple partners will help move these projects through all phases of implementation from design, permitting, and construction.

The importance of floodplains and natural meander guides habitat restoration, and there is a need to continually assess the utility of setback levees, flowage easements and wildlife friendly agriculture, wetlands creation, and riparian habitat restoration as called for by a number of milestones that address habitats and ecological practices. ERP actions benefit from the efforts of several prominent partners, both private and public, that also may contribute to substantial implementation of these milestones.

Temperature management, effects of irrigation return water, and ecological stream flow and geofluvial assessments of coarse sediment supply continue in nearly all Ecological Management Zones (EMZs) within the Sacramento Region.

Many of the water quality milestones in the Sacramento Region should be reviewed and scientifically vetted to more appropriately address the issues raised by these milestones. Many of the milestones are difficult to assess progress toward substantial implementation of the milestone because they represent expansive, complicated, and evolving issues that require long-term solutions and continuous improvement. Most of these milestones also are supported by the activities of water quality agencies and watershed groups, and their progress is not accounted for in this summary.

Over the past four years, the understanding of several large complex water quality issues has improved. Strategies for future actions to find the most effective solutions have been developed. A "mercury strategy" document was developed to provide a framework for future mercury investigations. Coordination efforts and over $20 million in ERP mercury research projects are contributing to implementation of the mercury strategy, so there is the expectation that significant progress will be made in the next few years on evaluating ecological effects, effects of restoration, and potential management actions to reduce mercury exposure. ERP funded three multi-region projects to reduce pesticide inputs, and three multi-region projects to investigate unknown toxicity, which are currently in progress. In addition, there are three projects specific to the Sacramento Region to assess or develop methods to reduce pesticide inputs to waterways.

Suggested priority actions for water quality milestones in the Sacramento Region include continuing coordination and support for implementing the mercury strategy framework, addressing the impacts of pesticides, implementing effective pesticide monitoring programs, summarizing water quality efforts by other agencies and organizations, and working with those agencies and organizations to identify gaps and high priority actions.

San Joaquin Region. Most of the milestones related to habitat improvements appear to be on schedule, and it is necessary to continue monitoring with detailed accounting of various habitat types and agricultural practices and ecosystem response. Approximately 3,985 acres of upland was restored using grants from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), and the milestone requiring 100 acres of fresh emergent wetland habitat being restored or created has been met. Follow-up monitoring is necessary for both. Riparian and floodplain habitat restoration has received much attention. Milestones related to fresh emergent wetland habitat should be scientifically vetted as a suite to assure that the target acreages by region and as a basin are appropriate. A priority in the San Joaquin Basin EMZ should include plans to increase suitable habitat for delta coyote thistle by at least 20 percent or to increase the number of populations and individuals by at least 10 percent through habitat management and protection. Efforts to establish new riparian brush rabbit populations should be monitored and evaluated.

Although much of the funding and effort targets improvements to the instream temperature and fluvial geomorphic processes, these are elements which link to other needs and stressors that have yet to be addressed. There is still much to do; specifically, a program addressing all aspects of temperature modeling, integrating temperature modeling and management at a basin scale, and instream sediment budgets are necessary for all three tributaries to the San Joaquin River. Although numerous plans, studies, engineering and feasibility projects were undertaken, there needs to be an effort to complete current projects and to evaluate all the actions to determine priority actions and future needs. While there are a few contracts which address breaching San Joaquin River levees and

acquiring significant land, it is necessary to determine if these contracts provide the necessary San Joaquin River floodplain habitat between the mouth of the Merced River and Vernalis.

The San Joaquin Basin EMZ milestone achievements related to stressor reductions due to dams and structures are still in the critical, but early, stages of planning and design; physical actions to enhance fish passage are on schedule. While there is an agreement to purchase water on the Stanislaus River, similar programs should be established for the remaining tributaries. Several habitat or geomorphic actions were undertaken to improve instream habitat or geomorphic function, which also improves fish passage, and initial stages for screening the Patterson Irrigation District diversion are underway. There are contracts supporting feasibility studies to restore steelhead migration into upper watershed areas, but these were delayed due to access problems to the targeted river reach.

Development of water resources in the San Joaquin River Basin resulted in large-scale changes in the aquatic ecosystems, including fish populations. Preliminary results from ERP-funded contracts indicate that water quality issues are impacting species although the magnitude and impacts are unknown. Further, the linkages between water quality and habitat degradation have not been fully addressed.

The understanding of water quality problems in the San Joaquin River has improved during the past four years and resulted in the development of strategies for future actions to find the most effective solutions. The ERP provided funding for eight water quality projects for the San Joaquin Region for approximately $11.3 million. These projects have focused predominantly on selenium, dissolved oxygen and pesticides. ERP funded three multi-region contracts to reduce pesticides inputs, and three multi-region projects to investigate unknown toxicity, which are currently in progress.

Research Milestones. Progress in substantially implementing the Research Milestones includes: a better understanding of the conditions necessary for establishing riparian vegetation on the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers; completing several instream flow studies to determine the flows necessary to support anadromous and estuarine fish species; completing an initial phase of experimental introductions of Sacramento perch into nontidal perennial aquatic habitats; and substantial work towards assessing the impact of hatchery practices on naturally spawning populations of Chinook salmon and steelhead. Additional work will be necessary to fulfill the milestones that are currently on schedule towards completion.

Of the eight Research Milestones, three are considered behind schedule in substantial implementation of these milestones. Among the options for the ERP Implementing Agencies can use to address these milestones are future grant solicitations or directed actions that would focus on the topic areas of the effects of the road through Olcott Lake on vernal pool hydrology and impacts on vernal pool species and in-channel structures with respect to habitat for predator and prey fishes and predation on juvenile salmonids. Perhaps the most critical need is the development of a Comprehensive Long-term Monitoring Program designed to fulfill monitoring and assessment mandates for the CALFED Program's ERP, Drinking Water Quality and Watershed programs. Such a monitoring program must include species inventories and range-wide distributional surveys for covered plants and animals. An effort to develop this monitoring program is a high priority for the ERP, and the effort can only succeed in coordination with the Science Program.

EWA Review

Because of the short time period of EWA implementation, insufficient data exists to fully evaluate the efficacy of EWA actions with respect to fish protection and recovery. Additional investigation is warranted, and some is already underway, to answer several remaining questions, including: (1) the impact of incidental take on survival, abundance and distribution of fish populations, (2) how much environmental water is needed to accomplish the ERP strategic goals, and (3) how the EWA can best be used to contribute to fish species recovery.

The following elements are needed to improve the management and use of EWA assets to make it more effective, potentially allow the EWA to implement more upstream actions, make some water available for experiments, and improve our assessment of the efficacy of EWA actions:

- Storage capacity for EWA water that is flexible, reliable and affordable;
- Reliable access to conveyance capacity;
- Reliable long-term funding with the ability to carry unused funds from year to year;
- Long term water purchase contracts including some contracts for firm annual amounts and some with options and call dates as late in the year as possible;
- Commitment to continued monitoring and in some instances improved monitoring with real-time reporting as needed, including reliable funding and adequate staff and equipment;
- Continued evaluation of decision making processes in light of changing circumstances and new biological information;
- Enhanced science effort on the range of factors that may be controlling populations of the various fish species in the Bay-Delta system, enabling better assessment of effectiveness of restoration actions including the EWA;
- Development, testing and refinement of conceptual models; and
- Continued development of population models, identification of weaknesses in the available data and incorporation of new information when it becomes available.

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This milestone and EWA assessment can also be considered from the perspective of how funds have been allocated for ERP projects. Below is a summary of funding information for several categories of projects that have received the most funding by ERP region through 2003. Information is shown only for the top five categories of actions in each region that would likely contribute to achieving the milestones. Please refer to 2003 annual report pages 36 to 39 (http://calwater.ca.gov/AboutCalfed/AnnualReport2003/AnnualReport_2003.pdf) for a more complete list.

Delta Region. More than $155 million was awarded for ERP projects in the Delta Region. Eighty-three percent of that funding was allocated between Shallow-Water Tidal and Marsh Habitat (28 percent), Uplands and Wildlife Friendly Agriculture (25 percent), Restoration of Multiple Habitats (15 percent), Ecosystem Water and Sediment Quality (10 percent), and Floodplains and Bypasses (5 percent).

Bay Region. More than $24 million was awarded for ERP projects in the Bay Region. Ninety-eight percent of that funding was allocated between Shallow-Water Tidal and Marsh Habitat (74 percent), Planning Local Watershed Stewardship (12 percent), Nonnative Invasive Species (8 percent), Fish Screens and Passage (3 percent), and Ecosystem Water and Sediment Quality (1 percent).

Sacramento Region. More than $172 million was awarded for ERP projects in the Sacramento Region. Eighty-seven percent of that funding was allocated between Fish Screens and Passage (61 percent), Restoration of Multiple Habitats (10 percent), Planning Local Watershed Stewardship (7 percent), Riparian Habitat (5 percent), and Uplands and Wildlife Friendly Agriculture (4 percent).

San Joaquin Region. More than $81 million was awarded for ERP projects in the San Joaquin Region. Eighty-eight percent of that funding was allocated between Channel Dynamics and Sediment Transport (43 percent), Restoration of Multiple Habitats (23 percent), Riparian Habitat (5 percent), Environmental Water Management (7 percent), and Floodplains and Bypasses (6 percent).

Cross-Regional. More than $41 million was awarded for ERP projects that affected more than one ERP region. Seventy-six percent of that funding was allocated between Ecosystem Water and Sediment Quality (43 percent), Channel Dynamics and Sediment Transport (13 percent), Riparian Habitat (10 percent), Fishery Assessment (5 percent), and Restoration of Multiple Habitats (5 percent).

Recommendations

During the completion of this milestones and efficacy of the EWA assessment, contributors noted several areas of potential improvement that could be considered for future assessments to improve their efficiency and accuracy. The four most significant areas were recommended improvements to the milestone evaluation process itself, milestone refinements, suggested global water quality milestones, and suggestions for future project prioritization and selection.

Evaluation Process. Future evaluations will benefit from implementing a coordinated grant and project tracking and management program. CDFG staff will work collaboratively with Service habitat restoration coordinators and NMFS staff to track projects. Staff with region-specific knowledge of restoration activities and projects will track projects on a continuous basis. Concurrent implementation of a comprehensive ERP data base to track these data and relevant data for other restoration efforts such as Anadromous Fish Restoration Program projects will compliment this program and contribute to addressing some of the recommendations from the *Look Back Exercise*. The *Look Back Exercise* recommended using multiple methods for project review, developing a continuous learning and review strategy, and developing and using a multilevel framework for measuring performance.

Another suggestion is that rather than checking only intermittently with the fish and wildlife regulatory staff, consideration could be given to instituting a team approach to ensuring regulatory compliance. This approach could be patterned after a similar Environmental Coordination Advisory Team (ECAT) currently formed to guide Suisun Marsh Preservation Agreement implementation. An MSCS ECAT could provide more frequent updates regarding progress toward substantially implementing the milestones.

Milestone Refinement. Milestones, along with actions and targets, will be evaluated during the preparation of regional ecosystem restoration implementation plans. Using a "vetting" process currently under development for the *Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan*, milestones, actions, and targets will be evaluated with the most current scientific information available including information gained during the first four years of ERP implementation. This process is consistent with "adaptive management" approach fundamental to the CALFED Program.

Some of the scientific rationale will be derived from the unpublished draft *CALFED ERP Milestones: Parsing and Rationales document (Parsing Document)*. The Parsing Document recommends an approach for parsing milestones based on milestone objectives and outlines some of the rationale and potential mechanisms for how the milestones would affect a listed species.

During the preparation of regional ecosystem restoration implementation plans restoration issues may be resolved to ensure more accurate future evaluations of how ERP projects contribute to ultimately achieving milestones. An example includes how a habitat mosaic should be designed that will contribute to the ERP's strategic goals, how wildlife friendly agriculture effectively fits into that mosaic, what types of projects qualify as being wildlife friendly agriculture, and under what conditions they contribute to meeting milestones. During the plan development process, certain ecosystem water quality milestone modifications may be proposed.

An MSCS ECAT would provide more frequent interaction between implementation, science, and regulatory staff to provide a venue to share ideas for making adjustments to the milestones and refining schedules.

Global Water Quality Milestones. There are six water quality milestones that are repeated and applied to all four ERP geographic regions that have a significant weight on the determination of progress towards substantial implementation of the milestones. These six repeated four times account for 24 of 119, or 20 percent of the milestones. Progress on these milestones was described as under evaluation because of the multi-jurisdictional and program governance. The significance of this is that the milestones themselves are not under the jurisdiction of the ERP Implementing Agencies and are largely regulated by other governmental programs and agencies such as California Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. EPA, State Water Resources Control Board, regional water quality control boards, and others.

These milestones address:

- Oxygen Depleting Substances – like animal feed lots or dairies (Milestones 27, 45, 73, and 101)
- Oxygen Depleting Substances from un-permitted dischargers (Milestones 28, 46, 75, and 104)
- Fine sediment deposition entering waterways, particularly spawning gravels (Milestones 29, 47, 76, and 105)
- Organochlorine pesticide residues in sediments (Milestones 35, 51, 81, and 109)
- Toxic Trace Metals (Milestones 36, 52, 82, and 110)
- Unknown Toxicity (Milestones 37, 53, 83, and 111)

While these milestones were applied regionally, they are in actuality global or landscape-level in scope, with actions and results applicable to all regions. Even site-specific actions affect waters down stream, through the Delta and into the San Francisco Bay. There is a recommendation that these 24 regional milestones be evaluated as six landscape milestones with regional application, much like the Research Milestones. Work should continue with those other agencies with regulatory and program authority related to these milestones to evaluate progress to address these issues and continue our synergistic efforts.

Project Prioritization and Selection. One tool available for the ERP Implementing Agencies to address substantial implementation of the milestones is to focus future Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) cycles on priority milestones that were evaluated as necessary to complete. Directed actions and independent efforts initiated by ROD signatories as Category A projects may also contribute to completion of important milestones. Refinement of an ERP database with contract monitoring and project assessment components will ensure project tracking and enhance the ability of the ERP Implementing Agencies to provide project guidance and direction as needed. This will provide the agencies with the ability to administratively monitor contracts as well as monitor performance of the projects to ensure that the desired objective and proper information necessary is gathered that will allow the ERP Implementing Agencies to evaluate ERP performance and employ the Comprehensive Monitoring, Assessment and Research Program as envisioned.

Because Stage 1 is more than half over and much remains to be completed, the ERP Implementing Agencies should proceed with completing the *Draft Stage 1 Implementation Plan* as written with the knowledge that changes of focus and corrections to the milestones may be made through the regional implementation planning process and other guidance as future stages of the CALFED Program begin.