

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Andree Breaux)
MEETING DATE: July 11, 2007

- ITEM: 5B
- SUBJECT: California Department of Fish and Game, Napa River Salt Marsh – Lower Ponds Restoration Project, Napa and Solano Counties - Amendment to Order No. R2-2004-0063, Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Quality Certification, to add the Napa Plant Site (NPS) Wetland Restoration Project, Napa County
- CHRONOLOGY: July 2004 - Board adopted Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Quality Certification for the California Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Napa River Salt Marsh Lower Ponds Restoration Project (Project).
- DISCUSSION: The Project, approved by the Board in 2004, is restoring approximately 9,450 acres of salt ponds to a mixture of tidal and freshwater ponds on the western side of the Napa River. In November 2006, DFG applied for approval to restore an additional 1,460 acres at the Napa Plant Site (NPS) on the eastern side of the Napa River, formally owned by Cargill, to predominantly tidal wetlands.
- The Revised Tentative Order (Appendix A) would add 1,460 more acres of wetlands to the Project. The result will be an order that covers the new NPS restoration site east of the Napa River, in addition to the ongoing restoration or enhancement of the Lower Ponds located south of the Napa Slough and west of the Napa River.
- The Revised Tentative Order includes terms and conditions for the initial release of contents from the salt ponds at NPS and for future habitat monitoring. Cargill is currently implementing a salinity reduction plan that will be completed before the breaches of the pond levees at NPS occur. The major difference between the ponds at NPS and the breaches that occurred in the Project's pond levees are that the NPS's pond levees will be breached when the ponds are dry to minimize impacts to the Napa River. The Project's pond levees were breached at high riverine flows to lower salinity.

Tidal marsh will be restored to most of the NPS by reestablishing tidal exchange in the NPS ponds. This will be accomplished by breaching and lowering levees; excavating starter channels; and dredging and filling some areas. The Project is expected to have fully developed tidal marsh approximately 70 years after four Napa River levees have been breached.

The only comments received during public circulation of the original tentative order were from a consultant on behalf of DFG. Appendix B contains the comments and staff responses. These comments were largely addressed by revising the original tentative order.

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of the Revised Tentative Order.

File No 2139.3131

Appendix A: Revised Tentative Order

Appendix B: Staff response to comments