



Topic: **Joint Reservoir Committee & Authority Board
Agenda Item 3.4**

June 16, 2023

Subject: **Principles establishing guidelines for Sites Project's use of the Lower Colusa Basin Drain (CBD) System**

Requested Action:

Discuss the draft principles establishing guidelines for the Sites Project's use of the Lower Colusa Basin Drain and Knights Landing Ridge Cut.

Detailed Description/Background:

Delivering the benefits of the Sites Reservoir Project (Project) requires shared use of existing conveyance facilities, including the CBD, Knights Landing Ridge Cut, Knights Landing Outfall Gates, and Wallace Weir - collectively, the Lower CBD System. This system currently lacks a centralized institutional framework which makes integrating the Sites Project operations complex. The Board needs to provide policy direction in the form of Board adopted principles to communicate intentions and guide staff's engagement with other entities and landowners. This report contains an outline that staff feels can achieve success, maintains the Sites Authority values, and allows a start to productive engagement with other partners.

Working in conjunction with the Ad Hoc Conveyance Subcommittee, staff has initiated coordination with Reclamation District 108 (RD 108) to integrate the Lower CBD System in the planning and development of the Project. The Sites Authority is working with RD 108 in this capacity, given RD 108's experience with water supply operations, local presence in the area, organizational structure, and support of the Project. In many respects, the use of the Lower CBD System puts RD 108 in a similar, but unique, position to TCCA and GCID in the sharing of Project facilities. RD 108 has some but not complete jurisdiction of the Lower CBD System, has a strong and respected local presence, and with the Sites Authority can best represent the needs for the Project within the area.

The Sites Authority and RD 108 are developing principles to establish guidelines for staff's interactions with others involved in the Lower CBD System, policy level commitments of the Board for the Project's use and future involvement in the Lower CBD System. These principles will assist staff in communicating to multiple partner agencies and individuals along the Lower CBD and help guide the drafting of land use, operations and maintenance, and other agreements required for the integration of the Lower CBD System and the Sites Project. Key commitments anticipated to be reflected in the principles include:

- A map defining the geographic and institution jurisdictional boundaries, private landowners with overlying rights, and anticipated operational extent of Sites influence on the Lower CBD System to inform planning efforts, potential capital improvements, and potential agreements.
- **Existing operation and uses of the Lower CBD System:**
 - The Sites Authority will limit its operations to confine any and all potential effects to be within the geographical and operational extent defined as the Lower Colusa Basin Drain (CBD) System.
 - The Sites Authority acknowledges the priority of the existing operations and uses of the CBD and will avoid impacts to such existing users, unless mutually agreed to otherwise by affected parties and the Sites Authority. These commitments will be memorialized in future agreements.
- **Partnership with local partners:**
 - The Sites Authority will closely coordinate its Project engineering analysis and development with the local agencies with jurisdiction over the Lower CBD System. The Sites Authority values the knowledge, experience, and expertise of the local agencies with jurisdiction to inform Project planning and decisions.
 - The Sites Authority wishes to work cooperatively with the local agencies with jurisdiction to leverage the Project's investments in the Lower CBD System to the benefit of existing users of the Lower CBD System where feasible and cost-effective to the Project to do so. The Project operates under the beneficiary pays principle.
 - If desired by the local agencies with jurisdiction, the Sites Authority commits to providing a leadership role in the organizing and capacity building that would lead to betterment of the Lower CBD System in the long term.
- **Water rights and water accounting:**
 - The Sites Authority commits to, at all times, respect senior water rights in the watersheds affected by Project operations.
 - The Sites Authority will develop a Measurement and Monitoring Plan for Sites Reservoir Project water diversions and releases. Such Project-related data collection will be transparent and accessible to local agencies with jurisdiction. Should there be any monitoring or reporting required by outside agencies on the Project for information not within the control of the Sites Authority, the local agency with jurisdiction will be consulted.
- **Maintenance and capital improvements:**
 - The Sites Authority will contribute its fair and reasonable cost share in the future maintenance and improvement of infrastructure within the Lower CBD System proportional to the benefits received by Project.

Pending Reservoir Committee and Authority Board feedback, staff anticipates getting concurrence with RD 108 on the above language and documenting principles in the form of a resolution for Board consideration at the July 2023 meeting.

Prior Action:

None.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Source:

None.

Staff Contact:

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Primary Service Provider:

Brown & Caldwell

Attachments:

None.