



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

Bay-Delta Management Group

- **Bay-Delta Management Report**

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for April 15, 2026 – May 15, 2026.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Decide on Sites Reservoir and Protect Our Bay-Delta Interests

Sites Reservoir

On April 17, 2026, the Sites Reservoir Committee and Authority Board approved an Exchange Agreement between the Sites Project Authority and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) governing voluntary exchanges of water between the Sites Project and the State Water Project (SWP) (Agreement). This Agreement is subject to final legal review and approval. The Agreement allows DWR to reduce SWP releases from Lake Oroville in exchange for providing an equivalent amount of SWP water to certain SWP Sites participants and for Proposition 1 ecosystem benefits, subject to legal, regulatory, and operational constraints. The Agreement preserves DWR's discretion over exchanges and incorporates comments received at the February 2026 Board meeting into the final version.

The Sites Reservoir Committee and Authority Board also authorized the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) related to accepting and conveying Incremental Level 4 refuge water as part of the Sites Reservoir Project's Proposition 1 ecosystem benefits (donation agreement). Under the donation agreement, the Sites Project Authority will deliver Proposition 1 Sites water to designated points of donation for conveyance by Reclamation to Central Valley Project Improvement Act refuges north and south of the Delta. The Sites Project Authority is responsible for delivery costs and losses to the points of donation, while Reclamation is responsible for conveyance costs to the refuges.

Delta Conveyance-Related Joint Powers Authorities

At the April 16, 2026, meeting, the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority Board received updates on project engineering, environmental permitting, and organizational readiness. Executive Director Graham Bradner reported ongoing support for the DWR, including design advancement studies, preparation of updated cost estimates and a revised Basis of Design Report for early 2027, and development of internal procedures for the transition to the delivery phase.

The Department of Water Resources Environmental Manager reported issuance of key permits, including a biological opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for construction and Amendment 1 to the project's Incidental Take Permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service on its construction biological opinion is ongoing.

Board Report Bay-Delta Management Report

Delta Conveyance Project

On April 23, 2026, the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) voted 6-1 to remand the DWR's Certification of Consistency for the Delta Conveyance Project on two narrow issues under two Delta Plan policies, while denying all other appeals from the ten appellant groups.

Before proceeding to implementation, DWR must submit a revised certification addressing: habitat impacts related to the invasive golden mussel; and potential conflicts between the Twin Cities Complex and the Sacramento Area Sewer District's Harvest Water project, including effects on ecosystem protection, agricultural use, groundwater recharge, and sandhill crane habitat. Once submitted, DWR anticipates a second round of appeals to the Council limited to the golden mussel and siting of the Twin Cities Complex, a process that takes 150 days.

The Council also directed DWR to submit annual implementation reports beginning March 1, 2028, consistent with the Council's independent oversight role.

Advance Science and Multi-Benefit Solutions That Improve the Sustainability of the Delta and Inform Regulation

Metropolitan staff presented to the Subcommittee on Imported Water an update on the Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project. The objective of the project is to develop and determine the efficacy of innovative tools for the culture of Delta smelt. Recent milestones include the successful harvest of three sets of pond cultures for Delta smelt.

Metropolitan staff, along with researchers at Southern Illinois University, UC Davis, and USFWS, published our work on Chinook Salmon outmigration pesticide hazard assessment. The paper is titled "Tracking pesticide accumulation in juvenile Chinook Salmon during outmigration through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta." The results of the study determined that outmigrating hatchery-origin juveniles from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta had greater hazard risks from the Feather River and Battle Creek. Elevated body burden of pesticides suggests increased predation risks. The results suggest that pesticide management in those rivers could improve outmigration survival.

Metropolitan released four addendums related to the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project bid solicitation. The bid opening occurred on May 14, and four bids were received. A July 2026 board action is planned to award the construction contract.