



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for September 2022.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Delta Conveyance

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) released the public Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) on July 27, 2022. It describes project alternatives, potential environmental impacts and identifies mitigation measures to help avoid, minimize, or substantially lessen potentially significant impacts. In response to requests to extend the comment period, on September 23, DWR announced that the comment period has been extended from October 27th to Friday, December 16, 2022, giving agencies and the public 143 days to comment.

A Change Sheet for the DCP Draft EIR is now available on the Delta Conveyance Project website ([Read the Document \(deltaconveyanceproject.com\)](https://deltaconveyanceproject.com)). Since the publication of the Draft EIR, formatting and editing issues have been identified in the Draft EIR. The Change Sheet describes those issues and the changes that will be made in the Final EIR to correct them. In some cases, the issues identified were not easily presented in the Change Sheet, and corrected files have been posted on the DCP Draft EIR website to present the corrected information. None of the identified changes modify the Draft EIR impact analyses or conclusions. The Change Sheet may continue to be updated if other formatting or editing issues are identified throughout the duration of the comment period.

DWR conducted three virtual public hearings to receive comments on the DCP Draft EIR on September 13, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., September 22, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., and September 28, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as part of its permitting review under the Clean Water Act and Rivers and Harbors Act, is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and is planning to release draft EIS for public review later this year.

Joint Powers Authorities

During the regularly scheduled Board of Directors Meeting on September 15, the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) Board of Directors approved a resolution to extend virtual board and committee meetings pursuant to AB 361. The DCA Board also passed a resolution approving the fourth amendment to the Management Partners Agreement for Executive Director services.

The Delta Conveyance Finance Authority (DCFA) Board of Directors held their regularly scheduled meeting on September 15, and they approved the Investment Policy and delegated authority to the DCFA Treasurer to invest DCFA funds.

Sites Reservoir

At the September 16 joint meeting of the Sites Project Authority Board, they approved the release of the draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA to initiate the public review process for activities related to the 2023-2024 Sites Reservoir Test Pits, Fault Studies and Quarry Studies Project.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Near-Term Delta Actions

Regulatory Activities

Staff continued to participate in the collaborative groups called for in the 2019 Biological Opinions (BiOp) for the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project, and in the 2020 Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for Long-term Operation of the SWP, to address science needs and inform management and operation of the water projects. In September, staff participated in meetings and provided input to develop: (1) longfin smelt conceptual model to guide research needs, (2) study plans to evaluate the effects of the North Delta Foodweb Subsidy action using Delta smelt cage studies, and (3) priority monitoring needed to estimate juvenile production of steelhead.

Delta Island Activities

Since 2016, Metropolitan, along with Reclamation Districts (RD) #756 – Bouldin Island; RD #2025 – Holland Tract; RD #2026 – Webb Tract; and RD #2028 – Bacon Island, has been working diligently on installation of up to 88 magnetic flow meters on the most widely used siphons to measure and report diversions consistent with SB 88 – Water Diversion Measurement Compliance. During this period, fourteen meters (~56 percent) have been installed as a part of Phase 4 (installation of 25 total meters).

Metropolitan also started building numerical correlations (case-by-case) between metered diversion to OpenET (evapotranspiration relationship to crop/plant consumptive use). This effort is to evaluate various diversion measurement devices with other data gathering methodologies, including OpenET to determine if they would meet SB 88 requirements.

Quarterly Bay-Delta Science Update

Metropolitan’s Bay-Delta Science Program is directed at supporting strong science for protecting the Bay-Delta environment, driving better management decisions and supporting effective regulations. The following summary of Bay-Delta Science activities provides key highlights for the period July 1 to September 30, 2022.

Staff will continue to provide this report on a quarterly basis in the Bay Delta Management Report to support reporting on the related portion of the General Manager’s Priorities.

Bay-Delta Science Update, July-September 2022

Science Objective	Accomplishments
Collaborative Science	<p>Staff continued participating in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP) with state and federal agencies, water agencies and the NGO environmental community. Key progress this quarter focused on efforts to facilitate recovery planning for Delta smelt and salmon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salmon Recovery Initiative – Staff efforts focused on Phase 2 of the project to develop a baseline scenario of current and planned projects in the Bay-Delta watershed aimed at increasing salmon abundance. This information will be used to evaluate management actions to achieve salmon recovery.• Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making – Staff efforts focused on review and discussion of initial modeling results for the project, including evaluating the effects of potential Delta smelt management actions being considered. <p>The State Water Contractors (SWC) held a Science Symposium on September 13, addressing the science related to the water project operations management criteria consisting of the ratio of San Joaquin River inflow to water project exports. This measure has been a key focus in recent processes related to water project operations requirements. Staff helped organize and facilitate the symposium, which included background information on the regulation and recent science on how the regulation impacts hydrodynamics and juvenile salmon survival in the South Delta.</p>

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Science Objective	Accomplishments
Science Investigations	<p>Staff continued to collaborate with university researchers, science experts and state and federal agencies to carry out science studies. Staff co-authored two scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals reporting on recent studies.</p> <p>Staff co-authored a scientific paper in <i>Estuaries and Coasts</i> journal reporting on findings from a symposium on practical applications of methods for detecting environmental DNA (eDNA) in the San Francisco Estuary to complement traditional monitoring and inform species management decisions in aquatic environments. Results from a Metropolitan eDNA study are included.</p> <p>Staff also co-authored a scientific paper in the <i>San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science</i> journal, reporting on the outcomes of a workshop for managers, scientists' and stakeholders to develop a juvenile production estimate (JPE) for spring-run Chinook salmon. The development of a JPE will support spring-run management actions.</p>
Innovation	<p>The Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project will utilize Delta island properties currently owned by Metropolitan to evaluate opportunities to support Delta smelt supplementation efforts. Staff continued to work with scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey and UC Davis to monitor the impoundments on the Delta islands to determine their suitability for Delta smelt rearing and supplementation research, and to prepare for Delta smelt enclosure studies this fall.</p>
Delta Science Community	<p>Staff attended the annual conference of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, Northern California Chapter, on September 15. The conference program included a presentation on a study funded by Metropolitan, Delta Science Program, Department of Pesticide Regulation, DWR, and SWC to evaluate the relative risk of toxic contaminants in the Delta and potential effects on Delta fish species.</p>