THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Report

Office of the General Manager

- **Bay-Delta Management Report**

Summary

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

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Delta Conveyance

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) released the public Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act for the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) on July 27, 2022. It describes project alternatives, potential environmental impacts and identifies mitigation measures to help avoid or minimize impacts. The Draft EIR is available for public review and comment through October 27, 2022.

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 a draft EIS for public review later this year.

Joint Powers Authorities

During the regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting on August 18, 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 also released the final draft Engineering Project Reports (EPRs) for the DCP options on its website (www.dcdca.org) in the DCA document library. The EPRs are detailed conceptual engineering design narratives that helped to inform DWR as it crafted official project descriptions for its environmental review process. The EPRs are separated into four sections:

- Narrative Report: highlights the key findings and conclusions of the Technical Memoranda and focuses primarily on describing the proposed facilities and the key drivers for their configuration and siting.
- Technical Memoranda: provide the basis of design criteria, design assumptions, siting analyses, and planned siting and configurations based upon existing physical information.
- Engineering Concept Drawings: include final site plans, construction phase site plans where locations of features would be substantially different than final site plans, site ingress and egress layouts, and major cross sections through the structures of key facilities.
- Map books: display the proposed facility sites and features in the context of the region. The EPRs also evaluate two fish screen options, a cylindrical tee screen fish screens and vertical flat plate fish screens.

There was no regularly scheduled Delta Conveyance Finance Authority meeting in August.

Sites Reservoir

In their August meetings, the Sites Project Authority Board (Authority Board) and the Sites Reservoir Committee (Reservoir Committee) approved moving the Terminal Regulating Reservoir (TRR) from the previously identified east-site location to the more suitable west-site location, which is on the west side of the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District Main Canal. It was found that the TRR west-site location would have less real estate impacts, approximately the same amount of environmental impacts, and that the geotechnical data indicate more favorable subsurface conditions.

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 (CVP), 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 August, staff presented the results of a modeling study regarding contaminant effects on Delta smelt and associated management actions to the Delta Coordination Group. The 2022 Summer Fall Habitat Action (SFHA) Plan included the use of Expert Elicitation and Relative Risk Modeling to identify the effects of contaminants and changes in those effects with the two proposed actions for the 2022 SFHA. Results suggesting contaminant impacts will be evaluated using field studies.

Science Activities

Staff continued participating in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP), including participation on the Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT). At the August CAMT meeting staff provided comments on the draft CSAMP Triennial Report and provided input on next steps for the CAMT Monitoring Assessment and planning for an adaptive management discussion. Staff efforts also focused on key CSAMP collaborative science projects including the Delta smelt Structured Decision-Making (SDM) Project and the Salmon Recovery Initiative. Staff participated in meetings to review initial results of the Delta smelt SDM project, which included modeling results of the effects of individual potential Delta smelt management actions being considered. Staff also continued collaboration with the environmental organizations for Phase 2 of the CSAMP Salmon Recovery Initiative (Initiative). In Phase 2, staff is seeking input from the broader community on current and planned salmon recovery projects and information on salmon metrics related to abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and diversity to set quantitative targets specific to each watershed. These will serve as benchmarks for comparison with predicted outcomes of potential management strategies that will be developed in Phase 3 of the Initiative.

Staff participated in the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) Stakeholder meeting and provided comments on the 2023 IEP Workplan. Many activities in the IEP Workplan are focused on monitoring and studies related to SWP and CVP compliance with permit requirements.

Delta Levee Stability and Monitoring Efforts

Delta levee stability and monitoring efforts are ongoing with implementation of an instrumentation pilot project on Metropolitan's Bouldin Island to evaluate the effectiveness of detecting real time changes in levee conditions. This type of capability could provide both long-term levee management benefit, as well as the ability to quickly assess conditions in the event of an earthquake in the region. Efforts also include the storage of real time data produced from the instrumentation network in a manner that can be easily accessed by Metropolitan for immediate evaluation, which includes real-time alerts following a seismic event within the Delta region. Staff is working with consultants to finalize the draft Investigation, Instrumentation and Monitoring Assessment – Delta Islands Levees (Bouldin Island Pilot) report, which could be completed as early as fall 2022.

Delta Islands Adaptation Planning Grant

Staff is managing the Delta Island Adaptations project funded by a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Proposition 1 Planning Grant. The project's overall goal is to make progress toward improving resilience and sustainability of Metropolitan's Delta islands by (1) reducing subsidence, (2) limiting or reversing greenhouse gas emissions, while (3) providing additional wildlife habitat, (4) maintaining economically viable agriculture, and (5) receiving and incorporating public input. Phase 1 of the project is complete, which included preliminary assessment of the islands and selecting one of the islands for more developed island-wide study, assessment, and planning. The use of a structured decision-making tool was beneficial for identifying Bouldin Island as the location to begin and the focus for further study for Phase 2.

The grant team began Phase 2 which includes development of conceptual plans for alternative land uses for the identified study island based on land characteristics and other criteria. Potential land uses being considered include: paludiculture, floating marsh (floating peat), sustainable agriculture practices, rice farming, ecoculture,

tidal wetlands (with setback levees), and flooded managed wetlands. Concept plans for pilot projects are currently being developed to test the viability of these alternative land uses. The seven draft landscape alternatives are being developed for further discussion and input by the stakeholders and the Technical Advisory Committee at its next scheduled meetings in the fall.