



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for May 2021.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Delta Conveyance

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is continuing to develop an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). DWR is continuing discussions with the local communities in the Delta to develop a Community Benefits Program as part of the Delta Conveyance Project to help protect and enhance the cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta. DWR conducted interviews, one tribal workshop, and three public workshops to have discussions and obtain feedback.

Field activities, including cone penetration tests, soil borings, and geophysical surveys, under the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for Soil Investigations in the Delta are underway. DWR added a link to their public website to help provide information to interested members of the public and will update a map weekly showing the near-term planned explorations (<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/State-Water-Project/Delta-Conveyance/Public-Information>). Additionally, DWR and the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) are continuing work to obtain temporary entry for these soil surveys on private lands. DWR is continuing to pursue permits for soil survey sites that fall under the jurisdiction of the Rivers and Harbors Act (Section 408). Investigations at any given site will not occur until property owners are notified and required permits and approvals for that site are obtained.

Joint Powers Authorities

During the May 20, DCA Board of Directors Meeting, the board continued to discuss the draft budget for fiscal year 2021/22 in the amount of \$21.5 million. The approval of the final budget is scheduled for the June DCA meeting, which will reflect any refinements or modifications requested by the board or DWR, as well as results from renegotiations of current contracts. There is currently an underspend of approximately \$1.5 million for this fiscal year, which could roll over to be available for next fiscal year if the DCA Board approves. Planned technical work in the upcoming year will largely focus on studies to support preparation of the Draft CEQA documents, continued execution of the geotechnical program, and consideration of a range of refinements to be further evaluated during final design.

The DCA Board approved a resolution modifying the size of the DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee (SEC) to reduce the SEC from twenty members to its current size of seventeen, which includes the 15 SEC committee members, the Chair and the Vice Chair. This action was taken in response to three SEC members recent resignations for various reasons, to address a potential quorum issue, and recognizing that the DCA has received SEC input and submitted most of its engineering work to DWR in support of its environmental analysis.

There were no DCA SEC meetings scheduled in May. Possible topics for the next SEC meeting scheduled for June 23, 2021 include the Community Benefits Framework and an update to design changes.

The Delta Conveyance Finance Authority regularly scheduled May meeting was cancelled.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Sites Reservoir

In their May meetings, the Sites Project Authority Board (Authority Board) and the Sites Reservoir Committee (Reservoir Committee) authorized the Executive Director to execute an amended Federal Financial Assistance Agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). The 2020 federal budget appropriated \$13.7 million in Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act funds toward the Sites Reservoir Project (Project). Approximately \$10.4 million of the total appropriation is expected to be directly reimbursable to the Authority Board. The remaining \$3.3 million is retained for Reclamation staff.

The Authority Board and Reservoir Committee also provided input on the fundamental elements of the water rights application being prepared for eventual submittal to the State Water Resources Control Board. These elements include the purpose of use and the points of diversion. A survey was sent to Reservoir Committee members to assess if any other additional points of diversion will be needed to ensure water can be delivered to Project participants.

The Authority Board and Reservoir Committee heard an update on the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the approach for Project commitments, key outcomes of the construction-related chapters and, local issues and challenges. They also heard an update regarding the California Water Commission Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program Feasibility Report development.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Regulatory Activities

Staff participates 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 May, staff coordinated with state and federal agencies' staff to develop a Juvenile Production Estimate (JPE) for Spring-run Chinook salmon as a condition required by the ITP. The JPE is needed to provide the scientific basis for the "take" level at the export pumps. Staff also participated in the Delta Coordination Group as part of the BiOp implementation and provided written comments on the summer/fall habitat action science and monitoring plans. These science planning and monitoring documents are being developed to guide collection of data that are needed to assess the outcomes of BiOp and ITP actions.

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 May 18 meeting, CAMT focused on Delta smelt science activities. CAMT reviewed a draft presentation on Delta smelt management and science activities, discussed the findings and recommendations of a report prepared for CAMT that assessed the pilot implementation of the Delta Smelt Science Plan completed in 2019, and provided input on the draft CSAMP Organizational Framework for Delta Smelt.

Staff is helping to lead a CSAMP effort to collaboratively develop a scientific definition of salmon recovery, expressed as a suite of clear, measurable objectives and landscape level quantitative targets. A series of technical workshops to develop this definition are being planned for the next year.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Reclamation are working with other state and federal agencies to conduct a Biological Monitoring Survey Design Review, focused on five pelagic Bay-Delta surveys of fish and their prey. The objective of the review is to improve utility, increase efficiency and reduce redundancy among the aquatic species surveys and improve designs to better meet management needs. Staff participated in meetings and coordinated with other water agencies to provide written comments on the review. Initial recommendations from the review are expected this summer.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan

DWR utilizes a real-time earthquake intensity notification system that sends alerts of ground motions at important locations throughout the Delta, providing essential information to emergency operations managers regarding potential impacts to Delta levees. This automated system, called the U.S. Geological Survey Earthquake Notification Service, is used by DWR and Delta emergency response partners. DWR has interest in Metropolitan's ShakeCast notification system, which provides both earthquake intensity and damage assessments at identified Metropolitan infrastructure locations. Staff collaborates with DWR on these efforts.

In addition to major centralized stockpile sites currently in place to support flood fighting and emergency freshwater pathway actions at Rio Vista and Stockton in the Delta, DWR is planning to place flood fight supplies in the Delta at locations providing more localized access during future flood emergencies. A regional emergency material storage depot Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been approved by the Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services (grant administrator on behalf of DWR) and Reclamation District 756 for approximately \$1 million to place materials on Boulton Island (Metropolitan owned), which is near potential channel closure locations that facilitate freshwater pathway flows along Middle and Old Rivers in response to large seismic emergencies.

DWR hosts a Delta Working Group on Delta Emergency Preparedness on a quarterly basis at locations throughout the Delta region with the five Delta counties, California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), DWR, and Metropolitan as participants to coordinate emergency planning activities and to understand the different roles and responsibilities during a catastrophic flood event in the Delta. A Delta Working Group table top flood emergency exercise was conducted through a series of four meetings throughout 2019-2021, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of levee maintaining agencies, operational area emergency responders, DWR, CalOES, and other state and federal agencies, in response to a multi-hazard, multi-jurisdictional event in the Delta region.

A DWR interdivisional flood emergency exercise was also conducted in May addressing the implementation of the Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan (DFEMP) and will include a subsequent after-action report. Information gathered from these exercises and from other comments received on the DFEMP will be incorporated in supplements and revisions to the DFEMP.