



Authorize agreement with the United States Geological Survey for \$357,000 to evaluate existing ponds on Metropolitan's Delta islands for their potential to assist in preserving Delta smelt

Water Planning and Stewardship Committee

Item 7-6

August 16, 2021

Overview

- Problem

- Native population of Delta Smelt are on the verge of extinction unless immediate actions are taken

- Objective

- Evaluate existing aquatic habitat on Metropolitan's Delta Islands for their potential to assist in preserving Delta smelt



Research Partners

- US Geological Survey
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
- California Dept. of Water Resources
- University of California at Davis
- Others



Research

- Location
 - Metropolitan Islands
 - 8 ponds – size ranges 7-50 acres
- Surveys
 - Aug, Sep, Oct, & Nov 2021
- Elements analyzed
 - Water quality
 - Biological inventory
- Research Agency
 - US Geological Survey
- Cost
 - \$357,000 Metropolitan
 - \$68,000 USGS
 - In-kind (DWR, USFWS, CDFW, UC Davis)



Support

“I am very supportive of Metropolitan Water District’s collaborative efforts to advance research and propagation of Delta smelt, Sacramento Splittail, Longfin smelt, Hitch and Tule perch on MWD’s islands.”

– Dr. Peter Moyle, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, UC Davis, 28 May 2021

“DWR recognizes the importance of the MWD impoundments as a potential supplementation research tool and views them as a viable alternative to the hatchery for both experimentation and propagation”

– California Department of Water Resources, Office of Water Quality and Estuarine Ecology, 23 June 2021



News Articles

“It's an all-hands-on-deck, precarious situation. Extinction is real on our side of the equation.”

– **Chuck Bonham**, Director, California Fish & Wildlife,
AgriPulse, 27 May 2021

“Delta smelt are already on the verge of extinction, and low inflow will affect salinity levels, a concerning sign going into the year.

– **Paul Souza**, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife,
AgriPulse, 27 May 2021



Summary & Next Steps

- Aquatic habitat studies could lead to valuable partnerships and future opportunities for the conservation of Delta smelt utilizing Metropolitan's properties
- Staff will bring future research and/or habitat development opportunities to the Board

Board Options

- Option #1

- Authorize the General Manager to enter into an agreement with USGS for up to \$357,000 for water quality and biological monitoring and assessments on Metropolitan's Delta properties.

- Option #2

- Do not authorize the General Manager to enter into an agreement with USGS for up to \$357,000 for water quality and biological monitoring and assessments on Metropolitan's Delta properties

Staff Recommendation

- Option #1

