



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Field activities in the Delta for Soil Investigations are proceeding to support the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (including cone penetration tests, soil borings, and geophysical surveys). Field investigations will continue in mid-September following a short break from July-August 2021.

DWR completed the last of the four technical webinars designed to inform the public and interested stakeholders about the approaches and methodologies used in conducting impact analyses in the Draft EIR. The final webinar on Environmental Justice was presented on September 16. All webinars were recorded and made available on DWR's website (<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/State-Water-Project/Delta-Conveyance/DCP-Informational-Webinars>). Information about impact findings and specific mitigation measures were not available for the webinars and will be included in future outreach efforts following publication of the public Draft EIR.

Joint Powers Authorities

The regularly scheduled Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) Board of Directors meeting was held on September 16 and included regular staff reports and updates. The DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee met on September 22, where air quality and greenhouse gas methodologies used in CEQA analyses were presented by DWR.

The Delta Conveyance Finance Authority (DCFA) regularly scheduled September meeting was cancelled.

Sites Reservoir

In their joint September 22 meeting, the Sites Project Authority Board (Authority Board) and the Sites Reservoir Committee (Reservoir Committee) gave the Executive Director authorization to execute a three-party agreement between the Authority Board, DWR, and Sites Reservoir participants that are also State Water Project (SWP) Contractors to include the planning costs for the Sites Reservoir Project in the SWP Annual Statement of Charges.

The Authority Board and Reservoir Committee also approved Amendment 3 of the Project Agreement and Work Plan with a period of performance from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024 for the purpose of initiating participant home board review, deliberation and execution of the agreement. The Executive Director was also given authorization to execute a Federal Financial Assistance Agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for \$6.9 million in WIIN Act Funds, and the authorization to submit the Final Water Storage Investment Program Feasibility Report to the California Water Commission to comply with Proposition 1.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Near-Term Delta Actions

Regulatory Activities

In response to ongoing drought conditions and associated water supply shortages in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta watershed, on August 3, 2021, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) adopted a Delta watershed emergency regulation authorizing the curtailment of diversions when water is determined to be unavailable. On August 20, 2021, the State Board issued curtailments to approximately 4,500 water right holders in the Delta watershed to help protect drinking water supplies, prevent salinity intrusion, and minimize impacts to fisheries and the environment. The SWP has rights for the diversion of water to Lake Oroville, as well as rights in the south Delta for the diversion and re-diversion of stored water. These rights are post 1914 appropriative and consequently are impacted by the State Board curtailment orders. DWR is working closely with State Board staff and Reclamation to ensure that the water projects are working together to achieve compliance.

At this time, the State Board has determined that riparian water right permits will not be curtailed in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Basins, including the Bay-Delta. Metropolitan holds riparian water right permits on its Delta island properties and, although not mandated to curtail diversions, Metropolitan staff is meeting with its Delta island agricultural lessees to assist in voluntary cutbacks.

Staff continued to participate in the collaborative groups called for in the 2019 Biological Opinions (BiOp) for the 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.

Staff continued collaboration with the state and federal agencies to develop a monitoring program for steelhead as a condition of the 2019 BiOp. The monitoring plan would encompass steelhead populations within the San Joaquin Basin and/or the San Joaquin River downstream of the confluence of the Stanislaus River, and would include steelhead and rainbow trout. The group is drafting conceptual models for each life stage of steelhead to help identify monitoring needed for each life stage.

Science Activities

Staff continued efforts to develop studies to assist in preserving Delta smelt and evaluating existing ponds on Metropolitan's Delta Island properties to assess the suitability of the ponds for Delta smelt research. On September 15, staff hosted the Deputy Directors of DWR, their staff, and UC Davis researchers for a Bouldin Island tour to provide information and develop opportunities for collaboration on projects on the Delta Island properties. The main projects discussed included floating wetlands, Delta smelt mesocosms, and levee security.

On September 2, staff participated in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Longfin smelt Workshop for the Species Status Assessment (SSA) and presented work on predictive mapping for larval/juvenile longfin smelt habitat. USFWS is considering scientific information to inform a federal decision regarding whether the longfin smelt should be listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. The workshop included presentations on the biology, ecology, distribution, and abundance of longfin smelt to inform USFWS SSA on longfin smelt.

Staff also continued participating in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP), including participation on the Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT). At the September 21 meeting, CAMT discussions focused on planning for a workshop to evaluate information from past reviews of Delta monitoring programs, and on potential science activities for the CAMT technical teams. Staff continued collaboration with the non-governmental organization participants on the CSAMP Salmon Recovery Initiative. The group is currently planning the second workshop to define salmon recovery in a broad sense through scientific technical discussions with salmonid experts.