

Delta Stewardship Council
Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee
March 2, 2020
Tsakopoulos Library Galleria 828 I St, Sacramento
Meeting Summary

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) established the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) after adopting the Delta Plan in 2013 and continues to oversee DPIIC activities as required by the Delta Reform Act. DPIIC serves as a forum to lead state, federal, and local agencies' efforts that implement the Delta Plan and Delta Science Plan. DPIIC members also coordinate priorities to improve statewide water supply reliability and ecosystem conditions in the Delta. The 14th DPIIC meeting took place on Monday, March 2, 2020 and was called to order by Chair Susan Tatayon.

The recording of the meeting can be found on line:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXhueHV_Ng0&list=PLqTHClW1Hhpo7AvPQSW6vPVymt11C9yJ. Meeting materials and presentations can also be found on the Council's website: <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov>.

Attendees

The following committee members were in attendance:

John Callaway	Delta Lead Scientist
Dan Castleberry	Assistant Regional Director, Fish and Aquatic Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Pacific Southwest (for Paul Souza, Regional Director)
Mike Chotkowski	Science Coordinator, Pacific Region, US Geological Survey (for Mark Sogge, Regional Director for the Pacific Region)
Ernest Conant	Director, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region (Reclamation)
Mark Cowan	Deputy Chief of Planning Division, Sacramento District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Wade Crowfoot	Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency (Resources)
Kanwarjit (Jit) Dua	General Counsel, Central Valley Flood Protection Board (for Bill Edgar, President)
Joaquin Esquivel	Chair, State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board)
Michael George	Delta Watermaster, (Water Board, for Mr. Esquivel)
Campbell Ingram	Executive Officer, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Conservancy)
Karla Nemeth	Director, California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Kristin Peer	Deputy Secretary and Special Counsel for Water Policy, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA; for Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary)
Maria Rea	Assistant Regional Manager, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (for Barry Thom, West Coast Administrator)
Karen Ross	Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture
Susan Tatayon	Chair, Council
Brian Thompson	Delta and Sacramento Basin River Lead, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA; for Tomas Torres, Director, Water Division, Region 9)
Oscar Villegas	Chair, Delta Protection Commission
Nancy Vogel	Director of the Water Portfolio Program, Resources (for Mr. Crowfoot)
Carl Wilcox	Policy Advisor on the Delta, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (for Chuck Bonham, Director)

In addition to those listed above, the following were also in attendance to present during the meeting (listed in order of appearance):

Amanda Bohl	Special Assistant for Planning and Science, Council
Jeff Mount	Public Policy Institute of California
Ron Melcer	Program Manager, Council
Louise Conrad	Deputy Executive Officer for Science, Council
Dylan Chapple	Senior Environmental Scientist, Council
Edward Hard	Chief, Aquatic Invasive Species Programs, Department of Boating and Waterways
Dan Riordan	Program Manager, DWR
Rachael Klopfenstein	Environmental Scientist, Council
Kelly Biedenweg	Assistant Professor, Oregon State University

Overview and Introductions

Chair Tatayon welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2020 and took a moment to inform attendees that the meeting was being webcast and a recording would be made available on the Council's website following the meeting. Chair Tatayon asked committee members to introduce themselves and provide relevant updates.

Mr. Crowfoot updated committee members on the status of the Governor's Water Resilience Portfolio, noting that the final document would soon be out. Ms. Nemeth provided information on a state incidental take permit for the State Water Project, transparency practices at DWR, and the pending hire of a new division chief for multi-

benefit projects. Chair Tatayon highlighted a few of the materials in the meeting binder, including the Chair's Blog focused on ecosystem-based management.

Delta Science Funding and Governance Initiative

Ms. Bohl provided an update on the DPIIC-endorsed Delta Science Funding and Governance Initiative priority actions:

- Implementation of common accounting and reporting protocols and the coordination of critical review of science funding in the Delta - Fiscal year 2018-2019 funding data has been collected. Reclamation and the Council are working on a report to submit to DPIIC by the July DPIIC meeting.
- Support and participation in an update of the Science Action Agenda (SAA) - The Delta Science Program has begun the process of updating the SAA and has discussed the process and scope with most DPIIC agencies via the Delta Agency Science Workgroup. DPIIC agencies should expect to hear more over the coming months.
- Convening of a workshop to develop a science needs assessment for the Delta, April 27-28, 2020 – The workshop planning team is meeting regularly and has completed the advance briefing paper for the workshop. Registration will open soon.

Mr. Crowfoot asked how the Delta was being geographically defined by the initiative, recognizing that everything in the watershed is connected. Ms. Bohl responded that the initiative focused on the legal Delta and Suisan Marsh; however, initiative participants had much discussion on the need—over the long-term—to take a watershed-wide and holistic look at these issues in the future. Mr. Esquivel suggested that DPIIC could be a trusted leader and body to support these types of discussions.

Chair Tatayon noted that the Delta Science Program is not just for the Delta Stewardship Council. Mr. Crowfoot pointed out that with this type of collaboration (e.g., the Science Action Agenda) will be effective in supporting cooperative science and he encouraged committee members to ask the “hard questions.”

Ecosystem-based Management and the Delta Plan

Dr. Mount presented the Public Policy Institute of California's recent work on ecosystem-based management: *A Path Forward for California's Freshwater Ecosystems*. Mr. Melcer provided an overview of desired ecosystem conditions described in the Delta Plan Chapter 4 Amendment, including performance measures, regulatory policies, and recommendations.

Mr. Esquivel noted the Water Board's ecosystem-based management efforts, including 50 years of implementing the Porter-Cologne Act, beneficial uses, a watershed approach, and water rights. Mr. Crowfoot mentioned the potential effectiveness of

voluntary agreements and asked why several interests assert the Environmental Water Account [of the late 1990s] didn't work. Dr. Mount offered that it was likely challenges in application of the program and explained that ecosystem-based management goes a step further by appointing an ecosystem trustee who manages environmental assets with trading and flexibility, noting that funding is needed to make this work.

Ms. Peer added that it is good to see many of the attributes of ecosystem-based management included in the voluntary agreement efforts and thanked everyone for their hard work.

Mr. Ingram spoke on shifting the culture of organizations to make room for an ecosystem-based management approach. This shift includes more flexibility with in our agencies and encouraging staff to take a more ecosystem-based approach as we meet obligations under regulations. Another opportunity is bond funds; the language in administering the funds could be more flexible and provide more opportunities to include ecosystem-based approaches. We have an imperative to not continue to do things that aren't working, particularly with climate change effects.

Ms. Rea provided examples of how NOAA's approach to species management is consistent with ecosystem-based management practices, including multi-species recovery plans and habitat conservation plans. The fundamental purpose of the Endangered Species Act is to protect endangered and threatened species and their habitats.

Mr. Castleberry spoke of the work carried out by the USFWS and Reclamation in implementing the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, with some projects resulting in flows for ecosystems and in improved aquatic connectivity. Another example is the work with rice farmers in creating floodplains.

Ms. Nemeth observed how uncertainty has been difficult to address, even in processes intended to bracket uncertainty; this aspect of ecosystem management may become more difficult given the accelerating change due to climate change. She emphasized the comprehensive nature of the voluntary agreements and the challenge of managing assets with the flexibility to achieve multiple water and ecosystem objectives.

Dr. Mount stated that in all this, we're dealing with tradeoffs. After sharing an example from Australia, he observed that we do not have the science to tell whether decisions made now will create conditions to solve these problems; there will have to be a "leap of faith" on all sides, which is why the governance structure has to be really sound

Ms. Vogel asked Dr. Mount to elaborate on who could be an ecosystem trustee. Dr. Mount responded by sharing a couple of different examples of governance structures: CalFed and a trustee agency. The PPIC report argues for a trustee who negotiates,

manages the assets, and helps coordinate a comprehensive ecosystem-based approach.

Mr. Wilcox stated that he does not see too much difference between what Dr. Mount is suggesting and what the voluntary agreements propose. Mr. Wilcox also emphasized the importance of shared ecosystem-based management goals in the Delta. There aren't shared goals in the Delta other than regulatory requirements. For projects to come forward that meet shared goals for the Delta, the objectives of those goals must be clear. It's also important to highlight the sociology of getting to shared goals.

As a next step in understanding how ecosystem-based approaches are currently being used, Chair Tatayon noted that Ms. Bohl would be following up with the DPIIC agencies to develop a compendium of projects and initiatives that are implementing ecosystem-based management.

Critical Needs for Aquatic Weed Control

Dr. Conrad, Mr. Chapple, Mr. Hard, and Mr. Riordan provided an overview of recent findings on the control of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and the urgent need for more effective strategies. The findings were summarized in a recent white paper written by the Delta Science Program in collaboration with DBW and DWR. SAVs are a growing crisis, increasingly threatening restoration sites, impairing human uses of water and waterways, compromising ecological conditions, and difficult and costly to control. SAVs have roughly doubled in cover since 2004. Without coordinated action on management and research, there is a high risk that aquatic weeds will compromise ecological function at planned restoration sites. This would put substantial investments in restoration at risk. Furthermore, multiple state and federal mandates and initiatives rely on effective control of submerged weeds.

The white paper identified the need for two actions: 1) prioritize regulatory authorization to try new control tools at pilot scale at Decker and Prospect Islands; and 2) identify funding for a consistent Delta-wide monitoring program for aquatic weeds.

Ms. Nemeth noted DWR's focus on Decker and Prospect islands and the need to add more muscle to existing monitoring efforts on Decker. Chair Tatayon asked about the consistency of funding for such projects, and Dr. Conrad responded that it is very opportunistic, adding that the Council will be providing funding in 2020 but funding after that is not secured.

Chair Tatayon stated that there is a dire need for consistent funding for Delta-wide monitoring of aquatic weeds and that we need to know what a more consistently funded aquatic weed control program would look like, including the magnitude of funding, length of funding needed, etc.

Dr. Conrad noted that aquatic weed control is an area of shared interest and goals, referring to the discussion of shared goals during the earlier agenda item on ecosystem-based management. It is also an area where scientists are already collaborating on research and potential solutions. What's needed is authorization to move forward and to experiment with new tools. Ms. Rea and Mr. Castleberry offered assistance in moving forward to allow for testing of different methods for managing SAV.

Social Science Task Force

Ms. Klopfenstein and Dr. Biedenweg presented the near final recommendations from the Social Science Task Force.

Ms. Nemeth noted how Delta agencies could better use the social sciences to address issues around risk management, working with the public, and sea-level rise. Chair Tatayon asked that the DPIIC agencies consider what they can do to implement the recommendations.

Closing Remarks and Committee Business

Chair Tatayon thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting.

The teleconference meeting will be audio recorded and the live audio feed will be available via WebEx (Password: Delta):

<https://deltacouncil.webex.com/deltacouncil/onstage/g.php?MTID=e3356b43ae12cc03f15f16415a0c87b67>

Note: Accessing the audio feed requires you to enter your name and e-mail, which may be disclosed as public information. The signal for the live audio feed may be intermittent due to the internet infrastructure at the meeting location.

- Additional information regarding the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee can be found on the Delta Stewardship Council's at www.deltacouncil.ca.gov.
- If you have any questions, please contact Erik Erreca at (916) 4455511 or erik.erreca@deltacouncil.ca.gov.
- If you have questions or need reasonable accommodation due to a disability, please contact Human Resources Office at (916) 445-5511, or TDD (800) 7352929.