



INFORMATION ITEM

Delta Independent Science Board Chair Update

Summary: Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) Chair Elizabeth Canuel, and Past Delta ISB Chair Stephen Brandt, will provide an update to the Council on completed and current Delta ISB reviews.

Background

As mandated by the 2009 Delta Reform Act, the Delta ISB is responsible for providing oversight of the scientific research, monitoring, and assessment programs that support adaptive management in the Delta (Water Code section 85280(a)(3)). Findings and recommendations from the Delta ISB inform updates to and the implementation of the Delta Plan, Science Action Agenda, and the Delta Science Plan.

The Delta ISB update to the Council is intended to "...increase scientific credibility, improve research clarity, advance the debate about Delta issues, and seek better connectivity between science, management, and policy" (Delta ISB Operating Procedures). The communication and relationship between the Council and Delta ISB is critical to the success of these values. The last update was at the Council's July 26, 2018, meeting.

Delta ISB Reviews

To meet its legislative mandate, the Delta ISB reviews programs that support adaptive management by "thematic" or topical areas. To date, the Delta ISB has completed and presented the following thematic reviews to the Council: restoration (2013), fish and flows (2015), adaptive management (2016), levee hazards (2016), Delta as an evolving place (2017), and water quality (2018). In addition, the Delta ISB also reviews specific science documents related to adaptive management. These reviews can be either self-initiated or based on a specific request from an individual or entity.

Since the last update to the Council, the Delta ISB finished its review of the draft Delta Science Plan in December 2018. The Delta Science Program addressed the Delta ISB recommendations and finished the plan in June 2019. In its review, the Delta ISB found the State's overall portfolio of science and technical activities for the Delta substantial and useful. It suggested, however, that the scientific enterprise must become better organized, and accelerate efforts to address rapid environmental change, such as climate change, new invasive species, and the decline of native species. After sending its final review to Delta Science Program, the Delta ISB also submitted a letter to the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee regarding the urgency, and opportunities, to improve interagency science.

Current Reviews

The Delta ISB is in the process of completing four thematic reviews, which are at different stages of completion. The current reviews are:

1. Interagency Ecological Program (started January 2018): This review looks into the organizational and programmatic business of the Interagency Ecological Program to produce science that informs management in the Delta. The Delta ISB released a draft report for public comments on June 14, 2019. Public comments were due on July 26, 2019, and the Delta ISB is in the process of finalizing the report.
2. Delta Monitoring Enterprise (started April 2017): The Delta ISB is in the process of reviewing how well monitoring programs are meeting informational needs of management agencies, whether monitoring programs need to be better coordinated, and whether monitoring data can support the implementation of adaptive management and assessments of performance measures. A comprehensive inventory of monitoring activities should be completed by the end of 2019 to help inform the Delta ISB's recommendations.
3. Water Supply Reliability (started April 2018): This review focuses on the science and methods available and employed to estimate and evaluate water supply reliability. In January 2019, the Delta ISB hosted a public workshop to learn about the different methods and models used by different agencies and to identify priorities for research and areas for collaboration. Currently, the Delta ISB is in the process of drafting the report.
4. Ecosystems (started September 2018): The review focuses on non-natives (often referred to as invasive species if deemed harmful), their effects on Delta ecosystems, and how to control or adapt to them. The review aims to identify the gaps in knowledge that impede effective management. Currently, the Delta ISB is in the process of drafting the report after hosting two public workshops in December 2018 and March 2019 with managers and scientists on the state of science to inform invasive species management in the Delta.

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

No attachments.

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