

Adaptive Management Forum 2023

Day 1

Summary Sheet



Delta
Science
Program

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Background

The Delta Science Program hosts the Adaptive Management Forum every two years to promote dialogue and information exchange related to adaptive management in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Day 1 of the 2023 Forum was held on May 4, 2023, and **focused on governance for adaptive management**, with the aim of fostering learning and discussion around governance needs to support effective, equitable, and inclusive processes in the Delta. More than 150 people attended in person and virtually.

Summary of Day 1

The forum opened with a **tribal welcome** from Raquel Gonzales of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians and a traditional blessing song, followed by a **land acknowledgment** from Delta Stewardship Council Chair **Virginia Madueño**. In the sessions that followed, over **20 presenters** from a variety of backgrounds shared their experiences and insights on adaptive governance.

Some **key themes** from the day are listed below.

- Authentic personal engagement, relationship building with coalitions intentionality, respecting lived experiences and perspectives of those historically excluded from decision-making processes, improving alignment across scales, and increasing collaboration and connectivity are all important for successful adaptive governance.
- Tribes and environmental justice communities should be integrated into adaptive management processes as early as possible.
- Governance systems can constrain adaptive management activities, but strategic planning can help alleviate these constraints.
- More funding and improved data collection can facilitate coordination amongst groups.

Summary of Storytelling Session

The storytelling session was focused on the human dimension of adaptation and governance. **Dr. Don Hankins** of California State University, Chico, spoke about his cultural connection with the land, and the need for better respect of tribal law and eco-cultural connections under current governance structures. **Tama Brisbane** of With Our Words, Inc. spoke about including young people in adaptive management and environmental justice efforts, and better connecting communities of color and marginalized communities to work in the Delta.

Summary of Keynote Presentation

The keynote presentation featured Supervisor **Diane Burgis** of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, and focused on governance needs for equitable adaptation in a dramatically changing Delta watershed. Burgis emphasized the need to embrace the unknown with enthusiasm and an open mind, and that we should think proactively about how to engage with a wide variety of different groups.

Summary of Panel 1: Governance Needs for Adaptation

The first discussion panel explored governance needs for effective adaptation across organizational scales related to equity, inclusiveness, and collaboration. **Barriers to adaptive governance were identified**, which included bureaucratic limitations, aversion to risk-taking, uncertainty, and the exclusion of marginalized groups.

Summary of Panel 2: Adaptation Case Studies Across Scales

Panelists gave brief presentations on their case studies and shared **insights and lessons learned**. Case studies covered topics such as traditional environmental management, restoration of peat soils through agriculture, levee improvement, climate resilience, and subsidence reversal.

Summary of Panel 3: How can the Governance System Change to Enable More Effective and Inclusive Adaptation?

Key themes included decolonizing ways of thinking, building collaboration and community involvement, and thinking outside of current boundaries.