



News Release

October 23, 2014

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Science and Policy Working Together to Help the Delta

Learn How the Disciplines Collaborate at the Bay-Delta Science Conference

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Successfully resolving California’s long-standing water supply and ecosystem restoration conflicts in the Delta depends on sound policy based on the best available science. Fostering that collaboration is the backdrop for the [8th Biennial Bay-Delta Science Conference](#), October 28-30, 2014, jointly sponsored by the [Delta Stewardship Council](#) and the [U.S. Geological Survey](#). More than 1,000 scientists, managers, and policymakers will gather in Sacramento to discuss the latest advances in scientific information and ideas on water resource management in the Delta, its watershed, and the San Francisco Estuary.

“Policies addressing California’s current drought, ensuring long-term water supplies, and protecting the health of the Bay-Delta environment must be based on the best available science,” said Mike Connor, Deputy Secretary of the Interior and the department’s lead water policymaker. “The Department of the Interior commends the Delta Stewardship Council and USGS for setting up this conference to bring decision makers together with scientists.”

“This is a major conference that highlights the most recent discoveries that influence management decisions on the Delta,” said [Dr. Peter Goodwin](#), lead scientist for the [Delta Science Program](#). “These discoveries include: how to anticipate and prepare for severe storms; assessing the risk of mercury impacts and new ways to minimize those impacts; and the importance of floodplains as fish food producers.”

The Delta, formed by the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, is the largest estuary on the West Coast of the Americas, the hub of both the state and federal water projects, and a region of agriculture and recreational importance. These often conflicting uses have bedeviled policy makers and scientists for decades.

This year’s theme is “Making Connections,” in the spirit of “[One Delta, One Science](#),” and highlights how management of the Bay-Delta ecosystem is at a critical juncture. Political and regulatory mandates require new ways of managing water exports while also restoring landscape-level ecosystem attributes and functions. To support these activities, scientists must make connections among the external forces that impact the system, management actions, and ecosystem responses. Equally critical is a two-way flow of communication between scientists and managers to better understand their respective needs, available resources, and ideas.

The conference will be held at the [Sacramento Convention Center](#), 1400 J Street, and begins with a plenary session at 9:00 a.m. on October 28. Participants include: [Mike Connor, Deputy Secretary of the Interior](#) as an invited speaker; [Council Chair Randy Fiorini](#) talking about the need for science that can

influence strategies, planning, and behaviors that affect the environment; Dr. Goodwin highlighting six things the Delta science community has learned in the last two years; [Delta Independent Science Board](#) member [Dr. Stephen Brandt](#) talking about habitat quality from a fish's perspective; and former [Interagency Ecological Program](#) Lead Scientist and current Associate Director for Projects at the U.S. Geological Survey, Dr. Anke Mueller-Solger, discussing new approaches to resolving scientific uncertainties in the estuary.

Several special sessions include: a discussion on the management of water and the ecosystem's health through a drought; whether or not climate science can influence public policy in an era of drought; and "Funding the Delta's Fiscal Orphans: Science, Governance, and Ecosystem Stress Relief" with an opening presentation by [Ellen Hanak](#) of the [Public Policy Institute of California](#).

The Delta Science Program partners with the [Delta Conservancy](#) in a discussion on Policy, Floodplains, and Toxics. This includes a session on implementing the [Delta Science Plan](#) followed by a presentation on the [Interim Science Action Agenda](#). There will also be highlights of June's [Data Summit](#) where a new era in information management and knowledge discovery was discussed.

The conference also features sessions on water policy including: predicting outcomes and working towards reconciliation; and the direct and indirect effects of large-scale restoration and its implications for science and management. A presentation on the Delta Independent Science Board's comments regarding the [Bay Delta Conservation Plan](#) and its reliance on habitat restoration is also scheduled. Approximately 185 posters will also be available for viewing during receptions on Tuesday and Wednesday from 5:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. on the 1st floor of the Convention Center.

This year's conference is co-chaired by [Dr. Lenny Grimaldo](#), a fish biologist and water resource manager at [ICF International](#), and [Dr. Wim Kimmerer](#), a marine biology research professor at [San Francisco State University](#). More information is available at [Science Conference 2014](#).

"Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place. – **CA Water Code §85054**

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