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Council Names Chris Knopp New Executive Officer

Former Forest Service official experienced in contentious large-scale projects

SACRAMENTO – The Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) today announced the appointment of Chris Knopp as its new executive officer, replacing Joe Grindstaff, who is retiring. Knopp, a recent high-level official with the U.S. Forest Service, has extensive experience working with local, state, and federal agencies on a broad array of issues balancing ecological, social and economic concerns in California and across the country.

“The Delta Stewardship Council was formed to achieve the coequal goals of California: a more reliable water supply, and a restored and protected Delta ecosystem,” said DSC Chair Phil Isenberg. “Chris is not an aging water warrior, but a smart guy who can take a fresh look at old problems. The Council is very impressed with his management style, sense of humor and judgment, as well as his ability and experience in dealing with complex natural resource issues,” Isenberg said.



“The task of the Delta Stewardship Council to achieve a coequal solution is daunting, but achievable,” Knopp said. “It represents the challenge of a lifetime. Success will require balance and compromise – and sound science so the nature of the compromises can be known and understood.”

Knopp retired from the U.S. Forest Service in November 2011 after a 34-year career that included leading the ecosystem conservation group at Lake Tahoe and the National Watershed Program in Washington, DC. His last appointment was as a supervisor for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona, where he helped create and develop the 2.4 million acre [Four Forest Restoration Initiative](#), the largest restoration project in the American West.

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“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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The Four Forests Restoration Initiative brought together federal, state, and local agencies and stakeholders over several years to develop a plan for landscape-scale restoration that will provide for fuels reduction, forest health, and wildlife and plant diversity. A key objective is to create sustainable ecosystems in the long term while allowing some harvest, processing and selling of wood products.

“I’m thrilled to learn that Chris has been selected for the position of DSC Executive Officer,” said Faye Krueger, Associate Deputy Chief for the U.S. Forest Service and Chris Knopp’s former supervisor. “His knowledge in ecosystem management and restoration work will serve the Council greatly by pulling people together to find solutions and resolve contentious issues in order to get great work accomplished in the Delta.”

While at the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Knopp also implemented 45 projects under the American Restoration and Recovery Act, oversaw the White Mountain Stewardship Project, and completed both the forest’s land management and travel management plans. While director of the National Watershed Program, he created a national water quality program for the Forest Service that required the cooperation of a number of federal and state agencies and organizations including the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

“I’ve worked very successfully with Chris in the past, and am particularly proud of the work we did together in the U.S. Forest Service at Lake Tahoe,” said Mark Nechodom, Director of the California Department of Conservation. “Chris’ knowledge of ecological sciences, his policy skills and his impressive work ethic will all be tremendous assets in his leadership role as Executive Officer at the Delta Stewardship Council. I truly look forward to working with him again.”

Knopp currently lives in Vacaville and Hilo, Hawaii, where his wife Pat is the Program Manager for Conservation of Biodiversity for the Pacific Southwest Research Station of the U.S. Forest Service, which encompasses California, Hawaii, and the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands. The position will soon transition to Northern California and the couple will eventually reside in the Sacramento area.

About the Council

Created by the legislature in 2009, the Delta Stewardship Council is composed of members who represent different parts of the state and offer diverse expertise in fields such as agriculture, science, the environment, and public service. Of the seven, four are appointed by the Governor, one each by the Senate and Assembly, and the seventh is the Chair of the Delta Protection Commission. For more information visit <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/>

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