

## Approval of San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science Contract

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**Requested Action:** Authorize the Executive Officer to enter into a new two-year contract to provide \$536,042 from Science Program Prop 50 funds for continued publication of the *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science* online journal in Fiscal Years 2014/15 and 2015/16 (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2016).

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### Background

As identified in the Delta Reform Act, “the mission of the Delta Science Program is to provide the best possible scientific information for water and environmental decision making in the Bay-Delta system.” The Science Program fulfills this mission in part by adding to the body of best available scientific information by funding research (grants and fellowships) and peer-reviewed publication of research findings.

The *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science (SFEWS)* ([http://www.escholarship.org/uc/jmie\\_sfews](http://www.escholarship.org/uc/jmie_sfews)) is a unique online journal that is a primary source of peer-reviewed, credible science relevant to water management issues of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and contributes towards the achievement of a shared vision for Delta science, ‘One Delta, One Science’. As an “open access” science outlet the journal publishes articles and allows open—free of charge—access to any interested reader.

The articles published in the journal continue to have influence beyond the local scientific community and often support important policy decisions or dialogue. For example, an article by W. Kimmerer in 2008 directly addressed the role of water diversions as a source of mortality for Delta Smelt. This article was heavily cited in recent Biological Opinions. The influential National Academy of Sciences book, *Sustainable Water and Environmental Management in the California Bay-Delta* cited articles from *SFEWS* repeatedly and 15 papers were cited in Chapter 5 of the book, “Stressors.” Many of the DRERIP conceptual models that were used extensively in the BDCP and the Delta Plan were published in *SFEWS* (Volume 10, Issue 4; Volume 11, issue 1).

In 2013, *SFEWS* implemented an idea suggested by the editorial board and then - Chair of the Delta Stewardship Council Phil Isenberg, and published nine invited essays from local and national experts who discussed how we can better use science to guide policies concerning water supply reliability and ecosystem restoration in the Bay-Delta. This marked the beginning of what is designed to be an ongoing new essay section in *SFEWS*.

The Delta Stewardship Council also supports science fellowships for postdoctoral and graduate researchers working with community and scientific mentors, and research grants – all targeted on Bay-Delta research priorities. A synergy between these research funding efforts and *SFEWS* has developed over the years with the publication of 14 papers prepared by fellows and 45 papers by grantees between 2003 and 2014.

### **Journal Usage**

Since the journal’s inception in October 2003, a total of 30 issues and 118 papers have been published. There have been 126,871 requests for articles since the release of the first issue. The growth of the journal is illustrated by the 19,496 requests for articles in 2013 as compared to 14,724 in 2010 and 10,617 in 2005. Articles of direct relevance to ongoing issues about Delta smelt, salmon, climate change, water movement, and the effects of diversions continue to be

requested. Authorship is spread across all interest groups as is readership. For example, in February 2012, 44 percent of requests came from searches (probably for specific subject areas) on Google. Twenty-two percent came from direct access to the journal web page (probably people accessing the journal to scan for articles of interest or to read the latest issue). Thirty-four percent came from known search engines and “unknown” sources, all representing additional search engines other than Google (Attachment 1).

Limited access to the scientific literature among agencies and stakeholders has long been cited as an impediment to science-based policy. As an open access journal, which charges neither authors for submissions nor readers for access, *SFEWS* addresses this important challenge.

### **Budget**

Publication of *SFEWS* is a shared effort of the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC), the University of California Digital Library (CDL), and the University of California at Davis (UC Davis). The DSC provides direct financial contributions and the CDL and UC Davis provide a nearly equal amount of in-kind services. In-kind services from the CDL include the journal’s electronic publishing platform, direct web access to the journal and IT support. UC Davis’ in-kind support includes providing an independent, university based “home” for the journal, including office space, and support for developing and maintaining an archive of legacy articles.

Peer review of the articles submitted for publication is provided free of charge by faculty and staff from different agencies, universities and stakeholders. The journal’s Associate Editors (collectively called the Editorial Board, see Attachment 2) represent a list of the most eminent water scientists in the region. Occasionally, *SFEWS* publishes special issues focused on a single topic. Costs for publishing a special issue are underwritten by the requesting party.

This current request is for the Council to allocate \$536,042 of Prop 50 funds to continue publication of *SFEWS* from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2016. An in-kind contribution of approximately \$460,000 will be provided by CDL, UC Davis, special issue underwriters, and other agencies, universities and stakeholders (Attachment 3).

### **Fiscal Information**

Prop 50 funding for this amendment is available from current appropriations and is on the Delta Stewardship Council’s list for bond funding.

### **List of Attachments**

- Attachment 1: San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science Cumulative Monthly Impact, 2003-2013
- Attachment 2: San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science Online Journal Editorial Board Members
- Attachment 3: San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science Online Journal - Budget Summary

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