

## Progress Report on the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Process

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**Summary:** Following the recent submittal of a Joint Status Report by the parties involved in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program, the U.S. District Court issued another one-year extension to the Biological Opinion remand order. This will enable the Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT) to move forward with scoping, conducting, and reviewing agreed-upon science investigations, following in large part the recommendations contained in the Delta Science Plan and the Adaptive Management steps of the Delta Plan. The two co-chairs of the CAMT, Dr. Valerie Connor (SFCWA) and Mr. Leo Winternitz, GEI Consultants, will join a Delta Science program representative to provide a brief presentation of how the Delta Science Program is envisioned to assist with a relevant, credible, and transparent joint fact-finding process for informing revisions to the Biological Opinions.

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### **Background**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service were under a court-ordered remand schedule for completing revisions to salmon and Delta Smelt biological opinions (BiOps) that placed certain conditions on the operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project.

In April of 2013, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California decided to extend the deadlines in both the Smelt and Salmonid cases by one year. This extension was intended to give a Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP) an opportunity to develop a durable science process and program that will be useful for implementation of existing reasonable and prudent alternatives to protect one or more of the listed species, as well as improvement of the next Biological Opinions and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan.

Delta Science Division staff, including the IEP Lead Scientist, were invited to participate in the “Collaborative Adaptive Management Team” (CAMT) deliberations since its formation in 2013. They have helped shape the Joint Status Report to the District Court Judge. Since 2012, the public water agencies, the environmental interest groups, and the fish and wildlife agencies had been broadly involved, together with the Bay-Delta science community as a whole, in the development of the Delta Science Plan, which suggested a number of pathways to manage scientific conflict, sort out scientific disagreements from uncertainties, and insure the relevance, credibility, and legitimacy of adaptively managing decisions in support of protecting listed species.

The CSAMP was seen as an opportunity to demonstrate key tenets of the Delta Science Plan related to peer review, information synthesis, and the role of science in management “experiments” that could be used to reduce uncertainties. Following his review of the Joint Status Report, Judge O’Neill granted another year-long extension to the biological opinion remand schedule. Despite a 9<sup>th</sup> District Court panel’s partial reversal of the district court’s judgment invalidating the 2008 biological opinion by the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the parties involved in the CSAMP are likely to proceed as described in their Joint Status Report.

### **Today's Briefing**

At today's meeting Dr. Val Connor, Science Program Manager of the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA), and Leo Winternitz, GEI Consulting, will joint Dr. Rainer Hoenicke of the Council's Delta Science Program to brief the Council on the likely steps the CAMT will take to implement the work elements developed as part of the Joint Status Report, including identifying and evaluating potential alternative management actions, and what kind of support functions the Delta Science Program could provide.

During the presentation or in follow up discussion, the Council may wish to consider these questions:

- What role did the Delta Science Program play in the agreements reached so far about the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program? Can those approaches be applied to management of other disputes?
- Which specific involvement by the Delta Science Program would add the greatest value to the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program during the next phase?
- Which actions in the Delta Science Plan could the CAMT apply to document their value and generate critical mass for broad acceptance of procedures or tools throughout the science and management communities?

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