



# United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
Office of the Regional Director  
Pacific Region  
3020 State University Dr. East, Ste. 3005  
Sacramento, California 95819-2632

July 17, 2013

Dr. Peter Goodwin, Delta Lead Scientist  
Delta Science Program  
980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Dr. Goodwin,

We, the USGS Bay-Delta Executive Board, appreciate the opportunity to review the draft Delta Science Plan. We wish to express our gratitude to you and your staff at the Delta Science Program for the incredible amount of work that went into preparing this draft plan. This living document will provide helpful, productive guidance on research directions, policy, and management in the Delta.

The following comments are provided, and grouped as requested, for your consideration:

Elements to add to the document:

- Consider expanding the List of Contents to include subsections within sections.
- It would be nice to see actions/proposed ways to facilitate interagency cooperation in the actual collection of data (not the modeling; the actual collection of field data). The importance of models is often mentioned in the document, and we agree “Models will continue to be a critical central part of our understanding of how the Delta functions as a system ...” (P. 29, line 32). However, we would argue that interagency cooperation in the data collection that leads to an understanding of the system is equally critical, particularly in our tight economic climate. The Plan speaks to “coordination of research groups” (P. 23), but, the Plan could explicitly suggest ways (or speak to opportunities where) agencies might coordinate to cooperatively collect data.
- Section 4.1 - Prioritizing research - This section should be expanded and more linked to the subsequent sections – especially monitoring (section 4.2) and shared modeling (section 4.4). As described in sections 4.2 and 4.4, monitoring and modeling are part and parcel of virtually all research. Section 4.1.3 indicates that research will be supported by competitive grants (including rapid response) and science fellows. It is

also important to emphasize the need maintain long-term monitoring and analysis in order to understand how the system functions and evaluate how it is responding to management actions. This may be implied within the “grand challenges,” but it should be more explicit.

- As noted on p. 39 (line 30) “Current funding is limited to a small percentage of the services the Delta Science Program is expected to provide...” Funding for the proposed committees, activities and science will be significant. You may wish to consider providing an estimate or range of potential costs (in addition to Appendix 2).
- You may also wish to consider adding reproducibility to Table 1A-1.

Elements to delete from the document:

- Minor edits to the Meffe reference at the bottom of page 33.
- Page 12, lines 29-32 is duplicative on P. 12, lines 33-36.

Organizational structures identified in the draft:

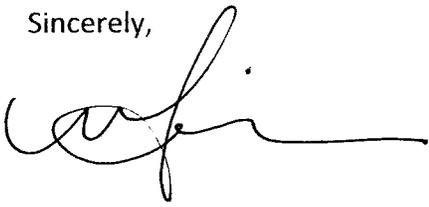
- Two key proposed structures in the plan are two teams: the Science Synthesis Team (and associated “Focused Science Synthesis teams) and the Policy-Science Team. There seems to be a lot riding on those teams, and it is not clear how they will distinguish themselves from and coordinate with the various existing inter-agency groups. How conflict or differing opinions will be addressed is not clear.
- Will decisions described in 4.1.2 (P. 24, line 8) be binding on agencies funding research?

Aspects we appreciated:

- Section 4.2 Monitoring and associated research. The logic and level of detail in this section is helpful (of course we may well be biased by the fact that this section was prepared by current and retired USGS employees).
- The inclusion of the insert boxes in section 4, “Efforts to build on” is a good idea - a reminder that there are many ongoing activities.
- The inclusion of Appendix 4 was appreciated. Frequent communication with stakeholders is key, particularly hearing from them whether the science we provide has any relevance or applicability to the decisions they are facing. It can be the best science and still not be what they need.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the draft plan. If you have questions regarding any of our review comments, please give me a call at 916-278-9560.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Shouse', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michelle K. Shouse, Delta Liaison  
U.S. Geological Survey