

"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



DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

## UNDERSTANDING THE DELTA PLAN

### About the Delta Plan

The California Delta of today is the result of centuries of natural and manmade actions and reactions. After decades of conflict and unsuccessful efforts to address the many problems and challenges in the Delta, the California Legislature, water agencies and environmental groups throughout the state united in an unprecedented manner to pass the 2009 Delta Reform Act.

The legislation created the Delta Stewardship Council to develop a legally enforceable, long-term management plan for the Delta to achieve the coequal goals of protecting, restoring and enhancing the Delta ecosystem, and providing for a more reliable water supply for California in a manner that protects and enhances the unique character of the Delta as an evolving place.

Now, the Council will serve as a coordinator and integrator across agencies to focus on the Delta and will provide a thoughtful approach to managing the Delta's resources – an approach based on common sense and best available science.

### Key Delta Plan Strategies

- 1 IMPROVE WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY & REDUCE RELIANCE ON WATER FROM THE DELTA WATERSHED** Water supply reliability will be increased through better water management throughout California and Delta reliance will be reduced by investing in improved local and regional supplies and water use efficiency. The Plan also calls for improved Delta conveyance and expansion of groundwater and surface storage.
- 2 SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE AND PERMIT THE BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN** as soon as possible to begin ecosystem and conveyance improvements needed to achieve the coequal goals.
- 3 UPDATE DELTA WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES** by June 2014 and Delta watershed water quality objectives for high-priority tributaries by 2018 in support of the coequal goals.
- 4 RESTORE HABITAT IN SIX HIGH PRIORITY LOCATIONS** in the Delta and Suisun Marsh to recover endangered species, rebuild salmon runs and enhance habitat for native wildlife. The Plan prioritizes actions to reduce pollution, invasive species and impacts of other ecosystem stressors.
- 5 PROTECT THE DELTA AS A UNIQUE PLACE** by locating new residential, commercial or industrial development in areas planned for urban use, protecting rural lands for agriculture and ensuring a role for Delta voices in significant projects.
- 6 IMPROVE FLOOD PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE** by creating a Delta Flood Risk Management Assessment District with the authority to impose appropriate fees for local costs of flood management actions. A unified local decision-making body will increase the effectiveness of the more than 100 flood control entities in the Delta.
- 7 REDUCE DELTA EXPOSURE TO FLOOD RISK** by enhancing the Yolo Bypass, improving the Cosumnes River-Mokelumne River Confluence, establishing the Lower San Joaquin River Bypass and using setback levees where feasible. The Delta Plan also protects floodplains from new development and restricts new subdivisions to areas with adequate flood protection.
- 8 SET STATE PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN DELTA FLOOD PROTECTION BY 2015** State investment in flood protection must be appropriate to the uses of land to be protected. The Council will take the lead in making priority recommendations for State funds in Delta flood protection based on a risk analysis that includes an assessment of State interests.



## DELTA PLAN APPROACH

### **Act Now**

We have been studying the problems of California's water supply and the declining Delta ecosystem for decades. While all parties agree the status quo is not acceptable, failure to take action only prolongs a worsening status quo. Near-term actions must move forward while the long-term conveyance, storage and ecosystem solutions are being decided over the next five, 10 and 15 years. Waiting is NOT an option. We must double-down on our investments in the Delta ecosystem and in the improved reliability of California's water supplies and water use efficiency.

### **Improve Water Supply Reliability**

Everyone in California must conserve water and must increase their efforts to do so. Modifying operations in the Delta so that exported water will more closely match water supplies available to be exported, based on water year type, can improve water supply reliability consistent with ecosystem protections. New surface and groundwater storage is also necessary to manage the timing of water for people and for fish. Done right, additional storage can make efficient water management possible and better allow for water use that reduces ecosystem conflict. Improved Delta

conveyance, including successful completion of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP), is essential and it should be done as soon as possible.

### **Commit to Delta Ecosystem Restoration**

We must preserve land in the Delta for future habitat restoration, and we must immediately begin restoration efforts on long-studied priority areas. In the Delta, the conflict between the way we move water and the health of native species must be resolved. A successfully permitted BDCP is key to that, including flow objectives updated by the SWRCB for beneficial uses including the Delta's ecosystem. Without more natural functional water flow (the right mix of timing and amount), we cannot expect fisheries to recover no matter how well we deal with other stressors.

### **Preserve Delta as a Place**

The Delta serves many demands, but we must preserve and protect a unique sense of place distinguished by geography, Legacy Communities, a rural and agricultural setting, vibrant natural resources and a mix of economic and recreational activities.

### **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. State law requires the Delta Stewardship Council to help provide a more reliable water supply and restore the Delta's ecosystem. To accomplish this, we are applying a common sense approach based on the best available science to preserve opportunities for habitat restoration, increase the diversity and efficiency of California's water supplies, enhance floodplains and improve the Delta's levee system, and preserve the unique values of the Delta.

For more information visit <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov>

