



## INFORMATION ITEM

### Delta Plan Performance Measures: 2019 Year in Review

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**Summary:** The Delta Plan includes 154 performance measures to track progress in implementing the strategies, policies, and recommendations contained in the Delta Plan. These measures provide vital information the Council can use to understand if Delta Plan strategies are working, and to adaptively manage the Delta Plan to better achieve the coequal goals. Council staff will summarize 2019 activities related to performance measure tracking, identify administrative performance measures recently completed in 2018 and 2019, and provide a look ahead to Council activities to promote and track performance measures in 2020 and beyond.

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#### Background

The Delta Reform Act of 2009 requires that the Delta Plan include performance measures to track the Delta Stewardship Council's (Council's) progress in meeting Delta Plan objectives. The performance measures stem directly from the Delta Plan's core strategies and actions and are intended to track the degree of effectiveness of these strategies and actions over time. Performance measures are based on best available science and include quantitative or other "measurable assessments of status and trends" regarding the health of the Delta's estuary and the reliability of the state's water supply imported from the Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds (Water Code sections 85211 and 85308).

The Delta Plan contains 154 performance measures, including 122 administrative measures that track the status of implementing the recommended management actions, and 32 output and outcome performance measures that track measurable features over time using defined baselines, metrics, and targets. For example, the Plan includes an output measure to increase acreage in the Delta with subsidence reversal or carbon sequestration practices (Performance Measure 5.2). This measure includes a baseline value of zero acres in 2008, a metric of acreage of subsidence reversal and carbon sequestration projects evaluated annually, and a target of 30,000 acres by 2030.

The performance measures are important to the Council's work, as they enable us to define measures of success relative to the coequal goals; to assess how well Delta Plan strategies, policies, and recommendations are working; and to determine if changes to the strategies outlined in the Delta Plan may be needed in order to achieve the goals.

The Council developed performance measures for the complex and large-scale Delta system over multiple years with the help of state, federal, and local agencies; scientists; and stakeholders. The original 2013 Delta Plan included an initial set of performance measures. In February 2016, the Council adopted refinements to the performance measures in response to input from the Delta Science Program and Delta Independent Science Board. In April 2018, the Council again adopted further refinements to the performance measures to better enable tracking of Delta Plan outputs and outcomes.

## **2019 Performance Measure Tracking Activities**

### ***Performance Measures Dashboard Launch and User Overview***

The Performance Measures Dashboard (<https://viewperformance.deltacouncil.ca.gov>) was presented to the Council at its February 2019 meeting and launched publicly in April 2019. The dashboard provides access to performance measure information and data, allowing users to view and track the full suite of Delta Plan performance measures. The dashboard features interactive visualizations of performance metrics, baselines, and targets, and provides a user-friendly and intuitive design to reach a broad audience and communicate multiple layers of technical details. The Performance Measures Dashboard is one of the Council's key communication tools to report data, information, and findings. The dashboard contributes to government accountability and transparency, and opens avenues for coordination and collaboration across state and local agencies implementing the Delta Plan and federal agencies with interests in the Delta. The Council also uses this information to provide updates to the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) and to communicate both agency progress in implementing the Delta Plan and physical changes in the Delta to a wide range of stakeholders.

During the six-month period following its launch in April 2019, the Performance Measures Dashboard had more than 7,000 page views, averaging from 1,000 to 1,500 views each month. Users accessed the dashboard either from Council electronic news announcements or from the Council's main website. The average user spent about five minutes on the dashboard and learned about five to seven performance measures in a single session. The average time spent on a single performance measure page was two minutes, meaning a user spent two minutes learning about each measure's context, details, and conclusions.

### ***Partner Agency Outreach and Dashboard Demonstrations***

Council staff has conducted targeted outreach to partner agencies and interagency workgroups over the last six months to improve awareness of the performance measures and the Delta Plan in general, and to gather feedback about the usability of the dashboard and the accuracy of the data presented. Agency outreach focused on program managers that are likely to use the information presented on the dashboard. Outreach also included agency data providers, in order to show how the Council is processing their data and visualizing it to support performance tracking.

Council staff presented the dashboard at more than 20 agency meetings and interagency workgroups, at several science symposia, at conferences, and at data summits. Feedback included useful suggestions to improve accuracy and consistency in source data analysis, and clearer messaging of key points and technical details. Users praised the effective dashboard design and functionality, expressed strong interest in helping to continue to provide feedback, and requested regular updates. Agency partners also requested that the Council continue to offer this type of outreach, allow for technical input from agency subject matter experts, and summarize relevant findings.

### ***Administrative Performance Measures Reporting***

Council staff also completed an update to the existing Administrative Performance Measures Dashboard in 2019. This update adds the administrative performance measures to the output/outcome measure dashboard. The updated dashboard displays the current status of 122 administrative measures tracking management actions led by 20 different implementing agencies (15 state agencies and five federal agencies). Additional enhancements include user-friendly navigation, search, filter, and download functions.

The dashboard enhanced with administrative measures was soft-launched on December 2, 2019, enabling partner agencies to provide updates and comments. Council staff will continue to seek annual status updates from partner agencies on their respective measures.

These improvements enable the dashboard to serve as one access point to all Delta Plan performance measures and associated details, and enables users to view and track progress in quantitative terms using output and outcome measures, and in qualitative terms using administrative measures. The dashboard will communicate findings and conclusions from performance measure assessments and inform adaptive management of the Delta Plan over time as more data is collected and reported.

### **Administrative Performance Measures Completed in 2018 and 2019**

The updated dashboard identifies the ongoing progress of each administrative performance measure and identifies those measures that have been completed. On an annual basis, staff will highlight for the Council the administrative measures completed in the previous year. Numerous performance measures related to Delta as a Place and water quality were completed in 2018 and 2019, including the following:

- *Designate the Delta as a National Heritage Area (Measure DP R01-02):* The Delta Plan recommends that the Delta Protection Commission complete an application for the formation of a Delta National Heritage Area, and that the federal government complete the process. On March 12, 2019, President Trump signed the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, a large conservation and public lands bill that includes the establishment of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area – California’s first-ever National Heritage Area.
- *Adopt Policies to Require Delta Water Users to Participate in CV-SALTS (Measure WQ R07-01):* The Delta Plan recommends that the State Water Resources Control Board and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board adopt regulations to require all relevant water users to participate in the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability Program (CV-SALTS). On October 16, 2019, the State Water Resources Control Board approved the Sacramento and San Joaquin Basin Plan and Tulare Lake Basin Plan amendments to incorporate the updated CV-SALTS Program. (Resolution R5-2018- 0034).
- *Begin Implementation of a Study Plan for Delta Nutrient Objectives (Measure WQ R08-02):* The Delta Plan recommends that the State Water Resources Control Board and the San Francisco Bay and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Boards prepare and begin implementation of a study plan for the development of objectives for nutrients in the Delta and Suisun Marsh. The final 2018 Delta Nutrient

Research Plan (DNRP) sets prioritized research actions to identify nutrient reduction benchmarks and address knowledge gaps in developing nutrient water quality objectives.

- *Complete Basin Plan Amendment for Dissolved Oxygen in Suisun Marsh (Measure WQ R12-01)*: The Delta Plan recommends that the State Water Resources Control Board and the San Francisco Bay Water Board complete a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Basin Plan Amendment for dissolved oxygen in Suisun Marsh. On July 3, 2019, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved a Basin Plan Amendment to establish the TMDL and site-specific objectives for dissolved oxygen in Suisun Marsh.

### **Looking Forward: Promoting and Tracking Performance Measures**

In 2020, Council staff will develop a performance measures assessment protocol to establish an annual, replicable process for data analysis and synthesis, quality assurance and control, performance assessments and evaluations, technical and management-relevant reporting, and communication to reach a diverse audience of varied technical interests. An important component of performance measures management is to determine how to ensure that performance measures continue to measure the effectiveness of the Delta Plan and evolve based on updated monitoring and available data, yet stay consistent enough to not compromise the value of long-term tracking.

Based on outreach responses and dashboard user analytics, Council staff also will pursue expanded outreach and communication with additional audiences, specifically local and regional agency partners, stakeholders, environmental organizations, and the public. Outreach should also expand upon existing measure-specific interactions to ensure agency subject experts have a venue to provide regular data updates, to improve accuracy, and to support science-based and management relevant messaging.

Intensive and effective outreach in 2020 and beyond will build on the momentum established in 2019 by connecting performance information to interested users, and provide additional opportunities for engagement and learning. In 2020, staff will also initiate reporting on output/outcome measures, including metric summaries, key technical facts, and high-level takeaways from recent data updates for measures or groups of measures, using Council communication venues such as email notices, social media, and blogs. Performance measure communication can leverage other Council opportunities for information sharing, including Council meetings, interagency workgroup meetings, and the DPIIC.

**Fiscal Information**

Not applicable.

**List of Attachments**

No attachments.

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