



ACTION ITEM

Approval of a Federal Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Summary: Council staff recommends that the Council approve a cooperative agreement with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for the Council to receive and administer up to \$3,500,000 for the period of September 2020 to September 30, 2025. This funding is for Council staff time and science research contracts resulting from the 2020/2021 Delta Science Research Proposal Solicitation.

Requested Action

Council staff recommends that the Council approve a cooperative agreement with Reclamation for up to \$3,500,000 and extending from September 2020 to September 30, 2025. This agreement would fund research contracts and reimburse Council for staff time to manage contracts issued under the 2020/2021 Delta Science Proposal Solicitation.

The Executive Officer has delegated authority up to \$500,000 to enter into contract/agreements on the Council's behalf. Because this agreement exceeds that amount, the Council must approve the proposed agreement.

Background

In 2019, the Council partnered with Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to issue a solicitation for research proposals. This solicitation was the first of its kind in over ten years and garnered 62 applications that requested over \$43 million in funding. Following a review of the proposals, \$17 million in research funding was awarded to support 26 critical science studies in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh.

The Delta Science Program's legislatively mandated mission is "to provide the best possible unbiased scientific information to inform water and environmental decision-making in the Delta... [which] shall be carried out through funding research...". The Delta Science Program is collaborating with Reclamation to establish a 2020/2021 Delta science research proposal solicitation that builds on the 2019 effort. This will advance the Delta Science Program's mission and advances a key objective of the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) to establish consistent funding for science. In recognition of the success and value of the 2019 Delta science solicitation, Reclamation is proposing to increase its contribution from \$2 million to \$3.5 million for the 2020/2021 solicitation.

Proposal Solicitation Priorities

Like the 2019 solicitation, the 2020/2021 solicitation would be guided by the collaboratively-developed Science Action Agenda (SAA)—a compendium of high priority science needs to inform water and environmental decision-making in the Delta. This research agenda is created by and for the Delta community, and the Delta Science

Program is currently leading the development of the 2022-2026 iteration. Reclamation is eager to fund research that helps to advance the priorities identified in the 2017-2021 SAA. The solicitation will also include priorities identified by the Sacramento River Science Partnership, which is another agency and stakeholder collaborative group supporting science studies in the upper Sacramento River.

More specifically, Reclamation is supporting this solicitation in order to fund critical science that builds on ongoing efforts to modernize data collection and sharing; develop tools and associated data to evaluate the ecologic and hydrologic effects of existing and alternative water operations in the Sacramento and San Joaquin watershed; improve scientific understanding of measures and opportunities to restore native species; and collaboratively synthesize available information regarding fish, wildlife, and wetland habitat restoration opportunities in the Delta.

In addition to Reclamation’s priorities, the Council is prioritizing social science efforts in the Delta, via interdisciplinary projects that couple social science research with the natural sciences (e.g., understanding how people interact with the Delta, how the Delta impacts their well-being, and how their actions (including adaptive management) impact the Delta environment).

Topics in the 2020/2021 proposal solicitation notice will prioritize the five major Science Action Agenda areas, including:

- Invest in assessing the **human dimensions of natural resource management** decisions;
- Capitalize on existing data through increasing **science synthesis**;
- Develop tools and methods to **support and evaluate habitat restoration**;
- Improve understanding of **interactions between stressors, managed species, and their communities**; and
- Modernize **monitoring, data management, and modeling**.

Through the 2019 solicitation and guided by the Delta Science Plan, the Council has established a transparent and rigorous process for competitive proposal solicitations, including identifying high priority projects and administering research contracts.

Fiscal Information

Costs to be reimbursed from USBR to the Council are summarized below:

	Proposed Budget 9/1/2020-9/30/2025
Council Staff	\$87,954
Subcontracts	\$3,412,046
Total	\$3,500,000

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: 2019 Competitive Research Awards Fact Sheet

Contact

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