



DRAFT

**SUMMARY OCTOBER 24, 2024
DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING**

For review and adoption by the Council at the November 21, 2024, meeting.

All meeting materials, presentations, and comment letters are available at
<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings>

MEETING SUMMARY

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Julie Lee called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM on October 24, 2024, at the California Natural Resources Building at 715 P Street, CA 95814.

2. ROLL CALL – ESTABLISH A QUORUM (WATER CODE §85210.5)

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. The following councilmembers were present in person: Burgis, Damrell, Hueso, Mehranian, Miller, Zingale, and Lee.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)

a. Adoption of September 26, Meeting Summary

Chair Lee presented the agenda item for adopting the consent calendar.

Chair Lee asked for public comment

There was no public comment.

Motion (approve the consent calendar): offered by Councilmember Mehranian, seconded by Councilmember Burgis.

Vote: 7/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Miller: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Z9Y8K4> , minute 00:01:40.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee mentioned her attendance at California Native American Day, the Bay Delta Science Conference and the Delta Independent Science Board meeting. Chair Lee reported on a meeting she attended with the Bureau of Reclamation and two Tribal Environmental Justice Issue Paper roundtable listening sessions. Chair Lee highlighted upcoming events including the upcoming Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee meeting on October 28, and the National Heritage Area Advisory Committee on October 31. Chair Lee closed with a report on the Delta tour she attended the day prior with Vice Chair Miller who also shared her thoughts about the tour.

Councilmember Burgis shared additional information on the upcoming National Heritage Meeting.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Z9Y8K4>, minute 00:02:38.

6. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson began with an overview meetings, conferences, and events she attended in October including the Bay Delta Science Conference, a meeting with Chair Lee and Special Assistant for Planning and Science, Amanda Bohl, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Smith Canal Gate Project.

Pearson reported on the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) certification of consistency filed for the 2024-2026 Proposed Geotechnical Activities and provided information on where the public can access the documents submitted by DWR on the Council's webpage.

Pearson closed with an overview of the Outreach Highlights Report and highlighted the recently published Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom Monitoring Strategy.

a. Legal Update

There was no legal update.

b. Legislative Update

There was no legislative update.

c. Delta Adapts (INFORMATION ITEM)

Morgan Chow, Environmental Program Manager with the Climate Change and Environmental Justice unit, shared updates on the outreach efforts for Delta Adapts, including newly released outreach materials.

Councilmember Zingale and Chow discussed some of the photos from community events.

Pearson closed the Executive Officer's Report with a highlight of the remaining agenda items.

Councilmember Zingale, Pearson and Deputy Executive of External Affairs Abbott Dutton discussed the Outreach Highlights Report.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Z9Y8K4>, minute 00:07:47.

7. DELTA LEVEES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES (INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee provided an overview summary of the agenda item and asked Delta Stewardship Council Senior Engineer, Erin Mullen to introduce the panel.

The panel consisted of: Central Valley Flood Protection Board Member, Joseph Countryman, Department of Water Resources, Senior Water Resources Engineer, Wendy Wang, and Central Delta Water Agency consultant Thomas Zuckerman.

Councilmember Burgis and Zuckerman discussed subventions, technology, and seismic issues/concerns. Zuckerman shared his view of levee engineering comparison between Japan and the Delta and provided examples of current seismic practices in the Delta and their relationship to previous levee seismic data.

Councilmember Mehranian, Zuckerman, Countryman, and Mullen discussed framing levees as large-scale infrastructure projects, preventative levee maintenance, technical vs. political levee maintenance prioritization, natural vs. built (levee structures), privatization, funding, agriculture, the federal levee program, the Central Valley Project, reclamation districts/levy maintenance districts, raising funds for work, establishing a standard level of maintenance for all levees, and levee failure.

Councilmember Hueso, Councilmember Burgis, Countryman, and Mullen discussed Frank's Tract (levee failure), why Frank's tract is being considered for fixing (decades after failure), when levees started getting built in California, the distinction between federal and state levees and why they are separate, the economic feasibility of Delta land, Army Corps. recognition of levee water supply (as a benefit), Urban levees (Stockton), project levees vs non-project levees, economic analysis (in regard to non-federal sponsorship for levees), and the subventions program.

Chair Lee provided closing statements on the upcoming Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) meeting, thoughts on Indigenous peoples'

perspectives, and the importance of historical knowledge and acknowledgment of what has happened in the past.

Before the agenda item was concluded, Amanda Bohl was invited to provide a summary of the upcoming activities for the DPIIC meeting.

Bohl offered a summary of the DPIIC Autumn gathering agenda.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Z9Y8K4>, minute 00:20:25.

8. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Delta Lead Scientist Lisamarie Windham-Myers Dr. Windham-Myers began with a review of the By the Numbers Report.

Dr. Windham-Myers provided an overview of Delta Science Program activities, including the Delta Science Tracker Webinar, and a report out of the Bay Delta Science Conference. Dr. Windham-Myers highlighted upcoming events including the DPIIC meeting, the DPIIC Restoration Subcommittee meeting, and Delta Science Tracker office hours.

Dr. Winham Myers next provided an overview of the highlighted article for this month.

Don L. Hankins. 2024. Climate Resilience Through Ecocultural Stewardship. PNAS 121 (32). <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2310072121>

Indigenous peoples, though comprising only a small percentage of the global population (6%), steward a significant portion of the world's biodiversity (~80%). Dr. Hankins attributes this disproportionate responsibility for biodiversity stewardship to historical injustices and displacement of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands, which in turn meant a loss of access to and connection with their “country”, a term used to describe land, water, plants, and animals. California is unique in that it

is home to both significant biodiversity and a high concentration of Indigenous cultural diversity. At the same time, it faces pressing climate challenges, such as wildfires, droughts, and biodiversity loss. In the article, Dr. Hankins describes how these crises are deeply tied to the severed connections of Indigenous peoples and their country, and limited Indigenous practices such as cultural burning, multispecies kinship, reading the landscape, and water stewardship, all of which has led to a loss of land stewardship.

The article highlights fire stewardship, or cultural burning, as one of the most significant keystone processes that was suppressed. Indigenous peoples in California used fire for millennia to promote biodiversity by controlling vegetation, creating a mosaic of habitats, improving water systems, and reducing the risk of large-scale wildfires. The restoration of Indigenous fire stewardship offers a way to mitigate the wildfire crises California now faces and support ecosystem recovery. Cultural burning is also recognized for its ability to sequester carbon and produce fewer emissions than uncontrolled wildfires. There are currently early-stage collaborations between the California government and Indigenous communities to reintroduce fire as a method of wildfire management.

Dr. Windham-Myers introduced Dr. Don Hankins who spoke on his paper highlighting restoration work in the Delta, the concept of “?elelte,” the Plains Miwok language word for “reading” as it relates to intuition of problems and how to address them. He described this concept as it relates to how the Delta landscape was formed, and how stewardship practices discussed in the paper can be applied to address climate change problems in the Delta.

Dr. Windham-Myers and Dr. Hankins discussed collaborations and partnerships in the Delta and surrounding watershed relevant to the Council’s work.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3Z9Y8K4>, minute 01:28:38.

9. PREPARATION FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council meeting will take place on November 21. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

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