

Delta Science Program Seeks Delta Lead Scientist

Recruitment Flyer



A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

Position Summary

- The Delta Stewardship Council (Council), in partnership with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), is seeking a nationally recognized scientist to become the next Delta lead scientist.
- The Delta lead scientist is responsible for providing vision, leadership and unbiased scientific expertise to the Council, the Delta Science Program, and the Delta science community by upholding the highest possible standards of scientific integrity and credibility.
- Applications received by **11:59 pm on January 17, 2027**, will receive priority consideration. Start date is negotiable, but can begin **in late 2027**.

About the Delta and the Delta Science Program

California's Delta is formed at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and presents one of the most significant water and environmental management challenges in the world. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009 created the Delta Stewardship Council to advance the coequal goals of a reliable statewide water supply and a protected, restored Delta ecosystem in a manner that preserves the values of the Delta as a place. To do this, the Council developed and adopted [the Delta Plan](#) in 2013, which calls for the Council's Delta Science Program to develop and publish a [Delta Science Plan](#) to identify actions for acquiring, synthesizing, coordinating, and communicating the best available science to achieve the vision of



“One Delta, One Science.” The Delta Plan also requires all major ecosystem and water projects to document the use of best available science through six criteria: relevance, inclusiveness, objectivity, transparency and openness, timeliness, and peer review.



The mission of the Delta Science Program is to provide the best possible unbiased scientific information to inform water and environmental decision-making in the Delta. That mission is carried out by funding research, synthesizing and communicating scientific information to policymakers and decision-makers, promoting independent scientific peer review, and coordinating with Delta agencies on adaptive management. **The [Delta Science Program](#) supports scientific research in the Delta** through competitive research solicitations, directed actions, and fellowships, and has awarded over \$50 million in competitive funding for Delta science since 2010 across more than 160 projects.

Position Description

The Delta lead scientist oversees the implementation of the Council’s Delta Science Program and is at the interface of emerging science and policy application. In carrying out that responsibility, the Delta lead scientist regularly consults with State, federal, and local agencies relevant to the Delta. The lead scientist needs to be able to communicate science in a manner that is understandable to the intended audience, whether technical or policy.

The Delta lead scientist is responsible for providing unbiased scientific leadership to achieve the vision of “One Delta, One Science,” as set forth in the Delta Science Plan, and provide unbiased scientific advice to the Council, the Delta Science Program, and the Delta science community. The lead scientist provides leadership with innovative science-based approaches to addressing the challenges of rapidly changing environmental conditions.

The Delta lead scientist must uphold the highest standards of scientific integrity at all times, by maintaining an unbiased, independent, policy-neutral perspective, while impartially presenting the best available scientific information to different audiences on relevant issues of concern (e.g., habitat restoration, fish & flows, water quality, etc.).

The responsibilities of the Delta lead scientist are to:

- Provide independent scientific leadership, oversight, and guidance for the Delta Science Program;
- Hold primary responsibility for maintaining an unbiased, independent perspective, while impartially identifying the best available scientific information for Delta decision-makers;
- Ensure quality control of scientific products (e.g., [State of the Bay-Delta Science](#) and the [Science Action Agenda](#)) and processes (e.g., [independent peer-review panels](#)) facilitated by the Delta Science Program;
- Oversee implementation of the [Delta Science Plan](#) and its components, and work collaboratively to make periodic updates to the Delta Science Plan;
- Anticipate upcoming issues of scientific concern and guide the Delta Science Program and Delta science community to consider research to address them;
- Promote integrated science for Delta planning, management, and ecosystem restoration to top-level regional, state, and federal staff and legislators;
- Serve as the principal science advisor to the Council and actively participate in providing technical advice on complex and controversial Delta hydrologic and ecosystem issues for both technical and policy audiences;
- Advise the Council on federal- and state-led science in the Delta and work with representatives from regional, state, and federal agencies and other partners, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and tribes, to facilitate communication, create a common vision, and promote the use of scientific information;
- Serve as the principal science liaison between the Council, the Delta Science Program, and the Delta Independent Science Board;
- Regularly meet with local, state, and federal agencies and other partners, such as NGOs and tribes, engaged in the Delta;
- Oversee the scientific review of activities and proposals touching key and sometimes controversial scientific issues in the Delta;

- Facilitate the exchange and synthesis of scientific information in response to management and regulatory needs;
- Ensure that the Delta Plan and Delta Science Plan support the adaptive management of the Delta, which depends on unbiased science and informed monitoring;
- Oversee the scientific content of, and scientific support for, [Delta Plan amendments](#);
- Through an open solicitation, solicit nominations and applications for vacancies on the Delta Independent Science Board and make recommendations to the Council for appointment;
- Guide (1) the annual work plan for the Delta Science Program and (2) the Delta Science Program's [research and fellowship programs](#), in coordination with the Council's executive officer;
- Consult with the Council's executive officer, chief deputy, and deputy executive officer for science regarding day-to-day management of Delta Science Program staff and budget; and
- Advise and mentor Delta Science Program staff, primarily to assist them in their advancement as scientists.



Qualifications

California law sets forth the basic qualification requirements of the Delta lead scientist (CA Water Code sections 85280(b)(1)).

The lead scientist shall meet all the following qualifications:

1. Hold an advanced degree in a field related to water or ecosystem management.
2. Have a strong record of scientific research and publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals in a field related to water or ecosystem management.
3. Have experience advising high-level managers in science-based decision making in the areas of water management and ecosystem restoration.
4. Have the capability to guide the application of an adaptive management process to resource management policy decisions in the Delta.

The Appointment

The appointment will be made via an assignment to the USGS from state or local governments, colleges or universities, Indian tribal governments, federally funded research and development centers, or other eligible organizations using the Intergovernmental Personnel Act Mobility Program. Salary will be based on the candidate's current position. Note that the incumbent will be required to adhere to relevant USGS rules and policies, including those pertaining to ethics. **The lead scientist will work at the Council office in downtown Sacramento, California, but reporting location is negotiable.** The lead scientist term is three years, and the lead scientist can serve a total of two-terms.

How To Apply

Please send a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to science@deltacouncil.ca.gov.

Both documents will be used to select candidates for interview. For additional information, please call Russell Taylor-Grimes of USGS at 916-406-4815.

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The Delta Stewardship Council strives to be an inclusive organization that values all perspectives at all levels of the organization and is committed to fostering an environment in which employees from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and personal experiences are welcomed and can thrive.