



- Bay-Delta Management Report

## Summary

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This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for November 2014.

## Purpose

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Informational

## Detailed Report

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### Long-Term Delta Actions

#### Bay Delta Conservation Plan

On November 14, the California State Treasurer's Office released *The Bay Delta Conveyance Facility: Affordability and Financing Considerations*, a study of affordability for the water facility construction proposed in the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). This independent study, requested by the California Natural Resources Agency, was commissioned by the California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission, chaired by State Treasurer Bill Lockyer. The study finds that the cost of the Delta conveyance facility is within the range of urban and agricultural users' capacity to pay.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) continues to work on addressing the comments received during the public comment period on the Draft BDCP and Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement. Part of this process involves identifying topics that should be covered in the expected Recirculated Draft documents. No formal decision on the scope or timing of the recirculation has been announced.

### Near-Term Delta Actions

#### State Water Resources Control Board

Staff continues to participate in the State Water Resources Control Board's (SWRCB) process to curtail water use of post-1914 water right holders in the Delta and Sacramento and San Joaquin River watersheds in response to ongoing drought conditions. On November 12, the SWRCB lifted water right curtailments for post-1914 water rights with a priority date earlier than January 1954. The rationale provided for this action was based on reduced diversion demands and the switch in diversion demand from direct diversion to storage. The SWRCB will be monitoring weather forecasts and stream gages to determine if curtailments should be re-imposed in the future, or if lifting of remaining curtailments is appropriate.

Staff also continues to work with state and federal water contractors to consider actions that would be needed to protect the projects' stored water. Several efforts are underway to evaluate key legal and technical arguments raised by various interests in letters filed with the SWRCB in August 2014. Initial results from the technical analyses are targeted for completion in December 2014.

#### Operating Criteria and Plan Biological Opinions

Staff continues to engage in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Process and Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT), which is charged with developing a robust science and adaptive management program to inform the development of the Operating Criteria and Plan (OCAP) biological opinions. The CAMT teams are currently focused on developing proposed investigations to address delta smelt entrainment, Fall habitat and salmon questions. The Delta Science Program organized an independent science review panel to review a proposal for investigations on *Understanding Population Effects and Factors that Affect Entrainment of Delta Smelt at the State Water Project and Central Valley Project*, and provide input on the scientific quality of

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the proposed investigations. Staff attended the independent science panel meeting on November 14. The science panel report is expected by December 15.

### Science Activities

The Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Science Program organizes an annual review of the Long-term Operations Biological Opinions. The purpose of the annual review is to inform National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as to the efficacy of the prior year's water operations and regulatory actions prescribed by their respective Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs). The review enables NMFS and USFWS to use lessons learned, incorporate new science, and make appropriate scientifically justified adjustments to the RPAs or their implementation. The 2014 annual review was held on November 6 and 7. Staff participated in the science review meeting and presented a model that explains adult delta smelt salvage patterns. The review panel gave preliminary comments on the model on November 7. Staff is responding to those comments and expects to forward both the model and the response to comments by November 21 to the USFWS. USFWS will consider using the method to assist in updating their adult delta smelt incidental take level in time for winter 2015.

Staff is also working with USFWS and other agencies to develop a monitoring program for the winter of 2015 to detect delta smelt movement toward the export pumps. This would be an expansion of the monitoring near Jersey Point in 2014. It is designed to help determine the level of risk associated with pumping in the south Delta in near real time. A presentation on this monitoring was made at the October 28 Special Committee on Bay-Delta.

The Bay-Delta Science Conference was held October 28-30. Staff participated in the conference and provided scientific presentations on evaluation of sources of fish survey bias for longfin smelt, and on development of a Delta salinity gradient model.

### **Delta Emergency Preparedness**

Staff continues to coordinate with DWR to make preparations for implementation of an emergency freshwater pathway after a major emergency event in the Delta. These actions include levee improvements for Middle River freshwater pathway levees, and the development of emergency materials stockpiles in the Delta to facilitate levee repair response in an emergency.

DWR has advised that a major materials transfer and support facility construction contract is being readied for contract award in fiscal year 2014/15 at their land- and water-based emergency storage sites at Rio Vista and Stockton. An additional contract is being prepared for award in fiscal year 2014/15 involving procurement and delivery of large scale pipe pile and sheet pile for closure of deep levee breaches. A total of \$80 million has been set aside from Proposition 1E funding for emergency materials and facilities to support Delta emergency operations.

The Delta Stewardship Council is in the process of developing a Delta Levees Investment Strategy that considers the water supply, habitat enhancement, and statewide economic benefits of Delta levees, and the value of the Delta as a unique place. The process includes use of a methodology to support levees prioritization funding decisions. The strategy will focus on ranking benefits and level of protection afforded by levee projects versus the ranking of islands. The expectation of the Delta Stewardship Council staff is that alternative investment approaches for levee projects can be balanced and optimized through application of this strategy.