



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for December 2018.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

California WaterFix

On December 7, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) withdrew the Certification of Consistency with the Delta Plan for the California WaterFix project. Despite DWR's firm belief that the project is fully consistent with the Delta Plan and the administrative record more than adequately supports its findings, DWR voluntarily withdrew its Certification of Consistency. In its letter to the Delta Stewardship Council, DWR requested that the Council dismiss all appeals of the California WaterFix Certification of Consistency that were deemed timely and filed on August 27, 2018. On that same day, the Council's Executive Officer dismissed the appeals, encouraging DWR to re-engage with the Council in consultation.

Joint Powers Authorities

The Delta Conveyance Finance Authority held a meeting on December 14. At the meeting, the Finance Authority considered and approved a conflict of interest code and authorized an agreement with Michael Bell Management Consulting, Inc., for continued Executive Director services.

Near-Term Delta Actions

State Water Resources Control Board

On November 7, 2018, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) held a meeting to consider adoption of changes to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP). The SWRCB did not take action at that time, and the meeting was continued until December 12, to allow for the further development of a Voluntary Settlement Agreement (VSA). At the December meeting, DWR Director Karla Nemeth and California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Chuck Bonham presented details on the VSA proposal. The VSA proposal provides a framework of flow, habitat, funding, and governance elements covering the Sacramento River, Feather River, Yuba River, American River, Mokelumne River, Tuolumne River, and the Friant Unit of the Central Valley Project. At this time, the Merced River and Stanislaus River water users are not part of the proposed settlement. After receiving public comment, and extensive deliberation by its members, the SWRCB approved amendments to the WQCP for the Lower San Joaquin River and Southern Delta including amendments that update water flow objectives in the Lower San Joaquin River and its major tributaries: the Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced Rivers, and revised southern Delta salinity objectives. When adopting the WQCP amendments, the SWRCB indicated a willingness to consider the VSA proposal in the future and urged participants to continue their collaborative work.

Science Activities

Staff is participating in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Longfin smelt Species Status Conservation Assessment. The process includes agency and non-agency experts on the biology and ecology of Longfin smelt. The assessment will produce a document that describes the Resiliency, Representation, and Redundancy of the species in the historical, current, and future context, and it is expected to be concluded by July 2019.

Staff continued participating in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP), including participation on the Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT). In December, the CSAMP

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Policy Group received presentations on preliminary results for Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy actions implemented in 2018, and on a CAMT study evaluating sources of bias in Delta smelt surveys. Both CSAMP and CAMT received updates on the development of a Delta Smelt Science Plan and discussed comments on the draft report. Staff is reviewing the draft Delta Smelt Science Plan and preparing comments. In December, CSAMP and CAMT also approved a set of recommendations related to salmon, including moving forward with development of a salmon science plan that concentrates on the Bay-Delta region and developing a strategy for CSAMP to promote implementation of near-term actions to benefit salmon.

Staff participated in the November 28 Integrated Modeling Steering Committee meeting organized by the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC). The objective of the effort is to develop a strategic plan for building a sustainable modeling community and a governance framework that links the short (1-5 years), intermediate (5-10 years), and long-term (10-30 years) decision periods with key management questions. The DSC has contracted with TetraTech consultants to develop the plan. At the meeting, the committee discussed efforts to identify the best available modeling tools for conducting an integrated modeling analysis, and discussed modeling approaches for conducting a Delta region climate change vulnerability assessment and developing an adaptation strategy. As a first step, the DSC staff will meet with Delta stakeholders to outline their interests and understand the risks due to climate change.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan

The Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan is undergoing final review at DWR, and final DWR internal review has been completed of the main document and supplements to the Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan (DFEMP). Internal coordination is taking place with executive management prior to publishing the final DFEMP. DWR has advised that in the event of catastrophic damage to Delta levees such as the Middle River Emergency Freshwater Pathway, levee breaches would be stabilized and deformed levees in jeopardy of failure would be immediately repaired, while broader state and federal strategies are developed. Technical approvals have been received to prepare contract documents for large sheet and pipe pile for closure of levee breaches. Following completion of the DFEMP, exercises will be planned to test strategies among local, state and federal agencies.