



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for February 2019.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

California WaterFix

On Tuesday, February 12, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom announced in his State of the State Address a policy shift in the State's support for the current configuration of California WaterFix from a twin-tunnel project to a single tunnel conveyance facility. Governor Newsom recognized the challenges facing California to secure safe, reliable water—climate change, population growth, earthquakes, and sea level rise—for agricultural, municipal, and environmental benefits, and expressed his commitment to foster solutions to these challenges. The timing and cost implications on this new direction has yet to be determined. Metropolitan staff will be working with the State and other State Water Project contractors to evaluate the ramifications of this shift to a single tunnel project and will provide updates to the Board as information becomes available.

Joint Powers Authorities

The Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) held a special meeting on January 31, 2019, and approved executing a contract for the services of Kathryn Mallon as Executive Director. The DCA did not meet in February. The Delta Conveyance Finance Authority (Finance Authority) held a meeting on February 21, 2019, and at the meeting the Finance Authority approved extending the contract for the Interim Executive Director. It also approved contracts for Bond Counsel and Disclosure Counsel.

Near-Term Delta Actions

State Water Resources Control Board

As reported previously, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) is in the process of developing and implementing updates to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay-Delta Plan). On December 12, 2018, the SWRCB adopted Bay-Delta Plan updates addressing San Joaquin River flows and south Delta salinity. Phase 2 of the Bay-Delta Plan update is focused on Sacramento River and its tributaries, Delta eastside tributaries, Delta outflows and interior Delta flows. Voluntary Settlement Agreement discussions continue, and the SWRCB has indicated a willingness to consider the Voluntary Settlement Agreement proposal in the future.

The proposed updates to the Bay-Delta Plan include new and modified narrative and numeric objectives for achieving reasonable protection of fish and wildlife by establishing flow conditions to support and maintain populations of native anadromous fish, estuarine fish, and other aquatic species. The SWRCB has indicated that implementation of the proposed updates will require quantitative assessment (“biological goals”) of progress toward meeting the narrative objectives. SWRCB staff has requested recommendations from the Independent Scientific Advisory Panel (Panel) on developing scientifically defensible methods for formulating biological goals that can be used to assess progress toward achieving the Bay-Delta Plan's narrative objectives. The request for recommendations includes how to formulate quantifiable biological goals to assess the status and trends of representative salmonids, other native fishes, and ecosystem processes in the Bay-Delta and its watershed. The draft Panel report was released February 4, 2019. Staff is reviewing the report and coordinating with other State

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Water Contractors to prepare comments to submit by the February 25 deadline. Staff is also preparing to participate in the Bay-Delta Biological Goals Scientific Advisory Panel meeting on March 4, 2019.

Science Activities

Staff continued participating in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP), including participation on the Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT). In February, CAMT focused on defining next steps for the Delta smelt structured decision-making process, Delta smelt science plan, and on development of a coordinated salmon science plan. CAMT is working with consulting experts to advance each of these processes forward this year. The California Department of Water Resources staff reported on the status of the Salmon Resiliency Strategy actions in the Yolo Bypass and Delta, and provided preliminary results for the Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy actions implemented in 2018. Staff also reviewed the CAMT Delta salmon rearing habitat draft report. The objective of this project is to summarize what is currently known or hypothesized about Chinook rearing habitat in the Delta from local research as well as from studies in other regions. Based on this understanding, the project will develop recommendations for what should be considered suitable rearing habitat in the Delta along with maps of rearing habitat based on available data.

Staff is working with UC Santa Cruz and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries to develop the scientific methods that will be used to study predator hot spots in the Bouldin Island area in March 2019, as part of a study addressing salmon predation.