



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

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

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

California WaterFix

In response to Governor Newsom's recent executive order directing state agencies to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy to build a climate-resilient water system including a smaller, single tunnel conveyance project, this month the Department of Water Resources (DWR) took steps to formally vacate the permits for the California WaterFix Project (WaterFix). On May 2, DWR Director Nemeth withdrew approval of WaterFix, decertified the Environmental Impact Report, and rescinded various permitting applications including those submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and State and federal Endangered Species Acts permits.

Joint Powers Authorities

The Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) and the Delta Conveyance Finance Authority (Finance Authority) met on May 16. At the meetings, the DCA adopted a purchasing and procurement policy and discussed creation of an environmental committee. Action to amend the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement with DWR to provide planning and environmental services for the single-tunnel conveyance project was deferred. The Finance Authority took action to approve the fiscal year 2019/2020 budget and authorized the Executive Director to execute an agreement for audit services.

Near-Term Delta Actions

Science Activities

Staff continued work to study factors affecting predation of juvenile salmon. In May, staff worked with UC Santa Cruz researchers to collect information on predation of juvenile salmon as part of a study to investigate if modification or elimination of predator contact points in the Delta can decrease predation mortality on juvenile salmon and increase their survival. Contact points are manmade structures associated with increased predation mortality of juvenile salmonids (e.g. diversions, scour holes, pilings). This is the first year of a five-year project. Year 1 of field work for the study is currently taking place through June and a report of findings will be available in December 2019. report will be used to identify where predation is occurring on the landscape and what contact points are associated with predation. This information will be used to identify which contact points have the highest predation and should be modified in an effort to reduce predation related mortality. Modification of the contact points and post-monitoring will take place in years 2-4 of the study, and analyses and reporting to determine if modification of contact points increased juvenile salmon survival will be conducted in year 5.

Staff continued participating in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP), including participation on the Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT). In May, the CSAMP Policy Group focused discussions on the CSAMP structured decision making (SDM) process for Delta smelt and possible strategies to integrate with the US Bureau of Reclamation SDM process focused on salmon. The overall objective of the SDM process for Delta smelt is to identify actions to benefit Delta smelt and evaluate and rank the actions in a scientifically structured process to support consideration of prioritized management actions. CAMT focused on implementation of the Delta Smelt Science Plan, the Department of Boating and Waterways

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aquatic weed program and opportunities for management of Suisun Marsh to improve habitat conditions for Delta smelt.

Staff also participated in a CAMT workshop focused on identifying rearing habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon. Providing rearing habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon is a key conservation priority in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; however there is limited data available on rearing habitat in the Delta, and interpreting that data is challenging because the system has been highly altered. At the workshop, researchers at the San Francisco Estuary Institute shared initial findings from a report they developed that summarizes what is currently known or hypothesized about Chinook salmon rearing habitat in the Delta, and workshop participants provided feedback on the report's findings, discussed additional information that should be included in the report, and prioritized areas for habitat restoration based on expert opinion.

Staff attended the Salmonid Restoration Federation Annual Conference which explored a range of issues including foodscapes, floodplains, and freshwater-estuarine habitats; monitoring, modeling and strategies to address summertime flows; salmon-habitat relationships, planning and strategies for fire resilience, and Chinook salmon genetic and recovery issues.

Staff participated in the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP) Stakeholder meeting on May 8. The meeting focused on proposed directed science studies for the IEP 2020 Workplan and development of a five-year IEP Science Strategy. Metropolitan staff and the State Water Contractors are collaborating with IEP on two studies addressing juvenile Chinook salmon.

The Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) initiated a process addressing science funding and governance for the Delta. Staff is participating in the DPIIC workgroups addressing: 1) mechanisms to critically assess science and monitoring efforts, 2) science-policy interchange to inform science priorities and management questions, 3) need for consistent funding across the Delta science enterprise, and 4) science needs to prepare for long-term changes such as climate change. The workgroups are charged with developing recommendations by fall of this year.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan

DWR recently completed emergency preparedness and response reports and indicated that the reports will be updated from time to time based on field exercises to refine and improve emergency procedures. The scope and tactical approaches of the DWR/USACE Delta Emergency Operations Integration Plan and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services Northern California Catastrophic Emergency Management Plan were tested during emergency exercises or actual emergency events while in draft form to help refine and finalize the reports.

A principal DWR objective during recent emergency exercises at Bacon and Middle Roberts Islands was to practice (or simulate) rapid formulation of scopes and contract packages for barge or truck transport and placement of rock and flood fight materials. DWR also practiced the preparation of streamlined documentation to secure USACE PL 84-99 emergency construction support should the scale of emergency operations exceed DWR capabilities.

During the recent exercise, Emergency Response Tool modeling exercises were performed to simulate levee slumping that results in full levee breaches, to identify locations of high salinity concentrations in the Delta. DWR has stated that State funding can be provided to local Reclamation Districts to subsidize most immediate emergency response needs during the time that DWR and USACE assistance is being deployed to an emergency operations site.