



● Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for December 2020.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Long-Term Delta Actions

Delta Conveyance

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is continuing to develop an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act. Current work is focused on formulation of alternatives to be analyzed in the EIR, descriptions of the existing conditions, and development of methods to analyze potential impacts on environmental resources. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has started preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Cone penetration tests, soil borings, and geophysical surveys were completed under the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for Soil Investigations in the Delta that was adopted on July 9, 2020. The final soil boring of this year is scheduled to be complete by December 17 and no additional work is scheduled until spring 2021. Additionally, work to obtain temporary entry on private lands is ongoing.

DWR is continuing to pursue permits for sites that fall under the jurisdiction of the Rivers and Harbors Act (Section 408). Those sites are not included in the near-term efforts. Investigations at any given site will not occur until property owners have been notified and required permits and approvals for that site have been obtained.

DWR will compile results from the Environmental Justice Community Survey used to collect information on how low-income, minority, and other underserved communities rely on resources in the Delta. This information will help assess potential impacts and benefits to these communities. Results from this survey will be shared after quality control has been completed.

The Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) engineering team completed the first draft of template, drawings, and GIS map book deliverables for the Bethany Alternative and submitted them to DWR for review and comment. The team also received the first round of comments on the Draft Engineering Project Report for the Central and Eastern Corridor alternatives from DWR and worked on the responses and updated the documents for resubmission.

Eighteen State Water Project contractors have taken action in November and December 2020 and approved their participation in the planning and pre-construction costs and authorized the execution of a funding agreement with DWR for such purpose. At its December 8, 2020, Board meeting, Metropolitan's Board authorized the General Manager to execute a funding agreement and committed funding for a Metropolitan participation level of 47.2 percent of the costs of preliminary design, environmental planning and other pre-construction activities to assist in the environmental process for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project. At a 47.2 percent participation level for Metropolitan, its forecasted funding agreement costs will be \$160.8 million for calendar years 2021 through 2024.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Joint Powers Authorities

The DCA board heard an informational presentation on the Fiscal Year 2019/2020 audit report at the December 17 regularly scheduled meeting. Also, Stakeholder Engagement Committee member Jim Wallace spoke to the board regarding his thoughts on the SEC issues of discussion including the Community Benefits Program framework process.

The focus of the December 5 DCA SEC meeting included an introductory presentation of a Community Benefits Program framework by DWR. The community benefits discussed would be to support meeting Delta Stewardship Council Delta Plan policies in addition to the mitigation measures developed to reduce potentially significant impacts analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process. The objective is to work collaboratively with the community in the development of the program, and the first step will be to create a framework, not only for the program but for how to work together. The next steps will focus on information gathering to move the process forward.

Details of the Bethany Complex Reception Shaft, Surge Basin, Pumping Plant, and Discharge Structure components were also presented to the SEC. The DCA concluded the meeting with a construction traffic analysis describing analysis of projected conditions with the Bethany Alternative. The upcoming January 27, 2021 meeting will include updates to SEC members on the Bethany Alternative, geotechnical work, and the Community Benefits Program framework.

The December regular meeting of the Delta Conveyance Finance Authority Board of Directors was cancelled.

Sites Reservoir

In their December joint meeting, the Sites Project Authority Board (Authority Board) and the Sites Reservoir Committee (Reservoir Committee) approved to have the firm Fechter and Company to conduct the Joint Powers Authority's (JPA) 2020 fiscal audit. They also approved the Final Delegation of Authority Matrix which conforms to the current delegated authorities described in the JPA bylaws, the final 2020 Strategic Plan which includes an environmental permitting strategy, plans for financing the project (75 percent local cost share commitment), and delegation of authority.

The Authority Board and Reservoir Committee were given the opportunity to review and comment on an option to add a third alternative that includes the United States Bureau of Reclamation at a 25 percent investment. This would provide flexibility to allow for a federal investment of greater than \$200 million which is consistent with the Final Federal Feasibility Report (2020 FFFR) maximum cost share. They were also provided an update on the 2020 FFFR which is concluding a six-month review process and a Secretarial determination which is expected prior to the end of this year and is needed to continue to qualify for WIIN Act funds.

Finally, the Authority Board and Reservoir Committee were given the opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary operations analysis and results. More information on this work will be forthcoming in the future.

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

Near-Term Delta Actions

Delta Stewardship Council

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) is conducting a climate change study for the Delta and Suisun Marsh. Delta Adapts: Creating a Climate Resilient Future will help the Council assess specific climate risks and vulnerabilities in the Delta and, in coordination with stakeholders, develop adaptation strategies to address those vulnerabilities. The vulnerability assessment analyzes the vulnerability of various asset types within the Delta to several climate stressors and hazards. Climate stressors include sea level rise, precipitation and runoff patterns, and air temperature changes. Climate hazards include flooding, extreme heat, drought, and wildfire smoke.

The Council established a Stakeholder Work Group with representatives from local and regional government agencies, state agencies, utility companies, water districts, and environmental organizations. The Stakeholder Work Group provided input during the development of the vulnerability assessment and has provided feedback on the draft results. Metropolitan staff and representatives of the State Water Contractors are members of the Stakeholder Work Group. The Council is scheduled to release the draft vulnerability assessment in January 2021 for public comment. Staff will work with the State Water Contractors to review and provide comments on the public draft.

Regulatory Activities

Staff continued to participate in the collaborative groups called for in the 2019 Biological Opinion (BiOp) for the State Water Project (SWP), Central Valley Project, and the 2020 Incidental Take Permit (ITP) for Long-term Operation of the SWP to address science needs, to inform management, and operation of the water projects. As part of these collaborative efforts, staff is providing input to the BiOp/ITP mandated Summer/Fall Action plan and associated Monitoring and Science Plan; the Juvenile Production Estimate monitoring plan for spring-run Chinook salmon; planning a workshop focused on monitoring steelhead in the San Joaquin Basin; and the ITP-mandated Longfin smelt Science Plan.

In December, the Longfin Smelt Science Plan was approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as part of the requirement in ITP for DWR to submit a draft plan by December 1. The Longfin Smelt Science Plan outlines priorities for management of relevant science during the 10-year duration of the new ITP. The information produced from this process is expected to inform future permitting efforts as well as improve general understanding of the species and its habitat needs. Staff is participating on the newly formed Longfin smelt Technical Team, which held its first meeting on December 18.

Science Activities

Staff continued participating in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP), including participation on the Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT). The December 10 CSAMP Policy Group meeting included approval of CSAMP priorities in 2021 and 2022, which primarily focus on continuation of current Delta smelt and salmon activities. The Policy Group also received a briefing on the recently completed Coordinated Salmonid Science Planning Assessment report and discussed the new CSAMP Salmon Recovery Initiative and development of a goal statement and objectives. The December 15 CAMT meeting focused on a facilitated discussion lead by Compass Resource Management consultants on the development of a CSAMP organizational framework for Delta Smelt. The goals of the organizational framework are to develop a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities of CSAMP participants and what CSAMP is striving for with respect to Delta smelt science and management actions that can be achieved through collaborative efforts.

Staff continued to participate in forums to ensure good science and collaboration. In December, staff participated in the State Water Contractors science coordination meetings, the Delta Independent Science Board, and technical meetings focused on nutrient studies and development of a nutrient model for the Bay-Delta.