



Update on Bay-Delta Voluntary Agreement Activity

Bay-Delta Committee
Item 6a
February 23, 2021

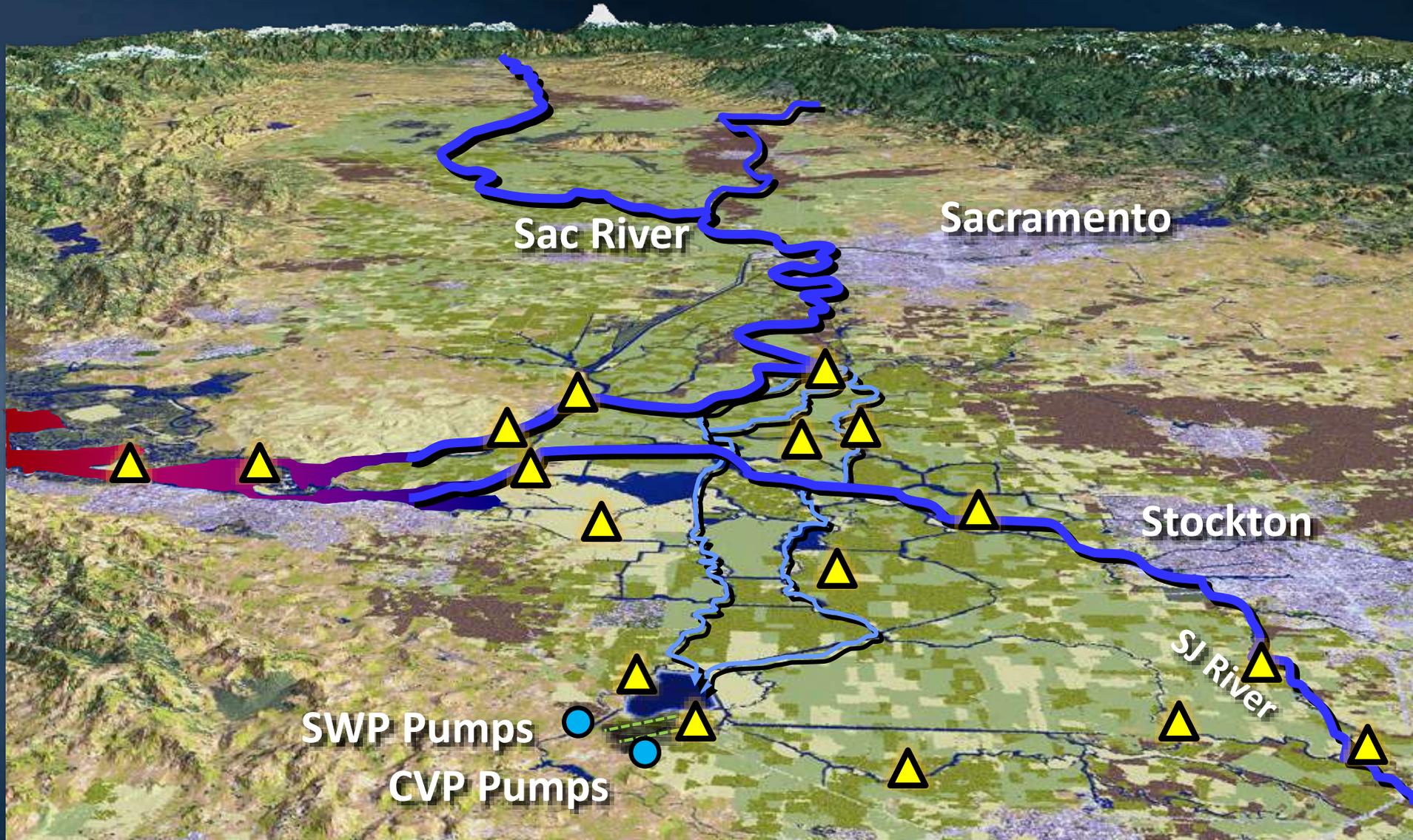
Overview

- Water Quality Control Plan (WQCP) background
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) process and scope
- WQCP status
- Voluntary Agreement approach
- Moving forward

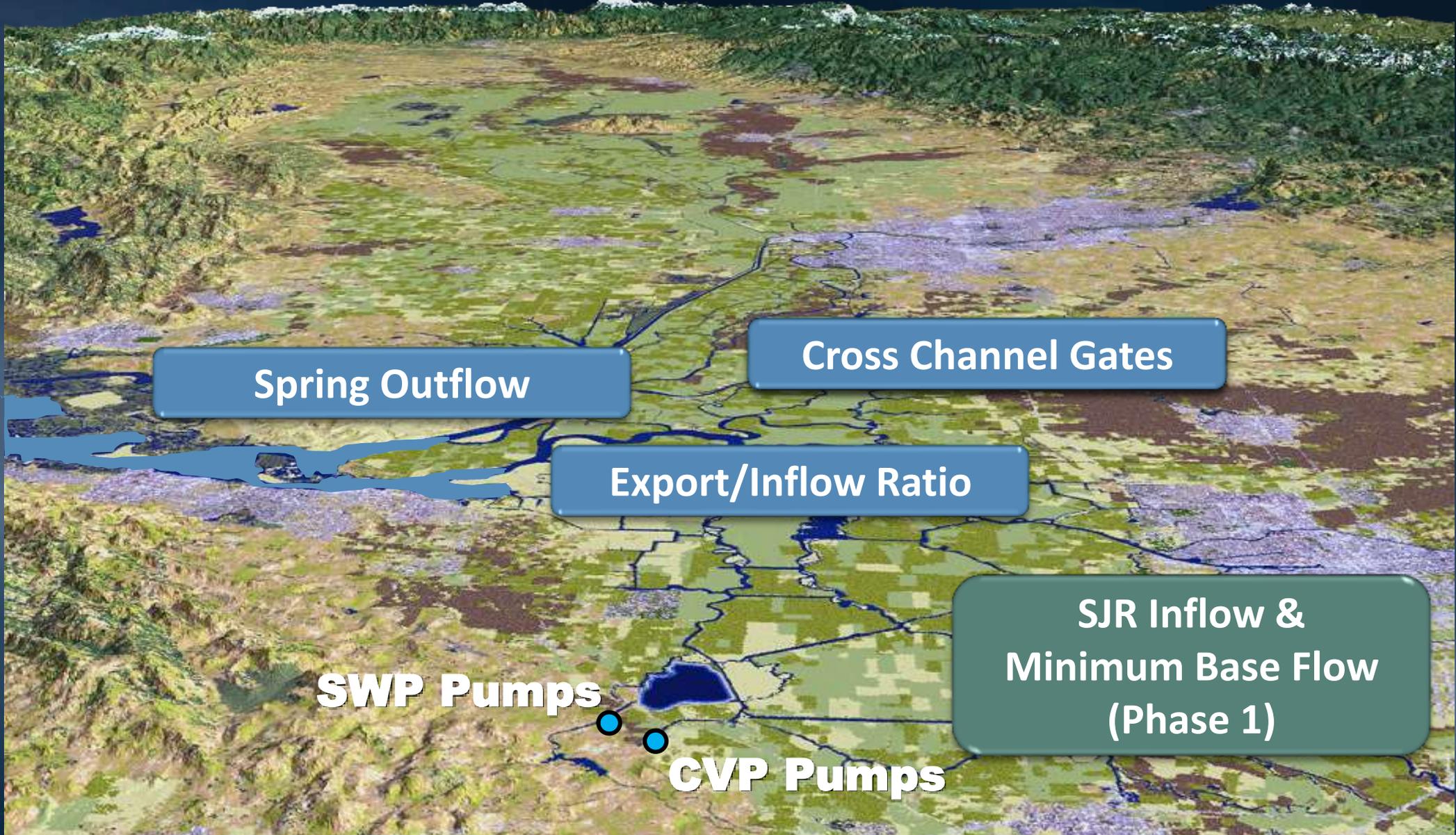
San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary



Water Quality Compliance Stations



Flow/Export Requirements



Background and Purpose

WQCP

Background

- SWRCB

- Responsible for developing and updating the Bay-Delta WQCP
- Identifies beneficial uses
- Establishes water quality measures to protect beneficial uses (flow only approach)
- Periodic review required

WQCP Development

2009

- Current review/update of the 2006 WQCP began in 2009

2010

- Flow Criteria workshops and report

2011

- Phase I - Scientific Basis Report

2013

- Phase I - Draft CEQA document

2016

- Phase II - Draft Scientific Basis Report

2017

- Phase I - Revised Draft CEQA document

2017

- Phase II - Final Scientific Basis Report

2018

- Phase I – Final Environmental Document and SWRCB Adoption

Ecosystem Overview

Key Elements and Stressors



High Water Temperatures



Lack of Food

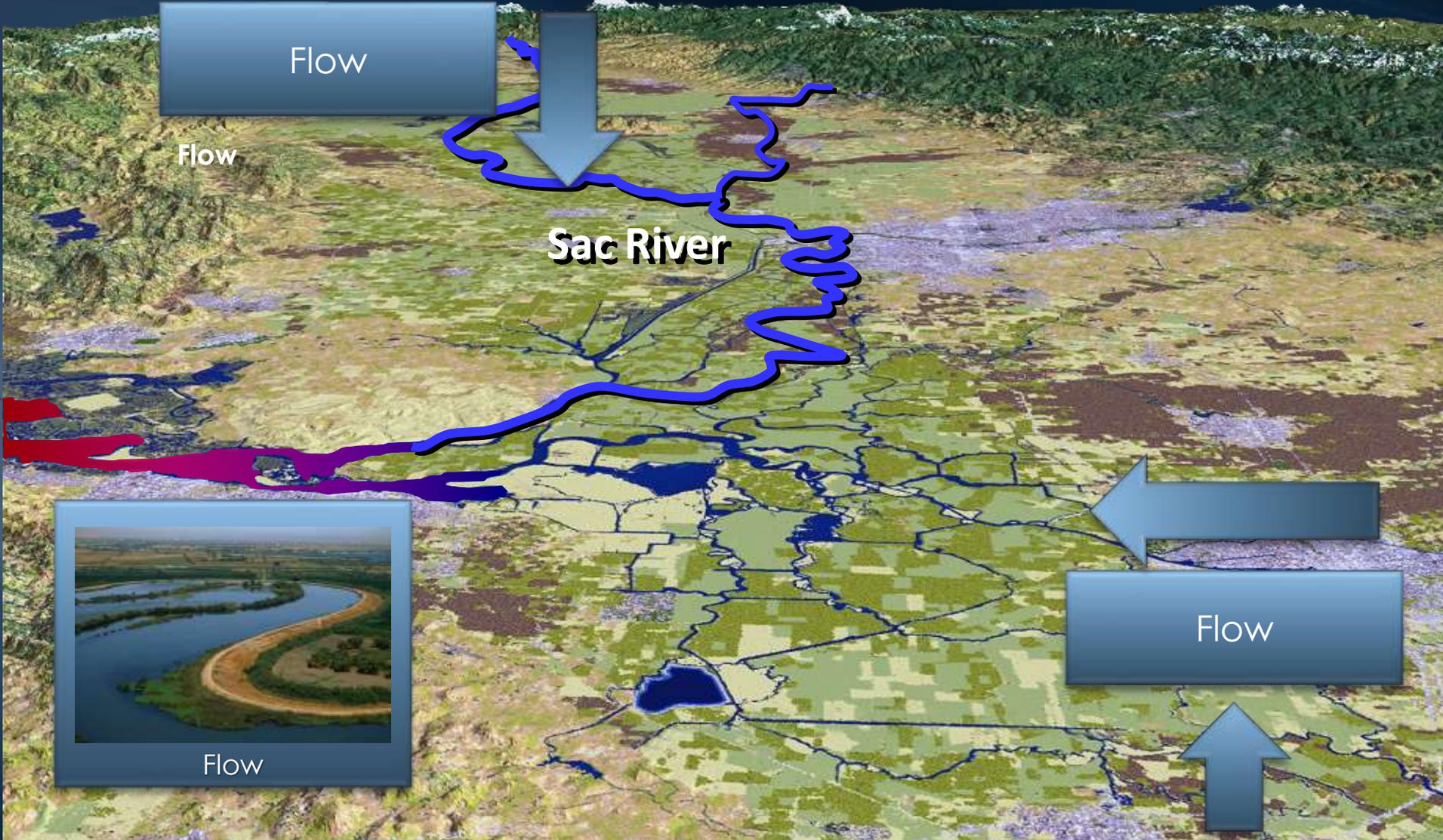


Lack of Habitat



Predation

SWRCB Staff Recommendation for WQCP Focuses on Unimpaired Flows



Unimpaired Flows vs. Water-Landscape Interface

Unimpaired Flows

- Modeled flows that would have occurred under current land use and channel configuration without dams or diversions

Water-Landscape Interface

- Holistic flow approach to address species life history including habitat

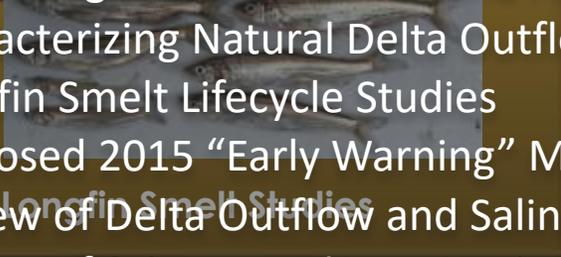


Voluntary Agreement Comprehensive Approach



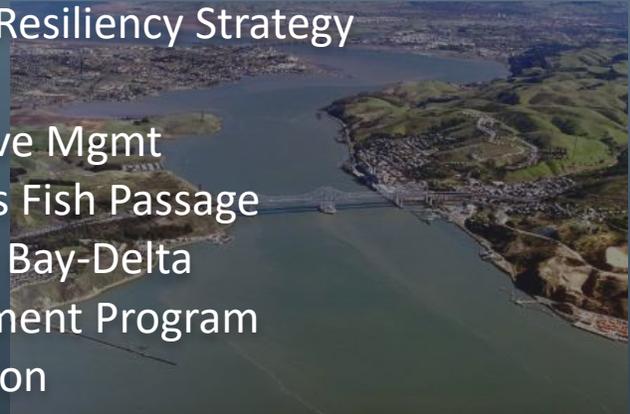
Board Briefings on Bay-Delta Science

- Mar 2011 New Fishery Detection Methods and Avoidance Modeling
- Apr 2011 Delta Smelt Lifecycle Modeling
- Jun 2011 Relevance of X2 to Fish Requirements
- Dec 2011 Effects of Nutrient Imbalances on Food Web
- Dec 2012 Estimating Fish Distribution and Abundance
- Apr 2014 Characterizing Natural Delta Outflow
- Jul 2014 Longfin Smelt Lifecycle Studies
- Oct 2014 Proposed 2015 “Early Warning” Monitoring
- Jan 2016 Review of Delta Outflow and Salinity Trends
- May 2016 Review of Science and Peer Review Processes
- July 2016 Bay-Delta Science Activities and Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy
- Jun 2017 Science Briefing on Longfin Smelt Studies
- May 2018 Briefing on Collaborative Science and Adaptive Mgmt
- Jun 2018 Update on Bay-Delta Science and Yolo Bypass Fish Passage
- Oct 2018 Implications of Declining Wind Speeds in the Bay-Delta
- Apr 2019 Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program
- May 2019 Science Update: Effects of Predators on Salmon
- Sept 2019 Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy
- June 2020 Longfin Smelt Scientific Studies



Delta Smelt and Longfin Smelt Studies

Predation



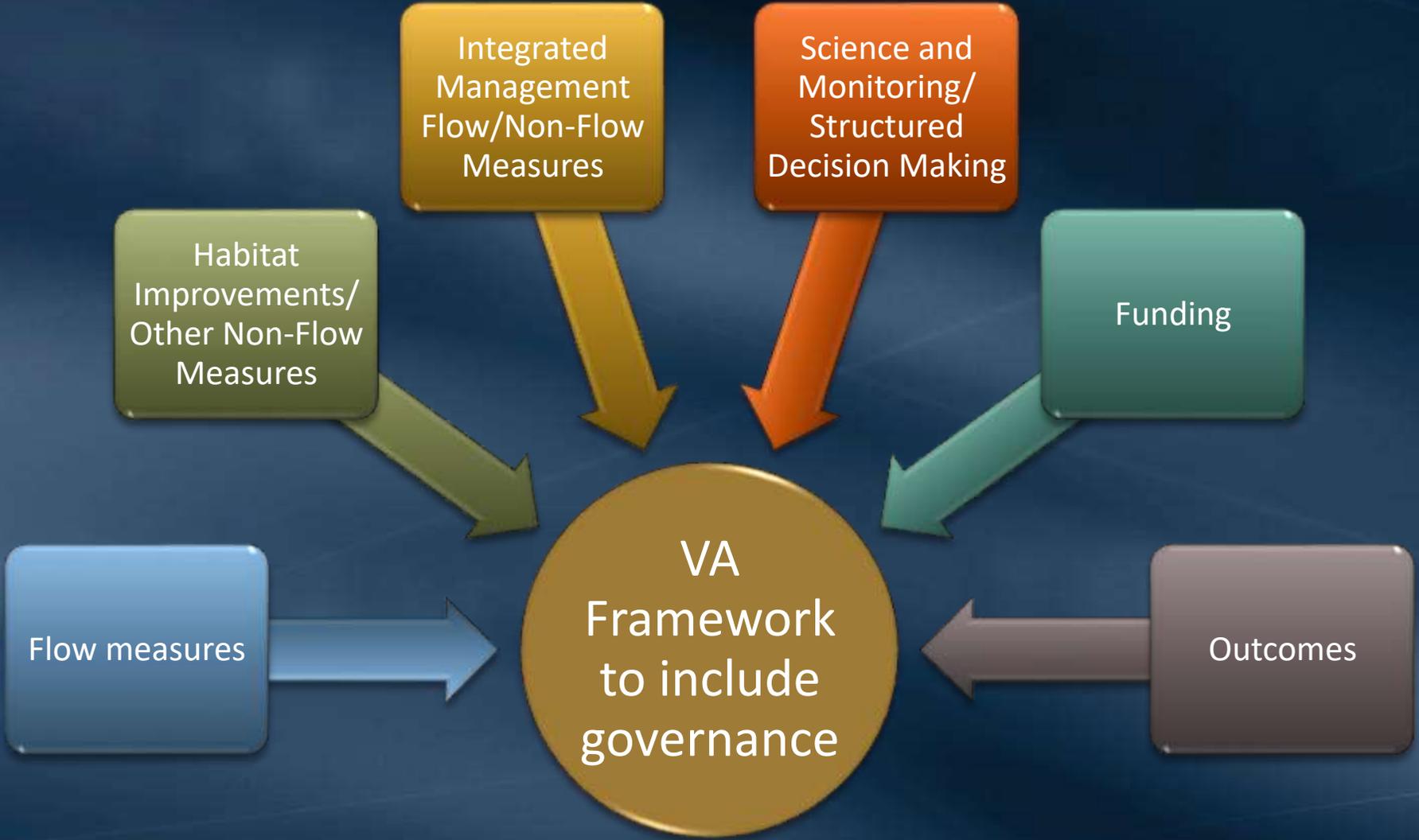
Effects of Nutrient Imbalances on Food Web

Outflow

Voluntary Agreements Concept

- Watershed-wide
- Stable regulatory framework
- Non-flow actions
- Early implementation actions
- Science and habitat
 - Science Program—transparent decision process
 - Structured decision making to increase water-landscape interface (benefit for aquatic species)
- Immediate implementation upon SWRCB approval

Voluntary Agreements Framework



Voluntary Agreements Status

2018

- State presented Voluntary Agreement to SWRCB

2019

- State submitted Voluntary Agreement proposal to SWRCB

2020

- State presented Framework of Voluntary Agreement

2021

- Water users continue work on proposal and discussions with State

Moving Forward

- Further discussions on Voluntary Agreement approach
- If agreement is reached, Voluntary Agreement would be presented to SWRCB as an alternative to analyze in the Substitute Environment Document
- Additional updates to the board as progress occurs

