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DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A California State Agency

Date: September 26, 2019
To: Delta Stewardship Councilmembers
From: Amanda Bohl, Special Assistant for Planning and Science
Subject: **Delta Science Funding and Governance Initiative Update**

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At the 2017 State of the Estuary Conference, a panel of Delta science and policy leaders discussed the outcomes and lessons learned from the 2016 Science Enterprise Workshop, which, among other outcomes, identified the importance of efficient use of available funding, effective leadership, and clear communication. ¹ An outcome of that discussion was a commitment to address the challenge of adequately funding science in the Delta to more fully support robust decision-making. In response, the Delta Science Funding Initiative Workgroup (Workgroup) was launched. The Workgroup is comprised of two Delta Stewardship Council representatives who coordinate with and receive advice from State and federal agencies, as well as environmental, and water user stakeholders. It has received continued support from the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) as an important effort to increase coordination on science, and make progress towards the vision of *One Delta, One Science*.

Focusing on understanding how science is funded, how to improve the tracking of science funding, and how to increase funding, the Workgroup drafted a white paper, with the input and advice of State and federal agencies and environmental and water user stakeholders, that included action-oriented recommendations. These recommendations and the continuation of the Workgroup were presented to the DPIIC members during the April 2019 DPIIC meeting. At the meeting, the committee endorsed the Workgroup's white paper and provided the Workgroup with a continued charge to identify how to implement the white paper recommendations.

The Workgroup then identified four sub-groups comprised of State and federal agencies and environmental and water user stakeholders to provide advice on the implementation of the white paper's recommendations and each sub-group was assigned specific recommendations. Since the April 2019 DPIIC meeting, the four sub-groups have coordinated and drafted reports, identifying specific actions for near and long-term implementation. The reports will be submitted to the Workgroup for synthesis and subsequent presentation to DPIIC.

¹ http://www.sfestuary.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SOE17Oral21_FutureCal.pdf and <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/events/implementation-committee-event/science-enterprise-workshop>

Charged with exploring how best to track and assess science funding, sub-group 1 identified how to establish common accounting and reporting protocols, support web-based tracking of funding, and coordinating a critical review of science funding in the Delta. Sub-group 1 has already begun to develop and implement an annual crosscut budget of science expenditures from State, federal, and local agencies and urges the utilization of the Delta Science Tracker as a long-term repository for science funding information.

Sub-group 2 focused its work on how to establish more effective interchange between decision-makers, stakeholders, and scientists and—among other actions—is promoting the update to the Science Action Agenda, with an emphasis on increasing stakeholder involvement and strengthening policy and science connections.

Sub-group 3 was charged with considering what actions are needed to develop consistent funding across the Delta. Actions include the creation of permanent analysis and synthesis positions, using topic-specific science plans to identify funding needs, and identifying additional potential sources of consistent, long-term science funding.

Sub-group 4 focused on how to equip the Delta science enterprise scientifically and structurally for a rapidly changing climate and the need to be more nimble in our efforts to address these changes. Sub-group 4 has begun to organize a scientific needs assessment workshop to identify a) key science needs to provide long-term management insights in the context of rapidly changing environments; and b) recommendations for organizing the science enterprise to better address such complex and changing problems.

The Workgroup will work to synthesize the sub-group reports into a single implementation report to be presented at the upcoming DPIIC meeting on Nov. 4, 2019. The Workgroup will present the findings to DPIIC and recommend that DPIIC take action on a few key short-term actions (below) that the Workgroup has identified as foundational to building long-term and sustainable science funding and further developing a science enterprise that can rise to the challenges the future presents.

The proposed near-term actions that will be recommended to DPIIC are:

- Implement common accounting and reporting protocols amongst State, federal, and local agencies (*Immediately*) and coordinate a critical review of science funding in the Delta (*Fall 2020*)
- Support and participate in a process to update the Science Action Agenda (*2020*)
- Conduct a science needs assessment workshop to identify the science needs in the Delta under a rapidly changing environment (*Spring 2020*)

The Workgroup's implementation report will be completed in mid-October and will be provided to the Councilmembers at that time in advance of the DPIIC meeting. In the meantime, I look forward to hearing and discussing any questions the Council has regarding this initiative and its findings, recommendations, and implementation actions.

"Coequal goals" means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place."