



DRAFT

**SUMMARY APRIL 25, 2024
DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING**

For review and adoption by the Council at the May 23, 2024, meeting.

All meeting materials, presentations, and comment letters are available at
<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/council-meetings>

MEETING SUMMARY

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Julie Lee called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM on April 25, 2024, at the Oakley Recreation Center at 1250 O'Hara Avenue, Oakley, CA 94561.

Chair Lee announced there was a change in the order of agenda items, Agenda Item 11 Metropolitan Water District Update on Delta Island Activities would take place after lunch, followed by Agenda Item 10 Delta Plan Five-Year Review Draft Report.

2. ROLL CALL – ESTABLISH A QUORUM (WATER CODE §85210.5)

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. The following councilmembers were present and in person: Burgis, Damrell, Mehranian, and Lee.

The following councilmember was present remotely: Zingale.

Councilmember Hueso and Vice Chair Miller joined the meeting later, as noted below.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Deirdre Des Jardin, California Water Research, expressed concerns about the limitations of the CalSim model used for the Delta Adapts Vulnerability Assessment, and the importance of further studies on carryover water storage to be done in the face of climate change.

Vice Chair Miller joined the meeting during this agenda item.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)

- a. Adoption of February 29, 2024, Meeting Summary**
- b. Adoption of March 1, 2024, Meeting Summary**
- c. Adoption of April 12, 2024, Meeting Summary**

Chair Lee presented the agenda item for adopting the consent calendar.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

Motion (approve the consent calendar): offered by Councilmember Mehranian, seconded by Councilmember Burgis.

Vote: 6/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Miller: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 00:08:11.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee thanked former Chair Virginia Madueño for her service on the Council and presented her (in absentia) with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of former Chair Madueño's service on the Council and her passion for advancing California's water supply.

a. Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) Update

Amanda Bohl, special assistant for science and planning, began with an overview of DPIIC and the agencies involved. Meenatchi Odaiyappan, executive fellow, provided a summary of the April 15, DPIIC Spring Gathering which took place in Stockton. Odaiyappan thanked Councilmember Burgis for her role as Chair at the meeting.

The meeting included a tour of the Little Manila Rising Historic Site and the Edible Schoolyard Community Farm with Little Manila Rising, a Stockton nonprofit, as well as a presentation on the Draft Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Blooms (CHABS) Monitoring Strategy from multiple agencies engaged in the work, updates from the DPIIC Restoration Subcommittee and key take-aways from the Salinity Management Workshop. Bohl closed with a preview of upcoming meetings and future DPIIC activities.

Councilmember Burgis provided additional information about the tour to the Edible Schoolyard and DPIIC meeting, including the Draft CHABS Monitoring Strategy.

Councilmember Zingale, Councilmember Burgis, and Bohl discussed Little Manila Rising and how to further support this organization and the vulnerable communities they represent, as well as the adoption of the concept of the Draft CHABS Monitoring Strategy as an example of supporting vulnerable communities. Chair Lee expressed the importance of meeting people where they are to engage and learn from communities.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Deirdre Des Jardin commented on the outreach to and representation of groups she works with on ongoing issues in the Delta. Des Jardin also expressed the importance of engaging with groups and publicly noticing meetings subject to Bagley-Keene.

Councilmember Burgis highlighted that DPIIC meetings are noticed with an agenda on the Council Website.

Councilmember Hueso joined the meeting during this agenda item.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 00:09:26.

6. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson congratulated Chair Lee and Vice Chair Miller on their recent election. Pearson next announced that the notice of proposed rulemaking for the Council's proposed Ecosystem Regulations was released on March 29; these regulations would implement the amendments the Council adopted to the Delta Plan in 2022. Comments may be submitted by email at deltacouncil.ecosystemrulemaking@deltacouncil.ca.gov or via U.S. Mail, postmarked no later than May 14, 2024. Comments regarding this rulemaking will also be heard during a public hearing scheduled on May 14, 2024, from 4:00 PM-6:00 PM at the California Natural Resources Agency building, 715 P Street, Room 2-309, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Pearson provided an overview of two comment letters sent by Council staff this month. On April 4, Council staff submitted a comment letter to Contra Costa County's Department of Conservation and Development regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the County General Plan and Climate Action Update. On April 19, Council staff submitted a comment letter to the City of Fairfield's Planning Division regarding its Comprehensive General Plan Update, Housing Element Update, and Climate Action Plan Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Pearson announced the promotion of Morgan Chow to Environmental Program Manager for the Council's new Climate Change and Environmental Justice Unit in the Planning Division. Pearson welcomed Claudia Vasquez, a new Human Resources Analyst at the Council, and two California Sea Grant Fellows, Margot Mattson, and Jessica Weidenfeld.

Pearson closed by highlighting the Quarterly Contract Report, Outreach Highlights Report, and Active Projects List included in the Councilmember packets and online.

Councilmember Burgis congratulated Eva Bush for her selection to the Water Leaders Program.

a. Legal Update

There was no legal update.

b. Legislative Update (Action Item)

Legislative and Policy Advisor, Brandon Chapin, began with an overview of the following bills: AB 2614, and SB 586. Executive Fellow Meenatchi Odaiyappan provided an overview of Federal Bill H.R. 7719, the Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Removal Act of 2024.

Councilmember Burgis and Chapin discussed the current process for the removal of vessels and how it applies to commercial and recreation vessels.

Chapin proposed the Council support this legislation through a letter of support.

Councilmember Burgis discussed the costs of cleaning up and removing abandoned vessels and the complications of commercial vessel abandonments, and her support of sending a letter.

Councilmember Zingale discussed the importance of the bill, and his interest in learning more about the fee structure of the fines.

Chapin stated that this is something the Council has taken a position on in the past.

Chair Lee expressed the importance of this issue in the Delta.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Deirdre Des Jardin commented on the Quarterly Contract Report, potential conflicts of interest, standing advisory group meetings, the representation of North Delta Community groups, and the COEQWAL modeling collaboratory.

Chair Lee turned to Chief Counsel Jorge Aguilar to address comments concerning advisory committees. Councilmember Burgis, Chair Lee, and Aguilar discussed the structure of the public comment period.

Chair Lee asked for additional public comment.

Morris Lum, a director of Recreational Boaters of California, commented on his appreciation that the Council is supporting this proposed law.

Motion (authorize the Council Chair to send a letter of support for H.R. 7719): offered by Councilmember Zingale, seconded by Councilmember Burgis.

Vote: 7/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Miller: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye)

c. Tribal and Environmental Justice Issue Paper Draft Update
(INFORMATION ITEM)

Special Assistant for Planning and Science, Amanda Bohl, provided an update on the Tribal and Environmental Justice Issue Paper (paper). Bohl reviewed the objectives of the Issue Paper, the development process of the paper, and the issues identified through discussions with stakeholders. Bohl outlined the conceptual framework of the paper that identifies the three tenets of Environmental Justice and how the paper is organized around those tenets. Bohl reviewed the Issue Paper content and next steps for this work.

Councilmember Burgis and Bohl discussed the importance of investing resources and time for people who have been historically not included in these decision-making spaces to learn and help them meaningfully engage with this work. Vice Chair Miller and Bohl discussed building capacity and technical assistance with organizations going forward.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Deirdre Des Jardin commented on community organizing, her concern with increased flood flows due to climate change, and the representation of primary Delta communities in outreach efforts.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 00:27:44.

7. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Lead Scientist Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers provided context for the article highlight for this month and introduced Senior Environmental Scientist Denise Colombano, a co-author of the article for this month.

Rogers, Tanya L., Samuel M. Bashevkin, Christina E. Burdi, Denise D. Colombano, Peter N. Dudley, Brian Mahardja, Lara Mitchell, Sarah Perry, and Parsa Saffarinia. 2024. "Evaluating Top-Down, Bottom-Up, and Environmental Drivers of Pelagic Food Web Dynamics along an Estuarine Gradient." Ecology e4274.
<http://doi.org/10.1002/ecy.4274>

Colombano began with an overview of the partnership between the Delta Science Program and the National Center for Ecological Synthesis and Analysis (NCEAS), what synthesis is and why it is important to the Council. Colombano outlined how the Delta Science Program is advancing synthesis and how it contributed to the creation of the paper that is this month's article highlight. Colombano next provided an overview of the article. The research team integrated and synthesized 40+ years of publicly available data from seven monitoring surveys, four regions, and 11 taxonomic groups, resulting in a single long-term dataset that allowed them to model the estuarine food web in ways that had not previously been possible. The research team examined how each player in the food web (phytoplankton, herbivorous zooplankton, predatory zooplankton, prey fish) is affected by three drivers: its food supply, its predators, and environmental conditions. The models showed that all three drivers were influential. The study lays the groundwork for developing more detailed and predictive food web models in the estuary.

Councilmember Mehranian and Colombano discussed how the results from the paper could be prioritized to support future food web research and policy actions. Councilmember Burgis, Colombano, and Dr. Windham-Myers discussed other research that could be used for synthesis and the benefits of open science.

Dr. Windham-Myers provided highlights of past and future activities of the Delta Science Program:

- The 2025 Delta Research Awards Proposal Solicitation is open for Letters of Intent, due May 14, 2024.
- The Delta Science Program held the final installment of the Salinity Management Workshop Series on March 26 and March 27.
- The Call for Abstracts is open for oral, poster, and art presentations at the 12th Biennial Bay-Delta Science Conference. The Delta Stewardship Council

and U.S. Geological Survey will co-host this event at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center in Sacramento, CA from September 30 - October 2, 2024.

Dr. Windham-Myers highlighted future events and applications upcoming:

- The Delta Science Program and California Sea Grant announced the 13th round of Delta Science Fellowships, with support for the 2024-2026 academic years. The request for applications is anticipated to be released on April 30, 2024.
- The 2024 biennial State of the Estuary Conference, originally planned for March 12-13, has been rescheduled for May 28-29, 2024, in Oakland, CA at the Scottish Rite Center.
- The UC Davis Coastal and Marine Sciences Institute (CMSI) and the Delta Science Program are hosting a one-day symposium exploring food webs research from the San Francisco Estuary to the Pacific Ocean on May 31, 2024.

Dr. Windham-Myers closed with a review of the By the Numbers report.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Deirdre Des Jardin commented on the termination of Striped Bass monitoring by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and her concerns about this.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 01:14:07.

8. CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT OF THE DELTA LEAD SCIENTIST (ACTION ITEM)

Chair Lee provided background information on the hiring process for the Delta Lead Scientist and introduced Delta Independent Science Board (ISB) Chair Dr. Lisa Wainger. Dr. Wainger announced Dr. Windham-Myers as the candidate being recommended by the Delta ISB. Dr. Wainger reviewed Dr. Windham-Myers' qualifications, and that she meets the requirements for the Delta Lead Scientist set forth in the Delta Reform Act and recommended an appointment for a term of three years effective December 1, 2023, through November 30, 2026.

Vice Chair Miller discussed the concept of open science and the excitement of future work using open science. Councilmember Burgis expressed her excitement for Dr. Windham-Myers' nomination and her ability to discuss complicated science issues.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Deirdre Des Jardin expressed her support for Dr. Windham-Myers.

Motion (appoint Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers to the position of Delta Lead Scientist for a three-year term, effective from December 1, 2023, through November 30, 2026): offered by Councilmember Hueso, seconded by Councilmember Mehranian.

Vote: 7/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Damrell: Aye, Hueso: Aye, Mehranian: Aye, Miller: Aye, Zingale: Aye, Lee: Aye)

Chair Lee congratulated Dr. Windham-Myers and commended her ability to synthesize science across scales. Dr. Windham-Myers thanked the Councilmembers for their support and her excitement about the opportunity.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 01:36:26.

9. DELTA INDEPENDENT SCIENCE BOARD UPDATE (INFORMATION ITEM)

Dr. Lisa Wainger provided an update on the Delta ISB's current activities and review on food webs, decision-making under deep uncertainty, and subsidence.

Councilmember Burgis and Wainger discussed target chemicals and the ongoing discovery of what needs to be sampled and measured, the incorporation of fires and wildfire impacts (chemicals used for firefighting), sediment changes due to fire

temperature, sediment change impact on water turbidity, and the incorporation of these topics into risk assessment.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Diedre Des Jardins provided comments on global temperature and precipitation in Western North America, climate model projections for the Pacific Ocean, transparency in the Delta Science Program, and input on the subject of uncertainty.

Chair Lee adjourned for lunch.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 01:46:43.

10. Metropolitan Water District Update on Delta Island Activities
(INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee reconvened the meeting at 1:04 pm.

Jeff Henderson, deputy executive officer for the Council's planning and performance division introduced Randall Neudeck, Metropolitan Water District (Metropolitan), who presented on critical issues affecting the Delta, including landscape resiliency, fishery improvements, and levee modernization.

Vice Chair Miller and Neudeck discussed the degree of coordination with the Delta Science Program and Metropolitan, and an ask for further clarification, moving forward, on the sea-level rise portion (as presented, regarding levee design and the immediate protection benefits).

Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers echoed Miller's thoughts on the openness of the collaboration between Metropolitan and the Council. Dr. Windham-Myers and Neudeck discussed the benefits of this data in open science settings, pilot/initial studies, funding strategies for levee improvements, and a general closer relationship for science data exchange.

Councilmember Zingale and Neudeck discussed anticipated profit loss for the island projects, increasing the island revenue at the same time as maintaining the coequal

goals, and revenue-increasing strategies (corn to rice and carbon sequestration credits).

Chair Lee commented on Emergency Preparedness in the Delta and the timeliness of Delta scientists working on making decisions in times of deep uncertainty and the idea of inviting the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to a Council meeting and/or taking a tour of OES in the future.

Councilmember Burgis agreed with Chair Lee and expressed a desire for a financial analysis component to be added to the Chair's request for further exploration of emergency services and their role in the Delta.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Gilbert Cosio provided comments on levee designs, seismic activity in the levee analysis, the 2016 report/workshop on seismic activity, and the conceptual benefits of having a "fat levee."

Vice Chair Miller and Cosio discussed predicting sea-level rise and levee design overcorrecting due to underestimating the rate of sea-level rise, and wide levees.

Diedre Des Jardins provided comment on the Napa earthquake and the gained understanding of seismic forces from nearby faults, levee maintenance, extreme flooding, the ArkStorm scenario not being used in Delta planning, and a desire to collaborate with Neudeck about their 500-year flood planning.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 02:03:37.

11. DELTA PLAN FIVE-YEAR REVIEW DRAFT REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Jeff Henderson, deputy executive officer for planning and performance, and Martina Koller, program manager, presented on the first five-year review, the second five-year review, key accomplishments from 2019-2023, report cards, performance measures, recommendations, and regulatory analysis.

Henderson announced the beginning of the public comment period for this document. The due date for public comment is June 10, 2024.

Councilmember Burgis, Henderson, and Pearson discussed the means of “reducing reliance” (reducing the amount of water agencies draw from the Delta (volume or percentage of your total portfolio)).

Councilmember Burgis commented on the subjective nature of the phrase “reduce reliance,” the practice of highlighting different places in the Delta at Council Meetings to help promote the “Delta as an evolving place,” regional self-reliance (community self-reliance), and the day-to-day struggles communities have with growing reliance issues outside of their other responsibilities.

Pearson turned to Henderson, who clarified the difference between the performance measures guidebook and the draft presented to the Council.

Chair Lee, Councilmember Damrell, Councilmember Hueso, Councilmember Burgis, Pearson, Henderson, and Koller, discussed whether the Council, as an organization, is improving the Delta. Some of the ideas discussed were: not meeting the pace with changes affecting the Delta (State identified priorities); mixed success on progress; climate change conditions impacting the Delta creating unanticipated results; progress being based on predetermined targets that change when the environment does (not static); change from policy vs. change from environmental change; the meaning of “who” regarding different Delta entities; limited resources; examples of districts improving their reliance on water; integrated Californian economies; Californian ingenuity; the uniqueness of the issues (local vs. international); the value of water; and how the report can help focus project work by highlighting sections that need support.

Pearson noted that performance measures were required by the Legislature in the Delta Reform Act so that the Council would create a Delta Plan and periodically evaluate progress.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

Public Comment

Diedre Des Jardins commented on drought impacts, accelerated climate change, step increases in temperature and evapotranspiration, step decrease in precipitation, metric addition for critically dry year transitioning to hot, flood preparedness reliance, Sacramento Valley extreme flood risk denial, and a call for better metrics.

Before closing the agenda item, Chair Lee asked Councilmember Burgis to speak on Oakley and the venue for the meeting. Councilmember Burgis welcomed everyone to Oakley and provided attendees with context on her ties to the area and the uniqueness and history of the area.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/3wCYVYi>, minute 02:59:49.

12. PREPARATION FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council meeting will take place on May 23. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

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