

"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."

– CA Water Code §85054



## DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

# UNDERSTANDING THE DELTA PLAN

NOVEMBER 2011

After decades of conflict and unsuccessful efforts to address the many problems and challenges in the Delta, the California Legislature, water agencies and environmental groups throughout the state united in an unprecedented manner to pass the historic 2009 Delta Reform Act.

The legislation created the Delta Stewardship Council to develop a legally enforceable, long-term management plan for the Delta to achieve the coequal goals of protecting and enhancing the Delta ecosystem, and providing for a more reliable water supply for California in a manner that protects and enhances the Delta as an evolving place.

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The Delta is at a crossroads. Native fish populations are crashing. Water deliveries have become less reliable. And the impact of climate change, flood risk and water quality problems threaten the entire system. Continuation of the status quo puts the California economy, environment, and Delta residents at risk.

## SOMETHING MUST BE DONE

The seven-member independent Delta Stewardship Council is tasked with developing a "legally enforceable plan"...*not another report*. The Plan must be based on best available science. The Council is not a super regulatory agency – rather it has specific independent decision-making authority and will serve a coordinating role among the many state, federal and regional agencies whose decisions impact the Delta.

## THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Council's first assignment is the development of the Delta Plan which was officially launched in April 2010. The Council's commitment to an open and transparent planning process is reflected through its release of five successively updated staff drafts of the Plan, which reflect the input received at more than 50 public meetings and thousands of pages of stakeholder comments. The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the Delta Plan is now available for public comment through February 2, 2012. A final PEIR and Delta Plan are expected Spring 2012.

## TOP TEN ACTIONS:

# WHAT DOES THE DELTA PLAN DO?

- 1** **SETS DEADLINES** for completion of BDCP and for the State Water Resources Control Board to update Delta flow objectives.
- 2** **PROTECTS** high priority restoration areas from development & **PRIORITIZES** top five habitat restoration areas.
- 3** **PROTECTS & PRESERVES** floodplains and encourages setback levees to increase habitat and reduce flood risk.
- 4** **REDUCES RISK** by requiring new development in the deep floodplain to have adequate flood protection/levees.
- 5** **INCREASES WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY** by requiring users of Delta water to implement local plans to diversify water supplies and improve water efficiency, and reduce pressure on the Delta.
- 6** **IMPROVES TRANSPARENCY** by requiring that transfers of Delta water and contracts for Delta water must be done openly.
- 7** **REDUCES DELTA ECOSYSTEM STRESSORS** through a suite of specific recommendations to address toxics, nutrients, invasive species and more and **PRIORITIZES** State and Regional Water Quality Control Board actions to deal with high priority Delta-specific water quality problems.
- 8** Requires **ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT** for significant ecosystem and water management projects so that we learn the best ways to improve water supply reliability and protect the Delta ecosystem as we go forward.
- 9** **ENSURES FAIRNESS** by using the financing principles of beneficiary pays and stressors pay.
- 10** **RECOGNIZES** that all actions must be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the values of the Delta as an evolving place.



## DELTA PLAN PRINCIPLES

### ACTION IS NEEDED NOW

We have been studying the problems of our water supply and the declining Delta ecosystem for decades. Near-term actions must move forward while the selection of long-term conveyance, storage and ecosystem solutions are being decided over the next five years. Waiting is NOT an option. We must continue to invest in the Delta ecosystem and in the improvement of California's water supplies and water use efficiency.

### ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

We are committed to using adaptive management which will enable us to act even though conditions are uncertain. We need to use this strategy for making decisions now, rather than constantly putting off actions to improve the Delta ecosystem and California's water supply reliability until more information is available.

### WATER MANAGEMENT: CONSERVATION AND EFFICIENCY

Everyone in California must conserve water and must increase their efforts to do so. Everyone who uses water from the Delta watershed must take action to diversify their local water supplies and increase water conservation and efficiency in order to improve regional self reliance and water reliability, and as a result, reduce reliance on the Delta for future water supplies.

### DELTA ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

We must preserve land in the Delta for future habitat restoration, and we must immediately begin restoration efforts on long-studied priority areas. In the Delta, the way we move water and the health of native species are in conflict.

Updated Delta flow objectives by the State Water Resources Control Board for fisheries must be established for the Delta and its major tributaries as soon as possible. Without adequate water flow (the right mix of timing and amount), we cannot expect fisheries to recover.

### WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY & WATER STORAGE

Fundamentally, water supply reliability means that California must more predictably match its demands for and use of water to the available supply. New surface and groundwater storage is necessary to manage the timing of water for people and for fish. Done right, additional storage can make efficient water management possible and better allow for water use that is wildlife-friendly. Successful completion of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is essential and it should be done as soon as possible. BDCP may offer our best opportunity to reduce conflict between water supply and ecosystem in the Delta.

## DRAFT PROGRAM EIR

The Council released its Draft Program EIR on November 4, 2011. There is now a 90-day public comment period.

### How to Comment:

Submit comments anytime through (and including) February 2, 2012.

- Email: [eircomments@deltacouncil.ca.gov](mailto:eircomments@deltacouncil.ca.gov)
- Mail: Delta Stewardship Council, 980 Ninth Street, Suite 1500, Sacramento, CA 95814, Attn: Terry Macaulay
- Or visit <http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/comment-draft-eir>

## ABOUT THE COUNCIL

Created by the legislature in 2009, the Delta Stewardship Council is composed of members who represent different parts of the state and offer diverse expertise in fields such as agriculture, science, the environment, and public service. Of the seven, four are appointed by the Governor, one each by the Senate and Assembly, and the seventh is the Chair of the Delta Protection Commission. For more information visit [HTTP://DELTA-COUNCIL.CA.GOV/](http://DELTA-COUNCIL.CA.GOV/)

