



**DRAFT**

**SUMMARY MARCH 1, 2024  
DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING**

For review and adoption by the Council at the April 25, 2024 meeting.

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

**MEETING SUMMARY**

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**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Virginia Madueño called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM on March 1, 2024, at the Jean Harvie Community Center at 14273 River Road Walnut Grove, CA 95690.

**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, Hueso, Lee, Mehranian, and Madueño.

The following Councilmember was present and remote: Zingale

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

*John Herrick, representing the South Delta Water Agency, commented on the siltation and flow of the South Delta Middle River.*

*Dominick Gulli, who represents various reclamation districts in the Delta commented on beneficial investments in Delta water resiliency (storage upstream), water storage, 100-year protection vs. 200-year protection for levees, and investing more in Terminous Tract to reach a higher standard (above HMP standards).*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 00:01:41.

#### **4. DELTA ADAPTS DRAFT ADAPTATION PLAN OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION (INFORMATION ITEM)**

Chair Madueño gave a brief introduction of the Delta Adapts Draft Adaptation Plan before introducing Jeff Henderson, deputy executive officer for planning and performance, and Morgan Chow, senior environmental planner at the Delta Stewardship Council.

Henderson introduced integral Delta Adapts staff, Morgan Chow (senior planner), Beck Barger (public participation manager), Dan Constable (program manager), Annie Merritt (environmental scientist), Liz Ramos (civil engineer) at Kjeldsen-Sinneck-Neudeck, Campbell Ingram (Delta Conservancy's executive officer), Erin Mullin (lead engineer), Ashok Bathulla (senior water resource engineer), James Edwards (senior water resource engineer), Chris Kwan (senior environmental scientist), Charnell Wickliff (Sea Grant fellow), Harriet Ross, Cory Copeland, Andrew Schwartz, Avery Livengood, consultants from AECOM, and the Delta Science Program.

Henderson and Chow provided an overview of the project and passed the agenda item to Constable and Merritt to introduce the strategies.

Barger asked if there were any comments from Councilmembers.

Councilmember Zingale asked that the equity component be expressed for every strategy throughout each presentation.

Barger asked if there was any contribution from the public to the discussion.

##### *Public Discussion*

*Diedre Des Jardins commented that the screening tools used for the project may have indicators that do not trigger certain criteria in legacy communities, which could leave them out of the analysis. De Jardins expressed the importance of involving legacy communities in the discussion/project.*

*Kathy Schaffer, a Ph.D. candidate at UC Davis, spoke about the National Flood Insurance Program Insurance Program (NFIP) and how it has become increasingly unaffordable, especially for impacted groups in the Delta.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 00:09:03.

**a. Flood Risk Reduction Strategies**

Constable and Ramos presented on flood risk vulnerabilities (climate-induced hydrologic variability, sea level rise, and levees), proposed plans, and some example actions in the Draft Delta Adapts flood risk reduction strategy.

Councilmember Burgis commented on investment strategies, agency responsibilities, and the need to consistently revisit the Delta Adapts: Draft Adaptation Plan, electricity access, and internet access.

Chair Madueño echoed Councilmember Burgis' thoughts and added thoughts on providing timely information for all, historical floods of 1997 and water contamination issues, integration of all media into the emergency response system, long-term planning, and taking a tour to understand emergency management practices.

Councilmember Lee commented on levee-break events, resulting in community devastation, generational impacts, events or circumstances that lead to communities having to leave the Delta (associated fear of similar future events and lack of trust in government action/promises), Office of Emergency robustness, and deputizing of State employees to work in fields outside of their current position to help with efforts in the Delta Adapts: Draft Adaptation Plan.

Ramos echoed comments on emergency services and provided further thoughts on the importance of public messaging, information sharing, and educating participating project/plan partners about threat levels.

Councilmember Mehranian and Ramos discussed how the Flood Emergency Preparedness: Concept Integration pie chart works in real-time and its implementation, how it would be revised, grant funding for emergency preparedness, and the value of preventative vs. reactionary responses.

Barger asked if there was any contribution from the public to the discussion.

*Public Discussion*

*Chris Neudeck provided comment on mass evacuations being ineffective, particularly in the Delta.*

*Dominic Ghuli discussed plans for storage, aquifer recharge, water resiliency (storage), and climate change being potentially good for California.*

*Gil Cosio commented on subventions funding, levee breeches (flattening the curve), and doing things programmatically rather than island by island.*

*Russ Ryan provided comments on preparedness, Bouldin Island levee instrumentation, and the ability to predict being cost-effective practice for future impactful/devastating events.*

*Amber McDowell, Sacramento County Farm Bureau, provided comments on cell towers and power outages rendering cellphones inoperable (notifications and updates not available) and the need to print evacuation plans ahead of time.*

*Melinda Terry, Central Valley Project (CVP), North Delta Water Agency (NDWA), provided comments on flood flows, the capacity of channels, each county having NFIP requirements, and DWR's annual flood fighting program.*

*Brett Baker, Central Delta Water Agency (CDWA), commented on existing assets, recirculating water out of the San Luis reservoir, drought, operating projects under drought records, dredging, sills/gates for salinity intrusion, and fighting water fix at all stages.*

*Artie Valencia commented on funding equity, that 10% cost-share requirements for flood funds can weigh on communities, levee subvention programs, the need to address geographical constraints when there is power loss, the incorporation of non-profits in emergency response, and a balance between water capture to align with ecosystem needs.*

*Diedre Des Jardins commented on the ARkStorm 1.0 scenario, its rejection by local flood planners, and how Delta Levees Investment Strategy (DLIS) didn't consider evacuation needs/routes.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 00:13:50.

## **b. Ecosystem Strategies**

Constable and Ingram presented on the Ecosystem vulnerabilities (land development, Heat, sea level rise, and climate extremes' impact on ecosystem and biodiversity), proposed strategies, and some example actions in the Draft Delta Adapts flood risk reduction strategy.

Chair Madueño and Ingram discussed the total acres in the Delta affected by subsidence (150 -200K), how will landowners work with the Council on ecosystem strategies (public ownership and private landowners), and what a feasible ecosystem project work target/goal (50k) is.

Councilmember Lee asked about the timeline for the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to adopt the carbon market protocol (no timeline, pressure to develop new protocols).

Barger asked if there was any contribution from the public to the discussion.

*Public Discussion*

*Diedre Des Jardins commented on the need to meet water quality standards for species, the need to meet D-1641, and how the ecosystem actions should include meeting these.*

*David Bradshaw, Metropolitan Water District, and Campbell discussed rice rotation, strategies for "in-between years," other crops that maintain inundated land, consistent farm and rotational rice farming, and rotational fallowing.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 01:22:15.

**c. Agriculture Strategies**

Merrit and Michael Wolffe, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), presented on the Agriculture vulnerabilities (heat, drought, flooding, reduced chill hours, sea level rise, and how decreased water supply decreases crop yield, impact of the vulnerabilities on economic stability of industry, and land viability for agriculture), proposed plans, and some example actions in the Draft Delta Adapts agriculture strategy.

Barger asked if there were any comments from Councilmembers.

Councilmember Mehranian and Wolffe discussed a discrepancy in modeling from CARB, why the practice was kept in the demonstration phase, and why the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is subject to what CARB says is a greenhouse gas-reducing practice, a Healthy Soils Program (HSP) question on what works in the soil, stacked projects (projects that undertake more than one practice), and funding.

Councilmember Zingale, Wolffe, and Chow discussed farmworkers getting compensation and the inclusion of farm workers in Environmental Justice work/Community-Based Organization (CBO) outreach.

Wolffe and Councilmembers Burgis and Hueso discussed what percentage of our economy are farmers and our ability to invest in new technologies/businesses, uplifting supportive businesses and people, crop studies, percentage of wells vs. surface water, and Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

Chair Madueño and Wolffe discussed disadvantaged groups and tribal entities receiving grants and if there are specific numbers of how many (Wolffe will follow up), workforce training, and a potential partnership with Council and CDFA for future agriculture.

Barger asked if there was any contribution from the public to the discussion.

#### *Public Discussion*

*Amber McDowell provided comments on State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) money ( to farm owners, supporting agribusinesses, and farmworkers), farmworker training for new technologies, changes in the way people want to farm, high water table making it hard to measure water use, and lack of Delta crop knowledge from the central valley and southern Californian farmers leading to land damage.*

*Melinda Terry commented on the Council coordinating with the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), their land use and resource management plan, prohibition of widespread development of private land to protect farming in the Delta, drainage importance, and water supply.*

*Sara Medina commented that she was happy to hear that rice was part of the conversation and provided comments on the need for longer-term investments for*

*transition, support needed for access to carbon sequestration and CDFA programs, restoration (need for more outreach to inform the broader community on benefits), clarification on land retirement transitions and new job market potential, tribal inclusion, and the importance of proper water flow for all adaptation.*

*Diedre Des Jardins commented on the agricultural strategy being inconsistent with the curtailment of water in the Delta and provided comments on irrigation reduction not working for rice, a need for adaptation to increasingly dry years, salinity intrusion, and salinity management.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 01:43:26.

#### **d. Water supply reliability Strategies**

Merrit, Tom Zukerman (Central Delta Water Agency), and Louise Conrad (the Department of Water Resources lead scientist) presented on the water supply reliability vulnerabilities (Water supply decrease, water demand increase, variable precipitation, decreased snowpack, sea level rise, drought and salinity intrusion harming water quality, and extreme weather damaging the network of water conveyance infrastructure and levees), proposed plans, and some example actions in the Draft Delta Adapts water supply strategy.

Chair Madueño asked Zukerman if there were any further comments he would like to share.

Zuckerman spoke on the importance of levees for water supply and conveyance, Delta smelt (the only mixing zone is the deepwater channel), and the inability to reduce reliance by using habitat projects alone.

Barger asked if there were any other contributions from the Councilmembers.

There were none.

Barger asked if there was any contribution from the public to the discussion.

#### *Public Discussion*

*Dan Nomellini, Jr., CDWA, commented on his hopes to see an exploration of physical barrier-type solutions to control salinity, management of salinity/salts, reservoir*

*reliance not being enough, and a release of the San Luis Reservoir water back into the Delta*

*Justin Marsh, UC Davis (UCD), commented on seeing a large turnout for this meeting and commented on behalf of, and to highlight, the UCD Just Transitions Project.*

*Diedre Des Jardins commented on concerns with the Delta Science Program's review of the Department of Water Resources' modeling (the Delta lead scientist's panel shortcomings – issues of equity in representation for modelers).*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 02:30:06.

### **e. Funding and Governance**

Henderson and Chow presented on governance recommendations, Delta adaptation governance, the Council's Role (representational justice, communication strategies on risk, restoration benefits, adaptation options, research gaps through Delta Science Program, Traditional Knowledge, DPIIC regional funding strategy for adaptation, and Council's covered action authority in the strategy), and the next steps for the funding and Governance Strategies.

Chair Madueño gave her thanks to the staff and reiterated the importance of engagement and how this work will unfold and impact everyone working in the Delta.

Councilmember Lee acknowledged the inherent complexities of the strategies and commented on water manipulation, the need for incremental progress, and appreciation for the public forum.

Councilmember Damrell echoed Councilmember Lee's comments about the need to fight for this reality.

Barger asked if there was any contribution from the public to the discussion.

#### *Public Discussion*

*Amber McDowell commented on increasing costs to farmers, taxes, trust of the government, disaster money (2021), the importance of self-reliance vs. assistance, and carbon farming (need more information, people are excited).*



*Julie Haas-Wajdowicz, City of Antioch, highlighted that their Climate Action and Resilience Plan will be updated this year, which will include data from the Delta Adapts and the Vulnerability Survey.*

*Diedre Des Jardins commented on the Delta needing a comprehensive adaptation plan, the availability of PowerPoints, the workshop being good but too short, the need for lateral learning, the want for the Delta Science Program work groups to meet publicly, the publishing of agendas, and being clear regarding representation of groups/organizations, existing contacts, or past collaborations.*

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 03:08:07.

Barger asked for public comment on the agenda item.

There was no public comment

## **5. PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

The next Council meeting will take place on April 25. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/49mtizD>, minute 03:27:46.

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