



INFORMATION ITEM

Delta Independent Science Board Update

Summary: The chair of the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB), Dr. Elizabeth Canuel, will provide an update on the activities of the Delta ISB.

Background

As mandated by the 2009 Delta Reform Act, the Delta ISB is responsible for providing oversight of the scientific research, monitoring, and assessment programs that support adaptive management in the Delta (Water Code Section 85280(a)(3)), and providing independent advice on the Delta Plan (Water Code Section 85308(a)). The findings and recommendations from the Delta ISB inform updates to, and the implementation of, the Delta Plan, the Science Action Agenda, the Delta Science Plan, and other Council projects.

As described in the Delta Science Plan, the comments, findings, and recommendations from the Delta ISB are expected to increase scientific credibility, improve research clarity, advance the debate about Delta issues, and seek better connectivity between science, management, and policy. This communication and relationship between the Council and Delta ISB is critical to help inform the Council's work. The last update was at the Council's August 22, 2019, meeting.

Delta ISB Reviews

To meet its legislative mandate, the Delta ISB reviews programs that support adaptive management by "thematic" or topical areas. To date, the Delta ISB has completed and presented the following thematic reviews to the Council: restoration (2013), fish and flows (2015), adaptive management (2016), levee hazards (2016), Delta as an evolving place (2017), water quality (2018), and the Interagency Ecological Program (2019). In addition, the Delta ISB also reviews specific science documents related to adaptive management or the Delta Plan. These reviews can be either self-initiated or based on a specific request from an individual or entity.

At the Delta ISB's last update to the Council, the Delta ISB presented the findings and recommendations from its review on the Interagency Ecological Program's ability to provide science to support the management of the Delta. Since then, the Delta ISB has submitted its final review to both the Council and the Interagency Ecological Program in November 2019. The Delta ISB is now in the process of having discussions with the leadership of the Interagency Ecological Program on how to move forward with implementing the recommendations. A one-page summary that can be printed as a poster can be found in Attachment 1.

In addition, the Delta ISB has submitted comment letters/memorandums on its review of the Social Science Task Force's draft Social Science Strategy for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the Council's preliminary public draft of the proposed amendment to Chapter 4 (Protect, Restore, and Enhance the Delta Ecosystem) of the Delta Plan.

The final reviews can be found on the Delta ISB's products webpage:
<http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-isb/products>.

Current Efforts

The Delta ISB is in the process of completing three thematic reviews, which are at different stages of completion, and providing input on the development of the Science Needs Assessment that is being developed by the Council in collaboration with partners from the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC). Progress on these efforts is described below.

1. Delta Monitoring Enterprise Review (started April 2017): The Delta ISB is in the process of reviewing how well monitoring programs are meeting the informational needs of management agencies. There are two components to this review. Component 1 is the development of a comprehensive inventory of monitoring programs in the Delta that was developed by a contractor under the direction of the Delta ISB, while Component 2 is the Delta ISB's evaluation and recommendations on monitoring programs. The first component of the review is now complete, and a summary of the effort can be found in Attachment 2.
2. Water Supply Reliability Review (started April 2018): This review focuses on the science and methods available and employed to estimate and evaluate water supply reliability. In January 2019, the Delta ISB hosted a public workshop to learn about the different methods and models used by different agencies and to identify priorities for research and areas for collaboration. Currently, the Delta ISB is in the process of drafting the report.
3. Ecosystems Review (started September 2018): The review focuses on non-natives (often referred to as invasive species if deemed harmful), their effects on Delta ecosystems, and how to control or adapt to them. The review aims to identify the gaps in knowledge that impede effective management. Currently, the Delta ISB is in the process of drafting the report after hosting two public workshops in December 2018 and March 2019 with managers and scientists on the state of science to inform invasive species management in the Delta.
4. Science Needs Assessment (started April 2019): Based on the recommendations from the Delta ISB in February 2019 and the endorsement of DPIIC in April 2019, the Council is planning a public Science Needs Assessment Workshop in the fall of 2020. The workshop will identify key science needs to provide long-term management insights in the context of rapidly changing environments and recommendations for organizing the science enterprise to better address complex and changing problems. To help inform the Science Needs Assessment, the Delta ISB is assessing the implications of rapid environmental change for undertaking research to support management in the Delta. As part of the assessment, the Delta ISB has prepared a draft discussion paper in November 2019 and moderated a panel discussion in January 2020 with science experts from across the country. A summary of the discussions on the implication of rapid environmental change on Delta science can be found in Attachment 3.

Outgoing Correspondence

On April 17, 2020, the Delta ISB submitted a comment letter to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), regarding the Notice of Preparation for the Delta Conveyance Project (Attachment 4). In the letter, the Delta ISB (1) invited a DWR representative to attend a future meeting of the Delta ISB to discuss the process and timeline for the Delta ISB's review of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) documents for the Delta Conveyance Project and (2) to share some insights and expectations based on the Delta ISB's previous review of EIR documents for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and California WaterFix projects.

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Summary of the Delta ISB's Review on the Interagency Ecological Program

Attachment 2: Summary of the Delta Monitoring Enterprise Review Component 1

Attachment 3: Delta ISB Memorandum – Preparing for Accelerating and Uncertain Environmental Change

Attachment 4: Delta ISB Letter to the Department of Water Resources on the Notice of Preparation on the Delta Conveyance Project

Contact

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