



DRAFT

SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

For review and adoption by the Council at the October 23, 2025, meeting.

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

MEETING SUMMARY

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Vice Chair Gayle Miller called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM on September 26, 2025, at the California Natural Resources Agency at 715 P Street, Room 2-221, Sacramento, California 95814.

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

Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. The following councilmembers were present: Burgis, Hueso, Mehranian, Patterson, Zingale, and Miller.

Chair Lee was absent from the meeting.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Vice-Chair Miller asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/48uRsuY>, minute 00:01:22.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)

4a. Adoption of August 28, Meeting Summary

Vice-Chair Miller presented the agenda item for adopting the consent calendar.

Vice-Chair Miller asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

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

Vote: 4/2/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Abstain, Hueso: Aye, Lee: Absent, Mehranian: Aye, Patterson: Abstain, Zingale: Aye, Miller: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/48uRsuY>, minute 00:01:41.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Vice-Chair Miller welcomed Councilmember Ann Patterson to the Council and shared about Councilmember Patterson's background. Councilmembers Zingale, Burgis, Mehranian, and Hueso shared welcoming remarks to Councilmember Patterson.

Councilmember Patterson shared her excitement to be on the Council and thanked Councilmembers for their words.

Vice-Chair Miller next shared appreciation for the years of service of Councilmember Damrell, who is now appointed to the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Appeals Board. Councilmembers Mehranian, Hueso, Burgis, Zingale, and Patterson shared memories and appreciation for the years of experience and knowledge Councilmember Damrell brought to the Council. Vice-Chair Miller welcomed others in the audience and on staff to share additional memories.

Vice-Chair Miller shared about Delta week, California Native American Day, and her attendance at Climate Week in New York City.

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson, Chief Council Jorge Aguilar, and Delta Lead Scientist Lisamarie Windham-Myers shared some words about their experience working with Councilmember Damrell.

Councilmember Burgis shared updates on the Delta Protection Commission including an update on the hiring process for their next Executive Director, and the imagery from her drive into the meeting through the Delta.

Vice-Chair Miller asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/48uRsuY>, minute 00:02:55.

6. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson began her report by welcoming Councilmember Ann Patterson to the Council. Pearson shared about an open survey to inform the Public Participation Plan Update, and changes to the Council website. There were no new covered action certifications of consistency to report. Pearson summarized two comment letters sent out this month. First discussed was a letter sent on September 8 to the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) regarding its preliminary study on farmland conversions in the Delta.

Councilmember Burgis and Pearson discussed the implications of the comment letter regarding the farmland conversion study and the importance of talking about this subject.

Pearson next summarized a September 25 comment letter sent to the City of Rio Vista regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Rio Vista General Plan Update 2045.

Pearson welcomed Audrey Cho, who has been appointed as the Legislative and Policy Advisor, and Alec Cruz, an Executive Fellow.

Pearson shared a review of the Outreach Highlights Report, highlighting the upcoming Adaptive Management Forum. Pearson provided an update on Senate Bill 650 and closed with a preview of the meeting ahead.

Councilmember Zingale, Councilmember Burgis, Vice-Chair Miller, Pearson and Deputy Executive Officer for Planning and Performance, Jeff Henderson, discussed the "Good Neighbor Checklist" and the inclusion of farmworkers and other parties potentially affected by conversion of agricultural land, as it appears in the letter to the DPC.

a. Legal Update

There was no legal update.

b. Legislative Update

There was no legislative update.

Vice-Chair Miller asked for public comment and welcomed Audrey Cho and Alec Cruz.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/48uRsuY>, minute 00:21:41.

7. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers introduced Dr. Kyle Delwiche and Dr. Tyler Anthony to share more about this month's highlighted article and provided some background information on the article.

Delwiche, K., Matthes, J. H., Arias-Ortiz, A., Knox, S. H., Oikawa, P., Sturtevant, C., Verfaillie, J., Szutu, D., Keenan, T. F., & Baldocchi, D. (2025). Dynamic methane emissions in a restored wetland: Decadal insights into uncertain climate outcomes and critical science needs. Agricultural and Forest Meteorology, 373, 110735.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agrformet.2025.110735>

Dr. Kyle Delwiche, Research Scientist with U.C. Berkeley, provided background on Carbon Flux Monitoring in the Delta, wetland drainage, subsidence and carbon loss,

and the cost and benefits of wetland restoration and methane emissions. Dr. Delwiche explained the climate benefits of wetland restoration, their measurement collection methods, and a review of the long-term data sets collected by their team. Dr. Delwiche closed with a reflection on the importance of wetlands.

Dr. Tyler Anthony with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) shared about DWR's Nature-Based Climate Solutions, the importance of long-term research, carbon credits, the possibilities of selling carbon credits, and closed with next steps. Dr. Windham-Myers closed with a reflection on the importance of funding for long-term monitoring.

Councilmember Burgis, Dr. Delwiche, and Dr. Anthony discussed the variance in the methane data collected, agriculture and cattle as methane producers, the water usage and plants used in wetland restoration, and possible funding methods to sustain future research and potential funding cuts to this work. Councilmember Mehranian and Dr. Delwiche discussed the warming effect of methane, the effect of salt in wetland restoration, possible issues of equity in cap-and-trade programs, and potential interest from the private sector in nature-based solutions.

Councilmember Hueso, Dr. Anthony, and Dr. Delwiche discussed the funding sources for these projects, highlighting California's cap-and-trade program, the benefits of wetland restoration and the plants associated with wetland restoration. Councilmember Hueso shared reflections on harvest season.

Vice-Chair Miller summarized key takeaways from the conversation, the pricing of carbon in markets, how to monetize and invest in nature-based solutions, and how the generated money is spent. Vice-Chair Miller and Dr. Delwiche discussed salinity in wetland restoration.

Dr. Windham-Myers shared Delta Science Program Activities including updates on the 2025 Delta Research Awards, the California Sea Grant Fellows Matching Workshop, and highlights of upcoming and past events including the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee Restoration Subcommittee meeting, the upcoming Adaptive Management Forum, the CNRA Secretary Speaker Series and the State of the Estuary Conference.

Dr. Windham-Myers closed with an overview of the By the Numbers Report.

Vice-Chair Miller asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://bit.ly/48uRsuY>, minute 00:36:43.

8. HIGHLIGHTING THE STATE OF BAY-DELTA SCIENCE 2025 “EXTREME EVENTS” EDITION (INFORMATION ITEM)

Council’s Program Manager Dr. Maggie Christman, and Senior Environmental Scientist Dr. Denise Colombano, were introduced to present on the latest edition of the State of Bay-Delta Science (SBDS). Christman began with an overview of the history and process of SBDS, efforts to share scientific learning in the editions, the role of SBDS in Delta Science, and readership and engagement of the SBDS. Dr. Christman provided context for the Extreme Events in the 2025 edition of the SBDS. Dr. Colombano summarized the key learnings from the edition, knowledge gaps, and closed with possible next steps, highlighting climate initiatives at the Council, short summaries of each article and upcoming events.

Councilmember Zingale and Dr. Christman discussed the impact of these extreme events on vulnerable communities and the mechanisms to learn more about this. Councilmember Burgis and Dr. Colombano discussed the impact of smoke and water quality in the wildfire article.

Pearson and Vice-Chair Miller commended staff for their presentation.

Vice-Chair Miller asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://bit.ly/48uRsuY>, minute 01:27:54.

9. DELTA SMELT AND NATIVE SPECIES PRESERVATION PROJECT UPDATE PRESENTATION (INFORMATION ITEM)

Principal Resource Specialist with the Metropolitan Water District (Metropolitan), Dr. Shawn Acuña, presented an update on its Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project. Delta Smelt are listed as endangered under the California Endangered Species Act due to a variety of factors, including habitat loss, predation, contaminants, and the impacts of water exports. This multifaceted project investigates solutions for improving Delta smelt culturing and survival in the Delta. Dr. Acuña presented on three Delta smelt studies that have been or are currently being carried out on Bouldin Island in the Delta. Each study seeks to develop and optimize fish farming methods to improve the production and survival of Delta smelt in support of the Delta Smelt Supplementation Strategy (<https://bit.ly/4pwqPvH>), developed by multiple federal and State of California agencies in 2020.

Councilmember Zingale and Dr. Acuña discussed the survival rates of the farmed Delta smelt releases. Delta smelt are an annual species and tend to die after spawning. In the studies referenced by Dr. Acuña, the smelt are released as adults so they can spawn in the wild, and there has been an increase in larvae, which is being considered a marker of success. More years of data will be needed before drawing firm conclusions. Dr. Acuña clarified that the 90% survival rate of the smelt mentioned in the presentation referred to a six-week period during which the smelt survived in cages placed inside the impoundment ponds.

Dr. Acuña closed his presentation with a short video explaining the projects.

Vice-Chair Miller asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://bit.ly/48uRsuY>, minute 01:51:47.

10. PREPARATION FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Councilmember Burgis commented on time commitments and expectations for Council meetings and Councilmembers.

The next Council meeting will take place on October 23, 2025. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 p.m.

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