



INFORMATION ITEM

Lead Scientist Report

Summary

Recent Delta Science Program activities include preparations for the upcoming release of the Delta Science Plan for public comment and recent participation at the California Council on Science and Technology Science Day. Upcoming events involving the Delta Science Program include a Secretary Speaker Series panel and presentations at the 2025 State of the Estuary Conference.

Delta Science Program Activities

Upcoming Draft Delta Science Plan Release

The draft 2026 Delta Science Plan will be released for public comment soon. The Delta Science Plan (<https://deltascienceplan.deltacouncil.ca.gov/>) is a shared framework providing vision, principles, and approaches for coordinating science in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This iteration includes 24 actions organized around the four Grand Challenges to Delta science identified in the essay, "Grand Challenges in Delta Science: Planning for Science in a Dynamic System" (<https://deltascienceplan.deltacouncil.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11-20-grand-challenges-in-delta-science-essay.pdf>). The grand challenges are: 1) Scientists and managers must anticipate a world in which environmental conditions and regulations may be fundamentally different from those faced today; 2) Environmental change is outpacing the traditional pace of science; 3) Flows of scientific information remain decentralized and poorly connected to communities and decision-makers; 4) Other ways of knowing, including Traditional Knowledge, remain siloed from decision-making. Using these grand challenges to frame the Delta Science Plan helps to encourage more forward-looking and collaborative approaches to advancing the coequal goals and science-informed decision-making.

We look forward to receiving input on this guiding document during the public comment period. The complete and final Delta Science Plan is anticipated to be released in early 2026.

California Council on Science and Technology Science Day

On September 29, 2025, Council staff took part in Science Day at the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) headquarters in Sacramento. Hosted by CNRA and the California Council on Science and Technology (CCST), the event brought together California's leading researchers and state policymakers to highlight groundbreaking work by universities, labs, research institutions, and agencies and to explore opportunities to align science with California's most urgent climate goals. Council staff shared the stage in a storytelling session highlighting the Science for Communities initiative, which pairs local communities with research scientists to collaborate on projects. Staff also hosted an outreach booth to engage participants throughout the day.

On Your Radar

Secretary Speaker Series, October 27, 2025

Secretary Crowfoot hosts monthly discussions with leaders from across California to discuss emerging natural resources issues. On Monday, October 27, Council staff and other partners will participate in a panel to highlight the latest climate research and how it relates to Delta management. This builds off the Delta Science Program's State of Bay-Delta Science (SBDS) special edition focusing on extreme events, the Delta Independent Science Board's September climate symposium, and the Council's recent adoption of the Delta Adapts climate initiative. More information is available here: <https://resources.ca.gov/About-Us/Secretary-Speaker-Series>.

State of the San Francisco Estuary Conference, October 28–29, 2025

The biennial State of the Estuary Conference will be held October 28–29, 2025 at the Oakland Scottish Rite. The San Francisco Estuary Partnership organizes this event every two years to highlight the current management and ecological health of the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary.

Council staff are participating in the conference in several ways, including organizing sessions and sharing oral and poster presentations. On October 28 Delta Lead Scientist Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers and Senior Environmental Scientist Dr. Denise Colombano are participating in a session titled "Science, Management, and Governance in the Era of Extreme Weather Events." This session builds upon the Science Program's recent State of Bay Delta Science Extreme Events Edition and on the Delta Independent Science Board's Emerging Climate Research Symposium. On October 29, Senior Environmental Scientists Dr. Xoco Shinbrot and Dr. Hollis Jones will participate in the session "Aligning Science with Action: Setting Regional Priorities." Furthermore, Council staff will present posters on products including the Delta Science Tracker, the Delta Modeling Collaboratory, a Research Impact Assessment for research funded by the Delta Science Program, and more. The full conference program is available here: <https://www.sfestuary.org/state-of-the-estuary-conference/>.

By the Numbers

Science Program staff will summarize current numbers related to Delta water and environmental management. The summary (Attachment 1) will inform the Council of recent counts, measurements, and monitoring figures driving water and environmental management issues.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: By the Numbers

Contact

Henry DeBey

Deputy Executive Officer for Science

Phone: (916) 902-6575