



DRAFT

SUMMARY MARCH 26, 2026

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEETING

For review and adoption by the Council at the April 23, 2026, meeting.

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

MEETING SUMMARY

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Lee called the meeting to order at 9:41 AM on March 26, 2026, 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 in person: Burgis, Lee, Mehranian, and Miller. (Government Code § 11123.2)

The following Councilmembers were present and online: Eggman, and Zingale.

Councilmember Patterson was absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://rebrand.ly/c7e01f>, minute 00:01:23.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION ITEM)

4a. Adoption of January 22, 2026, Meeting Summary

4b. Adoption of February 26 and 27, 2026 Meeting Summary

4c. Consideration and Possible Approval of an Amendment to Receivable Agreement DSC20231A2 with the California Department of Water Resources for Scientific Review (Resolution 2026-02)

Chair Lee presented the agenda item for adopting the consent calendar.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

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

Vote: 6/0 - The motion was adopted (Burgis: Aye, Eggman: Aye, Lee: Aye, Mehranian: Absent, Miller: Aye, Patterson: Absent, Zingale: Aye)

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://rebrand.ly/c7e01f>, minute 00:02:32.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Chair Lee thanked staff for all their work on the hearing held last month, and reported on the National Heritage Area passport kick off event, and her attendance at the National Heritage Area Advisory Committee meeting. Chair Lee highlighted her attendance at the Blue Carbon Symposium on March 5, 2026, and the Delta Independent Science Board meeting on March 19, 2026.

Councilmember Burgis shared updates on the recent Delta Protection Commission meeting held on March 19, 2026, and other updates from the Commission.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://rebrand.ly/c7e01f>, minute 00:03:57.

6. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Executive Officer Jessica Pearson thanked participants of last month's appeal hearing and gave an update on the appeal process. Pearson highlighted letters sent by the Council on February 2, 2026. One letter was sent to the State Water Resources Control Board, commenting on key elements of the revised Bay-Delta Plan, with a focus mainly on scientific and peer review for program implementation. Another letter was sent to the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency, recommending changes to their Mossdale Tract Flood Risk Reduction Project to better align with the Delta Plan.

On February 17, 2026, a letter was sent to Reclamation District 756 regarding the Bouldin Island Levee Setback Project, supporting habitat creation, levee rehabilitation, and pump station replacement, and inviting early consultation with Council staff.

On March 6, 2026, Council staff commented on Reclamation District 799's Hotchkiss Tract Levee Rehabilitation Project, which aims to improve levee segments and enhance tidal marsh habitat. The letter encourages early engagement and discussion of mitigation measures for Delta Plan consistency.

On March 18, 2026, Council staff provided feedback on the Department of Water Resources' Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report for the Tide's End Multibenefit Restoration Project (Tide's End), which focuses on wetland restoration and floodplain enhancement in the Yolo Bypass. The Tide's End is recognized as an early action project within the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program. Staff recommended early consultation before future certification.

On March 23, 2026, Chair Julie Lee sent a letter to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) requesting information about data from a set of water quality and flow gages located at sites throughout the Delta. In the letter, the Chair requests a meeting with Reclamation to better understand their approach to the future management of the monitoring stations and to ensure that reliable Delta water quality data remains publicly accessible.

Pearson welcomed the new cohort of five Sea Grant Fellows Alyssa Burns, Addison Gleekel, Melissa Palmisciano, Jessie Patzlaff, and Brayden Wiley.

Pearson closed, highlighting the Outreach Highlights Report and the Active Projects List.

a. Legal Update

There was no legal update.

b. Delta Atlas

Pearson introduced the Delta Atlas created by Council staff and Dan Constable, program manager, to present on the effort. Constable provided a demonstration of the Delta Atlas, an interactive online map available to the public, highlighting map layers available, and other features of the online tool.

Councilmember Burgis and Constable discussed available layers of the map like county and parcel boundaries, Vice Chair Miller commended Constable on the Delta Atlas as a resource for understanding California water. Councilmember Mehranian and Constable discussed the intended audience for the Delta Atlas.

c. Legislative Update

Audrey Cho, legislative and policy advisor, began highlighting recent events including the flood briefing held in February which briefed the Legislatures Delta Caucus on flood risk, Delta Levees and the Delta Levees Investment Strategy, the launch of the Delta National Heritage Area. Cho next provided updates on Bills of interest including SB 872, AB 2216, AB 2218, and Federal water policy including S. 3738 and new funding available for water projects. Cho closed with a report out on the Federal government shut down and an update on federal personnel.

Councilmember Burgis, Pearson, and Cho discussed the timeline for the Council endorsing some of the state bills, and water monitoring updates.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The agenda item is viewable on the linked agenda at <https://rebrand.ly/c7e01f>, minute 00:08:57.

7. LEAD SCIENTIST REPORT (INFORMATION ITEM)

Delta Lead Scientist, Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers introduced the lidar mapping effort and Megan Nguyen, analyst for the Council's Delta Science Program. Nguyen, provided an overview of the effort to create a unified elevation map of the Delta, including past data available, the importance of a consistent map, the partners involved in making this effort a reality, and a preview of the data collected.

Dr. Arina Ushakova, a land surveyor with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), provided an overview of lidar and its value as data. Dr. Alex Braud from the San Francisco Estuary Institute shared examples of how this data can be used to monitor levees and assess flood risk. Dr. Windham-Myers provided next steps, and the Delta Science Program's (Science Program) role in this project. Councilmember Mehranian commended the panel and the value of this work. Councilmember Burgis discussed the importance of this map, including the Bay and the Delta, the complexity of the system, and adaptive management. Chair Lee highlighted the importance of creating a unified map for use.

Dr. Windham-Myers provided updates on the Council's Delta Science Program activities, including the latest peer review on Winter-Run Chinook Salmon Annual Loss, which included recommendations for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and DWR, as well as the ongoing peer review for Spring Run Chinook Salmon. She introduced the California Sea Grant Fellows and highlighted the Interagency Ecological Program annual workshop and the Blue Carbon Symposium. Dr. Windham-Myers also summarized upcoming events, including the California Water and Environmental Modeling Forum Annual Meeting (April 20–22, 2026) and the Bay-Delta Science Conference (September 28–30, 2026).

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

Councilmember Burgis and Dr. Windham-Myers discussed water storage and management.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment in Sacramento or Eureka.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://rebrand.ly/c7e01f>, minute 00:42:55.

**8. HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM AND RICE CULTIVATION IN THE DELTA
(INFORMATION ITEM)**

Delta Stewardship Council Program Manager Dan Constable and California Department of Food and Agriculture's Agriculture Resilience and Sustainability lead, Dr. Nina Bingham, presented on the Healthy Soils Program (HSP) and its relationship to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The presentation highlighted the HSP's impact, new practices, the question of "why rice cultivation," the Information needed for a new HSP practice, greenhouse gas reductions, an overview of management guidelines, and what's next for the project.

Councilmember Burgis and Dr. Bingham discussed converting from other crops to rice, how often farmers are reimbursed, incentives for switching to rice, the amount of rice to grow, and rice and tulle in relation to alternatives for crop rotations.

Chair Lee and Dr. Bingham discussed wetland carbon density (which is 50% higher than in other areas), whether the density of the Delta is a causation for this project, if this program is available elsewhere (practice will be limited to the Delta, but the Healthy Soils Program is available statewide), other benefits to rewetting the soil (benefits to subsidence and healthy wildlife habitat), resistance to the program.

Before closing, Councilmember Eggman thanked Dr. Bingham for their work and expressed support for rice cultivation in the Delta.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://rebrand.ly/c7e01f>, minute 01:05:41.

9. THE CALIFORNIA WATER PLAN (INFORMATION ITEM)

Delta Stewardship Council Deputy of Planning and Performance Jeff Henderson, and Department of Water Resources Deputy Director Joel Metzger, presented on recent legislative updates to The California Water Plan and the State's long-term strategy for managing, protecting, and using its water.

The presentation covered three key questions for the California Water Plan 2028: where it stands now, where it is headed, and how to reach the goals. The presentation covered the California Water Plan – as it is today, the Delta's Role in Statewide Water Planning, SB 72, tools DWR can use to plan for additional water supply, engagement/coordination architecture, conceptual model for caucuses, partner agencies with SB 72 mandates or nexus, refined analytical resolution (hydrologic regions), where the Delta Plan and Water Plan align, Delta-related targets and measures, what SB 72 means for the Council, potential coordination pathways, and how the Council could engage in Water Plan 2028.

Councilmember Mehranian and Metzger discussed the inclusion of the State Water Resources Control Board regarding the engagement and coordination architecture (they are invited to participate), coordination (integration of information), integration/alignment of the CA Water Plan into strategic planning (local), challenges with changing trends, and the need to look broadly for goals (break free of silos).

Councilmember Zingale and Metzger discussed the inclusion of Environmental Justice in the Water Plan, the addition of Environmental Justice into the Water Code (alongside tribes), and the formalization of the concept for advisory committees in the future. Councilmember Burgis sought clarification on whether the nine million acre-feet (2040) was being added as a water supply, interpretation/approaches for determining what the additional water supply means, where the water is needed, the productivity of the proposed toolset, and meaningful inclusion of tribal work.

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Miller, and Metzger closed with a discussion on where information about the advisory committee members could be found and on the committee members' representation being reflective of the State.

Chair Lee asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

The item is viewable on the linked agenda <https://rebrand.ly/c7e01f>, minute 01:32:02.

10. PREPARATION FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next Council meeting will take place on April 23, 2026. Please refer to the posted meeting notice 10 days before the meeting for further information or updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

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