



INFORMATION ITEM

Lead Scientist Report

Summary

On May 21, the Delta Independent Science Board held a public meeting and tour of the Sacramento Area Sewer District's EchoWater Resource Recovery Facility, learning about innovative treatment plant upgrades at the facility that helped to improve sewage treatment and alleviate downstream Delta ecosystem impacts. Attendees also visited the Bufferlands, an expanse of space that acts as wildlife habitat and agricultural land while reducing the potential for odor and other nuisances to affect nearby communities. Upcoming events to be aware of include the Traditional Knowledge Roundtable Series on June 30, July 14, and July 28, as well as the Delta Climate Adaptation Team kick-off meeting on June 30.

Delta Science Program Activities

[Delta Independent Science Board Tour of SacSewer's EchoWater and Bufferlands](#)

On May 21, the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) held a public meeting and tour of the Sacramento Area Sewer District (SacSewer) EchoWater Resource Recovery Facility and its Bufferlands, located near Elk Grove, California. The tour helped inform the Delta ISB's review of contaminant monitoring programs. Contaminants enter the water system through sewage from toilets, showers, laundry, and more. The facility provides "tertiary treatment" for 1.6 million customers throughout the Sacramento region, which means that it treats sewage so it can be safely released into the Sacramento River in the northern part of the Delta. The facility also includes a substantial buffer between facility operations and its nearest neighbors. This expanse of open space is called "the Bufferlands" and provides wildlife habitat, farmland, and open space while reducing the potential for odor and other nuisances.

The EchoWater Project began in 2010 when the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board issued new treatment requirements in Sacramento Area Sewer District's wastewater discharge permit to improve water quality and help alleviate ecological problems in the Delta. Treatment plant upgrades were completed in 2023, and the centerpiece of the upgrade was the Biological Nutrient Removal Project, which is responsible for removing 99% of ammonia and 89% of nitrogen, addressing concerns about possible impacts downstream. To inform the upgrades, in 2016 the Delta Stewardship Council funded the "Operation Baseline" studies, a multi-year research initiative to establish a baseline of water quality and to assess the effects of the EchoWater wastewater treatment plant upgrades. The May 21 tour drew strong community interest, with more than 50 participants, and provided Delta ISB members and other attendees with the opportunity to see how engineering innovation, scientific research, and habitat management intersect at the facility. The visit offered valuable context for understanding the region's wastewater treatment system and the continued need for robust monitoring to support informed, science-based decision-making.

On Your Radar

[Traditional Knowledge Roundtable Series – June 30, July 14, July 28](#)

On June 30, July 14, and July 28 the Delta Stewardship Council, the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, and California Indian Environmental Alliance will co-host a roundtable series exploring Traditional Knowledge, Tribal history, and collaborative approaches to stewardship in California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its watershed. The series will bring together Tribal Elders and leaders, agencies, and scientists to share experiences, discuss challenges, and explore practical approaches to interweaving Traditional Knowledge, management, and science. Events will be a mix of online and hybrid, with in-person gatherings in downtown Sacramento and virtual attendance via Zoom. For more information please see the Council's Tribal Engagement web page: <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/tribal-engagement>.

[Delta Climate Adaptation Team Kick-Off Meeting – June 30](#)

Council staff is launching the Delta Climate Adaptation Team (DCAT) to help improve coordination among collaborative groups working on climate adaptation in

the Delta. DCAT builds on the momentum generated by Delta Adapts, a comprehensive regional climate resilience and adaptation plan led by the Council. DCAT is designed to strengthen cross-sector collaboration among community leaders, Tribal partners, scientists, managers, and policymakers across the region. It will support implementation of Delta Adapts by:

- Bringing adaptation practitioners together
- Highlighting case studies and practical resources
- Creating opportunities to coordinate funding and implementation of projects.

Anyone, particularly if involved in climate work in the Delta, is invited to join DCAT's kickoff meeting on June 30 from 1:30–5:00 p.m. at the California Natural Resources Agency building in downtown Sacramento or virtually on Zoom. Climate adaptation and Traditional Knowledge are deeply connected, and the DCAT kick-off has intentionally been scheduled to follow the June 30 Traditional Knowledge Roundtable event (9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.) and a networking lunch sponsored by California Sea Grant will be available for interested attendees of both events. The DCAT kickoff meeting will include a panel discussion on successes and lessons learned from three climate collaboratives within the Delta watershed—the Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative, the San Joaquin Regional Climate Collaborative, and the Solano Bayshore Resiliency Roundtable—as well as an interactive activity to brainstorm how DCAT can best support local climate adaptation efforts across the Delta. Learn more about DCAT and register for the kickoff meeting at <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-plan/climate-change>.

By the Numbers

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

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: By the Numbers

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