

2026 Delta Science Plan: Strengthening Science in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

The Delta Science Plan outlines **24 Actions**, structured around the four grand challenges, to foster a more collaborative, coordinated, and forward-looking approach to science in the Delta.

GRAND CHALLENGE	ACTION		THEME
 GRAND CHALLENGE 1: Scientists and managers must anticipate a world in which environmental conditions and regulations may be fundamentally different from those faced today.	1.1	Support the ongoing shift from single species to holistic monitoring and management of ecosystems	Monitoring
	1.2	Support horizon scanning to detect and understand emerging signals	Modeling & experimentation
	1.3	Strengthen links between models and data for more streamlined and informed decision-making	Modeling & experimentation
	1.4	Focus on regional resilience to climate change	Modeling & experimentation
	1.5	Improve connectivity between executive, management, and staff/scientist levels	Collaboration & communication
	1.6	Build stronger science and management goal alignment	Synthesis & review
 GRAND CHALLENGE 2: Environmental change is outpacing the traditional pace of science.	2.1	Expand support for adaptive management and monitoring to inform decision-making in a changing Delta	Monitoring
	2.2	Invest in enhanced tools and expertise in cutting-edge technology to anticipate near-future conditions	Monitoring
	2.3	Support scenario-based models that allow us to test management interventions that consider radically different future conditions	Modeling & experimentation
	2.4	Support actions to cut green tape and streamline decision-making practices	Collaboration & communication
	2.5	Utilize mechanisms of sharing information more efficiently and effectively	Synthesis & review
	2.6	Implement more responsive and targeted funding structures	Funding

GRAND CHALLENGE	ACTION		THEME
 GRAND CHALLENGE 3: Flows of scientific information remain decentralized and poorly connected to communities and decision-makers.	3.1	Support free and open data	Data accessibility
	3.2	Support collaborative venues for efficient flow of information	Collaboration & communication
	3.3	Increase research coordination at the watershed and estuary scale through systems thinking	Collaboration & communication
	3.4	Improve social science literacy	Collaboration & communication
	3.5	Incorporate social science data and disciplines in management decision frameworks	Collaboration & communication
	3.6	Proactively identify opportunities to leverage independent scientific peer review processes to enhance the rigor, transparency, and credibility of science underpinning management and policy decisions	Synthesis & review
	3.7	Increase funding opportunities and capacity for social science research and collaborations	Funding
 GRAND CHALLENGE 4: Other ways of knowing, especially Traditional Knowledge, remain siloed from decision-making.	4.1	Respect tribal data ownership and confidentiality	Data accessibility
	4.2	Support more co-produced and community-engaged science	Collaboration & communication
	4.3	Explore ways to expand funding that supports and engages community and tribal expertise	Funding
	4.4	Build trust through intentional and reciprocal working relationships	Governance & relationships
	4.5	Embrace more ways of knowing	Governance & relationships