

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delta Stewardship Council Appoints New Lead Scientist

SACRAMENTO – Dr. Laurel Larsen, an expert in hydroecology, landscape dynamics, complex environmental systems, and environmental restoration, was unanimously appointed by the Delta Stewardship Council on Thursday (April 30) as lead scientist. Most recently, Dr. Larsen has served as an associate professor of the Department of Geography and Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley.



In making the appointment, Council Chair Susan Tatayon said, “Dr. Larsen has been recognized nationally and internationally for her work in restoration and water-related science - primarily in the Florida Everglades - and has extensive experience in leading interdisciplinary teams. Her expertise and outstanding leadership skills are exactly what we need in applying scientific knowledge to advance the state’s coequal goals for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta during a time of rapid environmental change.”

“I look forward to working with Delta Stewardship Council, the Delta Independent Science Board, the staff of the Delta Science Program, and stakeholders to provide state-of-the-art independent science in support of the Delta Plan,” Dr. Larsen said. “This is a critical time for management of water in California, and science needs are more pressing than ever. I plan to build on some excellent initiatives established by my predecessor to maintain reliable funding for science research that anticipates future needs and to get a better grasp of the social-ecological interactions and feedbacks that impact the Delta.”

“Coequal goals” means the two goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place.”

– CA Water Code §85054

Dr. Larsen's appointment was the result of a nationwide search and is effective September 1, 2020. She replaces Dr. John Callaway, an internationally recognized expert in wetland restoration, specifically wetland plant ecology and sediment dynamics. He resumes his duties as a professor in the Department of Environmental Science at the University of San Francisco after serving one term in the post of lead scientist.

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About the Council

Created by the legislature in 2009, the Delta Stewardship Council is composed of members who represent different parts of the state and offer diverse expertise in fields such as agriculture, science, the environment, and public service. Of the seven, four are appointed by the Governor, one each by the Senate and Assembly, and the seventh is the Chair of the Delta Protection Commission. For more information visit <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/>.