

DELTA CHANNELS

Navigating the news about Delta policy, planning and research
for the clean water community

Program Updates

(Follow the arrows → to opportunities for stakeholder input!)

Delta Vision

Where are they now? The 3rd draft of the implementation plan (Strategic Plan) for the Delta Vision was released on August 14, 2008 http://www.deltavision.ca.gov/StrategicPlanningProcess/StaffDraft/DV_SP_Third_Staff_Draft.pdf. **Strategy 5** in the 3rd draft concerns water quality: "Improve water quality for drinking water, agriculture, and the ecosystem". This draft proposes a numeric water quality target as one of the performance measures for Strategy 5:

"...(increase) The percentage of time that ambient levels of 3 mg/L TOC and 50 µg/L bromide or better are achieved at drinking water intakes (or other applicable standards, whichever are more stringent)."

Key elements in Strategy 5 related to water quality include:

- By 2012, the SWRCB and CVRWQCB should develop water quality objectives for Central Valley rivers, tributaries, and the Delta for priority constituents (including nutrients, mercury, and selenium) that are fully protect beneficial uses.
- By 2010, the SWRCB shall set goals for infiltration or direct use of urban storm water runoff throughout the Delta Watershed and export areas.
- By 2013, the CVRWQCB should complete source control elements of the Water Boards Bay-Delta Strategic Workplan, clear the backlog of expired permits, and conduct all necessary oversight.
- Annually through 2013 and as needed after that, the SWRCB, DWR, USEPA, and USD should provide financial assistance (loans and grants) for local government and individuals to help achieve Delta water quality objectives.
- Increase SWRCB and RWQCB staff resources for source control program implementation (30-40 staff)
- Require and fund a study of source control resource needs, then provide funding for financial assistance programs for the State's share of necessary stormwater management, agricultural drainage management, wastewater treatment, and other source control projects.
- By 2015, local water agencies must double the current percent of treated urban effluent that is captured and reused.

CVCWA's comments and other public comments on the 3rd draft of the Plan, as well as public comments on previous drafts, are at <http://deltavision.ca.gov/StrategicPlanningDocumentsandComments.shtml>.

What's Next? → The next meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force is September 18-19th (webcast link at <http://deltavision.ca.gov/DeltaVisionMeetingMaterials.shtml>). The final draft of the Strategic Plan will be submitted to the Governor in October 2008, followed by a report to the Governor and Legislature in December 2008.

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)

Cadmium Criteria. SWRCB staff are proposing an amendment to the Policy for Implementation of Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California to establish water quality objectives for cadmium and related implementation methods (Proposed Amendment). Based on USEPA's 2001 revised cadmium criteria guidance, the changes may include revised saltwater objectives and hardness-based equations solely for freshwater objectives. New slopes for the hardness-based formulae in the USEPA 2001 update resulted from the inclusion of data for 12 more genera (for the acute criterion) and 4 more genera (for the chronic criterion) than were used in the 1995 USEPA update of Cd criteria.

→ **Public Scoping Meeting:** A CEQA scoping meeting for the Proposed Amendment will be held on Monday, October 6, 2008 (10:00AM) at the Cal/EPA Headquarters Building in Sacramento.

→ **Written Comments:** Written comments, limited to identifying the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and potential significant environmental effects to be analyzed, are due 12 PM on October 23, 2008

Links: SWRCB announcement:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/state_implementation_policy/docs/notice_ceqa_cadmium.pdf
USEPA 2001 Cadmium update website: <http://epa.gov/waterscience/criteria/cadmium/>

Review of the 2006 Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary

The SWRCB is beginning its periodic review of the 2006 Bay-Delta Plan, as required by state and federal law.

An informal Public Workshop on Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2008 (10:00 AM) at the Cal-EPA Building in Sacramento will formally begin the review process. Southern Delta salinity and San Joaquin River flow objectives are being reviewed in a separate SWRCB process and will not be a focus the Oct. 8 workshop.

→ **Written comments,** limited to a description of the plan elements that should be amended or added, with brief explanatory statements, may be submitted to the SWRCB in advance of the workshop, preferably by 12 Noon on Wed. Oct 1, 2008.

→ **Oral presentations** summarizing and supplementing the written submissions may be given at the workshop.

SWRCB request for written input and upcoming fact-finding hearings on critical factual issues concerning the Delta

One of the elements of the SWRCB Strategic Workplan for the Bay-Delta was a comprehensive review of the Bay-Delta Plan, water rights, and other requirements to protect fish, wildlife, and the public trust. As part of this review, the SWRCB is holding **evidentiary hearings in November 2008** (with sworn testimony and cross examination) on critical factual issues concerning at a minimum the following six issues: (1) sources of salt to the estuary, (2) biological impacts of constant or variable salinity on fisheries, (3) biological benefits (if any) of fish screens in the legal Delta (4) biological impacts of ammonia discharges (5) biological impacts of non-NH₃ toxic substances, (6) biological impacts of net outflow objectives.

- ▶ **Written input** (10 pages or less) listing and summarizing well-documented, data-based scientific studies on pertinent issues – and/or – input on which issues not identified above should be included in the hearings, are due on September 29, 2008 (electronic submission to commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov w. subject "Bay-Delta Fact Finding Issues")

Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

The CVRWQCB is holding a scoping meeting/outreach session on September 30, 2008, in Rancho Cordova, related to the development of a Delta Regional Monitoring Program. The meeting is designed, in part, to engage management-level personnel from key stakeholder agencies.

Forum In Focus: CALFED

****NOTE:** The Blue Ribbon Task Force Delta Vision Report (Jan. 2008) identified CALFED as the appropriate entity to organize and lead the assessment of a dual conveyance system (through-Delta plus an isolated conveyance) incorporating water supply reliability, seismic and flood durability, ecosystem health and resilience and water quality.**

CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) <http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erp/default.asp>

Background: CALFED projects are carried out by 13 state and federal implementing agencies. The CALFED process was launched by the Bay-Delta Accords in 1994, and was formalized by the CALFED Record of Decision (ROD) in 2000. Since 2000, CALFED's resource management efforts have been organized around four broad objectives: (1) Water Supply Reliability, (2) Water Quality, (3) Ecosystem Restoration, and (4) Levee System Integrity (<http://www.calwater.ca.gov/calfed/objectives/index.html>). Performance and governance concerns led Gov. Schwarzenegger to call for independent review of CALFED in 2005, led by the Little Hoover Commission (<http://www.lhc.ca.gov/>). A helpful primer on CALFED history and CALFED's Bay-Delta Program can be found at: <http://www.calwater.ca.gov/calfed/about/History/Detailed.html>. In August 2008, **ERP** released its **Draft Conservation Strategy for Stage 2 Implementation** for the Delta/Suisun Marsh/Bay Planning area (Draft Strategy) <http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=6501>. **Water and sediment quality constitute Goal 6** of the Draft Strategy. Although several numeric targets are specified in the Draft Strategy for fish and bird abundances, and acreage of restored habitat, the only explicit numeric water quality target specified in the Draft Strategy is for dissolved oxygen in anadromous fish corridors (> 5 mg/L). Otherwise, targets for reducing loading, concentrations, bioaccumulation of contaminants are labeled as "TBD by State & Regional WQCB efforts". As has been true in recent planning documents from other forums, the (untested) hypothesis that phytoplankton bloom formation in the Delta (diatoms in particular) is hindered by ammonium concentrations appears in several places in the Draft Strategy.

The **Delta Regional Ecosystem Restoration Implementation Plan (DRERIP)** <http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erpdeltaplan/> is one of four regional plans intended to guide ERP. The other regional plans are for (1) Suisun Marsh & San Francisco Bay, (2) Sacramento Valley, and (3) the San Joaquin Valley. An electronic chronicle of early stages of the DRERIP process may be found at http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/erpdeltaplan/science_process.asp. In January 2008, "Phase 2" of the DRERIP process resulted in **nine conceptual models** dealing with the following ecosystem components or stressors: (1) aquatic vegetation, (2) chemical stressors, (3) fish habitat, (4) floodplain, (5) mercury, (6) pyrethroids, (7) sediment, (8) selenium, and (9) tidal marsh (http://www.science.calwater.ca.gov/drerip/drerip_index.html). The DRERIP model for chemical stressors was authored by Inge Werner (UC Davis), Susan Anderson (Independent Consultant), Karen Larsen (CVRWQCB), and John Oran (San Francisco Estuary Institute).

Connections to Other Planning Forums

Delta Vision: The 3rd Draft of the Delta Vision Strategic Plan identifies CALFED programs as vehicles to implement or inform several components of the Delta Vision. For example, the CALFED Science Program and ERP are identified as entities which can develop the strategies for restoring open water tidal embayments in the Delta. CALFED surface storage investigations are referenced as fundamental in the identification and construction of new groundwater storage and conveyance facilities. And, the DRERIP conceptual models were utilized to develop flow targets. The ERP Draft Conservation Strategy was provided to the Delta Vision Task Force on August 19, 2008.

BDCP: The BDCP is using the DRERIP conceptual models to evaluate specific actions being drafted by the various working groups, such as the Other Stressors Conservation Measures Working Group, Conveyance Workgroup, Habitat and Operations Technical Team, and the Habitat Restoration Program Technical Team.

September Meetings

- Sep. 18**CVCWA Delta Team (8:00) & General Meeting (9:30) at Sacramento Regional WWTP
Sep. 19BDCP Steering Committee Meeting & Implementing Structure/Governance Workgroup Meeting
Sep. 18-19(all day) Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force ▶ **includes public comment session**