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Delta Watershed Initiative Network and Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program Updates
May 24, 2017

PROJECT UPDATES

Delta Watershed Initiative Network

The Delta Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) was established by the Conservancy out of recognition that many water quality problems within the Delta have multiple sources and that these problems are best addressed using an integrated approach at the watershed level. Delta WIN continues to reach out to watershed organizations to provide technical input, assist with standardized protocols, and conduct water quality monitoring.

Delta WIN is focusing on four main areas:

Coordinate Water Quality Monitoring: The Conservancy coordinates with organizations to monitor water quality using standardized protocols.

Implementation of Best Management Practices: Conservancy staff is working with state agencies and local organizations to identify and secure funding for the implementation of best management practices to reduce pollutant runoff.

Data and Information Access: Partnering with multiple organizations, the Conservancy has successfully established a data repository clearinghouse for water quality data collected by multiple programs. This effort developed a road map to make the regional data publically available to allow comprehensive datasets to be used to address management questions within the watershed.

Environmental Stewardship: The Conservancy coordinates and supports a wide range of environmental stewardship initiatives including waterway clean ups that track trash pickup and providing public education and citizen water quality monitoring opportunities.

The Delta WIN works collaboratively on efforts to improve water quality, increase the use of the data across various programs, and encourage the use of standardized metrics to enhance information sharing.

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Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program

The Delta MERP is a multi-year effort to reduce human exposure to mercury from eating fish from the Delta. While fish is a highly nutritious food and an important part of a healthy diet, many types of fish caught in the Delta and other California water bodies contain mercury, a harmful chemical. To protect the public's health, fish consumption advisories have been issued by OEHHA for the Delta. These advisories provide guidance on the specific types and amounts of Delta fish that can be safely eaten.

The objective of the Delta MERP is to work with affected communities to design and implement culturally-relevant activities and materials that raise awareness and understanding to reduce risks of harm from mercury. Due to the fact that it will take many years to lower mercury levels in fish, the Delta MERP encourages actions that will reduce mercury exposure to people. The Delta MERP activities include:

- A small grants program to fund community-based projects within affected populations;
- Development and distribution of multilingual educational materials;
- Outreach & training to raise awareness and understanding of fish contamination issues;
- Coordination with Delta organizations to include fish contamination messages in their programs; and
- Meetings with a community stakeholder group to gain input on project activities.

Conservancy staff and partnering agencies encourage community-based organizations, tribes, fish consumers, anglers, fishing organizations, and local agencies that have an interest in fish contamination issues in the Delta to participate in the Delta MERP. The program is funded by State agencies, wastewater dischargers, and local storm water agencies in the Delta.

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