



**EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**  
**October 28, 2020**

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**PROGRAM UPDATE**

**STAFFING UPDATE**

Please welcome Dr. Sarah Lesmeister, our newly hired Environmental Program Manager. Sarah will oversee ecological and community programs such as Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 projects, supervise Conservancy staff, lead special projects, and formulate policies and procedures relevant to the Conservancy's mission. Sarah has worked in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for 13 years, focused primarily on water quality, nutrients, pesticides and lower trophic organisms. Prior to coming to the Conservancy, Sarah was with the California Department of Water Resources as the Chief of the Environmental Monitoring Program and was an active member of the Inter-agency Ecological Program's Science Management Team. Sarah started with the Conservancy on October 12, 2020.

**COVID-19 UPDATE**

All Conservancy staff continue to work from home with the expectation that this will continue until a vaccine is approved. Staff have done an excellent job adapting to our new reality and continue to be very productive with only minor disruptions in our workflow. We are currently conducting virtual project site visits for both the Proposition 1 and 68 programs. Larry Hughes who volunteered to be our designated Contact Tracer, has officially been assigned to a six-month deployment.

**JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (JEDI)**

The Conservancy has formed a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee. The Committee is comprised of all staff and is co-chaired by two staff who will facilitate an on-going effort to increase staff knowledge and understanding of JEDI issues and explore how the Conservancy can improve its practices, both internally and externally. All staff have completed implicit bias training and participated in a subsequent discussion. Next steps will include development of a JEDI curriculum for in-house learning, as well as a series of brown bag lunches to provide staff an opportunity to discuss selected topics and learn from one another.

**ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAM**

**Nutria Eradication:**

Please see the end of this report for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's October 2020 update for the Nutria Program. Valerie Cook from California Department of Fish and Wildlife will provide an update for the program under Agenda Item 8.

**Delta Subsidence and Carbon Emissions:**

The Conservancy continues to develop pilot projects and support land owners in their efforts to explore carbon market opportunities. We are excited to announce that the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Offset Protocol Taskforce has recommended that CARB conduct additional review for

potential implementation of the American Carbon Registry protocol for Delta wetlands in to the AB 32 Compliance Offsets Program. This is significant because, if adopted, it would make carbon incentives equivalent to the value of the commodities currently grown in the deeply subsided regions of the Delta. Both the Administration's recently finalized Water Resilience Portfolio and the Governor's Executive Order N-82-20 setting a goal to conserve 30 percent of the State's land and coastal water by 2030, are strong drivers supporting the Conservancy's efforts to develop compelling economic incentives to address subsidence and carbon emissions in the Delta.

## **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

### **Delta Marketing:**

Through an interagency agreement, staff have been working with the Delta Protection Commission (Commission) to implement elements of the Five-Year Delta Marketing Plan and the Delta Sign Plan, which was a recommendation in the Marketing Plan. Obtaining the 11 encroachment permits for the "Welcome to the Delta" signs proposed in the Delta Sign Plan has been a challenge because this type of signage was not addressed anywhere in the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD). Staff from the Conservancy, Commission, and Caltrans met multiple times and determined the best route forward was to merge the "Welcome to the Delta" signs with National Heritage Area efforts, and request that the CA MUTCD to be amended to include signage for National Heritage Areas. The project team worked with Caltrans to create draft signs and will present this request to the California Traffic Control Devices Committee at their November 5, 2020 meeting.

### **DELTA SCIENCE**

Conservancy staff continue to work collaboratively with the broader Delta science community to advance science in the region. On September 9, 2020, staff participated in the Science Needs Assessment Workshop organized by the Delta Stewardship Council. The workshop's aim was to refine a list of key Delta ecosystem management questions (more than 1,100 questions to start) and use this refined list to guide Delta science actions over the next five years. In contrast to this list of short-term science actions, the Science Needs Assessment Workshop, which staff attended on October 5 – 6, 2020, intended to forecast what the Delta Science Enterprise would need to support the co-equal goals in 20-50 years. The Science Needs Assessment was called for and organized by the Delta Independent Science Board, the Interagency Ecological Program, and the Delta Stewardship Council. Staff provided direct feedback in breakout groups focused on invasive species and science funding.

Conservancy staff are also contributing to the planning of the 2021 Adaptive Management Forum, an effort lead by the Delta Science Program. As part of the planning team, staff have provided input on the Forum's topics, speakers, and structure. The forum will take place in late January and has direct relevance to the adaptive management requirements we make of our grantees.

Conservancy staff facilitate the Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team, which had its third quarter meeting on October 8, 2020. During this meeting, all participating agencies and entities report on active invasive species management projects and activities. Conservancy staff, in coordination with DWR and Delta Stewardship Council staff, organized a panel discussion on Early Detection and Rapid Response to new invasive species.

### BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

1. Supervisor Provenza requested that the Conservancy consider providing teleworking opportunities geared toward reducing our carbon footprint as staff transition back to an office environment.
  - The State and the Conservancy will be exploring our teleworking policies relative to our experiences related to COVID response.
2. Chair Mitchoff requested that Proposition 68 Grant Program staff reports include geographic locations of the projects, and Board Member Almy requested identification of disadvantaged community project sites.
  - A map showing the location of the Proposition 68 proposed projects is included in update under Agenda Item 7.
3. The Board would like to be updated on the status of the Proposition 1 grant for the Restoration Planning at River Garden Farms project, which has overlap with a DWR project.
  - There has been no resolution of this issue to date. Staff continue to work to bring DWR and the grant recipient together to resolve the issue.
4. Board members would like to see some projects sites virtually.
  - A request to produce video site tours of completed projects and projects under construction has gone out to grant recipients. We hope to have some videos to share at the January Board meeting.
5. Vice Chair Winternitz requested that staff continue to provide the Board with Delta Carbon Management updates.
  - Please see Delta Subsidence and Carbon Emissions update above.

### DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Agenda Item 5 (Attachment 2): Budget and Expenditure Report

### CORRESPONDENCE

None

### CONTACT

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## Nutria Eradication Program Update

### Field Update

Since March 2018, the nutria eradication efforts in California have:

- Completed full and/or rapid assessments on over 990 K acres
- Executed entry permits with over 3,300 landowners
- Set up 2,834 camera stations (>500 currently active as we initiate work in new management units)
  - Conducted 18,813 camera checks
- Confirmed nutria within 413 sites
- Deployed 4,141 trap sets for a total of 51,691 trap nights
- Taken or accounted for the take of 1,816 nutria (since Mar 2017)
  - Merced- 1,189
  - Stanislaus- 511
  - San Joaquin- 102
  - Mariposa- 12
  - Fresno- 2

Of 1,769 necropsies, the data has shown:

- 1.17 sex ratio (M:F)
- Of the females captured:
  - 23% of juvenile (2-6 mos.) females have been pregnant
  - 60% of subadult (6-14 mos.) females have been pregnant
  - 69% of adult (>14 months of age) females have been pregnant
- 1974 fetal nutria have been documented
- Litter size ranged from 1-13, with an average of 5.7
  - Average litter size for adult females (> 14 mos.) in California is 6.4