



**Executive Officer's Report
May 26, 2021**

PROGRAM UPDATE

COVID-19 UPDATE

All Conservancy staff continue to work from home; however, planning is in process for a phased approach to resuming in-office operations. As state-level direction is issued and local health directives evolve, the Conservancy will adapt accordingly. Staff did an excellent job adapting to exclusively teleworking; once work in the office resumes, teleworking will remain an option in the Conservancy's operational model.

JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (JEDI)

The Conservancy's Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee continues to facilitate collaborative learning discussions for all Conservancy staff. Recent topics include disability accessibility, gender identity, and inclusive language. In addition to the collaborative learning sessions, staff are finalizing a workplan for JEDI related activities. Conservancy staff continue to engage other state agencies in discussions about best practices and JEDI outreach. An overview of these efforts will be provided as Agenda Item 9.

DELTA CONSERVANCY STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The Conservancy staff continue to develop the 2022 to 2027 Strategic Plan. Staff have held several work sessions to provide input on goals and objectives and will present an initial draft for Board consideration at the July 2021 meeting.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROGRAM

Nutria Eradication:

Please see the most recent update from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) included in this agenda item (Attachment 2).

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 Delta Tourism Awareness 5-Year Marketing Plan and the Delta Sign Plan, which was a recommendation in the Marketing Plan. Commission staff are now working to re-file applications for the 11 encroachment permits for the "Welcome to the Delta" signs proposed in the Delta Sign Plan. The signs have been ordered through the California Prison Industry Authority, and the project team was able to order four extra signs in case any of the installed signs are damaged in the future. Upon receipt of the encroachment permits and signs, the Commission will contract with the California Conservation Corps for installation.

Conservancy staff is working with Commission staff to host a free Delta Marketing Workshop Series for small business owners in the Delta. The workshops are once monthly from April through July, and each workshop focuses on a different marketing activity. Ten Delta stakeholders attended the first virtual workshop on April 29 to discuss websites. The future workshops will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on May 27, June 24, and July 29, and will focus on social media, in-person marketing, and various other marketing topics.

DELTA SCIENCE

Fish Friendly Farming:

The Conservancy, supported by funding from the California State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB), has contracted the California Land Stewardship Institute (CLSI) to implement the Fish Friendly Farming (FFF) Program. The FFF Program works with farmers to improve Delta water quality by developing best management practices and identifying needed farm infrastructure updates. The SWRCB approved the FFF Program as an alternative compliance pathway for the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program, which is an added benefit for farmers who participate in the program. CLSI organized two informational webinars, held via Zoom, on March 11 and 25, 2021. Though they were advertised broadly, 11 farmers attended across the two webinars. This wasn't entirely unanticipated, as digital communication, though required due to COVID-19, was not thought to be the best way to engage with the target stakeholders in the farming community. CLSI has been working with the five Delta counties' Farm Bureaus to set up many, small in person meetings after the harvest has finished and COVID-19 vaccinations are widespread.

Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory:

The Conservancy, supported by funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has contracted the Aquatic Science Center (ASC) to develop a Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory (DARI). The DARI project is developing a comprehensive resource inventory specifically formulated with the Delta's unique ecology in mind. This contract was recently extended from June 30, 2020 to March 31, 2022. This time extension does not impact the project budget and allows the time necessary to gather and integrate digital feedback on the DARI geospatial dataset. This spring, ASC will host virtual workshops to solicit feedback on the dataset from the working group and begin incorporating feedback into a finalized dataset that will be integrated into the EcoAtlas online interface.

Delta Science Coordination:

Conservancy staff continue to work collaboratively with the broader Delta science community to advance science in the region. Conservancy staff continue to coordinate with colleagues at the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) around regional restoration planning and a role for public participation in the restoration planning process. Recent coordination meetings took place on April 28, 2021 and May 19, 2021.

Staff continue to facilitate the Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team. A working group of DIISC Team members produced a poster for the Bay-Delta Science Conference laying out a draft framework for early detection and rapid response to invasive species in the Delta (see below). This working group has opted to continue to meet and develop a draft early detection and rapid respond plan for the Delta. The next DIISC Team quarterly meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2021.

Conservancy staff have been participating in the development of the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda update. The Science Action Agenda lays out the high-level science goals and actions over a five-year period. As part of this update process, the Council recently released draft findings from a progress summary of the 2017-2021 Science Action Agenda. Staff responded to a request from the Council providing information on the ways Conservancy projects had contributed to the goals of the 2017-2021 Science Action Agenda. Additionally, staff responded to a survey giving feedback on the draft assessment. The draft assessment can be read here:

<https://scienceactionagenda.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/SAA-Progress-Summary.pdf>.

Eleventh Biannual Bay-Delta Science Conference:

The eleventh biannual Bay-Delta Science Conference took place April 6-9, 2021. The conference was fully virtual, and registration was free, allowing Conservancy staff to attend based on their availability and interest in topics. This year's theme was "Building Resilience through Diversity in Science." Staff who attended the plenary sessions reported feeling energized around the important goals of increasing human diversity in the Bay-Delta science community and preserving the biological and cultural diversity of the Bay-Delta region. Conservancy staff contributed significantly to the conference.

Presentations involving Delta Conservancy Staff:

- Steve Deverel (Hydrofocus), Campbell Ingram, and Rodd Kelsey (The Nature Conservancy). 2021. Integration of Science and Implementation for Land-use Change for Increased Sustainability. Oral presentation to the Bay-Delta Science Conference.
- Aaron Haiman, Chelle Temple-King, and Sarah Lesmeister. 2021. Bridging Delta working lands, ecosystem restoration, and conservation: Highlighting a role of the Delta Conservancy. Poster presentation to the Bay-Delta Science Conference.
- Dylan P. Moore, Robyn Krock, and Sarah Lesmeister. 2021. Community and Economic Enhancement Grant Program (CEEGP). Poster presentation to the Bay-Delta Science Conference.
- Rachel D. Wigginton, Elizabeth Brusati (California Department of Fish and Wildlife), Rachael Klopfenstein (Delta Stewardship Council), and Nicholas Rasmussen (California Department of Water Resources). 2021. Who you gonna' call? A draft framework for early detection and rapid response to invasion in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Poster presentation to the Bay-Delta Science Conference.

Please contact Rachel Wigginton (rachel.wigginton@deltaconservancy.ca.gov) if you would like a PDF of one of these posters emailed to you.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

- 1) Board members requested a process to receive final reports for completed projects.
 - Staff shared final reports via email with Board members that requested reports. Reports may be requested through an email to prop1grants@deltaconservancy.ca.gov or by calling (916) 375-2084.
- 2) Board members requested the status of projects (active projects, active proposals etc.) be identified on the Proposition 68 map.
 - Staff incorporated project status on the map, which is included as part of Agenda Item 7.

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Agenda Item 5 (Attachment 3): Budget and Expenditure Report

CORRESPONDENCE

None

CONTACT

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