



Executive Officer's Report July 28, 2021

PROGRAM UPDATE

STAFFING UPDATE

Sadly, we must say goodbye to three staff members this summer. Aleesah Herup was with the Conservancy for 3 years on our Administration team, serving as Contracts Analyst, Communications Analyst, and Chief Information Officer. Aleesah has accepted a Community Development Director position at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada, and will be relocating to Reno, Nevada. Her last day with the Conservancy was July 23. Dylan Moore has been with the Conservancy for two years working on the Proposition 68 program and most, recently, has been the co-chair of our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. She has been accepted to the UC Davis, Community Development Graduate Program; her last day with the Conservancy will be August 16. Aaron Haiman has been with the Conservancy for five years and serves as the Conservancy's lead for the Proposition 1 program. Aaron has accepted a promotion to a Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) position with the Wildlife Conservation Board. His last day with the Conservancy was July 22. All three of these individuals have made contributions to the Delta and the Conservancy that are too numerous to list; they will all be missed, and we wish them the best in their new endeavors. Staff are actively working to backfill the vacant positions as soon as possible.

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. Conservancy staff continue to engage other state agencies in discussions about best practices and JEDI outreach.

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 core principles, goals, objectives, and metrics and will present an initial draft of those for Board feedback as agenda item 11. Staff will incorporate feedback and develop for Board consideration at the October 2021 meeting a Strategic Plan draft for public comment. Staff will consider all comments and present a final draft for Board consideration in January 2022.

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:

Conservancy staff is working with Delta Protection Commission (Commission) staff to host a free Delta Marketing Workshop Series for small business owners in the Delta. The workshops have been once monthly from April through July, and each workshop has focused on a different marketing activity. The final workshop will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on July 29, and will focus on various marketing topics, including business chambers, guerilla marketing, email campaigns, listing directories, search engines, and more. To register for this workshop, visit <http://delta.ca.gov/calendar/marketing-workshop-4/>. Each workshop has been recorded and the recordings are available on the Commission's website.

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. The 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; they are currently targeting late July or early August as a start date for these smaller meetings.

Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory:

The Conservancy, supported by funding from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 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 summer, ASC will host virtual workshops to solicit stakeholder 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.

Conservancy Funding for Special Projects:

In February 2021, staff worked in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, UC Merced, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, and Point Blue Conservation Science to submit an ambitious proposal, titled Building a sustainable, nature-friendly, carbon-neutral agricultural landscape in the Bay Delta, to the Delta Stewardship Council's (Council) 2021 Delta Science funding call. In June, the Council sent notice that the proposal was not awarded funding.

On July 6, 2021, Conservancy staff and collaborators from the Aquatic Science Center-San Francisco Estuary Institute (ASC-SFEI) responded to the request for applications to EPA Wetland Program Development Grants. The proposal is titled California Wetland Program Plan, Wetland Monitoring

Workgroup Strategic Plan, and Strategic Capacity Development for the Regional Approach to Wetland Protection. If funded, the project would update California's Wetland Program Plan, a key strategic document used to direct EPA funding in the state. This work would be accomplished with technical support from the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup of the California Water Quality Monitoring Council. The project would also support the updated Wetland Program Plan by establishing a baseline reference for the condition of tidal wetland ecosystems in the Delta region. Without this baseline reference, the net effects of tidal wetland and protection policies and restoration programs will be difficult to assess. This proposed project will leverage the EPA-funded development of the DARI basemap to conduct an ambient survey of tidal wetlands in the Delta using the California Rapid Assessment Method. The total budget for this work is \$643,428.00, with \$482,571.00 coming from the federal government and a 25% match from SFEI-ASC (\$130,8570), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (\$4,000), and the Delta Conservancy (\$26,000 in-kind staff hours). This project budget exceeds the Executive Officers delegated authority and will need action by the Board to accept the funds, should they be awarded.

Delta Science Coordination:

Conservancy staff continue to work collaboratively with the broader Delta science community to advance ecological restoration, invasive species management, and regional science coordination in the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

Conservancy staff also continue to coordinate with colleagues at the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) regarding regional restoration planning and a role for public participation in the restoration planning process. The draft Delta Plan Chapter 4 Ecosystem Amendment will include a recommendation to create a restoration sub-committee of the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC). Council and Conservancy staff have been hosting listening sessions with other DPIIC agencies to understand the role the restoration sub-committee could play in regional restoration planning and facilitating meaningful outreach to the Delta community.

Staff continue to facilitate the Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team. The most recent DIISC Team quarterly meeting took place on June 15, 2021. The meeting brought together eight organizations working to manage invasive species in the Delta and Suisun Marsh. In addition to quarterly round robin, where representatives from the different organizations in attendance report on their recent invasive species related activities, the DIISC Team hosted Dr. Karen McDowell from the San Francisco Estuary Partnership. The Estuary Blueprint (or Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan) is currently being updated, and Dr. McDowell discussed the invasive species relevant portions and asked the group for feedback. The Estuary Blueprint update will be further discussed in agenda item 10.

A group of DIISC Team members has begun meeting to plan the 2021 Delta Invasive Species Symposium (Symposium). The planning team includes members from the Conservancy, the Delta Stewardship Council, the Department of Water Resources, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the NASA Ames Research Center. The Symposium is a nexus for Delta managers, researchers, and decision-makers to meet; share and synthesize information; and communicate best practices and lessons learned. The one-day event will take place in late 2021 and will focus on Early Detection and Rapid Response to new invasions in the Delta.

Conservancy staff have been participating in the development of the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda (SAA) update. The SAA lays out the high-level science goals and actions over a five-year period. As part of this update process, the Council recently released a list of six draft management needs to be addressed by the 2022-2026 SAA update. This short list is a distillation of a collaborative process Conservancy Staff have been participating in during the last year. On July 13-14 a Science Actions workshop sought to identify the scientific investigations needed to support solutions to these key applied needs. Conservancy staff participated in the workshop and provided input on proposed science actions through a pre-workshop survey and participation in breakout group discussions.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

- 1) Board members requested staff provide a link on the Conservancy website for the “Your Delta Your Voice Environmental Justice Community Survey”.
 - Information and a link to the survey are posted on the Conservancy’s home page.
- 2) Board members requested staff provide a link on the Conservancy website for the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee May 26 power point presentation, and that staff continue to report on the integration of JEDI work with the Delta Community.
 - A link to the presentation is posted on the Conservancy website library page.
- 3) Board members requested staff plan a future Conservancy Board meeting at a project location.
 - Staff is eager to take the Board members out to visit projects sites as soon as it is safe to do so. We will explore the potential to hold the October Board meeting in person and off site.

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Agenda Item 6 (3): Budget and Expenditure Report

CORRESPONDENCE

None

CONTACT

Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
campbell.ingram@deltaconservancy.ca.gov
(916) 281-4145