



## **Delta Invasive Species Coordination Update: Overview of Efforts to Streamline Early Detection and Rapid Response to Invasive Species in the Delta Staff Report**

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This agenda item provides an update on the Conservancy's role in facilitating the Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team and the fourth biennial Delta Invasive Species Symposium, which focused on early detection and rapid response to invasive species.

### **DESCRIPTION**

Since 2015, the DIISC Team has planned and facilitated the biennial Delta Invasive Species Symposium (Symposium). The Symposium is a forum for Delta managers, researchers, decision-makers, and stakeholders to meet, share and synthesize information, and communicate best practices and lessons learned. The 2021 symposium focused on early detection and rapid response (EDRR) to invasion. The Department of Interior and the National Invasive Species Council defined EDRR in their [2016 report](#) as, "a coordinated set of actions that aim to find and report, then eradicate potential invasive species before they spread and cause harm." When effectively implemented, EDRR can minimize the impacts of invasive species on ecosystems and decrease long-term costs for invasive species management.

The 2021 Symposium's theme responded to several key science directives. First, the DIISC Team's internal review found EDRR should be a priority in the Delta. A 2020 review by the Delta Independent Science Board titled "[The Science of Non-native Species in a Dynamic Delta](#)," identified the need for coordinated EDRR in the Delta. The draft 2022-2026 Delta Science Action Agenda highlighted EDRR as a key need in the system (3 D on page 7 [here](#)). At the state level, numerous groups and initiatives have highlighted the importance of EDRR, including: the 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan, the 2018 California Biodiversity Initiative, the 2018 California Invasive Species Advisory Committee Invasive Species Summit, the 2020 California Water Resilience Portfolio, and the California Invasive Plant Council and California Landscape Stewardship Network's 2020 white paper, "[Stewarding California's Biodiversity: Early Detection and Rapid Response \(EDRR\) for Invasive Plants](#)".

The Conservancy Senior Scientist led the 2021 Symposium planning team, which worked for seven months to develop the Symposium program. To guide the process, the planning team established five goals for the Symposium: 1) Highlight lessons learned from known EDRR efforts both within and beyond the Delta; 2) Strengthen communication among decision-makers, practitioners, stakeholders, and scientists; 3) Provide information on how to engage and use EDRR; 4) Share information and create awareness around existing EDRR activities in the Delta; and 5) Gather feedback from the broader Delta community on DIISC's draft Delta EDRR framework and coordination table.

The virtual Symposium was attended live by more than 180 individuals, representing over 65 different organizations. The Symposium consisted of an opening session and three themed sessions. The Delta Conservancy's Executive Officer facilitated the opening session of the symposium, which featured

remarks from the Delta Lead Scientist and the former chair of the Delta Independent Science Board. The themed session focused on EDRR lessons learned, successes and setbacks in EDRR, and emerging EDRR tools and challenges. Featured speakers came from the federal government, state agencies, academia, and non-profit groups (goal 2). Talks focused on lessons learned in the Delta and beyond, including a national EDRR perspective from the Executive Officer of the National Invasive Species Council, and overview of the successful EDRR program in the Columbia River Basin, and a report from Southern California describing the role of community scientists in EDRR (goal 1). Before lunch, a panel facilitated by the Delta Stewardship Council's Deputy Executive Officer for Science discussed the challenges of EDRR implementation (goal 3). The final section of the Symposium was an interactive feedback session on the draft Delta EDRR framework and coordination table (goals 4 and 5). The full Symposium agenda and the Symposium recording can be found on the DIISC Team's webpage (<http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/delta-inter-agency-invasive-species-team/>).

The draft Delta EDRR framework and coordination table were developed by a working group of the DIISC Team, which is facilitated by the Conservancy Senior Scientist and every month between December 2020 and August 2021. Within the Delta, numerous groups currently perform EDRR work, but these efforts are largely siloed by species or organizational jurisdiction. Additionally, there are no structures to coordinate actions among existing EDRR programs or analyses highlighting gaps in the Delta's EDRR capacity. The DIISC Team's EDRR working group has developed a draft EDRR framework that defines key terms and processes central to EDRR, presents illustrative examples, and highlights key gaps in the region's EDRR capacity. The draft EDRR coordination table is a first step toward consolidating information about the different EDRR resources in the Delta. The working group used their expert knowledge of the Delta and existing EDRR related activities happening in the region to populate the coordination table and augmented this data with desktop research. The Conservancy Senior Scientist is the lead author for both documents and can be share them with Board Members at their request.

## **BACKGROUND**

The DIISC team was formed in 2013 to provide a venue for the exchange of information, coordination of research and management, and collective leveraging of funding relevant to invasive species management and study relevant to the Delta. To this end, the team has met quarterly since 2015, hosted four research and management symposiums (2015, 2017, 2019, 2021), and maintains a table of relevant research needs. Due to past successes in coordinating regional efforts, the Delta Conservancy was identified as the facilitator of the DIISC Team. This facilitation role includes organizing quarterly DIISC Team meetings, leading strategic planning for the DIISC Team, organizing the planning of the biennial Symposium, and coordinating working group efforts. The Conservancy Senior Scientist currently facilitates the DIISC Team in collaboration with co-chairs from the Department of Water Resources, Delta Stewardship Council, and CA Department of Fish and Wildlife.

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