



Executive Officer's Report July 27, 2022

PROGRAM UPDATE

STAFFING UPDATE

Sadly, we must say our final goodbyes to Debra Kustic. Debra has been an exceptional Deputy Executive Officer and leader in our organization for over five years. Her contributions to the organization and team are far too many to list. She has a wonderful ability to effectively plan and strategize for the future, coach staff (myself included), and keep the trains running on time. Debra's last official day in the office was July 15, 2022, but she will be attending the meeting and there will be an opportunity to sign a going away gift. We wish Debra a long, happy, and well-deserved retirement.

Please welcome Karen Buhr, our new Deputy Executive Officer. Karen will start with the Conservancy on August 15, 2022. She will oversee Conservancy operations and programs. Karen has been the Executive Director of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts for the past twelve years where she has done amazing work increasing capacity and funding levels for RCDs across the state.

Please welcome Maya Garrett, our new Ecological and Community Programs Analyst. Maya started with the Conservancy on July 18, 2022. She will focus on providing project initiation and management of the Conservancy's Community Enhancement Program. Maya comes to us from the State Water Resources Control Board, where she was the lead analyst that oversaw development of programmatic deliverables for the federal and state environmental protection agencies.

Please welcome Anjali (Anji) Shakya, our new Ecological Program Environmental Scientist. Anji started with the Conservancy on July 18, 2022. She will focus on providing project management and close-out of the Conservancy's Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program. Anji comes to us from the University of Michigan where she recently served as a Graduate Student Instructor while completing her Master of Science degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

COVID-19 UPDATE

The Conservancy's Telework Policy has been approved by the Department of General Services and is currently being reviewed by the unions. Once finally approved, the policy supports a generous telework program requiring staff work in the office one day every other week and at other times as operational needs dictate.

IT SERVICES UPDATE

The Delta Conservancy has entered into a \$150,000 interagency agreement with the Department of Water Resources to provide information technology shared services and computer resources. The term of the agreement is from June 30, 2022, to June 30, 2025. We are working to get hybrid meeting equipment set up in the conference room. The setup will enable remote and in-person participants to see and hear each other and the goal is to have it ready for the October Board meeting.

ECOLOGICAL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Nutria Eradication:

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

Delta Drought Response Pilot Program:

The DDRPP continues to monitor efficacy and savings resulting from water conservation practices conducted by the farming operations enrolled in the program. Selection Committee members have been conducting site visits to verify practices, identify appropriate fields for comparison, and get feedback on the practices and Program from grantees. Given ongoing drought conditions, staff have been working with the Department of Water Resources and the Delta Water Master's Office to plan for implementation of the Program again this fall.

Delta Carbon Program:

The Conservancy continues to work with a large partnership to support the development of projects that stop subsidence and related carbon emissions. The Program focusses on converting lands that are currently too wet to farm into permanent managed wetlands and converting dry land farming to rice cultivation. Both practices re-wet the drained agricultural soils and stop the microbial oxidation of the highly organic peat soils that causes subsidence and directly emit CO₂ to the atmosphere. The Governor's May Revise included substantial funding for the Conservancy to support this work. While funds for the Climate and Energy package have been appropriated, the final distribution will be negotiated in the Legislature in August.

DELTA SCIENCE

Fish Friendly Farming:

The Conservancy, supported through a grant 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 in the Delta. An update on the FFF Program will be provided during Agenda Item 13.

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 continue to coordinate with colleagues at the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) regarding regional restoration planning and a role for public participation in this process. The amended Delta Plan Chapter 4 Ecosystem Amendment, adopted by the Council during their June 23, 2022 meeting, includes a recommendation to create a restoration subcommittee of the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC). Initially, the DPIIC restoration subcommittee (subcommittee) has been staffed by the Conservancy and the Council. Since the last subcommittee meeting on March 14, 2022 and the subsequent approval of the subcommittee's goal and objectives by the DPIIC, Conservancy and Council staff has been working to develop a workplan with specific actions that will support the subcommittee's goals and objectives. In addition, Council and Conservancy staff have begun meeting to plan the first Delta Restoration Forum, which would bring together diverse stakeholders and provide a meaningful forum for community participation in restoration efforts. Planning for this effort has just begun, but staff will update the Board as the planning progresses.

Staff continue to facilitate the Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team. The next DIISC Team quarterly meeting will take place on August 9, 2022. As part of California Invasive Species Action Week, Dr. Rachel Wigginton (Senior Environmental Scientist, DIISC Team Facilitator) gave a lunchtime seminar about early detection and rapid response to invasive species in the Delta and the DIISC Team's work to address this issue. The talk can be viewed at this link: <https://youtu.be/oG9KLL4qjQE>.

Staff attended the quarterly meeting of the Interagency Adaptive Management Implementation Team (IAMIT) on June 17, 2022. Conservancy staff provided an update to the IAMIT on the activities of the DPIIC restoration subcommittee. The meeting also included a briefing from Council staff on the Delta Plan Chapter Four draft amendment, group reflections on the Council's recent adaptive governance brownbag series, and an update from the Delta Independent Science Board on their recently completed Monitoring Enterprise Review.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

There were no staff directives from the May 25, 2022 meeting.

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Agenda Item 6 (3): Budget and Expenditure Report

CORRESPONDENCE

None

CONTACT

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