



## Executive Officer's Report

July 26, 2023

### PROGRAM UPDATE

#### STAFFING UPDATE

Please welcome Jiantie (Jenny) Hou, our new Fiscal & Board Analyst who started with the Conservancy on June 14<sup>th</sup>. She has worked in accounting and analytics in both China and the United States with her last position in the fiscal section for the California Department of General Services.

#### DELTA DROUGHT RESPONSE PILOT PROGRAM (DDRPP) UPDATE

Conservancy staff continue to verify and evaluate outcomes from water conservation practices implemented by the 61 DDRPP grantees during the 2023 water year. The DDRPP 2023 Oversight Committee, co-chaired by staff from the Conservancy and the Office of the Delta Watermaster, has been meeting regularly to build on insights from last year's report and to update the analysis methodology for this year. Site visits to verify water-saving practices and to ensure an open line of communication with grantees are in progress and will be completed by the close of the 2023 water year. Through the Conservancy's interagency agreement with UC Davis, installation of eddy covariance systems at six DDRPP sites began in June. Installation is expected to be completed by the end of this month. Measurements collected by this equipment will help to "ground truth" the satellite-based evapotranspiration estimates provided by OpenET. Agenda Item 12 of this Board meeting presents an amendment request for the six DDRPP sites that have been selected to host this equipment.

#### DELTA CONSERVANCY FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION UPDATES

The Conservancy received a one-time General Fund allocation of \$6,000,000 for wildfire prevention. Staff are in the initial phase of exploring how best to deploy this funding to reduce wildfire-related water quality impacts to the Delta. We anticipate bringing a solicitation notice to the Board in early 2024. The Nature Based Solutions allocation included in the May revise was eliminated. All baseline funding for facilities and operations remains.

#### NUTRIA ERADICATION

Please see the most recent update from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife included in this agenda item. A more detailed update will be provided during Agenda Item 13 of this Board meeting.

## **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. A total of 10,752 acres of farmland has been enrolled in the Delta FFF Program. A contract is now in place to implement the second water quality improvement project recommended by the FFF Technical Advisory Committee. The project, which is located on 3D Farms on Roberts Island in the southern Delta, will reduce pesticide drift by installing a tree windbreak and reduce return flows by providing cost-share on installation of water conserving irrigation. This project will improve water quality by reducing transport of chemicals off-site and into nearby waterways. The Delta FFF Technical Advisory Committee met on April 10, 2023 to discuss the best management practices that will be included in the farm plans for the enrolled properties, and this feedback is being used to finalize the farm plans for all enrolled areas. Site visits and enrollment certification will take place over the next six months.

### **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 work to co-lead the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) restoration subcommittee (subcommittee) with colleagues from the Delta Stewardship Council. Planning has begun for the second Delta Restoration Forum, currently planned for late fall 2023. This event would build on the first forum in February of this year by providing additional project-specific information to attendees. The planning team, including representatives from the Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, environmental consulting groups, Restore the Delta, and the California Natural Resources Department, met on June 15, 2023 to begin work on this second forum. The next subcommittee meeting will take place on August 17, 2023; information about meeting time and location will be shared over the Stewardship Council and Conservancy listservs once finalized.

The Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team, facilitated by Conservancy staff and co-led by staff from the Delta Stewardship Council, the Department of Water Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, has its third quarterly meeting in August. The DIISCT has been coordinating with the California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC), which advises the Invasive Species Council of California (ISCC). The ISCC represents the highest level of leadership and authority in state government regarding invasive species. Currently, DIISCT members are working to have a Delta site highlighted in CISAC's planned invasive species tours for legislators and funders across the state. The first planning meeting for the 2023 Delta Invasive Species Symposium took place on June 1, 2023. The Symposium is being planned for December of 2023 and will be held as a hybrid event. The planning team is currently working to determine a theme and set the Symposium's exact date and location. Information about past Symposiums can be found [on the Conservancy's website](#). Conservancy staff worked with DIISCT members to promote California Invasive Species Action Week, which was June 3-11, 2023.

The Interagency Adaptive Management Integration Team (IAMIT) met on June 16, 2023. The group was briefed on the 2020-2022 monitoring work performed by UC Davis on Delta Levee Projects sites (Cosumnes River Preserve, Grizzly Slough, McCormack-Williamson Tract, Twitchell Island, Sherman Island, and Dutch Slough). The group also heard an update on the first day of the Adaptive Management Forum, which took place on May 4, 2023 and focused on adaptive governance. Staff attended day one of the Adaptive Management Forum, and day two, which took place on June 27, 2023. Day two focused on breakout group discussions where participants developed long-term, aspirational goals for adaptive governance.

On June 6, 2023, staff met with UC Davis students studying soil evolution for a field trip on Staten Island. Staff presented to students about the work of the Conservancy and the importance of Delta soils and preventing subsidence.

### **MEDIA MENTIONS**

[The Stockton Record](#) covered an event held in May to publicize the recently approved Delta Aquatic Center of Stockton planning project in which the Delta Conservancy is providing up to \$2.5 million.

[The Reporter](#), a news outlet covering Solano County, and [website Contra Costa News](#) covered the groundbreaking for the Pacific Flyway Center. The Delta Conservancy is one of the funding agencies for the Pacific Flyway Center's Walk in the Marsh project.

[The East Bay Times](#) and other Bay Area News Group outlets covered the Conservancy's recent approval of Webb Tract Wetland Mosaic project.

### **BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF**

1. Invite grantee for the nutria eradication project to provide an update on the nutria eradication efforts in the Delta.
  - Valerie Cook from California Department of Fish and Wildlife will be providing an update in Agenda Item 13.
2. Provide the Board with reporting contacts for nutria sightings.
  - This information was put into the chat of the Board meeting, "Suspected observations or potential signs of nutria in California should be photographed and immediately reported to CDFW ONLINE, by email to [Invasives@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Invasives@wildlife.ca.gov), or by calling (866) 440-9530." The Conservancy will bring nutria identification pamphlets to the July Board meeting.

### **DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE**

Agenda Item 6 (2): Budget and Expenditure Report

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Conservancy received communications from a member of the public regarding the Webb Tract Mosaic Landscape project (NBS01). The correspondence requested that Conservancy staff inform Board members of the individual's assertion that islands owned by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) are, "an extension of the state and land held in its name is state-owned land; therefore, a member of the public has the right to access and fish from Bouldin Island, Bacon Island, Holland Island and the Webb Tract (section 25 article I California Constitution)." Conservancy staff are working with MWD staff to address this concern on Webb Tract and other MWD-owned islands in the Delta.

**CONTACT**

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California Department of Fish and Wildlife

### Nutria Eradication Program Update

#### Field Update July 13, 2023

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

1. Completed full and/or rapid assessments on over 1.8 M acres
2. Executed entry permits with 4,600 landowners for over 9,800 parcels in 14 counties
3. Set up 8,427 camera stations (1,392 currently active)
  - o Conducted 72,818 camera checks
4. Detected nutria in 815 sites (40-acre cells)
5. Deployed 9,922 trap sets (414 currently active) for a total of 115,131 trap nights
6. Taken or accounted for the take of 3,582 nutria (since March 2017)
  - o Merced - 2,109
  - o Stanislaus - 970
  - o Fresno - 338
  - o San Joaquin - 110
  - o Solano - 26
  - o Sacramento - 16
  - o Mariposa - 12
  - o Madera - 1 (San Joaquin River; Fresno County line)

Of 3,461 necropsies, the data has shown:

- o 1.14 sex ratio (M:F)
- o Of the females captured:
  - 22% of juvenile (2-6 mos.) females have been pregnant
  - 62% of subadult (6-14 mos.) females have been pregnant
  - 67% of adult (>14 months of age) females have been pregnant
- o 4,066 fetal nutria have been removed from the population
- o Litter size ranged from 1-13, with an average of 5.9
  - Average litter size for adult females (> 14 mos.) in California is 6.4

**Table 1.** The total number of cells with nutria taken, total number of nutria taken, and average number of nutria taken per cell, by year from March 2017 to July 13, 2023.

Year	Total (unique) cells with nutria taken	Total # nutria taken	Average # nutria taken per cell
2017	7	20	2.9
2018	57	348	6.1
2019	73	492	6.7
2020	157	1239	7.9
2021	145	703	4.9
2022	112	579	5.2
2023	54	201	3.7
<b>Total Across Years</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>3582</b>	<b>8.0</b>