



Executive Officer's Report

May 28, 2025

PROGRAM UPDATE

ETHICS TRAINING COMPLIANCE

California law requires state officials to complete an ethics training course within six months of being hired, and if your service is ongoing, once during each two-year period. The two-year period begins with an odd-numbered year, for example, 2025-26. Board Members and Liaison Advisors were sent email requests with details to provide a certificate of completion for the 2025 ethics course.

PROPOSITION 4 GRANT SOLICITATION

Process

Conservancy staff are designing a Proposition 4 grant program that is both efficient and effective. The goal is to fund strong, high-quality projects, given the high demand and limited availability of funding. Staff aim to ensure these funds support projects that can make a meaningful impact.

To create a grant program that meets community needs, staff have used their deep experience in grant management and conducted extensive outreach. This has included meetings with multiple state agencies, participation in California Natural Resources Agency-wide planning calls, conversations with over 25 partner organizations, and a public survey that received 41 responses, as of May 20.

Overview

Staff plan to release a grant solicitation in July. Each program, Nature Based Solutions, Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation, and Community Enhancement, will receive approximately \$8.6 million. Staff expect to run two solicitations for each program, \$5 million per program in 2025–2026 and \$3.6 million per program in 2026–2027.

Each solicitation will include two rounds of review:

1. **Pre-application:** This initial step will help staff identify projects that are ineligible, not ready, or not competitive. It will be a pass/fail process.
2. **Full application:** Projects that pass the pre-application stage will be invited to submit a full

proposal. These proposals will be reviewed and scored competitively based on the following criteria: project readiness, scientific or community value, community support, geographic balance, cost share, service to disadvantaged or vulnerable communities, partnerships, tribal involvement, cost-effectiveness, alignment with state and Delta goals, long-term maintenance and sustainability, and likelihood a planning project leads to implementation.

Conservancy staff anticipate bringing initial recommendations for funding starting in March 2026.

Small Grant Program

In addition, staff anticipate launching a small grant program for awards up to \$100,000. This program is intended to support smaller organizations by building their capacity and providing technical assistance. Funds can be used for various purposes, including staffing, technical support, equipment, and research.

DELTA DROUGHT RESPONSE PILOT PROGRAM (DDRPP) UPDATE

The six DDRPP grantees currently hosting micrometeorological equipment on their project sites continue to implement water conservation practices as part of the Delta Conservancy's interagency agreement with the University of California, Davis (UC Davis). Monitoring by the UC Davis research team and collection of micrometeorological and soil data from these six sites will continue through September 2026. An amendment to this agreement will be considered by the Board (see Agenda Item 9).

DELTA CONSERVANCY FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET APPROPRIATION UPDATES

A verbal update will be provided about the Governor's May Revise.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Staff completed CalHR Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Plain Language training. The Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Subcontracting Report, Implementation Plan, and State Agency Waste Management Annual Report were submitted. Staff submitted their annual Form 700s. Staff worked with the Department of Finance and California Natural Resources Agency on the fiscal year 2025/26 budget, including setting up the new Proposition 4 appropriation. Rachel Lane, Environmental Scientist (ES), separated from state service in February to accept a position in the North Bay Area closer to her home. The Conservancy hired Lauren Damon for a second limited-term position as a Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory) in March. Staff processed one new contract, five grant and contract amendments, closed two grants, and processed 118 invoices. The new contract is with the Department of Water Resources for \$157,000 for IT Shared Services from July 2025 to June 2028. The Conservancy's Disability Advisory Committee facilitated an accessibility refresher for Microsoft products for all staff and performed the annual facilities assessment to ensure our office space is physically accessible.

DELTA CONSERVANCY ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING AUTHORITY AND REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) UPDATE

Conservancy staff are pursuing the authority to enter into Architectural and Engineering (A&E) agreements. This authority allows more opportunities in contracting given how few entities can perform the specialized work. The Proposed Action of Regulation was published on January 3, 2025, by

the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). The 45-day comment period ended on February 18, 2025. OAL reviewed the proposed regulation packet this month. They determined the Conservancy needed to make modifications to the regulation text and complete additional requirements. The new proposed regulation will be considered by the Board (see Agenda Item 11).

Conservancy staff are concurrently seeking Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from A&E firms for the Cost Feasibility Analysis for the Restoration of Franks Tract project while completing the regulatory process. The RFQ was posted on Cal eProcure on May 5, 2025. The deadline to submit an SOQ is May 27, 2025. Staff aim to complete both by July.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Conservancy staff partnered with the California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways, the Delta Protection Commission, Solano Resource Conservation District, the Catholic Charities of Stockton, and law enforcement agencies from the five Delta counties to submit a proposal to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Removal Program in January 2025. If awarded, the program would provide funding to support community engagement, education, outreach, removal, monitoring, and prevention of marine debris (e.g., abandoned vessels, vehicles, fishing gear) in the Delta waterways. Staff expect to hear a decision about the status program and the proposal by early fall 2025.

DELTA SCIENCE

Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) Restoration Subcommittee (RSC):

Conservancy staff continue to co-lead the DPIIC RSC with colleagues from the Delta Stewardship Council (Council). The DPIIC RSC held the third Delta Restoration Forum (Forum) on May 1, 2025, at the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse. Over 60 people attended the Forum from various sectors, including State, federal, and local government, consulting firms, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, academia, and local businesses. The Forum included an open house, where over 20 different restoration and habitat enhancement projects were represented, and a session of lightning talks showcasing various topics in Delta restoration, including tribal engagement, funding, and balancing agricultural production with ecological restoration. Numerous Conservancy-funded projects were represented at the Forum and our Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation Projects Supervisor Lauren Damon gave a rapid talk on forthcoming Proposition 4 funding.



Figure 5.1. Photo of attendees at the third Delta Restoration Forum.

Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team

The Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team, facilitated by Conservancy staff and co-led by staff from the Delta Stewardship Council, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the California Department of Water Resources, had its second quarterly meeting of the year on May 21, 2025. In addition to the customary updates from all attending organizations, the team discussed the planning progress for the sixth biennial Delta Invasive Species Symposium, which is tentatively scheduled for December of 2025, and the draft “Quick-Start Guide to Managing Invasive Aquatic Vegetation (IAV) in Tidal Wetland Habitats of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh” being compiled by DIISC Team members. Team members also received an update on the invasive golden mussel [response plan](#), which was released in April 2025, and a briefing on the State Lands Commission’s California ballast water regulations and their relations to the golden mussel introduction and response.

Delta Carbon Team

A newly formed Delta Carbon Team, facilitated by Conservancy staff and co-led by staff from The Nature Conservancy, had its first meeting on May 27, 2025. This team aims to bring people working on Delta carbon issues together to improve collaboration and make progress at scale toward reversing subsidence and reducing associated greenhouse gas emissions within the Delta. The team discussed direction, began establishing goals, and discussed meeting frequency.

OUTREACH

Spring Cleanup

In partnership with the Rio Vista Windsports Association, Conservancy staff organized and held a cleanup at Sherman Island on April 26, 2025, as part of Earth Week. About 30 volunteers filled a 40-yard dumpster, generously donated by Waste Management, with trash that otherwise could have ended up in the Sacramento River. Staff are grateful for the volunteers who braved the rain and donated their time to help beautify the Delta.

California Society for Ecological Restoration

Staff attended the annual conference for the California Society for Ecological Restoration from April 21 to 23, 2025, in Sacramento. Staff co-authored two posters presented at the conference. The poster, "Advancing Ecosystem Restoration Towards a Resilient Delta," was co-authored by Dr. Elizabeth Brusati (Council), Dr. Dylan Chappel (Council), Dr. Rachel Wigginton (Delta Conservancy), Annie Merritt (Council), and Amanda Bohl (Council). The poster, "Developing Guidance for Managing Invasive Aquatic Vegetation in Tidal Wetland Sites," was co-authored by Dr. Elizabeth Brusati and Dr. Rachel Wigginton.

MEDIA MENTIONS

- [The Daily Republic published an article](#) about Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's request for proposals regarding leasing land for rice farming on Webb Tract. The Delta Conservancy is providing funding for this project.
- [KCRA produced a story](#) about the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) using detection dogs to help in the fight against invasive nutria in the Delta. This CDFW-led work is funded by a Delta Conservancy grant.
- [Maven's Notebook featured an article](#) about The Nature Conservancy's plan to turn Staten Island into a carbon sink and rebuild peat as a demonstration of what can be done to combat subsidence and associated greenhouse gas emissions in the Delta. The Delta Conservancy is funding implementation components of this work, with planning funded by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

- Email information about the California Natural Resources Agency meeting on "Implementing the Climate Bond" to all Board members. Meeting links sent on January 23 for both the January 24 and the January 30 meetings.
- Provide more useful information of nutria status in the Delta. Staff requested that the Grantee provide a full presentation update twice a year at Board meetings.

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Agenda Item 5.2: Budget and Expenditure Report

CORRESPONDENCE

- On February 15, the Conservancy received a request for copies of Community Enhancement Grant Program proposals. Staff compiled the proposals and attempted to send them to the requester, but the requester's email account had been disabled.

CONTACT

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