



Executive Officer's Report

January 28, 2026

PROGRAM UPDATE

STAFFING UPDATE

Please welcome Meredith Howard, PhD as the new Ecological and Community Programs Manager, having transferred from the Regional Water Quality Control Boards in October. Sadly, the Conservancy must say goodbye to Brenda Lusk, the Conservancy's Administration Manager. After seven years with the Conservancy, Brenda has moved on to work at the CA Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. Recruitment is underway to backfill the Administration Manager position. The Conservancy must also say goodbye to Rachel Wigginton, PhD, the Senior Environmental Scientist. After five years with the Conservancy, Rachel has been appointed by the Governor to be the Special Assistant for Planning and Science at the Delta Stewardship Council. Recruitment to backfill the Senior Environmental Scientist position will begin soon. The Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation Projects Supervisor limited-term position will be extended for another 12 months starting in March.

FORM 700 COMPLIANCE

The Notices from the Fair Political Practices Commission to complete Form 700, Statement of Economic Interests have been sent to Conservancy Board Members, alternate Board Members, and Liaison Advisors. The final filing deadline is April 1, 2026. Forms are completed on the Fair Political Practices Commission [online portal](#). If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Chelsea Martinez at chelsea.martinez@deltaconservancy.ca.gov.

CLIMATE BOND SOLICITATION (PROPOSITION 4)

The Conservancy has completed its Climate Bond grant solicitation notice, proposal application materials, and comprehensive assessment criteria. Opening the solicitation is still pending. The Legislature did not approve an exemption to the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). The APA sets the requirements for adoption, publication, review, and implementation of regulations by State agencies and affects all departments managing Proposition 4 grants. Prior natural resource agency bonds (e.g. Propositions 68, 84, 50) included language that exempted bonds from the APA, meaning that the development of program guidelines did not need to undergo the formal regulation process through the Office of Administrative Law. The Conservancy is working with California Natural

Resources Agency and other agencies to navigate the emergency rulemaking process as directed by the Legislature. In addition, the Legislature earmarked three projects that are estimated to cost between \$24 million and \$32 million. Given that the Conservancy received \$29 million, it is trying to navigate providing funding for earmarked projects while also funding projects that meet the entire mission of the Conservancy.

Overview

Each program, Nature-Based Solutions, Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation, and Community Enhancement, will receive approximately \$8.6 million. Each solicitation will include two rounds of review: **Concept Proposal:** This initial step will help staff identify projects that are ineligible, not ready, or not competitive. **Full application:** Projects that pass the concept proposal 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, and alignment with state and Delta goals. The highest-ranking projects will be recommended to the Board for funding. It is anticipated that the first set of funding recommendations will be brought to the Board starting in Fall 2026.

Small Grant Program

In addition, a small grant program will be launched 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.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

All staff completed Situational Leadership II training, as well as the annual mandatory IT training courses. The Fair Political Practices Commission approved the Conservancy's updated Conflict of Interest Code, which took effect in December. The System for Award Management (SAM) renewal has been completed. Required reports, including the State Agency Buy Recycle Campaign (SABRC), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) Subcontracting Report, and Contracting Activity Reports (CAR) were submitted, and the Conservancy met its Small Business (SB) and DVBE participation goals, achieving 28.27 percent in both categories. Compliance submissions were completed for Department of General Services (DGS) Reasonable Accommodation requirements, and staff annual performance appraisals were completed. The lease renewal process with DGS was initiated, and several budget drills were completed. In December, CalHR approved the Conservancy's Workforce and Succession Management Plan. In 2025, the Conservancy executed five new grant and contract agreements and 16 amendments, closed two agreements, and processed 309 invoices.

COST FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR THE RESOTORATION OF FRANKS TRACT

As approved by the Board during the July 2025 meeting, the Architectural and Engineering contract for this project was awarded to the most qualified firm, Environmental Science Associates. The agreement was executed on October 27, 2025, and a project kick-off meeting was held in December.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Clean Vessel Act Program

The Conservancy was awarded the 2026 California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways Clean Vessel Act Education and Outreach Program grant. This \$292,600 grant is a continuation of the project activities from 2025 and includes education and outreach to boaters about proper sewage disposal and monitoring of pumpout and dump stations in the San Francisco Bay, Delta, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties.

DELTA DROUGHT RESPONSE PILOT PROGRAM (DDRPP)

The six DDRPP grantees currently hosting micrometeorological equipment on their project sites continue to implement water conservation practices as part of the Conservancy's interagency agreement with the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) at least until the end of the water year in September 2026. The second annual field water budgets were submitted during the November 2025 reporting period, and UC Davis presented the initial results to members of the Delta Measurement Experimentation Consortium on November 20, 2025.

DELTA SCIENCE

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

The Conservancy continues to co-lead the DPIIC RSC with colleagues from the Delta Stewardship Council (Council). The Restoration Subcommittee's work is guided by the [workplan](#). The vision of the DPIIC RSC is a Delta ecosystem that supports the mosaic of natural and human communities, is resilient to stressors, adapts to change, and is accessible for recreation. In 2026, the DPIIC RSC plans to host the fourth Delta Restoration Forum and two Subcommittee meetings.

Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination Team

The Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team is facilitated by the Conservancy and co-led by the Delta Stewardship Council, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and California Department of Water Resources. A detailed update on the 2025 activities of the DIISC Team will be presented during Agenda Item 12.1.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Annual Report

A summary of the Conservancy's [2025 Annual Report](#) will be provided during Agenda Item 9.1.

Coastal Cleanup Day

As part of Coastal Cleanup Day, the Conservancy and the Rio Vista Windsports Association held a cleanup at Sherman Island on September 20, 2025. Volunteers collected trash along a 1.5-mile stretch of the Sacramento River, filling a 40-yard dumpster with trash that would have otherwise ended up in the river.

Sausalito Boat Show

The Conservancy participated in the Sausalito Boat Show September 19-20, 2025, to promote clean and safe boating. With support from the Conservancy's Clean Vessel Act Program, the Conservancy handed out more than 130 free kits for boaters and promoted the Pumpout Nav app, which shows nearby boat sewage disposal facilities.

2025 State of the Estuary Conference

The Conservancy attended the State of the Estuary Conference in Oakland in October and presented a poster, co-authored by Anjali Shakya and Maya Garrett, about the Conservancy's Proposition 4 (Climate Bond) program and hosted a booth to share the important work of the Conservancy with regional scientists, community organizers, students, legislators, resource managers, planners, and others who are working to improve, conserve, and monitor the health of the estuary.

MEDIA MENTIONS

- [Stocktonia](#) produced an article about the ongoing work on the Stockton Maritime Museum, which will showcase a retired Navy minesweeper that is currently being restored. The Conservancy is providing funding for the planning portion of the museum project.
- [Soundings Journal](#) published a video story to preview the Delta Invasive Species Symposium, which was held at the California Natural Resources Agency headquarters on December 4, 2025.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

- None

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Agenda Item 5.2: Budget and Expenditure Report

CORRESPONDENCE

- In December, Deltek submitted a public records request for information about the Cost Feasibility Analysis for the Restoration of Franks Tract solicitation. The Conservancy provided copies of the statement of qualifications evaluations and the awarded contract.

CONTACT

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