



Executive Officer's Report

July 22, 2026

PROGRAM UPDATE

STAFFING UPDATE

Brenda Lusk has returned as the Administration Manager. Chelsea Martinez, our board liaison and contracts analyst, had her last day with the Conservancy on July 5. She had been with the Conservancy since March 2022 and moved to the Department of Justice to be part of a newly formed grant team. Karen Buhr, our Deputy Executive Officer, had her last official day with the Conservancy on July 13. She had been with the Conservancy since August 2022 and left to run the watershed program at Resources Legacy Fund, a philanthropic foundation. Thank you, Chelsea and Karen, for your contributions to the Conservancy over the past four years. Recruitments to backfill both positions have begun. Recruitment is underway to backfill the Senior Environmental Scientist position.

INTRODUCED LEGISLATION

Please note that the Conservancy does not have a position on the following legislation. It is presented for informational purposes.

Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry introduced [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 2216](#), which would expand the Delta Conservancy boundary to include the areas of San Joaquin, Sacramento, Yolo, and Solano counties that are not currently covered by the Legal Delta and Suisun Marsh boundaries. The bill was amended in June to include Lake County and was passed out of the Assembly and was subsequently passed out of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Subcommittee. The bill would allow the Conservancy to support more of the upper watershed with future funding sources.

Senator McNerney introduced [Senate Bill \(SB\) 872](#), as amended in April would establish the Delta Levees and Canal Subsidence Fund in the State Treasury and, upon appropriation, would make the moneys in the fund available to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency for expenditure. As amended in early July, the bill now directs the Conservancy to work with local interests to develop a list of priority projects that would be funded by 15% of future appropriations for Delta levee maintenance and special projects. The bill passed out of the Senate and subsequently passed out of the Assembly Water Parks and Wildlife Subcommittee.

CLIMATE BOND SOLICITATION (PROPOSITION 4)

Under Agenda Item 12, the Board will consider updates to the Conservancy's General Grant Guidelines. Agenda Item 13 contains two Solicitation Notices for the Board's consideration: the Delta Community, Environment, and Climate Grant Program and the Delta Conservancy Small Grant Program.

The Solicitation Notices will be publicly released once an exemption to the Administrative Procedures Act is approved through Assembly Bill 35 and upon appropriation of fiscal year 2026/2027 Climate Bond funding. Conservancy staff anticipate these requirements happening to allow the public release in August or September 2026.

The Rice Program, funded by the Proposition 4 Climate Bond, is currently underway and staff are reviewing concept proposals. The full proposals are due on October 30, 2026, and staff anticipate seeking the Board's approval on funding projects at the March Board Meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

The Conservancy worked together to meet all fiscal year-end due dates for budgeting and invoice processing, which were throughout the month of June. The State Agency Annual Report (SARC) was submitted in April. As of June 2026, for fiscal year 2025-2026, the Conservancy has executed 16 grant and contract amendments, nine agreements have been successfully completed, and 293 invoices have been processed. Ten new computers were procured to replace outdated hardware. We are continuing to work with the Department of General Services to identify and secure new office space. Our lease expires in September 2027.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

On April 13, Conservancy staff applied for a Wetland Program Development Grant from EPA Region 9 with collaborators that include the San Francisco Estuary Institute, Delta Stewardship Council, and Department of Water Resources. The proposed project is to develop a Delta Dashboard to centralize the tracking and visualization of wetland restoration and greenhouse gas emissions. The grant program is highly competitive, and the proposal was not funded. Staff and the project team will seek additional funding sources for the Project.

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

On May 15, Conservancy staff submitted a concept proposal for a block grant from the CDFA Healthy Soils Program (HSP). The project goal is to support adoption of climate-smart farming systems, including rice conversion that rebuilds soil elevation, reduces long-term flood risk, and improves farm resilience. The Conservancy was not invited to submit a full proposal due to existing Climate Bond investments in the Delta and statewide requests that exceed available funding.

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

On May 15, Conservancy staff submitted a concept proposal for a block grant from the CDFA State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP). The project goal is to lower energy demand by reducing energy use and operating costs for Delta farmers through energy-efficient irrigation and

expanded solar adoption. The Conservancy was not invited to submit a full proposal due to existing Climate Bond investments in the Delta and statewide requests that exceed available funding.

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) until the end of the water year in September 2026. The Conservancy continues to collaborate with partners from UC Davis, Office of the Delta Watermaster, OpenET, Department of Water Resources, and the Delta Stewardship Council to evaluate irrigation practices from the information collected through this program.

COST FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS FOR THE RESTORATION OF FRANKS TRACT

A contract with Environmental Science Associates (ESA) was executed in October 2025 to conduct a Cost Feasibility Analysis for the Restoration of Franks Tract Project. This contract is for one year, and the goals are to engage in a collaborative, structured decision-making process to refine the Franks Tract Futures Project and conduct value engineering to refine and prepare new cost estimates for the Project. ESA has reconvened both the Steering and Advisory Committees, and the Steering Committee met on May 7 to discuss public agency interest and involvement in the project. There was strong interest in developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Conservancy amended the contact with ESA to add MOU development support.

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. The DPIIC RSC hosted the fourth Delta Restoration Forum at the Bogle Family Vineyards on June 18, 2026. This back-to-back event featured the DPIIC Restoration Subcommittee meeting in the morning, followed by the Delta Restoration Forum in the afternoon. The Subcommittee meeting featured several presentations highlighting diverse ecosystem restoration projects and related programs, and the afternoon Forum was an open-house format featuring restoration projects across California's Delta and Suisun Marsh.

Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination Team

The Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team is facilitated by Conservancy staff and co-led by staff from the Delta Stewardship Council, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). The last quarterly meeting was held on May 14, 2026, with updates on winged primrose (*Ludwigia decurrens*) movement toward the Delta, and CDFW's Nutria Eradication Program. The next quarterly meeting will be held on August 19, 2026.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Staten Island Soils Class Field Trip

On May 26, the Conservancy attended a Soils Genesis class field trip to Staten Island and provided information to UC Davis students learning about the carbon dynamics and unique sequestration opportunities in the Delta.

MEDIA MENTIONS

- A recent interview of the Conservancy's Executive Officer on Delta funding needs was quoted in a June 13 [SJV Water](#) story about Mormon Slough. Restore the Delta is leading a community-driven effort to restore and revitalize the Stockton waterway.
- In a July 8 article, [Maven's Notebook](#) covered the Delta Independent Science Board's May meeting, which included an examination of nature-based solutions projects in the region. The Executive Officer joined other state leaders for a panel discussion and talked about the Conservancy's nature based solutions projects in deeply subsided areas of the Delta.

BOARD DIRECTIVES TO STAFF

1. Supervisor Allen requested that the Delta Restoration Forum invitation be sent to Yolo County Supervisor Oscar Villegas.
 - Supervisor Villegas received event information on May 7 and an invitation follow-up the week of the event.
2. Supervisor Hume requested to review our distribution list to identify potential gaps.
 - This request was completed June 3.

DELTA CONSERVANCY BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Agenda Item 6.2: Budget and Expenditure Report

CORRESPONDENCE

- None.

CONTACT

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