



STAFF MEMORANDUM

TO: Board Members and Alternates

FROM: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director
Cynthia Meyer, Special Programs Manager

DATE: April 4, 2024

RE: Update on Science Program

SUMMARY

The San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority's ("Water Authority") current science commitments for Fiscal Year 25 (March 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025) may be considered in two categories. First, the Water Authority re-budgeted \$120,000 from the FY24 budget to fund two activities and/or studies previously authorized to be funded. Second, the Water Authority has budgeted \$610,000 in the current budget for science studies. More detail regarding the various science commitments is provided below. In total, the Water Authority started the current fiscal year with approximately \$730,000 available to fund science, of which \$60,000 has been obligated, and another \$60,000 has been committed.

1. Previous Commitments - \$120,000 in FY 25 Budget

Subject	Description of Work / Objective(s)	FY 25 Budget
Joint Funding CSAMP Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making Phase 3b	This funding would support management and technical analyses required to conduct Phase 3 for the CSAMP Delta Smelt Structure Decision Making (SDM) project. Technical analyses would include modeling and the application of other analytical tools to evaluate the consequences of proposed management actions for Delta Smelt as well as the evaluation of potential consequences to other resource values including water supply and agriculture. Phase 3b is underway and will provide a Formal evaluation of Delta Smelt recovery actions along with the full suite of objectives: Salmon, Ecosystem, Water Supply, Cost, Learning.	\$50,000
Joint Funding Delta Coordination Group Structured Decision making Facilitation	Funds support and assistance with the structured decision making for recommendations for summer-fall habitat actions for delta smelt by the Delta	\$10,000

	Coordination Group to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Department of Water Resources. Main contract with Dr. Jennie Hoffman with Adaptation/Insight, using Compass Resources.	
Reorienting to Recovery Salmon Workshops	Funds support continuing this effort to collaborate with a wide range of interested parties to develop innovative approaches to aid salmon population recovery. This activity was transferred from CAMT to the Delta science Program for completion and is jointly funded by SWC and other agencies.	\$60,000

2. New Science - \$610,000 in FY 25 Budget

Subject	Description of Work / Objective(s)	FY 24 Budget
Science Studies/Efforts		\$610,000
CAMT Studies	This funding would match State Water Contractor funding obligated for CAMT studies. The Water Authority and State Water Contractors are currently jointly researching potential uses for this funding – 1. Salmonid Survival Study (<i>final report expected in April 2024</i>), 2. OMR Management - Adult Delta Smelt Entrainment Study (<i>final report in preparation</i>) 3. Delta Smelt Structured Decision-Making (SDM) (<i>to be completed by August 2024</i>) 4. Evaluating the monitoring and science synthesis efforts.	\$150,000
Joint Funding CAMT Technical Support	Funds support technical engagement by Hansen Environmental (Chuck Hansen) in CAMT and CSAMP meetings. Contract held by SWC and jointly funded at a 50-50 cost share.	\$25,000
Delta Coordination Group Summer Fall Habitat Action Structured Decision Making Facilitation Support	Funds support facilitation and assistance with Delta Coordination Group Structured Decision Making for Delta Coordination Group recommendations to Reclamation and DWR related to Summer Fall Habitat Actions in the Biological Opinions and State Incidental Take Permit. Project jointly funded with State Water Contractors and the contract is with Compass Resources, with a subcontract held by Jennie Hoffman of Adaptation/Insight, who is performing facilitation support services for the Group.	\$10,000

SLDMWA Technical, Science and Regulatory Support	Funds will be used for engagement in Science Program, technical or regulatory efforts that arise in FY 2025. Anticipated use includes technical support for the reconsultation on long-term operations of the CVP and SWP, anticipated ESA/CESA listing decisions for longfin smelt, giant gardener snake, yellow-legged frog (and others), and engagement in efforts associated with the Bay-Delta Plan Update and VA Science Plan.	\$200,000
University of California, Merced Science Partnership	Funds will be used to initiate a partnership with the University of California, Merced, for capacity building in the Science Enterprise and to conduct research into issues of importance to member agencies.	\$225,000

SCIENCE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:

Staff participates in several science forums and coordination activities. The highlights include:

Agreements for Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (“Agreements”) Science Committee (Bay-Delta Plan Update):

The Agreements Science Committee is developing the monitoring and evaluation strategy for the components of the Agreements science projects. A draft is currently under review, which includes several appendices to define and address the peer review process, the use of best available science, tributary monitoring plans, data management, and prioritization of hypotheses. In March 2024, the group developed a draft habitat accounting protocol. Staff provided suggestions to improve the analysis and quantification methods for the habitat accounting. In April 2024, the Agreements Science Committee will participate in a workshop with the State Water Resources Control Board to examine the plan.

Delta Coordination Group (DCG):

The final 2023 DCG Activities Report is anticipated in April 2024. Staff is participating on the planning committee for the Summer-Fall Habitat and Salmon Juvenile production independent reviews. The DCG is updating the Science and Monitoring plan and improving documentation of the SDM effort. During the March 2024 workshop, staff provided comments on the potential application of the 100 TAF for the benefit of Delta Smelt and considered the impacts of both the continuous 60-day flows and the intermittent 7-day pulse flows options.

Collaborative Adaptation Management Team (CAMT)/Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP):

The CAMT is revising a draft report for the Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making efforts which provides a summary of the activities and suggestions for moving the effort forward into 2024. This report will also inform the ESA and CESA consultation efforts. Staff has encouraged the completion of this report to be available for consideration prior to the publication of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the LTO.

Additionally, the Salmon Technical Working Group is preparing the final draft report for the CAMT Salmon Subteam update to the 2017 Salmon Scoping Team Report. The revised version is anticipated for Spring 2024. The next Reorienting to Recovery (R2R) workshop is scheduled for April 2024.

The second draft of CSAMP biennial report was provided in March 2024 for additional comment. It includes the accomplishments for 2022 and 2023. The CSAMP conducted a survey effort to reflect on the effectiveness, direction, and improvements of the group. Small group interviews were conducted in February 2024 with the interested parties. The initial feedback was discussed at the Quarterly CSAMP Policy Meeting and will be provided in further detail in the biennial report.

ESA Consultation for the Long-Term Operations of the CVP and SWP

A second draft of the EIS is anticipated to be released for Cooperating Agency review in April 2024. In addition, the draft Biological Assessments (BA's) for both aquatic and terrestrial species were provided in mid-November. While there is no formal comment period for the BA's, staff is reviewing these documents and providing informal comments to Reclamation and the Services. The Delta Science Program is currently providing an independent science review for the BA's as requested by Reclamation. The final report is anticipated in May 2024.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine independent review of the Long-term Water Operations of the CVP and SWP held the first meeting on January 30-31 in Sacramento. The panel was introduced to many aspects of the LTO for the CVP and SWP. Staff provided a public comment in support of the review effort and a tour of the Jones Pumping Plant. The second meeting was held in on February 28-29 in Davis. The Panel focused on the Summer/Fall Habitat and OMR data and modeling approaches. Several water contractors and interested parties were invited to participate in the discussion panels. This opportunity highlighted the complexities of the water management and projects for the water districts and authorities. The next meeting will be held in Redding, CA on May 6-8. This meeting will focus on the Shasta cold water pool management and temperature needs of Salmon.

Information is available at <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/review-of-the-long-term-operations-of-the-central-valley-project>

Science Coordination:

At the January 2024 meeting, the Board approved the Science Plan. Staff revised the draft Science Plan based on the input from the Water Resources Committee and Board. The Science

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Coordination Workgroup met on March 20, 2024 to discuss the implementation of the short-term tasks outlined in the science plan. In addition, staff is working on establishing a contract with UC Merced to support the science needs of the Water Authority. The Board will be presented with a proposed resolution to address the indirect cost rate associated with this contract at the April 2024 meeting. The contract is anticipated to be presented to the Board at the May 2024 meeting for review.