

NDWA Manager Report – August 2020

ADMIN UPDATE

Assessment Rolls – The rolls for parcel assessments are due in early August for each of the four counties within the Agency’s boundaries. Staff has identified issues with changes in parcel map availability in Yolo County and some parcel splits in Sacramento they will continue working on after the rolls are completed.

ACTION: The Agency submitted assessment rolls for each county and all have been accepted. Staff had conference call to discuss how to deal with recent parcel splits into sub-parcels in Sacramento County.

Biennial FPPC Training – The Fair Political Practices Commission requires officers serving on local public agencies to receive training on ethics and sexual harassment every other year.

ACTION: The Agency and CCVFCA co-hosted two training workshops in August via teleconference for NDWA Directors, Reclamation District trustees, and managerial staff to complete their biennial FPPC training.

DELTA DOWNLOAD

Delta Tunnel Project Moving Forward with New Permit Processes

At the July meeting of the Delta Stewardship Council, they heard [updates on Delta planning](#) efforts from the Delta Protection Commission, Delta Conservancy, and the Central Valley Flood Protection Board. The presentations covered the Delta Conveyance Project, distribution of Prop. 1 and 68 bond funding, National Heritage Area planning, Delta Carbon Program progress, and update of the DPC’s Economic Sustainability Plan and flood board’s Central Valley Flood Protection Plan.

In DWR’s [August update](#), the Administration announced it [released](#) a preliminary [cost estimate](#) for the [single tunnel](#) of \$15.9 billion, which is [similar](#) to the \$17 billion cost for the twin tunnel project. A [validation action](#) was filed in Sacramento Court to authorize DWR to [issue revenue bonds](#) to finance the planning, design, construction and other capital costs of the proposed Delta Conveyance Project ([DCP](#)).

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also issued a [Notice of Intent](#) for the [preparation](#) of an Environmental Impact Statement for the tunnel project and received an [application](#) for a permit to place dredge and fill materials in waters of the U.S. which are expected to result in permanent impacts to 247.44 acres of waters. A briefing provided to the Delta Independent Science Board [revealed](#) that in addition to the revision of the prior 9,000 cfs diversion capacity of WaterFix twin tunnels to the new single-tunnel 6,000 cfs Delta Conveyance Project, there are also less

construction impacts with the elimination of an intermediate forebay and barge loading docks, as well as a reduction in the number of underground pipes connecting intakes to the conveyance tunnel. This downsizing will reduce some of the adverse construction impacts to reclamation districts, but will not reduce the adverse water quality impacts.

Delta Agencies File Lawsuit Against Tunnel Drilling

Claiming CEQA violations, the Central and South Delta Water Agencies and Local Agencies of the North Delta (LAND) filed a [joint lawsuit](#) challenging DWR's adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for geotechnical drilling associated with the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP).

SoCal Water District Discusses Future of Delta Tunnel Project

Staff of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) [briefed](#) its board of directors on recent activities and future steps for DWR's plan to construct State Water Project conveyance tunnel facilities in the Delta. Next steps are development of funding proposals and refinements to the governance structure. He acknowledged that DWR has been providing recent funding from discretionary funding that normally is used for recreation and fish and wildlife resource enhancements, but water contractors will need to provide more funding in January 2021.

Droughts May Intensify in Future

After reviewing several state documents and speaking with agency managers and scientists, the California WaterBlog determined that water demands on the Delta often outstrip its capacity, even in wetter than average years, and provides [nine recommendations](#) to prepare for anticipated increases in frequency and severity of future droughts. An [article](#) in a science journal reports on a recently published study that found the intensifications of dry seasons is generally a consequence of increasing evapotranspiration, not a reduction in precipitation; and these changes are caused by human activity rather than natural variability.

Enhancement Plan for Franks Tract

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is leading an effort to develop options for enhancing ecosystem, recreation, water quality and other benefits at Franks Tract. A [draft report](#) has been released with a September 2, 2020 deadline to submit comments.

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Installs Improvements

In an effort to improve wetlands management and support wildlife-friendly agriculture, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Board worked together to install two bridges in the [Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area](#).

Toxic Algae Growing Worse in the Delta

Many in the Delta, particularly recreational boaters, are ringing alarm bells about [toxic algae](#) blooms spreading throughout the Delta and express concern that this [dire situation](#) could be made worse because of actions such as construction of the Delta Conveyance Project proposed in Governor Newsom's Water Resilience Portfolio. The Regional Water Quality Control Board recently reported toxic algae levels in several [Delta waterways](#) around Stockton are [220 times higher](#) than what is considered the danger level.

DWR Files Consistency Certification for Delta Habitat Project

A certification of consistency with the Delta Plan was filed by DWR for the [Wings Landing](#) Tidal Habitat Restoration Project.

LEGISLATIVE LATEST

Legislative Session Ends

Midnight on August 31 marked the [end of the legislative session for 2020](#), with most bills focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, racial justice, and ongoing wildfires; leaving numerous legislative bills dealing with other issues such as environmental resources left stranded upon adjournment. The Legislature will reconvene briefly in December to swear in newly elected legislators, but committee hearings and the introduction of new bills will not resume until the new year.

NEWSWORTHY

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman issued a press [statement](#) on actions it has taken to implement President Trump's memorandums in [2018](#) and [2020](#) directing federal agencies to maximize water supply deliveries in California. Recent activities include submission of a draft feasibility report to Congress for the expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir and release of environmental documents for the Shasta Dam raise project.

CALENDER ALERTS

Sept 17 – Delta Design & Construction Authority meeting, 2:00 pm

Sept 17 – Delta Protection Commission public meeting, 4:00 pm

Sept 23 – DCA Stakeholder Engagement Committee meeting, 3:00 pm

Sept 24 – Delta Stewardship Council public meeting, 9:00 am

Oct 20 – Deadline to comment on USACE dredge and fill [permit application](#) for DCP

Oct 22 – Delta Stewardship Council public meeting, 9:00 am