



## How the Delta Plan Works

The Delta Plan is a comprehensive, long-term management plan for the Delta that creates new rules to help provide a reliable supply of water for California, and protect and restore the Delta ecosystem, in a way that respects the people who live and work in the Delta. The Delta Plan also establishes a new and more significant level of independent scientific involvement in both water and ecosystem management. In addition, the Delta Plan, as required by law, lays out a management structure to foster coordination among state and local agencies, whose actions and plans must be consistent with the Delta Plan.

Through 14 enforceable regulatory policies and 73 non-binding recommendations, the Delta Plan:

### 1. Reduces reliance on the Delta for water supply

- Requires those who take water from, transfer water through, or use water in the Delta to describe and certify that they are implementing all feasible efforts to use water efficiently and to develop additional local and regional water supplies.

### 2. Improves statewide water supply reliability

- Recommends that all water suppliers detail how they are reducing their dependence on the Delta and improving regional self-reliance. Also recommends the state revise grant criteria to give priority to those suppliers who comply.
- Recommends identifying impediments and updating water efficiency goals, implementing groundwater management plans for regions that receive water from the Delta, improving water transfer procedures, and developing a coordinated statewide system for reporting water use.
- Urges swift and successful completion of 1) the Bay Delta Conservation Plan to improve the way water is conveyed across the Delta, and 2) ongoing surface water storage studies including recommendations on priorities to expand the state's overall surface storage capacity.

### 3. Protects, restores and enhances the Delta ecosystem

- Promotes science-based habitat restoration and requires protection of opportunities for habitat restoration in six high-priority areas of the Delta.
- Recommends the State Water Resources Control Board complete by specific dates, updates to water quality objectives for the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and their tributaries. This action will be the basis for both ecosystem flow enhancements and certainty in the opportunities to export water from the Delta.
- Recommends steps to reduce other stressors to the ecosystem, including contaminants, to expand floodplains and riparian habitats in levee projects, and to locate habitat restoration areas at appropriate elevations to accommodate sea-level rise.

### 4. Protects the Delta as a unique place

- Protects farmland for agriculture by requiring that new residential, commercial or industrial development is located in areas planned for urban use;



- Requires that water management facilities, ecosystem restoration projects and flood management infrastructure be sited to reduce or avoid conflicts with agriculture and other existing or planned land uses, when feasible and requires state and local agencies consult with local land-use authorities and consider locating projects on existing public lands before privately owned sites are purchased or acquired.
- Recommends ways to encourage agritourism and wildlife friendly farming practices, to provide new and protect existing recreation opportunities, to expand outdoor recreation and promote boating safety.

#### **5. Improves water quality to protect human health and the environment**

- The Delta Plan makes 12 recommendations, including that the State Water Resources Control Board consider and perhaps propose special water quality protections for priority habitat restoration areas;
- Complete development of a strategic work plan to protect groundwater resources, and
- Work with other relevant agencies to develop and implement a Delta regional water quality monitoring program.

#### **6. Reduces risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta by effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and investments in flood protection.**

- Delta Plan policies prohibit encroachment on floodways and floodplains;
- Require a minimum level of flood protection for new residential development of five or more parcels including anticipation of rising sea levels; and
- Require the Council to develop priorities for investment in Delta flood protection by 2015. The recommendations will be based on the principle that beneficiaries pay, and will include a calculation of the state's interests. The plan recommends that private sector beneficiaries also help pay for flood protection improvements.
- In addition, the Delta Plan recommends creation of the Delta Flood Risk Management District to integrate local agencies, and with the authority to impose appropriate cost shares to those who benefit from levee improvements, including water or power utilities, transportation, etc. A unified local decision-making body will be more effective than the commendable but uncoordinated efforts of more than 100 flood control entities in the Delta.

#### **7. Establishes a new governance structure with the authority, responsibility, accountability, scientific support, and adequate and secure funding to achieve these objectives.**

- The Delta Plan sets the general direction for the Council to establish and commence operation of, as soon as practicable, the statutorily- required Implementation Committee to coordinate agency actions, assess current spending on Delta projects, assess future needs, identify funding gaps, and make recommendations to the Legislature, as appropriate.
- The Delta Plan contains 14 legally-binding regulatory policies, with which significant state and local agency, Delta-related actions must be consistent. This "consistency" requirement is enforceable through the Council's statutorily-prescribed appellate role.
- The Delta Plan anticipates future approval of the Plan pursuant to the federal Coastal Zone Management Act, which will ensure consistency of federal agency Delta-related actions.