

WHAT SPECIES WILL BE ADDRESSED BY THE BDCP?

“Covered Species” identified in the BDCP include both terrestrial and aquatic endangered or sensitive species whose conservation and management will be provided by the plan. Species considered for coverage include:

- ▶ Delta smelt
- ▶ Longfin smelt
- ▶ Winter-run Chinook salmon
- ▶ Spring-run Chinook salmon
- ▶ Fall-run and late fall–run Chinook salmon
- ▶ Central Valley steelhead
- ▶ Green sturgeon
- ▶ White sturgeon
- ▶ Sacramento splittail
- ▶ River lamprey
- ▶ Pacific lamprey
- ▶ More than 40 terrestrial species

Where feasible, BDCP conservation measures will be designed to complement other existing or planned terrestrial HCP/NCCPs in the Delta to enhance benefits to natural communities and species and to support locally led conservation efforts and compatible existing land uses to the extent possible.

WHAT’S NEXT

Throughout the remainder of 2009 and early 2010 the BDCP participants will:

- ▶ Conduct ongoing refinements to conservation measures such as the operations of dual conveyance water facilities, habitat restoration measures for covered wildlife and plant species, and the design of a robust adaptive management program
- ▶ Continue to develop biological goals and objectives and related metrics
- ▶ Develop other aspects of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan such as:
  - Analysis of the conservation strategy’s effects on water quality and biological resources
  - Cost and financing
  - Implementation structure and schedule
- ▶ Host Delta community workshops on the Draft Conservation Strategy
- ▶ Release to the public the complete Draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan for public comment

WHO IS PARTICIPATING IN THE BDCP?

The BDCP is being prepared through a voluntary collaboration of state, federal, and local water agencies, state and federal fish agencies, environmental organizations, and other interested parties. The BDCP Steering Committee consists of the following participants.

STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

California Bay-Delta Authority  
California Department of Water Resources  
California Natural Resources Agency (chair)  
California State Water Resources Control Board  
US Bureau of Reclamation  
US Army Corps of Engineers

FISH AGENCIES

California Department of Fish and Game  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
US National Marine Fisheries Service

WATER AGENCIES

Kern County Water Agency  
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority  
Santa Clara Valley Water District  
Westlands Water District  
Zone 7 Water Agency  
Contra Costa Water District  
Friant Water Authority  
North Delta Water Agency

ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Rivers  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Environmental Defense Fund  
Natural Heritage Institute  
The Bay Institute  
The Nature Conservancy

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

California Farm Bureau Federation  
Mirant Delta

BDCP  
BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN

A PLAN TO RESTORE THE DELTA’S ECOSYSTEM AND CALIFORNIA’S WATER SUPPLIES

DRAFT CONSERVATION STRATEGY—AUGUST 2009 UPDATE

The purpose of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is to promote the recovery of endangered, threatened and sensitive species and their habitats in the Delta in a way that also will protect and restore water supplies.

The BDCP is a habitat conservation plan and natural communities conservation plan under federal and state laws, respectively. When completed, the BDCP would provide the basis for the issuance of endangered species permits for the operation of the state and federal water projects. The plan would be implemented over the next 50 years. The heart of the BDCP is a long-term conservation strategy that sets forth actions needed for a healthy Delta ecosystem.

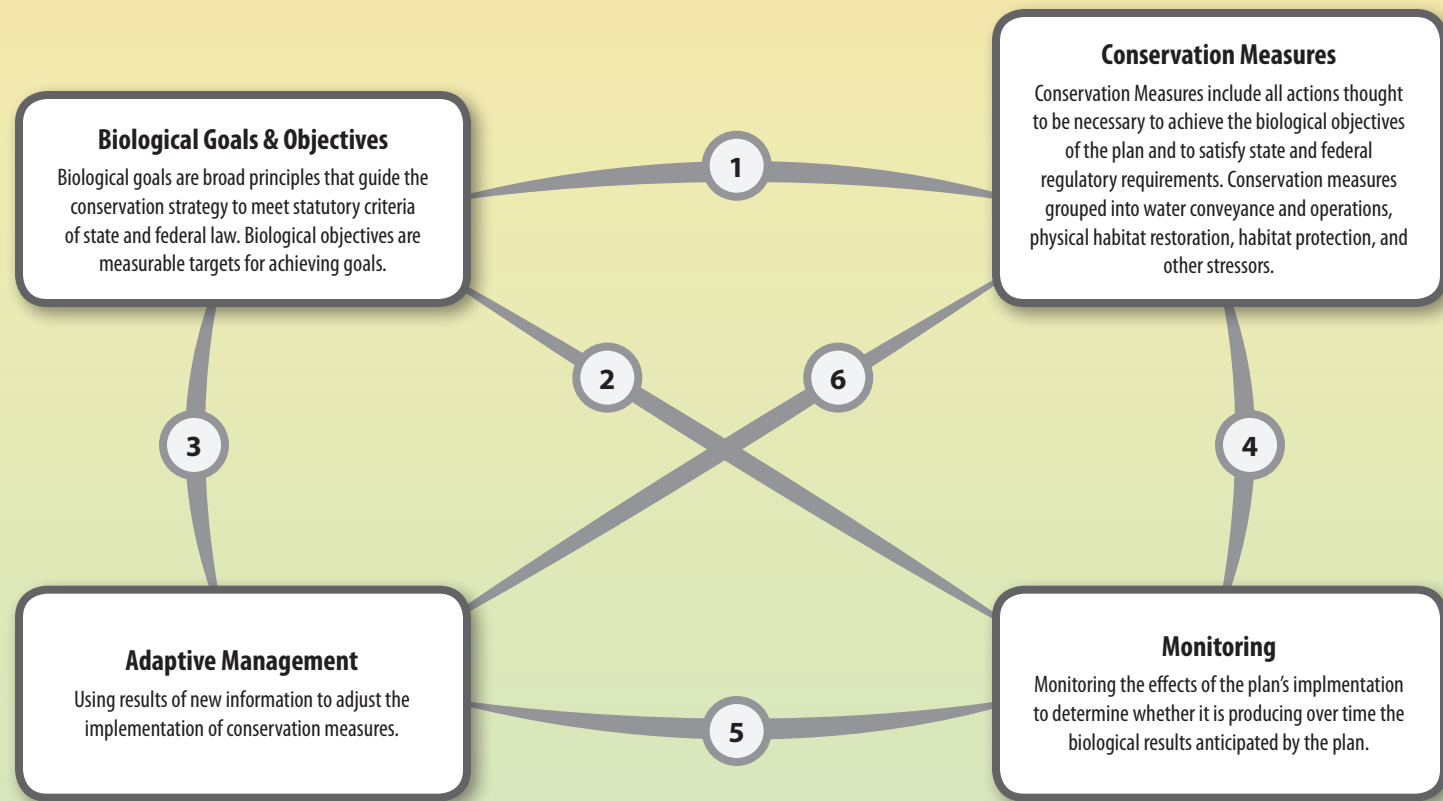
Environmental organizations, water agencies, and other organizations preparing the BDCP have made significant progress on aspects of the draft conservation strategy focused on helping the Delta and contributing to the recovery of 11 native fish species. The aquatic portion of the draft strategy describes how moving the primary point of water diversion of the state and federal projects from the southern Delta near Tracy to the Sacramento River near Clarksburg and Freeport would alter flow patterns in the estuary to promote fish recovery and provide for reliable water supplies. New water delivery facilities and new operating rules coupled with habitat restoration and efforts to reduce the negative effects of stressors like contaminants and invasive species will be undertaken together to address the threats to native fish survival and recovery.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DELTA CANNOT BE OVERSTATED

The Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta is home to half a million people and many historic communities. It is a key recreation destination and supports extensive infrastructure of statewide importance. Fresh water that reaches the Delta is the core of California’s water system, which provides 25 million people throughout the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and southern California with a portion of their water supplies. Delta-conveyed water supports farms and ranches from the north Delta to the Mexican border. These agricultural resources are a major economic driver for the state, producing roughly half of the nation’s domestically grown fresh produce. The Delta is also a vitally important ecosystem that is home to hundreds of aquatic and terrestrial species, many of which are unique to the area and several of which are threatened or endangered.

CONSERVATION STRATEGY: HOW IT WORKS

The current draft conservation strategy identifies biological goals and objectives to improve large-scale ecosystem conditions and the health of covered species; a comprehensive set of conservation measures developed to meet these goals and objectives; and monitoring and adaptive management programs to maximize the effectiveness of the strategy over the course of its implementation.



Relationship Between Conservation Strategy Elements	
1.	Biological goals and objectives reflect intended plan outcomes. Conservation measures are the actions taken to meet these goals and objectives.
2.	Monitoring is designed to evaluate biological effectiveness of the plan over time based on measurable biological objectives described in the biological goals and objectives.
3.	The range of adaptive management responses detailed in the plan will be shaped by the biological goals and objectives. Triggers based on biological goals and objectives will serve as warning signals that adaptive management actions may need to be taken. The adaptive management program allows for flexible, iterative, and effective implementation of the conservation strategy in meeting the biological goals and objectives, particularly in its capacity to respond to greater understanding about the Delta ecosystem as conditions change over time.
4.	The effectiveness of conservation measures will be evaluated through the monitoring program.
5.	The monitoring program supplies the data and research needed for adaptive management to occur.
6.	As more is understood about the Delta ecosystem and if conservation measures are found to be less effective than anticipated, the adaptive management program will inform what modifications to the conservation measures may be necessary.

DRAFT CONSERVATION STRATEGY ELEMENTS

Habitat Restoration Targets	Water Delivery Rules	Other Stressors
<p>Restore up to 80,000 acres of tidal marsh, seasonally inundated floodplain, and riparian habitat distributed throughout the Delta</p> <p>Enhance 11,500–21,000 acres of existing seasonal floodplain habitat in the Yolo Bypass</p> <p>Enhance up to 20 linear miles of channel bank restoration to create a more natural riverbank with overhanging shade, instream woody debris, and shallow benches</p>	<p>North Delta Diversion and Bypass Flows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversion facilities to support flexibility in flow management, with a design capacity of 15,000 cubic feet per second, which is similar to existing south Delta facilities</li><li>• Establish minimum river flows to ensure that Sacramento River flows are always greater than export diversions and that flows support the habitat needs of covered fish and the ecological needs of the Delta as a whole</li></ul> <p>South Delta Channel Flows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimize incidence and magnitude of reverse flow to acceptable levels during the times of year most important to fish and also reduce entrainment</li></ul> <p>Outflow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide freshwater outflow necessary to maintain a desirable salinity regime and for fish health and survival</li></ul> <p>Other Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set new operating rules to (1) better manage inflows, (2) better manage the flow of water through the Delta Cross Channel and at Rio Vista, and (3) address water quality throughout the central and south Delta</li></ul>	<p>Support scientific evaluation of ammonia and endocrine disruptor effects on fish species</p> <p>Reduce methylmercury</p> <p>Support existing programs and voluntary incentive-based actions to reduce agricultural pesticides and herbicides and clean urban stormwater runoff</p> <p>Support efforts to detect and remove invasive species such as quagga mussels and non-native submerged and floating aquatic vegetation</p> <p>Improve hatcheries, reduce poaching, and allow greater harvest of largemouth bass, black crappie, and striped bass in some areas of the Delta</p> <p>Screen, remove, relocate, consolidate, modify, and/or alter timing of non-project diversions to reduce entrainment</p>

ROLE OF SCIENCE IN DEVELOPING THE DRAFT CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The BDCP Conservation Strategy is built upon and reflects the extensive body of scientific investigation, study, and analysis of the Delta available. The BDCP Steering Committee also undertook a rigorous process to develop new and updated information, including an evaluation of conservation options using the CALFED Bay-Delta Ecosystem Restoration Program’s DRERIP evaluation process conducted by multiple teams of experts in early 2009. The BDCP Steering Committee sought and utilized independent scientific advice at several key stages of the planning process, enlisting well-recognized experts in ecological and biological sciences to produce recommendations on a range of relevant topics, including conservation planning for both aquatic and terrestrial species and developing adaptive management and monitoring programs. This independent panel will continue to convene as the plan is developed, and ongoing scientific input will be provided during plan implementation.

BENEFITS OF REGIONAL CONSERVATION PLANNING

Conservation plans:

- ▶ Allow operations of state and federal water projects to proceed with a comprehensive ecosystem-focused approach that provides for the conservation of affected species and habitats
- ▶ Eliminate more costly, often less effective piecemeal project-by-project, species-by-species permitting
- ▶ Provide flexibility in addressing those issues that are most effective for promoting the conservation of covered species
- ▶ Are based on the best available science
- ▶ Provide reliable funding sources for ecosystem restoration