

# 2014 Delta Vision Report Card

Report Card Category	Effort Grade	Results Grade	Comments
<b>Progress: Implementation of the <i>Delta Vision Strategic Plan</i></b>			
Near-Term Actions	D	D+	There has been little progress on near-term actions. The State lacks management direction to implement actions with the urgency required. Only State progress on water use reporting and emergency preparedness keeps this grade from an F.
Governance	B	C+	New governance structures established, improved interagency coordination, and planning processes advanced. No funding or government performance accountability established. Narrow focus on a single project and inadequate efforts to work with the public to equitably resolve issues.
Ecosystem Restoration and Recovery	B	C-	Improved understanding, science, biological objectives, and local coordination in some areas. Slow start for pilot projects. Little actual project implementation.
Delta Vitality and Security	C+	C-	Improved regional coordination on emergency response. No organized strategy for levee improvement or investment. Insufficient funding to support regional economic development.
Water Supply Reliability	C	C-	Water use efficiency targets established. Moderate expenditure on improved regional water management, but no connection to the Delta established. State's single focus on conveyance has not advanced system flexibility, as shown by drought crisis.
<b>Citizenship: Leadership, Effectiveness, and Cooperation</b>			
State, Federal Agencies and Stakeholders	B+	C+	Continued high level of focus and effort; science collaboration improving, but fragmentation and conflict remain. Continued lack of integration across issues and actions leads to opposition and conflict. Implementation capacity still needed.
<b>Results: Two Co-Equal Goals</b>			
Efforts to Reduce Risks for the Ecosystem and Water Supply Reliability	B-	C-	Continued advancement of <u>plans</u> with <i>Delta Plan</i> , <i>BDCP</i> , and <i>CVFPP</i> , but nothing accomplished to reverse years of neglect. Conditions remain critical. Incomplete definition of performance outcomes and common objectives.
<b>Status of the Two Co-Equal Goals: Low, Moderate, High, Very High, Critical, Extreme</b>			
Delta Ecosystem Restoration	<b>Critical</b>		Slow to no implementation of restoration actions. Fish Restoration Project slowed; some pilots started. Better biological objectives developed; ecosystem focus needed.
Water Supply Reliability	<b>Critical</b>		Drought crisis reveals the consequences of the failure to act on comprehensive approach. Storage, retention, levees, and floodplains needed to avoid future crises.

## Reasons for Hope

1. The Two Co-Equal Goals are influencing decisions.
2. The level of effort and coordination remains impressive; major plans have advanced and the Governor's Administration has worked diligently to break down silos and increase coordination.
3. Science programs are improving collaboration and increasing independent reviews.

## Cause for Concern

1. Near-term actions are stalled or ignored.
2. Performance outcomes are missing.
3. Water Action Plan lacks action and accountability.
4. The State lacks focus and capacity for oversight and implementation.
5. Important Delta programs are underfunded.

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction and Background

The *2014 Delta Vision Report Card* assesses the status of the Delta and water supply reliability and the progress and effectiveness of State agencies and appointed governing bodies, Federal agencies, and other organizations in implementing the actions recommended in the 2008 *Delta Vision Strategic Plan (DVSP)*. It has been five years since the DVSP was, in large part, accepted and approved by the Governor's Administration and implemented through the 2009 water legislation package. The *Report Card* provides a broad assessment of actions and organizations so that elected officials, agency executives and staff, and stakeholders and the public can understand the opportunities and barriers for achieving the Two Co-Equal Goals. It is based on information gathered from elected officials' staff, agency executives and staff, stakeholders, and the public. The *Report Card* also includes recommendations for action and improvement to accelerate implementation and ensure that strategies and actions are comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated.

The Delta Vision Foundation assessed three aspects of efforts to implement the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* and achieve the Two Co-Equal Goals:

**Actions Progress** – For each of the 85 actions recommended in the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan*.

**Leadership, Effectiveness and Cooperation** – Of the State, Federal agencies, and stakeholders and other interested parties.

**Status of the Two Co-Equal Goals** – To reduce risks for the ecosystem and water supply reliability.

#### ***Comprehensive, Integrated Action is Essential***

In the past year, the Delta Stewardship Council completed the *Delta Plan*, the Association of California Water Agencies developed a *Statewide Water Action Plan*, and the Governor's Administration prepared the *California Water Action Plan*. These efforts reinforce the need and support for a comprehensive effort to address California's water and environmental needs, as envisioned by the *DVSP*. Unfortunately, these efforts lack the performance measures, actions and schedules, commitments and linkages, and funding strategies that ensure accountability for results. It has taken nearly five years for the Governor's Administration, Delta Stewardship Council, and water users to reiterate the strategies and actions described in the *DVSP*, largely a result of the Administration and some water users focusing on implementing one program within the comprehensive solution, the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan. Near-term actions have stalled or been abandoned. Performance accountability has been ignored or deferred. Storage and levee planning is anemic. Critical funding strategies beyond State borrowing have not been advanced. At the same time, while interagency coordination has improved, it has not been open, transparent, and accountable to the public or structured to resolve critical issues and avoid lawsuits.

#### ***Delta Vision Foundation***

The Delta Vision Foundation was established by former members of the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force, the independent body established under Governor's Executive Order S-17-06. The mission of the Delta Vision Foundation is to encourage implementation and progress by the State of California toward achieving the Two Co-Equal Goals as defined in the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan*:

- (1) Restore the Delta Ecosystem
- (2) Ensure Water Supply Reliability

The Delta Vision Foundation monitors, evaluates, and provides information to government officials, policymakers, and the public about implementing the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* recommendations as a set of integrated and linked actions.

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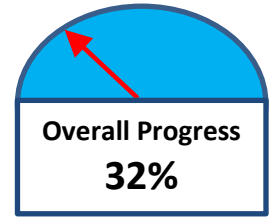
#### ***Staff***

Charles Gardiner, Executive Director  
 Rita Holder, Policy Research Associate  
 Julie Dixon, Resource Media, Media Relations and Communications

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## Implementation Progress

Overall, the 85 actions recommended in the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* are 32% complete. This is a slight improvement compared with the 25% complete reported in the *2011 Delta Vision Report Card*.



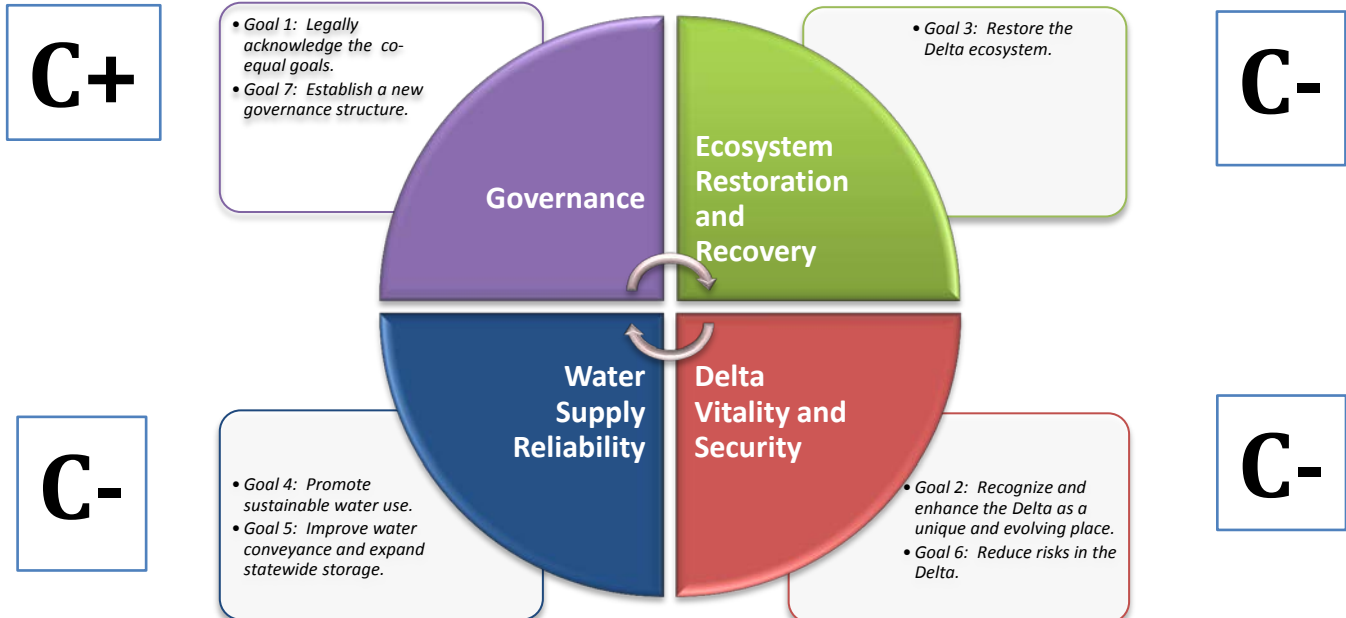
## Near-Term Actions

**D+**

Over the past five years, State and Federal agencies have failed to advance important near-term actions to address Delta risks, ecosystem restoration, and water supply reliability. The promotion of near-term projects has come almost exclusively from stakeholders and local government as represented by the Coalition for Delta Projects, Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, and Delta Counties Coalition, along with Office of Emergency Services and Department of Water Resources advancing emergency response planning in cooperation with local and regional managers. Some near-term restoration actions are finally nearing readiness for construction, but these projects have been planned for 10 to 20 years. Planning to address Delta water quality and to reduce the risk of catastrophic flooding of Delta islands caused by an earthquake or major flood event has been deferred. Overall, the progress on near-term actions continues to be entirely inadequate. The lack of progress over the past five years resulted in a declining grade from a “C-” in 2013 to a “D+” in 2014.

## Mid-term and Long-term Actions

New governance structures have been established and plans are complete or near complete, but implementation is lagging in all areas. The Governance grade decreased from a “B” in 2013, to a “C+” this year, due to the lack of action planning, performance accountability, and funding, except for the 2014 drought crisis response. The grade for Ecosystem Restoration and Recovery decreased from a “C+” to a “C-” this year due to ongoing slow implementation, in spite of improved science and better performance objectives. The grade for Delta Vitality and Security remained a “C-” due to the continued delays in developing a Delta levee investment strategy and inadequate funding for Delta economic development. The Water Supply Reliability grade remained at “C-” for this year. These grades reflect the urgency for action and results after nearly five years of effort (and nearly 20 years since the beginning of the CALFED Program). However, “C-” is a poor grade—few “on-the-ground” actions have been implemented and funding and governance is not in place and accountable to improve water supply reliability, ecosystem restoration, or Delta vitality and security.



## Leadership, Effectiveness and Cooperation

### State of California

The 2014 Delta Vision Report Card evaluates implementing agencies for their leadership, strategic direction, coordination, results, and accountability. DVF asked each agency to complete a self-evaluation to provide the public and policymakers with the most complete information and transparency on accountability. DVF also completed an assessment as in the past. Results below grade both the effort and results of each agency independently. DVF concludes that, overall, there is strong effort in most areas, but the State of California needs to foster a culture of public accountability for results and increase transparency on performance through the Interagency Implementation Committee initiated in 2014 and other mechanisms.

*Table 1. State Leadership and Effectiveness Summary*

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Effort</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Legislature</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>C+</b>	Drought and BDCP have focused action and attention on water bond and governance. Funding for Delta activities inadequate. Delta oversight not integrated or constructive.
<b>Governor’s Administration</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C+</b>	Water Action Plan supports integrated approach, lacks action plan and accountability. Leadership and management needed on storage and retention, restoration, levees, and regional water management to drive action and link to Delta.
<b>Delta Stewardship Council</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	Finally initiated Interagency Implementation Committee; inadequate public accountability. Slow to move on tough issues: levees, near-term actions, and performance measures.
<b>Natural Resources Agency</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	Advanced BDCP analysis. Slow to embrace comprehensive, integrated approach. Weak action plan for other components. Insufficient leadership or direction on near-term actions.
<b>Department of Water Resources</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C+</b>	Advanced BDCP analysis. Slow to embrace comprehensive, integrated approach. Slow to no action plan or progress for storage, levees, and restoration. Progress in emergency preparedness. Regional water management lacks performance linkage to Delta.
<b>Department of Fish and Wildlife</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C+</b>	Improved leadership and coordination regarding BDCP. Ecosystem restoration lacks leadership, management strategies, and deadlines to drive implementation. Slow progress on instream flows and no progress on storage.
<b>Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	Advanced the Restoration Network and local relationships. Constrained by lack of State funding for near-term projects to demonstrate success.
<b>Delta Protection Commission</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B+</b>	Improved partnerships to represent Delta interests effectively. Constrained by lack of State funding to implement economic development projects.
<b>State Water Resources Control Board</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	Guided by a strategic plan; assigns resources to address highest priorities. Effectively seeking sound science. Drought diverting resources from Bay-Delta Plan.
<b>Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	Coordinated strategies with State Water Board. Addressing critical water quality issues. Improved collaboration and value of Delta monitoring programs.
<b>California Water Commission</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B+</b>	Advanced discussion of public benefits of storage and funding criteria. Reviewed DWR regulations and SWP. Needs to continue action on water storage, levees, and the SWP.

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*Table 1. State Leadership and Effectiveness Summary*

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Effort</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Office of Emergency Services</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B+</b>	Continued effective coordination and enhancement of Delta emergency management. Completing <i>Northern California Catastrophic Flood Response Plan</i> .
<b>Central Valley Flood Protection Board</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B+</b>	Advancing regional integrated flood management strategies developed by local interests. Working to continue alignment among flood, water, ecosystem actions.
<b>Department of Food and Agriculture</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B+</b>	Helped develop Water Action Plan. Needs strategy to localize and implement Action Plan and Ag Vision 2030 to Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Delta regions.
<b>Science Programs</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B+</b>	Completed Delta Science Plan. Initiated collaborative science; more needed. Increased valuable independent reviews. Science and policy processes remain fragmented, diffusing energy and effectiveness. Need resources to synthesize and communicate science efforts and address key policy issues.

### Federal Agencies

The *2014 Delta Vision Report Card* also evaluates the Federal agencies for their leadership, strategic direction, coordination, results, and accountability. Previous report cards evaluated the Federal agencies as a whole. This year's evaluation provides an individual assessment, based on a self-evaluation and the DVF assessment. Table 2 summarizes the results for the Federal agencies evaluated.

*Table 2. Federal Agency Leadership and Effectiveness Summary*

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Effort</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Department of the Interior</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	Completed draft BDCP and several draft storage feasibility studies. Loss of key leaders in Washington, DC and Sacramento reduced effectiveness.
<b>Bureau of Reclamation</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	Continues to engage and lead federal participation in BDCP and biological opinions. Completed several draft storage feasibility studies. Needs to improve integration of water management approaches.
<b>U.S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B-</b>	Provided planning, science, and regulatory oversight to critical Delta processes. Needs resources and coordinated decision-making to resolve key issues for BDCP. Needs to engage in storage planning.
<b>National Marine Fisheries Service</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B-</b>	Improved strategies for science collaboration. Needs resources and coordinated decision-making to resolve key issues for BDCP and engage in storage planning.
<b>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	Could and should play a stronger leadership role in advancing actions, results, and performance accountability.

### Stakeholder Cooperation

Since completion of the *DVSP* and passage of the 2009 water legislation, cooperation among stakeholders has become even more important. In 2013, DVF acknowledged the important stakeholder collaboration efforts initiated by stakeholders themselves, including: (1) the Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley and the Delta Counties Coalition (12 counties total); (2) Coalition for Delta Projects; (3) "Delta Dialogues" process initiated by the Delta Conservancy; (4) improved collaboration with and among stakeholders in floodplain planning in the Yolo

**B-**

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Bypass and the lower San Joaquin River; and (5) the Ag-Urban Coalition efforts, which led to the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Statewide Water Action Plan. In the past year, most of these stakeholder collaboration efforts have stalled from lack of funding or purpose, or from higher importance of efforts to review BDCP or address the drought.

When DVF released the *2013 Delta Vision Report Card*, stakeholders of diverse perspectives asked the DVF Board of Directors to help convene stakeholder discussions of an integrated approach to Delta issues. Over the past year, DVF has convened various stakeholder forums to discuss and support an integrated approach. These forums have resulted in agreement among some stakeholders on a set of principles for an integrated approach and concurrent implementation (see below). During the same period, ACWA developed agreement among its diverse membership on a *Statewide Water Action Plan* that describes the importance of a comprehensive approach. However, stakeholder positions remain entrenched, particularly around issues of Delta conveyance, the sequence of actions, and appropriate commitments and linkages to ensure implementation of a comprehensive plan.

Based on strong efforts by many parties to forge consensus, but tempered by the reluctance of many parties to engage in meaningful discussions to identify funding, commitments, and assurances to build trust, DVF retained the 2013 grade, “B-,” for 2014. As noted previously, the continual repetition of the same positions and proposals has delayed action. The DVF notes that there is no forum or process for considering, addressing, and resolving these big issues and lawsuits remain the mechanism of choice to advance stakeholder interests and stop action. The lawsuits cost time and resources that would be better spent developing science and workable solutions.

Stakeholders and State and Federal agencies need new mechanisms for increasing understanding, clarifying issues, identifying solutions, and developing agreements.

### **Linkage and Integration is Essential**

In previous report cards, DVF stressed the urgency for action and the essential importance of leadership. Fortunately, there has been improvement in leadership and coordination over the past three years in all agencies. There is more shared knowledge and a better understanding of the inherent interconnectedness of the agencies with regards to the Delta. These improvements led to the development of the *California Water Action Plan*. Leaders and managers are coordinating better on major programs. In addition, science programs are more closely integrated with policy decisions and efforts to implement more collaborative science are increasing.

Across stakeholder interests, there is broad support for comprehensive, integrated actions to address Delta issues and conflicts. Over the last eight months, DVF and others convened discussions among water users, Delta counties, and several environmental groups to explore support for an integrated approach that would put more specifics and action in the *California Water Action Plan*. This group reached agreement relatively quickly on the principles of an integrated approach (see Principles of Agreement on page ES-6). In spite of that broad agreement, challenges remain in fleshing out the details of how to achieve a comprehensive “Water Fix” for California, the sequence of actions, and the mechanisms for ensuring progress in all areas without bogging down decisions and actions.

However, improved coordination among agencies and principles of agreement are not sufficient to assure workable solutions and earn public trust. Agencies and stakeholders must develop accountability mechanisms to assure progress on the major components of the *DVSP* and subsequent implementing legislation as a cohesive strategy in all areas—levees, conveyance, storage, ecosystem restoration, flood management, water quality, economic development, etc. These commitments are the first, and most important, step in resolving the historic conflicts about the Delta and building public trust that the State will implement solutions to solve the Delta challenge. Commitments can be structured in a way that does not bog down decisions and action.

The Delta Vision Foundation finds reason for optimism. The opportunity is now to refine a comprehensive action plan and fashion commitments and assurances to reinforce accountability for implementing a workable solution.

## California Water Fix Coalition Points of Agreement

The following are the agreements that form the basis of the policy and action recommendations embodied in the Water Fix Policy Paper, a set of recommendations to advance the *California Water Action Plan* for important actions for the Delta, including regional water management and efficiency, headwaters management, storage, conveyance, habitat restoration, and levees and floodplains. The agreements were developed and supported by a diverse group of Delta interests, including: water users upstream, in, and downstream of the Delta; leaders in the Delta counties, environmental interests, and civic leaders in the San Joaquin Valley.

1. California precipitation, averaged over a long-term period, provides sufficient water to meet reasonable needs for drinking water, ecosystem protection, and economic uses. The problem is that precipitation is highly variable year-to-year and current infrastructure is unable to capture available surpluses in wetter periods to help carry the state through drought.
2. The water resources of the state, including surface and groundwater, need to be managed more efficiently and in a more integrated way to achieve multiple benefits. California's aquatic ecosystems are highly stressed and/or collapsing, in part due to flow alteration, loss of physical habitat, introduction of non-native species, and pollution caused by human activity.
3. All parties want to achieve the co-equal goals, while protecting and enhancing the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place.
4. The current water system does not and cannot achieve the co-equal goals because it does not offer the flexibility to store water when it is abundant and move it to where it is needed when it is needed in a way that is consistent with the achievement of the co-equal goals. Improved water management and water use efficiency in all regions is necessary to help balance needs of the Delta.
5. Improved Delta conveyance alone will not address the co-equal goals; a comprehensive plan of integrated actions is required to achieve them.
6. Moving water through the Delta is complex and highly controversial. All of us agree that the status quo on conveyance is not sustainable. Some of us think that Improved Through-Delta Conveyance alone can be the solution. Others of us conclude that Dual Conveyance, which includes both Through-Delta Conveyance and a new isolated component, is necessary. To resolve the longstanding conflicts regarding conveyance, measures to improve through-Delta conveyance and investments in new storage to improve flexibility of water operations and water management should be pursued expeditiously while dual conveyance continues through its decision process.
7. Improved water management and a sustained commitment to continuous improvement in water use efficiency in all regions are necessary to increase system flexibility and reduce conflicts resulting from scarcity.
8. Protection and enhancement of headwaters areas is needed to increase retention, contribute to system flexibility, and adapt to climate change.
9. It is vitally important that the proposed system solution consider the economic interests of every affected region and costs are allocated based on the benefits received, including general public benefits, e.g., environmental enhancement and meeting drinking water needs of disadvantaged communities.
10. Any solution to achieve the co-equal goals must be developed consistent with the public trust, state and federal environmental requirements, water rights, and area of origin protections.

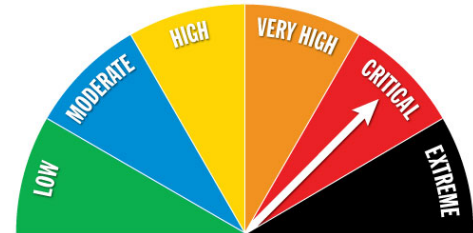


## Status of the Two Co-Equal Goals

The Delta Vision Foundation *2014 Delta Vision Report Card* assessment of the status of the Two Co-Equal Goals describes the risk that substantial, undesirable outcomes could occur for California. It is based on the observations and perspectives of the people who provided input to the Delta Vision Foundation.

### Delta Ecosystem

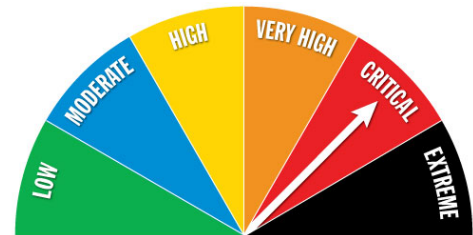
The Delta ecosystem remains at critical risk of failure. Since the Delta Vision Task Force began its work in early 2007, substantial effort has been expended to develop the *DVSP*, implementing legislation, implementation guidelines, and project plans, including the *Delta Plan*, *Delta Economic Sustainability Plan*, *Delta Conservancy Strategic Plan*, *Central Valley Flood Protection Plan*, and public draft *Bay-Delta Conservation Plan*. While effort and attention on the Two Co-Equal Goals and plans to achieve them is commendable, there have been few “on-the-ground” changes to protect and restore the Delta ecosystem.



The scope and scale of necessary actions to restore and recover a functioning ecosystem in the Delta is substantial. Habitat improvements of all types and revised water management strategies are needed. Additional pilot projects, with monitoring and performance evaluation, are needed immediately. Restoration projects on the drawing boards for 10 to 20 years must now move promptly into implementation and adaptive management. The core agencies (Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Water Resources, Delta Conservancy, and State and Federal Water Contractors Agency), along with Federal agencies and non-governmental organizations, and in coordination with local landowners, must develop an implementation focus through further collaboration to accelerate habitat restoration and demonstrate measurable improvements in ecosystem function.

### Water Supply Reliability

The severity of the 2014 drought demonstrates that water supply reliability statewide also remains at critical risk of failure (the drought is also affecting important aquatic habitats and species). Just three years after the wet 2011 water year, snowpack and some reservoirs are at historic lows, and agricultural allocations are extremely low, stressing groundwater supplies, which are already overdrafted in many areas. These wet-dry year cycles demonstrate the inadequacy of California water management and need for infrastructure and operational improvements.



The complexity and challenge of increasing flexibility and security in the State water supply system is daunting. As with ecosystem restoration, the urgency for action cannot be understated. Increasing the flexibility to capture more water in wet years and make it available where needed in dry years requires substantial planning and investment, which has taken decades. Storage studies have released several evaluation documents, but decisions are elusive. Long-term conveyance and storage studies must be integrated to identify workable solutions that increase water availability and storage for people and the economy in wet years and leave water in the Delta and its tributaries for fish and habitat in dry years. Design, implementation, and testing of through-Delta conveyance and Delta water quality improvements have stopped completely. Concerted, focused action is needed to finalize and implement interim actions. Regional water management planning and implementation must continue as a collaborative effort between the State and local government, with consideration of and linkage to improved water management flexibility for the Delta. Long-term funding for both infrastructure investment and water management is needed now.

## Comprehensive, Integrated Approach

The *DVSP* described a comprehensive set of integrated and linked goals, strategies, and actions to achieve the Two Co-Equal Goals. In the five years since the *DVSP*, the State and stakeholders lost sight of the comprehensive approach and focused attention on just two components of a comprehensive approach—Delta habitat restoration and conveyance, to be implemented through the *Bay Delta Conservation Plan*. At the same time, the Delta Stewardship Council prepared the *Delta Plan*, but deferred critical issues and actions, such as explicit objectives and performance measures for healthy ecosystem function and water supply reliability, Delta levee investment priorities, near-term actions, and the Interagency Implementation Committee.

The current drought crisis demonstrates the consequences of this combined narrow focus and action deferral. The water management system does not have the flexibility to meet the needs of people and the environment, just three years after a wet year. The responses to the drought conditions may further undermine the trust that is so critical for advancing actions to achieve the Two Co-Equal Goals. The premise of capturing more water in wet years and reducing demand on the Delta watershed in dry years as the means to achieve the Two Co-Equal Goals depends on consistent, reliable constraints on diversions in dry years and water management facilities to capture, move, and store supplies in wet years. California is not prepared for either continued drought conditions or more extreme wet conditions.

In each previous *Report Card*, the Delta Vision Foundation recommended immediate action to improve leadership and coordination among State and Federal agencies; increase transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement, and accelerate implementation of critical near-term actions. DVF is encouraged by the movement on these recommendations in the past year as demonstrated by the *California Water Action Plan*, the initial meeting of the Delta Plan Interagency implementation Committee, and accelerated funding for drought relief actions. However, all of these actions could have and should have started in 2010.

Plans and policies are not effectively linked to performance, monitoring, and accountability. Without leadership, commitments, accountability, and action, the State and stakeholders will remain in the endless do-loop of plan, approve, sue, and plan again. State and Federal agencies and stakeholders must refocus efforts to develop policies, assurances, and commitments that link actions and incentive performance to achieve the Two Co-Equal Goals while protecting and enhancing the Delta as an evolving place.

## Conclusions

The Delta Vision Foundation identified the following overall conclusions about efforts to achieve the Two Co-Equal Goals while protecting and enhancing the Delta as an evolving place. Three conclusions offer hope for the State's ability to address the complex Delta problems that have defied solution for decades.

- 1. The Two Co-Equal Goals influence discussion and decision-making across all organizations.**
- 2. The level of effort and coordination remains impressive, major plans have advanced, and the Governor's Administration has worked diligently to break down silos and increase coordination.**
- 3. Science programs are improving collaboration and increasing independent reviews.**

However, the status of each of the Two Co-Equal Goals remains critical, threatening California's environmental and economic future. The State, Federal agencies, and stakeholders have made little, if any, progress in reducing the risks and resolving historic conflicts that have impeded progress. The following are five factors that demonstrate the underlying reasons for the overall lack of progress and results.

- 1. Near-term actions are stalled or ignored.**
- 2. Performance outcomes are missing.**
- 3. The *California Water Action Plan* lacks action and accountability.**
- 4. The State lacks focus and capacity for implementation.**
- 5. Important Delta programs are underfunded.**

## Recommendations

### Program, Process, Partnerships, Permitting, and Performance

Improving the conditions in the Delta to achieve the Two Co-Equal Goals, while protecting and enhancing the Delta as an evolving place is a complex, multi-faceted, “wicked” problem. For the past five years, legislators, agency leaders and staff, and stakeholders have been working diligently to advance many aspects of the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan*. The Governor’s Administration is to be commended for recent work to advance a *California Water Action Plan*, including many of the necessary actions for the Delta. However, the Delta Vision Foundation finds that additional focus and action are needed to improve and accelerate implementation and results. The current drought demonstrates the conflicts and consequences for both the economy and ecosystem if the State, Federal Government, and stakeholders do not work together to implement the right program, in the right way, with the right performance accountability.

The following “Five Overall Recommendations” address the program, process, participation, permitting, and performance needed to establish a sustainable Delta and address the severe risks and crises on the horizon. The recommendations provide a roadmap for the State Administration, Legislature, Federal agencies, and stakeholders to act with the necessary urgency to advance the Two Co-Equal Goals while protecting and enhancing the Delta as an evolving place. Strong, visionary leadership is needed to establish the alignment, assurances, accountability, and action of State and Federal agencies in solving Delta challenges. That leadership must come from the Governor and Secretaries of the Department of the Interior (Interior) and Department of Commerce (Commerce). Further, the leaders must work with agency directors and stakeholders to develop the commitments and accountability to assure action, progress, and results that will endure through changes in administrations. The *2014 Delta Vision Report Card* also includes 106 specific recommendations regarding actions progress and organization leadership and effectiveness.

#### 1. Program: Integrated System Approach

The cornerstone of the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* is that it is a comprehensive set of integrated, linked actions to address the complex Delta issues, including both near-term and long-term actions. To date, planning and implementation has not reflected a similar comprehensive approach by the State and others. Near-term actions do not have the focus, leadership, funding, and action plans necessary to accelerate implementation and address immediate needs. High priority planning activities, such as levee investment strategies and funding and financing plans are barely beginning. Delta conveyance has been the sole focus of the Administration and certain water users. Surface and groundwater storage investigations are not integrated with Delta conveyance and operations. Delta levee improvements are not planned and coordinated with conveyance and water quality needs. Recently, the final *Delta Plan* and the *California Water Action Plan* begin to describe a more comprehensive strategy, but additional alignment, actions, schedules, and directed funding are needed to achieve results.

**Near-term Actions.** The Governor’s Administration, in cooperation with the Delta Stewardship Council, Federal agencies, and stakeholders should immediately identify and develop a five-year action plan, with schedules and funding commitments, to complete high priority projects and pilot programs. High priority projects and pilot programs include: strategic levee investments to protect critical islands, water quality, water supply, and ecosystem function; immediate restoration of floodplain and tidal habitats; working landscapes; and physical and operational improvements for Delta water operations (barriers, fish screens, and diversion timing).

**Long-term Actions.** Within 12 months, the Governor’s Administration, in cooperation with the Delta Stewardship Council, Federal agencies, and stakeholders should develop a work plan, schedule, responsibilities, and funding needs for completing the core components of the *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* and subsequent legislation by 2030. Core components include: Delta ecosystem restoration; substantial new surface and groundwater storage; improved Delta conveyance; and resilient Delta levees. The State must support efforts to integrate the analyses to demonstrate regional and system-wide benefits and achievement of the Two Co-Equal Goals.

## 2. Process: Concurrent Action and Accountability

The prioritization and sequencing of actions and programs is a significant source of conflict and inaction. Every interest group has a different preferred action that should proceed first and anxiety that resources dedicated to other actions will undermine their preferred actions. State and Federal agencies lack resources and capacity to lead, review, and implement major components of an integrated approach simultaneously. Comprehensive approaches as described in the *Delta Plan* and *California Water Action Plan* lack the actions, commitments, and assurances to convince skeptical interest groups and beneficiaries that results will be achieved in all areas.

**State Leadership.** The Governor's Administration must take the lead, in cooperation with the Delta Stewardship Council and Federal agencies, to develop and describe the concurrent actions and commitments to assure implementation of a comprehensive, integrated program. Wherever sequencing of actions is needed to address resource constraints, reliable commitments and assurances should be developed to ensure comprehensive implementation.

**Resources for Action.** Water users, other stakeholders, and the public must support additional resources and capacity for State and Federal agencies to provide effective leadership, oversight, and guidance for implementing the comprehensive plan. The agencies must be focused on decisions, actions, and results.

**Accountability.** Accountability mechanisms, in the form of reliable commitments, assurances, and transparency must be embedded in all aspects of implementation. Interest groups and water users must be accountable for statewide needs. Regulatory agencies must be accountable for actions and decisions using best available information. Implementing agencies must be accountable for efficiency and results. All parties must be accountable for assuring prompt progress and results to implement a comprehensive, integrated plan to address the Delta challenges.

## 3. Partnerships and Participation: State, Federal, and Local Collaboration

Effective, constructive working relationships in all arenas are critical for moving from planning and conflict to implementation and results. Unfortunately, in the last five years there are too many instances of agencies and interests undermining opportunities for constructive discussions and problem solving with predetermined conclusions, positional statements, or refusals to participate or consider alternate views and solutions. Everyone has done this. However, there are several encouraging signs. The Governor has directed and encouraged State agencies to work collaboratively across organizational lines and to participate fully in the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee. The Association of California Water Agencies developed agreement across its diverse membership on a *Statewide Water Action Plan* as a comprehensive approach to California water issues and to support the Two Co-Equal Goals. The Delta Conservancy convened foundational discussions among agencies and stakeholders to explore interests, needs, and outcomes to build better understanding and working relationships. The Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program is advancing joint science to address key issues associated with the biological opinions for operating the Central Valley Project and State Water Project. These recent activities are encouraging, but additional work is needed to integrate these activities and make them meaningful.

**State and Federal Agency Coordination and Collaboration.** The Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee is a critical resource for fostering and demonstrating agency alignment and action and promoting public accountability. The Delta Stewardship Council, working with the other agencies, must establish a meaningful agenda for leadership coordination and problem-solving, including developing the work plan and responsibilities for implementing the relevant elements of the *California Water Action Plan*. The committee should meet monthly until that work plan is complete and at least quarterly thereafter.

**Stakeholder Engagement and Public Accountability.** State and Federal agencies have not encouraged or implemented robust and meaningful stakeholder and public engagement necessary to advance integrated, workable solutions and resolve conflicts. Public meetings and hearings are not sufficient for the complex challenges. Stakeholders from all perspectives are seeking meaningful engagement and problem-solving. State and Federal agencies must be the “honest brokers” to consider, address, and resolve stakeholder differences; or the courts will. Specifically, the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee must charter work groups of agency staff, stakeholders, and scientists to develop and advance core components of comprehensive solutions such as ecosystem restoration through the nascent Restoration Network, water storage, regional water management and water use efficiency, and Delta levees.

**Public and User Partnerships.** Partnerships among State and Federal agencies, users, and beneficiaries are critical for successful implementation of certain projects, including water storage, levee improvements, and regional water management. State and Federal agencies must improve leadership, guidance, and definition for the structure of these partnerships and beneficiaries must engage as constructive partners to contribute resources and funding. Together, public agencies and users must define expected outcomes, responsibilities, decision steps, and implementation actions.

**Local Collaboration.** The necessary physical changes for ecosystem restoration, Delta protection, and water facilities will affect landowners and local economies wherever they occur. Project proponents, landowners, and local governments must work together to avoid, reduce, and mitigate construction, management, and operations impacts.

**Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management.** The *Delta Plan* and the Delta Science Program’s *Delta Science Plan* set a framework for collaborative science and adaptive management. Initial improvements are underway, but science programs remain fragmented. Science management and adaptive management efforts must recognize and improve the relationship of the science to the policy and decision-making for comprehensive Delta solutions. Science synthesis must be further improved. Engineering and economic considerations must be incorporated. Policy makers must clearly define the critical questions where science can support decisions and action.

#### 4. Permitting: Ecosystem Function

Nowhere do the conflicts in the Delta come into more focus than in the permitting and regulatory milieu—flows, wetlands, water quality, and navigable waterways. The *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* set a direction or implementing a more robust management approach focused on ecosystem function to support important species, rather than a protection strategy for individual species. California is in the midst of a transition from a single species/single medium regulatory approach to a multi-species/habitat management approach. The regulatory institutions must continue to evolve oversight, permitting, and decision-making to support and guide projects that improve ecosystem function, while at the same time ensuring connections and linkages among projects to maintain a broader, workable strategy. Similarly, project proponents must be held accountable for defined ecosystem performance outcomes, even if they require change and adaptation.

#### 5. Performance: Actions and Results

Achieving the Two Co-Equal Goals while protecting and enhancing the Delta as an evolving place cannot be achieved without clear and specific performance goals and objectives. The *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* included performance measures for each of its seven goals and the 2009 legislation set the expectation for implementing a performance management approach for achieving the Two Co-Equal Goals while protecting and enhancing the Delta as an evolving place. Unfortunately, since 2009 there has been little or no progress in defining and reporting on the top-level performance outcomes and metrics. The *Delta Plan* did not fully characterize goals and objectives for the Two Co-Equal Goals or Delta vitality and security. While the *Bay Delta Conservation Plan* has taken substantial strides to define performance outcomes for the Delta ecosystem, the Independent Science

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Board highlights the need for improved performance indicators, better triggers and links to adaptive management, and more robust structure and governance for implementing adaptive management.

**Delta Plan Performance.** The *Delta Plan* should be updated as soon as possible with specific definitions of the Two Co-Equal Goals and how progress toward them will be measured. The *Delta Plan* should also include specific, measurable performance measures for the primary objectives embodied in each chapter. The following are the top-level performance measures recommended in the *2013 Delta Vision Report Card*.

### Ecosystem

- Population trends for high priority aquatic species such as delta smelt and winter-run Chinook salmon.
- Population trends for high priority avian species.

### Water Supply Reliability

- Trends in water diversions from the Delta watershed, by water year type and region (the objective is more in wet and less in dry).
- Trends in water availability at the end user from all sources, by water year type and region.

### Delta as Place

- Annual farm gate receipts and total agricultural output and annual economic output from recreation and hospitality for the Delta region, showing actual amounts and growth trends relative to other regions.
- Delta levee failure risk and quantification of people, assets, and infrastructure at risk.

### Fiscal

- Planning and administrative costs as a percentage of construction/implementation costs for State and Federal programs and projects (objective is downward trend), benchmarked against similar multi-disciplinary restoration programs.

**Policy-level Monitoring and Reporting.** The Delta Stewardship Council, in cooperation with the Delta Science Program and State and Federal agencies, should establish and maintain a monitoring and reporting program for top-level performance measures to inform policy makers and assure transparency and accountability for both actions and results.

## Information Sources for the 2014 Delta Vision Report Card

- Online survey of stakeholders, agency staff, and community members.
- Leadership questionnaire of agency leadership and select interviews.
- Stakeholder questionnaire of stakeholder leaders and select interviews.
- Reports, plans, and online progress reports of agency plans, policies, and actions.
- Agency and stakeholder presentations at public meetings, workshops, and conferences.

The complete *2014 Delta Vision Report Card* and appendices are available at [www.deltavisionfoundation.org](http://www.deltavisionfoundation.org).

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