

## Bay Delta Conservation Plan

The Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is intended to be a comprehensive plan for sustaining delta fish populations while providing for continued water delivery. Conceived and started in 2006, the BDCP is incorporating the Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) Act principals of ecosystem, species and habitat conservation and management to achieve its goals. As an NCCP, the BDCP would provide comprehensive incidental “take” authorization of species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), avoiding the often litigious and controversial approach of individual permits for various elements of the state and federal water project construction and operation. Development of the BDCP will include extensive science-based research and evaluation in order to provide the necessary take authorization of species protected under CESA and the federal endangered species act for the State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project (CVP).

The planning process was initiated in 2006, and is led by the Natural Resources Agency and guided by a 19-member steering committee comprised of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Water Resources, Bureau of Reclamation, state and federal water contractors, six environmental organizations and the Farm Bureau. The BDCP has two goals: the recovery of protected species, which are in severe decline, and ensuring water supply reliability. It is intended to address these issues more comprehensively than by just constraining flows and SWP and CVP water operations, which already have been undertaken. A primary consideration is to construct a new water conveyance structure around the Delta for this purpose.

Some stakeholders view the BDCP as a comprehensive mechanism to resolve long-standing conflicts over water supply and the health of the Delta ecosystem. Others, including agricultural interests, county governments, area residents and some environmental organizations, believe an alternative method for conveyance will reduce support for maintenance of the Delta’s islands, convert agriculture land to wetland habitat, undermine existing and proposed county conservation plans, reduce Delta water quality and open the door for the export of more water from the Delta.

DFG is an active participant in the development of the BDCP and will be ultimately responsible for considering approval of the plan as an NCCP to authorize take of species protected under CESA. Currently, staff is involved in technical and management work groups that analyze and review data, generate physical modeling outputs, provide technical assistance and guide the development of environmental documents to minimize adverse ecological effects from using the Delta as a conveyance facility.