
State Water Resources Control Board

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT BIOLOGICAL GOALS FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT SAN FRANCISCO BAY/SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA ESTUARY WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is seeking written public comments on draft biological goals for fall-run Chinook salmon in the lower San Joaquin River and its three salmon-bearing tributaries, the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Rivers (collectively “LSJR”) developed pursuant to the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary, as amended on December 12, 2018 (Bay-Delta Plan or Plan). The LSJR biological goals are proposed for consideration by the State Water Board as early as the end of the year.

BACKGROUND

The Bay-Delta Plan establishes water quality objectives for the protection of beneficial uses in the Bay-Delta watershed. The most recent and ongoing updates to the Bay-Delta Plan are being made to address prolonged and precipitous declines of native aquatic species and the ecosystems they depend on. The December 2018 amendments to the Bay-Delta Plan revised flow objectives for the reasonable protection of fish and wildlife beneficial uses in the LSJR. The State Water Board is also currently conducting a review and update of the Bay-Delta Plan to address reasonable protection of fish and wildlife beneficial uses in the Sacramento/Delta.

Biological goals for the Bay-Delta Plan are quantitative metrics that describe desired biological outcomes of flow and non-flow management actions to protect fish and wildlife beneficial uses. The 2018 Bay-Delta Plan requires the State Water Board to consider approval of biological goals for the LSJR within 180 days of approval of the Plan amendments. This public comment process is part of that consideration. The biological goals are intended to inform the Plan’s adaptive methods, effectiveness of its program of implementation, including its monitoring and evaluation program, and need for future changes to the Plan. The biological goals are not intended to be used for compliance purposes. The Bay-Delta Plan specifies that biological goals will be developed for salmonids including goals for abundance, productivity, diversity, population spatial extent, distribution, and structure. Fall-run Chinook salmon were selected due to their more abundant status and ability to serve as an indicator species for conditions protective of native fish species. The State Water Board may also

establish biological goals for other species and associated environmental parameters. The biological goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, result-focused (relevant) and include a time frame for when they will be achieved.

The Bay-Delta Plan envisions the creation of a Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Working Group (STM Working Group) as a way of facilitating coordination among the State Water Board and interested water agencies and other stakeholders who have expertise in LSJR fisheries management, hydrology, operations, and monitoring and assessment needs. Efforts are currently underway to develop a Voluntary Agreement (VA) with alternative methods for providing reasonable protection of fish and wildlife beneficial uses in the Bay-Delta watershed. The VA process has created a significant number of working groups and participation in those working groups may overlap with membership on the STM Working Group. To help provide capacity for stakeholders who are also engaged in VA negotiations, the State Water Board is taking an initial step in naming a coordinator responsible for reaching out to potential STM Working Group members and other interested persons in the LSJR watershed to solicit recommendations on the biological goals. The STM Working Group coordinator is Erin Foresman, Environmental Program Manager, Bay-Delta Planning and Oversight, and can be reached at (916) 341-5359 or Erin.Foresman@waterboards.ca.gov.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

The draft biological goals are posted at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/bay_delta/

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

Written comment letters on the Bay-Delta Plan draft biological goals must be **received by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Friday, October 25, 2019**. The State Water Board requests that comment letters on the Bay-Delta Plan draft biological goals be submitted via email to Bay-Delta@waterboards.ca.gov (please note that the email capacity is less than 50 megabytes total). Please title the subject line: "Comment Letter – Bay-Delta Plan Draft Biological Goals." Electronic submission by email in pdf text format is preferred. The State Water Board appreciates submissions that conform to Universal Accessibility and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 standards.

FUTURE NOTIFICATIONS

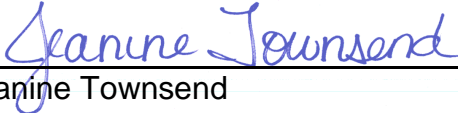
Any person desiring to receive future notices concerning the Bay-Delta Plan must sign up for the Lyris email distribution list. To sign up for the Lyris distribution email list, access the Email List Subscription form, select the box for "Bay Delta Notices" (located within the section entitled "Water Rights"), and provide the required information. The subscription form is located at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on this matter, please direct questions to Erin Foresman at (916) 341-5359 or erin.foresman@waterboards.ca.gov.

September 20, 2019
Date


Jeanine Townsend
Clerk to the Board