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## State Water Resources Control Board

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF  
REVISED DRAFT INITIAL BIOLOGICAL GOALS  
FOR LOWER SAN JOAQUIN RIVER FLOW OBJECTIVES  
FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT  
AND  
NOTICE OF WORKSHOP  
TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM  
STANISLAUS, TUOLUMNE, AND MERCED (STM) WORKING GROUP  
AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is seeking written public comments on revised draft initial 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 (Bay-Delta Plan or Plan), as amended on December 12, 2018. State Water Board staff also plan to hold a technical workshop to receive input and recommendations on possible revisions and improvements to the revised draft initial biological goals from members, or potential members, of the STM Working Group and the public. The workshop is scheduled to be held:

**July 18, 2022**

**1:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

**Remote Participation Only**

### **WORKSHOP TOPICS**

The workshop is offered to seek recommendations and comments from members, or potential members, of the STM Working Group and public on revisions to the revised draft initial biological goals for the LSJR. Staff specifically request input on biological goals that will contribute to meeting the overall goals for salmon populations, including the salmon doubling objective, and inform management of flow conditions to maintain viable native San Joaquin River fish populations migrating through the Delta for the following topics:

1. Definition – The Bay-Delta Plan requires biological goals to be specific, measurable, achievable, result-focused, and time-bound (SMART).
2. Achievability – Sources of additional evidence that inform whether the quantitative values, time-frame, and averaging periods of the revised draft initial biological goals are achievable.
3. Role –The Bay-Delta Plan states that the biological goals will be used to evaluate effectiveness of the program of implementation and inform adaptive methods, the San Joaquin Monitoring and Evaluation Program (not yet initiated), and future changes to the Bay-Delta Plan.
4. Abundance – The use of escapement as the metric for defining the abundance goal, identifying a specific numeric value for abundance and a time-frame for achieving the escapement value, and feasibility of the abundance goal.
5. Salmon Protection Objective – The role of biological goals with respect to the salmon protection objective and the relationship between the salmon protection objective<sup>1</sup> and biological goals.
6. Hatchery Issues – The inclusion of adult hatchery fish as contributing to the abundance goal, feasibility of improving hatchery marking practices for fall-run Chinook salmon, and feasibility of and means for completing and implementing hatchery management plans for fall-run Chinook salmon in San Joaquin River tributary hatcheries.
7. Process – The process for adoption of revised draft initial biological goals and future review and updates to any adopted biological goals.

## **WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION INFORMATION**

**If you wish to view the workshop only**, a webcast will be available at <https://video.calepa.ca.gov/> (closed captioning available). This option should be used for viewing the workshop **UNLESS** you intend to provide oral comments or ask clarifying questions during the workshop.

**If you wish to make oral comments or ask clarifying questions during the workshop**, you must fill out a virtual speaker card using the [online form](#) provided for this workshop. Workshop participants should submit their online forms by **noon on July 13, 2022**. Staff will respond to your form with the information needed to join the workshop via the Zoom online platform. If you do not submit an online form, you may not be provided access to speak during the workshop and may be limited to viewing the webcast only. Comments should be technical in nature, addressing the topics identified above. Comments will be limited to 5 minutes per speaker unless you request to make a presentation. Presentations will be limited to no more than 15 minutes. If there are a

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<sup>1</sup> The Salmon Protection Objective in the Bay-Delta Plan requires that “water quality conditions shall be maintained together with other measures in the watershed sufficient to achieve a doubling of natural production of Chinook salmon from the average production of 1967-1991, consistent with the provisions of State and Federal law.”

large number of commenters, speakers may be asked to shorten their comments to accommodate all speakers.

If you wish to make a PowerPoint presentation at the workshop, please indicate so on the online form. PowerPoint presentations are required to be submitted to [LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov) no later than **noon on July 14, 2022**. Presentations must be in **PowerPoint format and should not include any transitions or external media sources**. Please be aware that State Water Board staff will be projecting and advancing PowerPoint slides during presentations. Speakers are encouraged to organize themselves as panels and should indicate this, if applicable, on their online form. Only one online form should be submitted for each panel presentation, clearly identifying the number and names of all panelists.

If you have any questions regarding how to participate in the workshop, please send an email to [LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov).

### **WRITTEN COMMENTS**

Written comment letters on the Bay-Delta Plan revised draft initial biological goals must be received by **12:00 p.m. (noon) on Monday, August 1, 2022**. The State Water Board requests that comment letters on the Bay-Delta Plan revised draft initial biological goals be submitted via email to [LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:LSJR-SD-Comments@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 Revised Draft Initial 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 2.1 standards.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Bay-Delta Plan establishes water quality objectives for the protection of beneficial uses in the Bay-Delta watershed, a program of implementation to achieve those objectives, and monitoring, evaluation, and study provisions. The State Water Board approved updates to the LSJR flow components of the Bay-Delta Plan for the reasonable protection of fish and wildlife in 2018. As part of this update, the State Water Board committed to the development of biological goals for the LSJR.

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 biological goals are intended to inform the Plan's adaptive methods along with other available scientific information, assess effectiveness of its program of implementation, guide development and assessment of the monitoring and evaluation program, and evaluate the need for future changes to the Plan. The biological goals are intended to be used for assessment purposes with other available information and are not tied to compliance actions. The 2018 LSJR update to 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 Bay-Delta Plan requires biological goals to be specific, measurable, achievable, result-focused (relevant) and include a time frame for when they will be achieved.

A draft initial biological goals report was released on September 20, 2019, with a comment period extending through October 25, 2019. The State Water Board received written comments from 16 agencies, entities, or individuals providing information to consider during the development of biological goals. The revised draft initial report addresses issues identified by the commenters throughout the report. A summary of comments and responses is also presented in the Section, *Response to Comments on the Draft Initial Biological Goals* of the report.

#### **DOCUMENT AVAILABILTY**

The revised draft initial biological goals are available on the [Implementation Activities for Lower San Joaquin River Flows](#) webpage.

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

For more information regarding LSJR flow objectives, implementation, and biological goals, visit the Bay-Delta Plan Update and Implementation of the [Lower San Joaquin River](#) webpage. For information on other Bay-Delta Plan update and implementation activities, please visit the [San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Estuary Bay-Delta Watershed Efforts](#) web page.

#### **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. Please visit the [Email Subscription Form webpage](#).

#### **CONTACT**

Individuals who require special accommodations are requested to contact staff at [LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov) prior to the workshop. If you have any questions regarding this notice or related efforts, you may send an email to [LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:LSJR-SD-Comments@waterboards.ca.gov).