

Public Hearing: Sacramento/Delta Update to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan (Bay-Delta Plan)

December 11, 2023



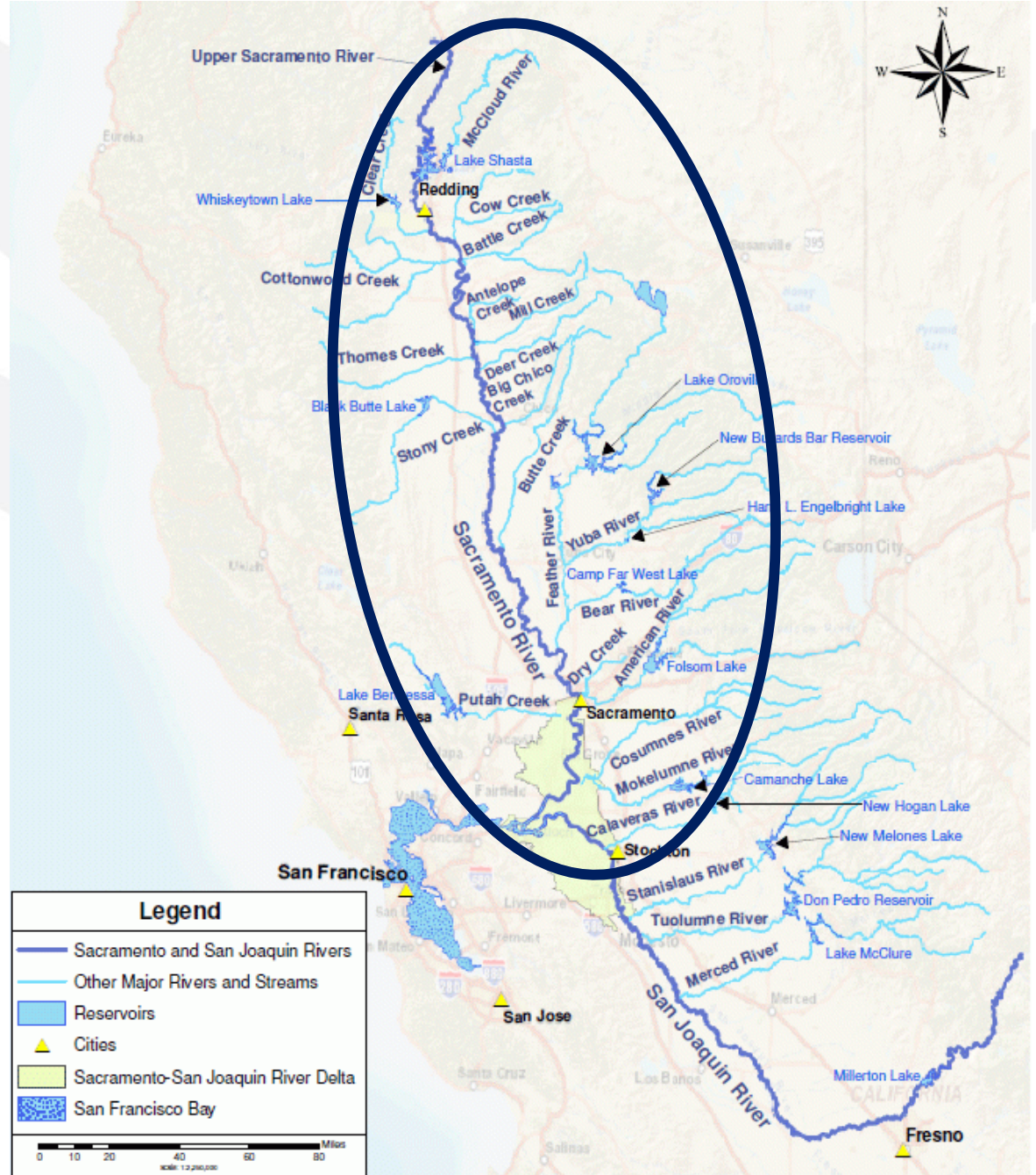
State Water Resources Control Board

Bay-Delta Plan

- Identifies beneficial uses of water, water quality objectives to protect those uses, a program of implementation to achieve the objectives, and monitoring and special studies
 - Beneficial uses: municipal and industrial, agricultural, fish and wildlife
 - Water quality objectives: narrative and numeric (primarily flow-dependent)
 - Program of implementation: flow and nonflow actions
 - Monitoring and evaluation to assess compliance and effectiveness of implementation actions

San Francisco Bay/ Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta) Watershed

Sacramento/Delta Update to the Bay-Delta Plan



Purpose of Updates to the Bay-Delta Plan

- Native species have undergone substantial population declines
- Aquatic ecosystem stressors:
 - Flow alteration
 - Habitat loss
 - Water quality
- Bay-Delta Plan updates are intended to establish flow and related measures to protect native species
- Those measures are then implemented through subsequent water right/water quality actions



Proposed Plan Amendments

- Possible Sacramento/Delta changes to the Bay-Delta Plan identified in 2018 Framework referred to as “proposed Plan amendments”
 - Year-round inflows of 55% of unimpaired inflows with an adaptive range from 45–65% that would apply to Sacramento River and Delta salmon bearing tributaries (Mokelumne, Cosumnes, Calaveras)
 - Narrative cold water habitat objective and implementation measures
 - Year-round inflow-based Delta outflows that would provide for required inflows and outflows
 - Interior Delta flows to avoid export related impacts
 - Science, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and other provisions

Proposed VAs

- Propose flow, habitat restoration, and other actions on Sacramento, Feather, American, Yuba, and Mokelumne Rivers, Putah Creek, and in Delta
- Propose: (1) a new narrative objective to achieve viability of native fish populations, and (2) to provide participating parties' share to contribute to achieving the existing narrative objective to double salmon populations by 2050
- Initial 8-year term proposed, following which VAs could be extended or modified, or regulatory pathway could apply if proposed VAs are not found to be effective
- Draft Staff Report identifies proposed regulatory pathway consistent with the inflow, outflow, and cold water habitat provisions of 2018 Framework, assumes pathway applies to non-VA regions, and applies if VAs not continued after initial implementation

Draft Staff Report

- Evaluates potential benefits and environmental/economic impacts of possible alternatives for updating the Sacramento/Delta components of the Bay-Delta Plan
- Assesses a range of alternatives, including proposed Plan amendments, proposed VAs, High and Low Flow alternatives, and modules
- Identifies proposed inclusion of tribal and subsistence fishing beneficial uses in the Plan
- Complies with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Water Code, and other laws
- Public's opportunity to review and comment on analyses
- Board has not decided on changes to the Bay-Delta Plan, which will be informed by public comments and other information

Anticipated Timeline

- **Fall 2023:** VA Scientific Basis Report Supplement Report submitted for independent scientific peer review
- **Late 2023/early 2024:** VA parties submit additional draft components of VA proposal (flow accounting, various agreements, governance charter) to the Board and for public review
- **Early to Mid 2024:** Release specific draft changes to Bay-Delta Plan, including program of implementation language, for public review and comment, and hold public meeting
- **Late 2024:** Develop responses to public comments on draft Staff Report and any needed changes to Staff Report and proposed changes to the Bay-Delta Plan for Board consideration
- **Late 2024:** Board meeting to consider adoption of Sacramento/Delta updates to Bay-Delta Plan and final Staff Report

Resources and Contact Information

For questions and to submit written comments:

SacDeltaComments@waterboards.ca.gov

Webpages:

Bay-Delta Watershed:
waterboards.ca.gov/bay_delta/

Sacramento/Delta Updates:
waterboards.ca.gov/bay_delta/comp_review.html

Draft Staff Report:
waterboards.ca.gov/bay_delta/staff_report.html

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