# **California Wetland Program Plan**

# 2023 - 2028



Prepared by the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup





Pursuant to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Enhancing State and Tribal Wetland Programs (ESTP) Initiative

# **Acknowledgements**

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# **Agency Participants**

People from the following agencies and organizations contributed to the California Wetland Program Plan:

California State Coastal Conservancy California Department of Fish and Wildlife California Natural Resources Agency California State Water Resources Control Board Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

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### 1. Purpose

This California Wetland Program Plan (Plan) serves as a comprehensive five-year strategy to direct and measure California's progress towards improving its existing wetland programs.

The Plan will also assist California agencies in applying for annual Wetland Program Development Grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for programs, projects, or activities that protect, manage, restore, and monitor California's wetlands and support the Plan.

This Plan should be considered a "living document" that will be reviewed and revised by the participating agencies as needed, in coordination with the California Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW). Updates to the Plan will be posted, as needed, on the CWMW website.

# 2. Participating Agencies

Regulation, funding, and management for wetlands and other aquatic resources falls under numerous agencies in California. This Plan was jointly developed by staff of the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), California State Coastal Conservancy (CSCC), Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (SSJDC), and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) with assistance from USEPA Region 9.

### 3. Overall Goal Statement

While California has a great diversity of wetlands, including coastal and inland wetlands and vernal pools, it is estimated that California has lost more than 90% of its historic wetlands overall, and more than 95% of its coastal wetlands<sup>1</sup>. The remaining wetlands are vulnerable to development, roads, farming practices, hydromodification, pollutants, invasive species, climate change, and a host of other potential stressors. The participating agencies developed the Plan with the shared overall goal of **increasing the abundance**, condition and diversity of California's wetlands and riparian areas, and sustaining and enhancing the delivery of ecosystem services.

# 4. State Laws Protecting California Wetlands

The California legislature has passed numerous laws to protect valuable aquatic resources within its jurisdiction, including wetlands. The 1969 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act broadly defines

"waters of the state" as "any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state."<sup>1</sup>

Wetlands are defined and protected in various laws and regulations, including the California Coastal Act<sup>2</sup> of 1976, the 1976 Keene-Nejedly California Wetlands Preservation Act<sup>3</sup>, the 1965 McAteer-Petris Act<sup>4</sup>, and the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act<sup>5</sup>. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)<sup>6</sup> also plays a role in wetlands protection and management by requiring that project impacts be disclosed and mitigated by approving agencies before permitting can be finalized. Additional laws have been enacted to provide further protection for wetlands in coastal counties and the San Francisco Bay area and the Delta.

Governor Pete Wilson signed the State Wetland Conservation Policy in 1993<sup>7</sup>, which requires agencies to work together to: (1) ensure no overall net loss and achieve a long- term net gain in the quantity, quality, and permanence of wetlands acreage and values in California in a manner that fosters creativity, stewardship, and respect for private property; (2) reduce procedural complexity in the administration of state and federal wetlands conservation programs; and (3) encourage partnerships to make landowner incentive programs and cooperative planning efforts the primary focus of wetlands conservation and restoration.

The Delta Reform Act of 2009<sup>8</sup> created the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) and established new standards for groundwater monitoring, statewide water conservation, enforcing Delta diversion and setting state policy that achieving water supply reliability and restoring the Delta's ecosystems must be applied coequally. The Delta Plan, required by the Delta Reform Act, is a comprehensive, long-term management plan for the Delta. It created new rules and recommendations to further the state's coequal goals for the Delta: Improve statewide water supply reliability and protect and restore a vibrant and healthy Delta ecosystem, all in a manner that preserves, protects, and enhances the unique agricultural, cultural, and recreational characteristics of the Delta. The Act also created the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy to be a lead agency for ecosystem restoration in the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

<sup>5</sup> Cal. Pub. Res. Code§§ 29000-29612

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cal.Water Code§ 13050(e)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cal. Pub. Res. Code§ 30121

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cal. Fish & Game Code § 2785

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Cal. Gov't Code§§ 66600-66694; Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14, §§ 10110-11990

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Cal. Pub. Res. Code§ 21000 et seq.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Office of the California Governor, Executive Order W- 59-93 California Wetlands Conservation Policy (1993), at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water issues/programs/cwa401/docs/wrapp2008/executive order w59 93.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/sen/sb 0001-0050/sbx7 1 bill 20091112 chaptered.html

# 6. California Water Quality Monitoring Council

In November 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)<sup>9</sup> was signed by the Secretaries of the Cal/EPA and the California Natural Resources Agency to establish the California Water Quality Monitoring Council (CWQMC). The MOU was mandated by CA Senate Bill 1070 (Kehoe, 2006)<sup>10</sup> and requires the boards, departments and offices within the Cal/EPA and the California Natural Resources Agency to integrate and coordinate their water quality and related ecosystem monitoring, assessment, and reporting. On December 22, 2020 a new MOU was signed that replaced the original MOU signed in 2007 and recognized the continued need for collaboration and coordination across the two agencies.<sup>11</sup>

CA Senate Bill 1070 (Water Code Sections 13167 and 13181) and the MOU require that the Monitoring Council develop specific recommendations to improve the coordination and cost-effectiveness of water quality and ecosystem monitoring and assessment, enhance the integration of monitoring data across departments and agencies, and increase public accessibility to monitoring data and assessment information. While the Monitoring Council may recommend new monitoring or management initiatives, it will build on existing effort to the greatest extent possible. The Monitoring Council published its initial recommendations in December 2008<sup>12</sup>, and its recommendations for A Comprehensive Monitoring Program Strategy for California in December 2010.<sup>13</sup>

### 6.1 California Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup

To support the CWQMC, the California Wetlands Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW) has provided periodic updates to the Wetland Program Plan. CWMW's mission is to improve the monitoring and assessment of wetland and riparian resources by developing a comprehensive stream, wetland, and riparian area monitoring plan for California and through increasing coordination and cooperation among local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, and non-governmental organizations. The workgroup reviews and coordinates technical and policy aspects of wetland monitoring tool development, implementation, and data use to improve wetland management in California.

The Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan (WRAMP) is a plan developed by CWMW for comprehensive monitoring and assessment of aquatic resources using a watershed or landscape context. WRAMP, like USEPA's three-tier monitoring and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\_council/docs/sb1070mou.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\_council/docs/sb1070chptrd.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> <u>https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\_council/docs/council\_mou\_12\_2020.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> <u>https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\_council/docs/sb\_1070\_full\_report\_final.pdf</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> <u>https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring\_council/docs/comp\_strategy\_all.pdf</u>

assessment framework, includes three levels of assessment and analysis, and provides the framework for making these three levels of assessment work together in the analysis of the overall condition and viability of aquatic resources within a watershed.

Although WRAMP has been applied to support a watershed approach to wetland and stream protection in California, the framework can be adjusted to generally support ecosystem and habitat planning, assessment, monitoring, and reporting.

- Level 1 assessments consist of map-based inventories of aquatic resources, including: rivers, streams, and riparian areas, plus related projects that have a direct effect on the distribution and abundance of aquatic resources. Level 1 maps may serve as the basis for landscape and watershed profiles and be used as a framework for Level 2 and 3 assessments.
- Level 2 assessments are rapid, field-based assessments that provide data on overall aquatic resource condition. In California, the California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) is the baseline for level 2 data collection. Other level 2 assessment methods may also be used when needed.
- Level 3 assessments are usually site-specific measures of specific resources. Plant species composition, nesting bird surveys, spawning success, and groundwater recharge rates are examples of level 3 data types. Types of level 3 assessments will vary from site to site.

# 7. State Agencies Involved in Wetlands Protection

### 7.1 California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)

#### 7.1.1 State Water Resources Control Board

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the nine affiliated Regional Water Quality Control Boards regulate discharges to wetlands under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act and the Clean Water Act.

Organizationally, the Water Boards are under the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). The Water Boards carry out regulatory functions, such as Clean Water Act §401 water quality certifications, monitoring, assessment, enforcement, and compliance. The SWRCB also develops statewide water quality plans, policies, and standards and determines water rights. The SWRCB directed staff, in Resolution Number 2008-0026, to develop a wetland protection policy using a phased approach. The first phase, completed in 2019, includes a wetland definition and a wetland regulatory mechanism based on the 404 (b) Guidelines (40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) parts

230-233). Future phases include establishing water quality standards for wetlands where existing standards may not be appropriate. SWRCB staff participates in wetland protection and advance mitigation efforts integrated with regional planning approaches including natural community conservation plans, habitat conservation plans, watershed plans, integrated water resource management plans, and state climate change initiatives.

On October 7, 2020, Governor Newsome issued Executive Order N-82-20 to combat climate change and biodiversity crises, which required implementation of actions to increase the pace and scale of environmental restoration and land management efforts by streamlining the State's process to approve and facilitate these projects. In November 2020, the California Natural Resources Agency, in coordination with CalEPA issued a report outlining an initiative (the Cutting Green Tape Initiative) which included 14 recommendations to improve regulatory efficiency for restoration projects. The Water Boards have supported this initiative by adopting in 2022 the Statewide Restoration General Order, which streamlines permitting for restoration projects.

### 7.2 California Natural Resources Agency

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) is a sister agency to CalEPA with 34 departments, boards, commissions, and conservancies under its umbrella, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (SSJDC), California State Coastal Conservancy (CSCC), California Coastal Commission (CCC), San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR), and California Department of Water Resources (DWR). CNRA is responsible for implementing the California Wetlands Conservation Policy, updating the state wetland inventory as outlined in the policy and the Keene-Nejedly Act, and identifying wetland restoration and enhancement opportunities.

In 2008 CWMW was convened to better coordinate the wetland monitoring activities of local, state, and federal agencies, tribes and non-governmental agencies involved in wetland monitoring and regulation (see CWQMC, above). CNRA staff and staff from SSJDC, SWRCB, CDFW, and CSCC participate in this group and provide technical input on a variety of monitoring and policy topics, including the development and use of CRAM and CRAM's use in monitoring and assessment programs in California.

#### 7.2.1 California Department of Fish and Wildlife

The mission of the CDFW is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for

their use and enjoyment by the public. CDFW works through both regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands and other aquatic resources.

In addition to the CWMW, CDFW participates in other efforts to assist in the coordination of wetland monitoring in the state, improve consistency among wetland-related regulatory efforts, support mapping efforts for the wetland resources of the state, and carry out wetlands conservation, management, and restoration activities in cooperation with partner agencies and organizations statewide.

CDFW supports efforts to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands through its various grant programs, including the Watershed Restoration Grant Program, Wetlands Restoration for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grant Program, and Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. CDFW also administers the California Waterfowl Habitat Program, which is an incentive-based conservation program that compensates private landowners for managing their land in accordance with annual work plans developed by CDFW. Consistent with its primary waterfowl habitat objectives, the program also endeavors to enhance habitat for other wildlife species that rely on these same habitat types.

CDFW has developed guidelines, policies, and procedures for establishing conservation and mitigation banks. CDFW is finalizing policies and guidelines for the new Regional Conservation Investment Strategies (RCIS) program. The RCIS program includes an advance mitigation mechanism to create compensatory mitigation credits under an approved RCIS. California's Fish and Game Code further authorizes the CDFW to issue Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreements for activities that cause impacts to wetlands associated with rivers, streams, and lakes.

CDFW is also an active participant in wetland restoration and management on its own lands (e.g., Hill Slough and Eden Landing in Suisun Bay), and as a partner with the Department of Water Resources under the Fish Restoration Program Agreement (FRPA). A dedicated program within the CDFW Bay Delta Region monitors the effectiveness of tidal wetland restoration included in the FRPA for providing food web and habitat benefits to listed fish species. The program also leads the Interagency Ecological Program Tidal Wetland Monitoring Project Work Team, which has developed conceptual models, a monitoring framework, and standard operating procedures for monitoring aquatic communities and habitat attributes of tidal wetlands in the upper San Francisco Estuary. Similarly, the CDFW Suisun Marsh Program works with DWR to study and monitor wetlands.

#### 7.2.2 Department of Water Resources

DWR is responsible for managing the state's water resources, as outlined in the California Water Plan, and for constructing, operating, and maintaining the State Water Project. Impacts to wetlands that result from its activities must be avoided, minimized, or mitigated based on permit conditions. DWR mitigates water quality impacts to the Suisun Marsh, manages the Upper Stream Restoration Program to help projects fix bank erosion and flood problems, provides staff to the Upper Sacramento River Advisory Council, develops and carries out the San Joaquin River Management Project, implements a Floodplain Management Program, and also works on establishing mitigation banks. In 2015, California EcoRestore (EcoRestore) was launched, which is a multi-agency initiative lead by DWR to advance at least 30,000 acres of critical habitat restoration and enhancement in California's Central Valley including the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta), Suisun Marsh, and Yolo Bypass region.

#### 7.2.3 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

The SSJDC leads efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta ecosystem in coordination with other governmental and non-governmental entities in the Delta. The SSJDC collaborates and cooperates with local communities to better coordinated monitoring, ecosystem restoration, and natural resource management that may impact California's wetlands.

The SSJDC has worked with the San Francisco Estuary Institute and other agencies to develop Project Tracker (https://ptrack.ecoatlas.org/), which tracks habitat restoration activity on EcoAtlas (https://www.ecoatlas.org/). Projects are viewable on the interactive map and summarized on individual project pages. Project Tracker provides detailed project information, such as acres of distinct habitat types, species benefitted, progress and status reports, and funding sources. The Project Tracker database provides visual displays and queries of the tabular and spatial project data. As new projects are developed and existing projects enter new phases, information is expanded and updated through the online data entry forms. New spatial data layers, such as "Modern Delta Habitat Types", allow users to evaluate projects within the context of existing ecological resources and other landscape characteristics and uses.

SSJDC administers several grant programs that support California wetland conservation, restoration, and enhancement, including the Proposition 1 Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality Grant Program for multi-benefit ecosystem and watershed protection projects in the Delta, the Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration Program to support restoration, conservation, and climate resilience for wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and Climate, Access, and Resource funding for projects

that support climate resilience, community access, and natural resource protection activities that benefit the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

#### 7.2.4 Delta Stewardship Council

The Delta Reform Act of 2009 created the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC). DSC is made up of seven members. Of the seven members, four are appointed by the Governor, one each by the Senate and Assembly, and the seventh member is the chair of the Delta Protection Commission. DSC's work advances the State's coequal goals for the Delta - a more reliable statewide water supply and a healthy and protected ecosystem, both achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique characteristics of the Delta as an evolving place. To do this, the Delta Plan was adopted in 2013, includes both regulatory policies and non-binding recommendations. The major regulatory tool of the Delta Plan is the covered actions process that require project proponents to show alignment with the Delta Plan.

The DSC chair also chairs the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee. SSJDC and the Delta Stewardship Council staff the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee's Restoration Subcommittee (DPIIC RSC), which focuses on restoration across the Delta's ecosystems, including many different wetland types. The DPIIC RSC formed in 2022 in response to amendments to the Ecosystems chapter of the Delta Plan and aims to provide forums for meaningful community participation in Delta restoration efforts, increase interagency collaboration to streamline restoration implementation, identify opportunities in restoration planning and long-term management efforts, and increase transparency and coordination around existing, new, and needed restoration funding.

Part of the Council is the Delta Science Program, charged with providing the best possible unbiased scientific information to inform water and environmental management decisions for the Delta. The Council appoints a lead scientist to oversee the program and also appoints the 10 members of the Delta Independent Science Board. In addition, the Science Program supports the Interagency Adaptive Management Integration Team, which discusses and coordinates strategies for implementing adaptive management for conservation efforts in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and related areas.

#### 7.2.5 California Coastal Commission

The California Coastal Act includes requirements related to coastal zone management and wetlands protection, including coastal development permits, and established the Coastal Commission as one of California's coastal regulatory and management agencies. The California Coastal Act prohibits dredge and fill activities in coastal wetlands, with the exception of low impact allowable uses such as restoration or research.

#### 7.2.6 California State Coastal Conservancy

The CSCC works through non-regulatory mechanisms to protect, restore, and enhance coastal wetlands, as well as other coastal resources. The CSCC may work on wetland restoration or enhancement projects directly or provide funding and technical assistance to government agencies and organizations for projects. Since its creation, the CSCC has built hundreds of miles of trails and preserved hundreds of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat, coastal farmland, and scenic open space. Many of the most-loved scenic, natural, and recreational resources of the California coast and the San Francisco Bay Area have been protected by the work of the Conservancy and its many partners.

CSCC is coordinating restoration activities efforts in the Bay through the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture and San Francisco Estuary Partnership and is supporting the work of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority. It has also been the lead on the recent update to the Baylands Ecosystem Habitat Goals which generally guides wetland restoration activities in the region. Along the Central Coast, the CSCC is involved in several wetland restoration programs, including the Morro Bay National Estuary Program, the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve Tidal Wetland Program, and Integrated Watershed Restoration Program, which stretches from Monterey County north to San Mateo. In the North Coast region, CSCC has helped establish the Humboldt Bay Initiative, a network of local partner agencies and nonprofits that work to further ecosystem-based management in Humboldt Bay, including wetland restoration. CSCC also sits on the Pacific Coast Joint Venture Management Board.

In Southern California, CSCC works to coordinate and facilitate wetlands restoration activities through the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (SCWRP).

SCWRP is a broad-based partnership of 18 state and federal agencies working in concert to improve coordination, pool resources, and advance the recovery of rivers, streams, and wetlands in coastal Southern California. SCWRP's Regional Strategy document guides project prioritization and shapes restoration and enhancement projects throughout the region. The Regional Strategy was updated in 2018 to include the bestavailable science on historical, present, and future changes to tidal wetlands. SCWRP also participates in CWMW to take advantage of knowledge and expertise from other portions of the state. SCWRP's participation in CWMW also provides the WRAMP framework with an excellent case study of regional cooperative monitoring, assessment, and planning. The CSCC provides staffing and serves as a fiscal agent for the SCWRP.

#### 7.2.7 San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

Pursuant to the McAteer-Petris Act, BCDC's regulatory responsibility covers the San Francisco Bay, being all areas that are subject to tidal action, including all sloughs, and specifically, the marshlands lying between mean high tide and five feet above mean sea level; tidelands (land lying between mean high tide and mean low tide); and submerged lands, salt ponds, and managed wetlands, as well as the an Suisun Marsh.as provided in the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act. BCDC also has jurisdiction over a 100-foot shoreline band, extending 100-feet upland of the Bay. BCDC issues permits for any placement of fill, extraction of material, or substantial change in use of land or water in the Commission's jurisdiction. BCDC's mission is to minimize Bay fill, ensure appropriate water-oriented development in the Bay, and ensure that development in and along the Bay provides maximum feasible public access. BCDC reviews projects for resilience and adaptability to sea level rise and other flood hazards and provides planning guidance to local governments to support planning for sea level rise. BCDC is responsible for updating the San Francisco Bay Plan, the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan and Local Protection Program. BCDC also serves as part of the state's Coastal Zone Management Act Coastal Management Program and reviews federal projects and projects that require federal approval or are supported with federal funds for consistency with the state coastal program. BCDC coordinates with partners to plan for protection, restoration, and enhancement of the San Francisco Bay and Suisun Marsh.

#### 7.2.8 California Department of Parks and Recreation

CDPR is responsible for managing wetlands located within the State Park System, administering the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Habitat Conservation Fund Grant Programs, and identifying wetlands preservation opportunities on lands adjacent to state parks.

#### 7.2.9 Wildlife Conservation Board

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) was created by legislation in 1947 to administer a capital outlay program for wildlife conservation and related public recreation. WCB is an independent Board with authority and funding to carry out an acquisition and development program for wildlife conservation. WCB's three main functions are land acquisition, habitat restoration and development of wildlife oriented public access facilities, which are carried out through various grant programs.

WCB manages multiple grant programs that fund wetland restoration statewide, including:

- The Inland Wetlands Conservation Program (IWCP): The IWCP was created to assist the Central Valley Joint Venture in its mission to protect, restore and enhance wetlands and associated habitats. The IWCP program funds acquisition of land or water for wetlands, acquisition of conservation easements, and restoration/enhancement of degraded wetland habitat within the Central Valley.
- The Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program supports a wide variety of restoration projects that fall outside of WCB's other mandated programs and contributes to the restoration/enhancement of freshwater/coastal wetlands and riparian habitat statewide.
- The Riparian Habitat Conservation Program develops coordinated conservation efforts aimed at protecting, preserving and restoring California's riparian ecosystems.

#### 7.2.10 Other Agencies

In addition to the various state agencies involved, regional and local agencies also regulate wetlands. Thus, there are multiple overlapping jurisdictions in regard to wetlands protection and management in California.

### 8. Plan Components

In 2007, the USEPA launched the Enhancing State and Tribal Programs (ESTP) Initiative<sup>14</sup> to enhance delivery of technical and financial support for wetlands programs. A foundation of the ESTP is the Core Elements Framework, which outlines the core elements of an effective state or tribal Wetland Program Plan. Wetland Program Plans describe overall program goals along with broad-based actions and more specific activities that will help achieve the goals. Wetland Program Plans, approved by the USEPA, qualify submitters to compete for a larger allocation of the USEPA Wetland Program Development Grants.

The Core Elements Framework identifies four core elements that comprise a comprehensive wetland program. The four core elements of an effective Wetland Program Plan are:

- 1. Monitoring and Assessment;
- 2. Regulatory Activities, including the Water Quality Certification Program;
- 3. Voluntary Restoration and Protection; and
- 4. Water Quality Standards for Wetlands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See <u>http://water.epa.gov/grants funding/wetlands/estp.cfm</u>

This Plan outlines specific activities over the next five years that are related to each core element. The attached spreadsheet tables below list actions related to each element and responsible agencies.

# 9. Attachments

CWMW Project Portfolio

# 10. Acronyms

California Coastal Commission (CCC) California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) California Department of Water Resources (DWR) California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) California Rapid Assessment Method (CRAM) California State Coastal Conservancy (CSCC) California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) California Water Quality Monitoring Council (CWQMC) California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup (CWMW) Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Commission California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee Restoration Subcommittee (DPIIC RSC) Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) Fish Restoration Program Agreement (FRPA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Regional Conservation Investment Strategies (RCIS) Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (SSJDC) San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development (BCDC) United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Wetland and Riparian Area Monitoring Plan (WRAMP) Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB)

### **11. Plan Authorization**

We, the undersigned, have reviewed this Wetlands Program Plan and direct our respective staff to work cooperatively towards its development and implementation as resources allow.

Karen Mogus, Deputy Director Division of Water Quality State Water Resources Control Board

Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer Sacramento San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

Mary Small

5/30/2023

Mary Small, Deputy Executive Officer State Coastal Conservancy Date

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We, the undersigned, have reviewed this Wetlands Program Plan and direct our respective staff to work cooperatively towards its development and implementation as resources allow.

Karen Mogus, Deputy Director Division of Water Quality State Water Resources Control Board

Campbell Ingram

4/28/23

Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer Sacramento San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Date

Mary Small, Deputy Executive Officer State Coastal Conservancy

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We, the undersigned, have reviewed this Wetlands Program Plan and direct our respective staff to work cooperatively towards its development and implementation as resources allow.

May 10, 2023

Karen Mogus, Deputy Director Division of Water Quality State Water Resources Control Board Date

Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer Sacramento San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Date

Mary Small, Deputy Executive Officer State Coastal Conservancy

Date

### Active Projects

_ast Updated:	3/2/2023					Projected			
Project Name CWMW Goal 1: Support WQMC	Project Vision	Status	Lead Agencies	Key Team Members	Start Date	End Date	Last Status Update	EPA Core Element	Notes:
RAM websites	Ensure websites have most recent information and are easily understood for the target audience.	Not started	CWMW co-chairs, State Water Board	Paul Hann, Melissa Scianni, Kevin O'Connor				Monitoring and Assessment	
WMW Goal 2: Develop and Maintain evelop New CRAM Modules, including	Tools							Monitoring	
pelta Channels/Riverine Tidal, acustrine, playa, dune, sea grass	Complete field books and associated materials for wetland habitats not covered by a currently available field book.	Not started	CCWG, SFEI, SCCWRP, State Water Boad, EPA	Kevin O'Connor, Sarah Pearce,				and Assessment	
Jpdate validated CRAM modules, as leeded. Includes field books, data heets, support materials, and eCRAM. Jpdate eCRAM to reflect latest version	Update validated CRAM modules as needed to address lessons learned, new science, and administrative needs.	Not started	CCWG, SFEI, SCCWRP, State Water Boad, EPA	Kevin O'Connor, Sarah Pearce				Monitoring and Assessment	
h the field books, including updating to he stressor index and removing the stressor checklist.	Ensure eCRAM reflects the most up to date field book for each validated module	Not started	SFEI					Monitoring and Assessment	
Jpdate eCRAM to allow batch uploads rom a spreadsheet	Modify eCRAM database to allow upload of multiple assessment areas from a spreadsheet. This will simplify and speed up entries for projects with many assessment areas.	Not started	SFEI	Cristina Grosso				Monitoring and Assessment	
Establish CRAM regional ambient assessment curves for each wetland ype.	Develop curves depicting regional ambient CRAM scores for available modules. These data will allow agencies and public to evaluate changes in wetland condition on a regional scale over time, and will allow better comparison of project specific scores to regional ambient data.	Not started	CCWG, SFEI, SCCWRP, Coasta Conservancy, State Water Boad, Regional Boards, EPA	-				Monitoring and Assessment	
Complete CRAM habitat development ypes for all wetland types.	Develop curves to predict how CRAM scores change over time at restoration sites. These curves will allow comparison of project specific CRAM scores to anticipated scores over time to evaluate whether projects are developing properly.	Not started	SFEI, CCWG, Coastal Conservancy, State Board, EPA	Kevin O'Connor, Sarah Pearce, Evyan Sloane, Katie Nichols				Monitoring and Assessment	
Establish methodology to use CRAM levelopment curves to forecast nitigation project success	Develop a methodology to use the habitat development curves to predict habitat development over time at compensatory mitigation sites, including how the curves can be incorporated into site specific performance standards.	Not started	State Board, EPA, USACE					Monitoring and Assessment Monitoring	
CRAM customer support	Investigate ways to provide ongoing support for CRAM trainees, agencies, and consultants.	Not started	CCWG, SFEI, SCCWRP	Kevin O'Connor, Sarah Pearce				and Assessment	
Jpdate EcoAtlas to better meet open data standards and communicate with other databases.	Ensure that EcoAtlas can efficiently share data with other key databases in CA	Not started	CDFW, State Water Board, Natural Resources, SFEI, CCWG, SCCWRP, SSJDC	Cristina Grosso, Jim Falter, Paul Hann				Monitoring and Assessment	Includes BIOS, CWIQS EMPA databases Initial work funded EPA
EcoAtlas Training	Develop how-to-guides, case study examples, and training tools for agency staff and permittees/constulants	In progress	EPA, SFEI	Cristina Grosso, Melissa Scianni	Jan 2022			Monitoring and Assessment Monitoring	contract money. Addition work/funding will be needed
EcoAtlas Dashboards	ldentify what new dashboards are needed by federal, state, and local agencies	Not started	SFEI	Cristina Grosso				and Assessment	
	Update Project Tracker to make it more user friendly, including		SFEI, SSJDC, Coastal Conservancy, CDFW, EPA,	Cristina Grosso, Rachel Wigginton, Evyan Sloane, Hildie Spautz, Melissa				Monitoring and	
Project Tracker Updates	modifying the pick lists to be more concise		BCDC	Scianni				Assessment	
Establish Water Board 401 online application system with ability to share certain permit application information	modifying the pick lists to be more concise The water boards are developing an online application system that will collect detailed delineation mapping information that can be compiled and used to improve/enhance CARI/EcoAtlas	Not started	BCDC	Scianni				Assessment Monitoring and	
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### **Ongoing Activities**

Last Updated:	3/2/2023				
Ongoing Activity Name	Project Vision	Lead Agency	Key Team Members	EPA Core Element	Notes:
CWMW Goal 1: Support WQM	-		Rey ream members	EPA Core Element	Notes.
Support the WQMC	Provide technical and policy input to support agency coordination, cost- effective water quality and ecosystem monitoring, information sharing and public access to collected data.	Co-chairs	Paul Hann, Melissa Scianni, Kevin O'Connor	Monitoring and Assessment	
Support the CWMW	Actively engage in meetings, review documents in advance of discussion, and provide technical and policy input on behalf of the member agency			Monitoring and Assessment	
Support the Level 1 Committee	Coordinate the review, development and implementation	SFEI, OPC, CWMW co- chairs	Cristina Grosso	Monitoring and Assessment	
Support the Level 2 Committee		State Water Board, CWMW co-chairs	Stephen Barrlow	Monitoring and Assessment	
Engage with other CWMC Committees CWMW Goal 2: Develop and M	Coordinate CWMW work with other Committees, as appropriate, including Healthy Watersheds.	CWMW co-chairs	Paul Hann, Melissa Scianni, Kevin O'Connor	Monitoring and Assessment	
Continue support and maintenance of the CA Aquatic Resources Inventory (CARI)			Cristina Grosso	Monitoring and Assessment	
GVVIVIVV Goal 3: AChieve consi	stent monitoring and assessment Contribute habitat project data				
Contribute to Project Tracker	from regulatory and grant programs. Require projects funded by Prop 1 grant programs to provide their data.		Evyan Sloane, Hildie Spautz, Rachel Wigginton	Monitoring and Assessment	
Support development of Regional restoration goals.	Participate in efforts and identify specific projects to bring to the CWMW. Known efforts include SF Bayland Goals, SF Subtidal Goals, SCWRP Regional Strategy, and Central Coast Regional Goals.	Coastal Conservancy, SSJDC, DSC	Dylan Chapple, EPA	Monitoring and Assessment	
Assist in assessing progress toward regional goals.	Assist in the reporting of progress toward meeting the SF Bay and Southern CA regional goals.	Coastal Conservancy,	Evyane Sloane (SCC), Rachel Wigginton, Dylan Chapple, EPA	Monitoring and Assessment	
Participate on mitigation bank interagency teams	Participate in the IRTs, PDT, NCCPs/HCPs, IWRPM, and Regional Advance Mitigation efforts to ensure consistent approaches and effective compensatory mitigation. Advance the goals of the Joint	State and Regional Water Boards, CDFW, EPA, USACE	IRT members	Regulatory	
Participate on and support the Joint Ventures, including Central Valley, SF Bay, Central Coast, and Pacific Coast.	Ventures and ensure consistent monitoring, including regional strategic planning, prioritizing implementation efforts, performing monitoring and research, and capacity building. Engage with Authority on their	Coastal Conservancy, CDFW , Central Coast Wetlands Group, Wildlife Conservation Board, SSJDC, BCDC		Voluntary Restoration	
Support San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority	strategic planning, development of Measure AA grant program, progress reporting, and external oversight of grants	Coastal Conservancy, BCDC		Monitoring and Assessment, Voluntary Restoration	
Support wetland, stream, and ocean protection and restoration and monitoring	Engage with partners through agency programs to support restoration, protection, and monitoring of aquatic habitats.	Coastal Conservancy, State Water Board, CDFW, Ocean Protection Council, Wildlife Conservation Board, SSJDC, DSC		Voluntary Restoration	
Support implementation of Fish Restoration Program, a biological monitoring program for fish and foodweb resources in restored tidal wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun March.	Engage with partners through agency programs to support restoration and monitoring of wetlands and aquatic habitats in	CDFW. DWR, SSJDC, DSC		Regulatory, Monitoring and Assessment	

### **Ongoing Activities**

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CWMW Goal 4: Outreach       Reach out to partners with work that overlaps with CWMW to achieve CWMW Goals.       Paul Hann, Melissa Scianni, Kevin       Monitoring and Assessment         Engage with CWMW partners       achieve CWMW Goals.       CWMW co-chairs       O'Connor       Assessment         Support landowners with restoration, management, and monitoring of aquatic habitats.       Work through existing agency education, and support for landowners.       Coastal Conservancy, SSJDC, CDFW, Ocean Protection Council, Wildlife Conservation Board       Rachel Wigginton       Voluntary Restoration         BCDC along with other regional regulators to coordinate permitting for restoration projects in the Bay that have been funded by       BCDC, Coastal       Conservancy, EPA       Regulatory         Engage with the Cutting the Green Tape program to promote new environmental permitting tools, such as the CDFW Restoration Management Permit (RMP), State Board Restoration General Orders, and CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration       CDFW, State Water       Hildie Spautz, Paul			State Water Board		-	
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Support landowners with restoration, management, and monitoring of aquatic habitats.Work through existing agency programs to conduct outreach, education, and support for BoardSSJDC, CDFW, Ocean Protection Council, Wildlife Conservation BoardRachel WiggintonVoluntary RestorationBay Resources Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT)BCDC along with other regional regulators to coordinate permitting for restoration projects in the Bay Measure AA.BCDC, Coastal conservancy, EPARegulatoryEngage with the Cutting the Green Tape program to promote new environmental permitting tools, such as the CDFW Restoration Management Permit (RMP), State BoardRegulatoryRegulatoryCDFW, State WaterHildie Spautz, PaulHildie Spautz, Paul	Engage with CWMW partners	achieve CWMW Goals.		O'Connor	Assessment	
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Support landowners with restoration, management, and monitoring of aquatic habitats.       programs to conduct outreach, education, and support for landowners.       Protection Council, Wildlife Conservation Board       Voluntary Restoration         BCDC along with other regional regulators to coordinate permitting for restoration projects in the Bay Integration Team (BRRIT)       BCDC along with other regional regulators to coordinate permitting for restoration projects in the Bay Measure AA.       BCDC, Coastal Conservancy, EPA       Regulatory         Engage with the Cutting the Green Tape program to promote new environmental permitting tools, such as the CDFW Restoration Management Permit (RMP), State Board Restoration General Orders, and CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration       CDFW, State Water       Hildie Spautz, Paul		Work through existing agency	SSJDC, CDFW, Ocean			
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Bay Resources Regulatory Integration Team (BRRIT)       that have been funded by Measure AA.       BCDC, Coastal Conservancy, EPA       Regulatory         Engage with the Cutting the Green Tape program to promote new environmental permitting tools, such as the CDFW Restoration Management Permit (RMP), State Board Restoration General Orders, and CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration       CDFW, State Water       Hildie Spautz, Paul						
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Exemption for Restoration CDFW, State Water Hildie Spautz, Paul				1	1	
		Orders, and CEQA Statutory				
			CDFW State Water	Hildie Snautz, Paul		
	Cutting the Green Tape	Exemption for Restoration		-	Voluntary Restoration	

### **Ongoing Activities**

	California has committed to the				
	goal of conserving 30 percent of				
	our lands and coastal waters by				
	2030. Engage with the CA Natural				
	Resource Agency on				
	implementation of the Pathways to				
	30x30 strategy, which prioritizes				
	conserving wetlands through				
	aquisition and land easement				
	arrangement with willing sellers,				
	increase natural flood protection				
	by reconnecting hydrological				
	systems, and restoring coastal				
30x30 California	wetlands.	CDFW	Hildie Spatuz	Voluntary Restoration	

### **Backlog Projects**

Backlog Project Name	Project Vision	Status	CWMW Goal	Lead Agency	Key Team Members	Date	Last Status Update	EPA Core Element	
Develop and Maintain a Level	-	Status	CVVIVIVV Goai	Leau Agency	Rey reall members	Dale		EFA Core Element	
3 Committee	Level 3 Committee meets regularly to discuss L3 monitoring needs and protocols, similar to how the L1 and L2 committees function.	Not started	1	твр	TBD	NA		Monitoring and Assessment	C loi E groi a s a n
Wetland Status and Trends		Started			100			7.8565511611	Plan
Program									SCO
									prev grar
									pick
									age
	CA regularly conducts an								doin for [
	assessment of wetland	Program							Suis
	acreage in the state to report on net change over time.	Plan developed	2	TBD	TBD			Monitoring and Assessment	
Update SCWRP Regional	Regional Strategy is update	developed	2					Assessment	proje
Strategy to include	to provide an assessment of								
assessment of non-tidal wetlands.	historical losses, existing acreage, and updated								
wedands.	quantitative restoration								
	targets similar to what was	NI-4						Manitavia er av d	
	done for tidal wetlands in 2018.	Not started	3	cscc	Evyan Sloane, Melissa Scianni	NA		Monitoring and Assessment	
Develop and bring forward for			-						
State Water Board	Water quality within wetland areas can be substantially								
consideration: (a) new beneficial use definitions, (b)	different from adjacent waters								
water quality objectives, and	and existing beneficial uses								
(c) a program of implementation to achieve the	and water quality criteria do								
•	diversity of wetlands. This								
necessary, to protect wetland-									
related functions (Phase II of Water Quality Resolution	statewide beneficial uses and water quality objectives for	Not						Water Quality	
2008-0026	wetland waters	started	2	SWRCB	Paul Hann	NA		Standards	
Develop, and bring forward for State Water Board	The State Water Board lacks								
consideration: (a) new	a uniform definition of riparian								
beneficial use definitions, (b)	zone and regulatory								
water quality objectives, and (c) a program of	protections for riparian zones vary from region to region.								
	This project would establish a								
	consistent statewide riparian								
<b>3</b> 7 <b>1 1</b>	definition for use in water board program, and clarify								
III of Water Quality	applicability of beneficial uses	Not							
Resolution 2008-0026)	and water quality objectives. Work with partners to	started	2						
	evaluate sites for native								
	oyster restoration and								
Humboldt Bay Native Oyster Restoration Study	implementation of living shoreline restoration projects								
Restoration Olddy	utilizing constructed native								
	oyster reefs to mitigate	Not				<b>N</b> 14		Monitoring and	
	effects of SLR.	started	3	SCC	Joel Gerwin	NA		Assessment	Som
State of the State's Wetlands									repo
Report	Develop report on the state of CA's wetland acreage and	Not						Monitoring and	(e.g.
	condition.	started	3	TBD				Assessment	
	The Technical Advisory Team			Ī					
	that developed the Wetland definition adotped by the								
Finalize techninal advisory	Water Board also developed								
Team memo for	a draft technical memo for								
recommenation on how to identify non-wetland waters of	non-wetland waters. Complete this memo for use	Started,							
		on hold	1	SWRCB	Paul Hann		1	Regulatory	I

2	Notos
	Notes: Previous L3 Committee no longer meeting, Estuaries MPA group may provide
	a starting point for a new committee. Plan developed by SCCWRP under
	previous EPA grant. Not been picked up by an agency yet. DSC doing some S&T for Delta and Suisun Marsh. Dylan Chapple project lead.
	. <i>.</i>
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l	Some regional reporting occuring (e.g., SF Bay, Delta, Susuin Marsh).

### **Completed Projects**

### Last updated:

3/2/2023

Closed Project Name	Project Vision	CWMW Goal	Lead Agency	Key Team Members	Year Completed	EPA Core Element	Notes:
CRAM Module development							
and verification: Riverine,			SFEI, Central				
Estuarine, Depressional,			Coast				
Slope, Vernal Pool, and			Wetlands				
Episodic Riverine modules	Update CRAM modules to		Group, State	Sarah Pearce, Kevin		Monitoring and	
	version 6.1/6.2	2	Water Board	O'Connor, Brendan Reed		Assessment	
CRAM users survey	Evaluate how agencies are					Monitoring and	
	using CRAM in their programs.	3	EPA	Melissa Scianni	2022	Assessment	
Dredge and Fill Procedures	A policy to provide a statewide						
Adoption and Approval	water board definition of						
	wetland waters of the state and						
	procedures on how discharges of waste to wetlands and other						
	waters of the state will be						
	regulated (including						
	procedures for 401		State Water				
		3	Board	Paul Hann	2019	Regulatory	
	Guidance and training	•	200.0				
	materials were developed to						
Develop and carry out staff	support implementation of the						
training for Procedures	Statewide Dredge or Fill						
implementation	Procedures. Training						
	materials can be accessed at		State Water				
		2	Board	Paul Hann	2020	Regulatory	
Develop and update General							
Orders for restoration	certain restoration orders						
projects	(supports the multi-agency	-	State Water				
		2	Board	Paul Hann	2022	Regulatory	
	The San Francisco Estuary						
	Blue Print is a collaborative, consensus-driven five-year						
	roadmap for the San Francisco						
	Estuary. The Blueprint						
	identifies						
	the top actions needed for: 1)						
	increased climate resilience; 2)						
	improved water quality for						
	animals and people; 3)						
	healthier habitats and wildlife,						
Update the San Francisco	and 4) thriving human						
Estuary Partnership's	communities. The Blueprint						
Comprehensive	updates the Comprehensive						
Conservation Management	Conservation and	_	Coastal			Monitoring and	
Plan	5	3	Conservancy	Evyan Sloane	2022	Assessment	
	Develop a framework based						
Develop an assessment	on WRAMP that can guide integration of 404/401						
framework to support	permitting for HCP/NCCPs,						
integration of NCCP/HCP	including mitigation planning,		State Water				
and 401/404 permitting.	evaluation and compliance			Paul Jones, Joe Morgan,		Regulatory, Monitoring &	
	monitoring.	3	EPA	Josh Collins, Cliff Harvey		Assessment	
Assessing Sediment	Asses sediment supply,		-	, <u> </u>			
Dynamics and Salt Marsh	sediment contaminants, water						
Sustainability in Humboldt	quality, and salt marsh		Coastal			Monitoring and	
Вау	sustainability in Humboldt Bay.	3	Conservancy	Joe Gerwin	2021	Assessment	
	Update CARI in the Delta to						
Delta Aquatic Resource	reflect unique ecological						
Inventory (DARI)	conditions and create SOPs for			Rachel Wigginton,		Monitoring and	
		3	SSJDC, SFEI	Cristina Grosso	2022	Assessment	
	General 401 certification for						
	certain restoration orders						
Statowida Destaration One	(supports the multi-agency	2	State Water	Paul Hann	2022	Dogulatory	
Statewide Restoration Gener	Cutting Green Tape Initiative	3	Board	raui nann	2022	Regulatory	

### Definitions

Definitions	
Project:	Short name for project
Active Tab:	List of projects that currently have resources allocated, or are high priority for receiving funds in the next couple of years.
Ongoing Tab:	List of projects and activities that have resources allocated but do not have defined start and end dates.
Backlog Tab:	List of pending projects on hold or awaiting prioritization.
Completed Tab:	List of projects that have been completed or cancelled.
Last Updated:	The date this portfolio was last updated.
Project Name:	Short name for the project
Vision:	Short description of the vision for the project
Status:	General stage of the project
CWMW Goal	Put in the number code for the CWMW Goal that this project addresses. Note that the Active and Ongoing tabs are organized by Goal.
Lead Agency	Agency taking lead for directing project
Project Manager (PM)	Person responsible for tracking and reporting to CWMW
Key Team Members	members. Often include Business Analysts, Architects, or any
Start Date:	The date the project started
Projected end date	The date the project is expected to be completed
Last Status Update:	the date is older than one year.
EPA Core Element	
Notes:	Any comments on issues, risks, or changes.
CWMW Goals	
Goal 1	Support the Goals of the Water Quality Monitoring Council
<b>A</b> 1 <b>A</b>	

Goal 2Develop and maintain tools to monitor, assess, and track data for wetlands and riparian areas throughout CaliforniaGoal 3Work with federal, state, tribal, regional, and local entities to implement consistent monitoring and assessment tools to improve compatibility among wetland programsGoal 4Outreach to and coordinate with agencies, programs, and partners that are involved in wetland management, regulation, or funding