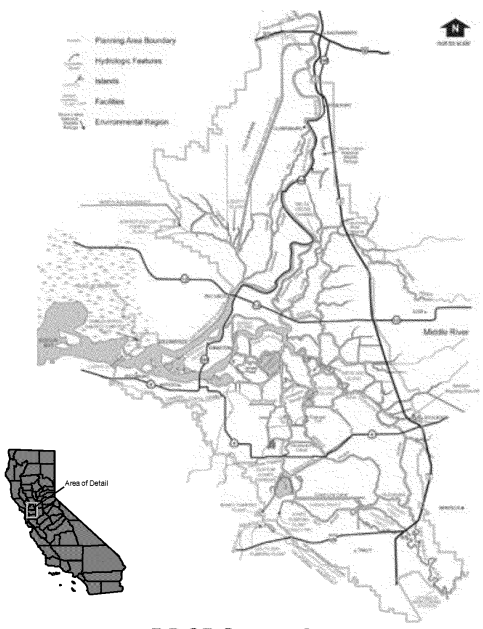
## Public Participation Is a High Priority in Developing the BDCP

www.resources.ca.gov/bdcp/




BDCP Study Area

## Who Is Preparing the BDCP?

The BDCP is being prepared through a voluntary collaboration of state, federal, and local water agencies, state and federal fish agencies, environmental organizations, and other interested parties. They have formed the BDCP Steering Committee, which consists of the following participants:

**Federal and State agencies**

- California Bay-Delta Authority
- California Department of Water Resources
- California Resources Agency (chair)
- State Water Resources Control Board
- US Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation
- US Army Corps of Engineers

**Fish agencies**

- California Department of Fish and Game
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service

**Water agencies**

- Kern County Water Agency
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- Westlands Water District
- Zone 7 Water Agency
- Contra Costa Water District
- Friant Water Authority
- North Delta Water Agency

**environmental organizations**

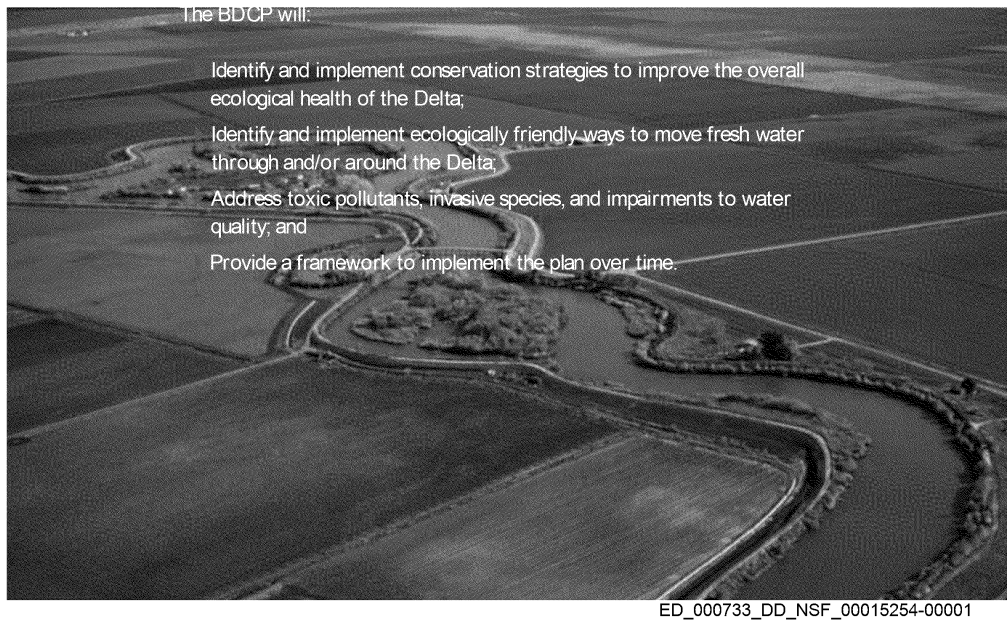
- American Rivers
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Natural Heritage Institute
- The Bay Institute
- The Nature Conservancy

**other organizations**

- California Farm Bureau Federation
- Mirant Delta

# BDCP

## Bay Delta Conservation Plan



The BDCP will:

- Identify and implement conservation strategies to improve the overall ecological health of the Delta;
- Identify and implement ecologically friendly ways to move fresh water through and/or around the Delta;
- Address toxic pollutants, invasive species, and impairments to water quality; and
- Provide a framework to implement the plan over time.

What the BdcP Will do:

- Provide a comprehensive habitat conservation and restoration program for the Delta
- Provide the basis for permits under federal and State endangered species laws for the activities covered by the plan based on the best available science
- Identify sources of funding and new methods of decision-making for ecosystem improvements
- Provide for an adaptive management and monitoring program to enable the plan to adapt as conditions change and new information emerges
- Streamline permitting for projects covered by the plan

What the BdcP Will not do:

- Solve all environmental challenges in the Delta
- Address all the stressors that may affect Covered Species (such as ocean conditions)
- Eliminate other permitting requirements

## The Importance of the Delta Cannot Be Overstated

The Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta is a vitally important ecosystem that is home to hundreds of aquatic and terrestrial species, many of which are unique to the area and several of which are threatened or endangered. Fresh water reaching the Delta is the core of California's water system, which conveys high quality water to 25 million people throughout the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and Southern California. Delta-conveyed water supports farms and ranches from the north Delta to the Mexican border that are a source of financial stability for the state and that produce roughly half of the nation's domestically grown fresh produce. In addition, the Delta is a key recreational destination and supports extensive infrastructure of statewide importance.

## Why Is a Conservation Plan Needed in the Delta?

The Delta remains a center of controversy in a long-standing conflict over how best to use and conserve its resources. Several fish species have experienced the lowest population numbers in their recorded history; levees, and the Delta infrastructure they protect, are at greater risk as lands subside and sea level rises; water supplies are increasingly unreliable; in 2007 a federal court ordered a massive reduction in water supplies—up to nearly one-third—from the state's two largest water delivery systems; and mandatory water rationing is under discussion in much of the state. The BDCP will address these issues by providing for an ecosystem-based approach that will help to restore fish and wildlife species in the Delta in a way that also will provide for the protection and restoration of water supplies.

## Benefits of Regional Conservation Planning

Conservation plans:

- Allow covered activities to proceed with a comprehensive ecosystem-focused approach that provides for the conservation of affected species and habitats
- Eliminate more costly, often less effective piecemeal project-by-project, species-by-species permitting
- Are prepared by participants proposing to undertake covered activities on a voluntary basis, meaning participants are motivated and dedicated
- Provide an opportunity for a broad range of interested parties to work collaboratively
- Provide a great deal of flexibility in addressing those issues which are most useful for promoting the conservation of covered species
- Are based on the best available science
- Are developed through an open and public process
- Provide reliable funding sources for ecosystem restoration

## What Activities Will Be Covered by the BDCP?

An objective of the BDCP is to obtain long-term (50-year) permits to operate water and energy projects, both existing and new. BDCP Covered Activities are those that support water supply and power generation, such as water conveyance and facilities maintenance and improvements, as well as any restoration efforts that impact threatened and endangered species.

## What Species Will Be Addressed by the BDCP?

"Covered Species" identified in the BDCP are those that are endangered or threatened and whose conservation and management will be provided by the plan. Initially, the BDCP will focus on the following aquatic species but also will consider terrestrial (land-based) species in the future.

- Delta smelt
- Longfin smelt
- Winter-run Chinook salmon
- Spring-run Chinook salmon
- Fall-run and late fall-run Chinook salmon
- Central Valley steelhead
- Green sturgeon
- White sturgeon
- Sacramento splittail

## Milestones Reached to Date

The BDCP Steering Committee was formed in mid-2006. Members of the Steering Committee signed a Planning Agreement in late 2006 that established the Plan's ecosystem restoration and water supply goal. Throughout 2007, the Steering Committee evaluated different conceptual approaches to meeting this goal. Ten conservation strategies were analyzed based on biological, planning, and other criteria, then narrowed to four conservation options.

In late 2007, the Steering Committee published "Points of Agreement for Continuing into the Planning Process," which outlined basic approaches for developing the elements of the BDCP. The Steering Committee agreed the most promising approach for achieving the BDCP's ecosystem restoration and water supply goal would be to develop and analyze a combination of through Delta and around Delta water conveyance, in tandem with habitat restoration and ways to manage other stressors on fish species.

In December 2008, the BDCP Steering Committee released an Overview of the Draft Conservation Strategy for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan to share its approach to, potential key components of, and direction for continuing to develop the draft Conservation Strategy. The Overview identified a number of elements that demonstrate the integrated nature of the draft Conservation Strategy, including those that are likely to form the nucleus of the overall Conservation Strategy.

The Administrative Draft BDCP is expected to be available by mid-2009, and the Public Review Draft BDCP is expected by the end of 2009. A draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) on the BDCP will be available for public review by the end of 2009. The BDCP Steering Committee anticipates that the BDCP will be approved, and a permit decision will be made, by the end of 2010.