

## Practicum Report

Student name: [REDACTED]

Partnering Organization (PO): Office of the Delta Watermaster | California State Water Resources Control Board

### Project and partnering organization (PO) description

Over the course of five months, I interviewed stakeholders throughout the Delta science enterprise, attended agency, committee, and public meetings, and researched existing funding and governance models within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and other national estuaries. The Delta Watermaster, Michael George, and my Faculty Supervisor, Dr. Jay Lund, guided my activities, especially regarding relevant meetings and suggestions for an initial list of possible interviewees. The purpose of the interviews was to leverage the experience of practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to discern barriers and opportunities for collaborative research. These insights, combined with a review of the relevant literature, were used to recommend possible changes to the future governance and funding of Delta science. These recommendations are contained in the attached report, which has been provided to the Delta Watermaster.

The Delta Reform Act of 2009 formed the Office of the Delta Watermaster. The Watermaster is appointed to a four-year term by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and reports to both the SWRCB and the Delta Stewardship Council. As an independent officer of the state, the Watermaster oversees day-to-day administration and enforcement, if necessary, of water rights in the Delta related to water diversions. In addition to water rights management, the Watermaster works with the SWRCB and the Stewardship Council to advance the coequal goals mandated in the Delta Reform Act. These goals are: (1) improved water supply reliability and (2) an enhanced Delta ecosystem.

1. *Describe any differences between your original Practicum Proposal and your actual Practicum to*
  - a. *Questions to be answered/objectives*

The proposed question, Interagency Delta Science: Is there a path to shared funding to support shared science?, was consistent throughout the course of research. The proposed objective also remained the same. The original proposal called for identifying opportunities or barriers. These are specifically called out in the attached white paper under the sections, 'Gaps Between Current and Desired System of Science' and 'Barriers to Overcoming Gaps'.

- b. *The analytical/methodological approach*

As indicated in the project description, above, the methods included interviews and a literature review. This is consistent with the proposal document. The interviewees and their respective organizations are listed in Appendix A of the attached report. The majority of individuals listed are contained in Table 1. Professional Contact Plan within my Professional Development Plan. Due to scheduling limitations or an inability to reach planned contacts, the list suggested in the Professional Development Plan is longer (32 individuals) than those contained in Appendix A (23 individuals); however, several of the contacts were present at meetings I attended, so I benefited from hearing their perspective. As I conducted interviews, suggestions from interviewees would lead to me, iteratively, to additional subjects, meetings, and documentation to review. The list of search criteria used in the literature review is given in the attached report under the 'Objectives and Scope of Study' section.

2. *Name and briefly describe the deliverables produced (attach deliverables if available).*

The white paper produced, entitled *Shared Science for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*, is attached. The study:

- Evaluates the current system of collaborative Delta science and its funding.
- Examines gaps between the current organization of science and underachieved policy aspirations for science.
- Identifies barriers to funding and collaboration for scientific research in the Delta.
- Recommends opportunities to overcome existing barriers and to move to more reliably funded and efficiently organized interagency science.

3. *How did the project further your individual career objectives?*

The project increased my understanding of current political and structural dynamics in water management and policy. The process of writing and revising the white paper focused my ability to discern what is relevant to a policy audience. As I developed recommendations, the draft and review process with Michael George and Dr. Lund produced a more pertinent and accessible document. Through my participation in meetings and workshops, my network has grown, and I have recently been asked to review a section of the 2018 Draft Delta Science Plan Update. The interview process exposed me to stakeholders from local, state, and federal government, as well as private organizations and NGOs. I have a better sense of the sort of work I would like to do in the future and which organizations would best position me to achieve my longer-term goals. Finally, my interview with the Department of Finance and subsequent analysis of various documents, like the State Budget and Manual of Funds, improved my understanding of the State budgeting process. I am excited to continue following Delta science advances and water management decisions. My research is relevant to a number of ongoing initiatives, especially at the Delta Stewardship Council and I hope to be part of future conversations.