

Frequently Asked Questions

“Reorienting to recovery: Developing an inclusive, landscape scale process for Central Valley Salmonids, prioritizing actions and investments to achieve recovery and minimize community and economic impact”

1. What is the objective of the “Reorienting to Recovery” project (Project)?

The Project will seek to engage the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP) member agencies, other existing forums, stakeholder groups and tribes across the salmonid landscape in an inclusive, collaborative, and structured process to:

- Identify a suite of implementable and impactful actions that will advance the recovery of the four distinct runs of California Central Valley (CV) salmon (spring-run, fall-run, late fall-run, and winter-run) and steelhead throughout their life cycle; and
- Establish broad support and buy-in for these preferred actions by making trade-offs transparent and balancing participants’ diverse values, perspectives, and priorities.

2. How will the Project achieve its purpose and goals? What steps are involved?

The Project consists of the following three phases:

- Phase 1 (funded by the State Water Contractors) - engage salmon scientists in a series of workshops to develop a scientifically based recovery definition framework
- Phase 2 (funded by the Delta Science Program) - gather input from interested parties across the salmonid life cycle
- Phase 3 (funded by the Delta Science Program) - evaluate suites of actions through modeling and structured decision making

The Project will implement a structured engagement process to socially and scientifically “stitch together” the currently disaggregated efforts across the Central Valley to advance salmonid recovery. The Project will seek to leverage existing collaborative efforts and decision support tools to create a shared vision and a common set of scientifically based priorities for action.

The Project will consider scientific (i.e., biological and ecological), economic, historical, cultural, and social values when evaluating recommended salmonid and steelhead recovery actions. It will also consider all habitats, runs, and species, including those located above reservoirs and in the ocean and of natural and hatchery origin. For more details regarding the specific objectives, deliverables and associated timelines of each Project phase see the attached one-pager.

3. What agencies or organizations make up the Project Planning Team?

The Project Planning Team includes: The Bay Institute, Compass Resource Management, FlowWest, Kearns & West, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, NOAA Fisheries, QEDA Consulting, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Trout Unlimited, and University of California (Santa Cruz).

4. How is CSAMP involved?

The Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program (CSAMP) Policy Group—composed of the directors, general managers, and executive staff of state and federal resource agencies, non-governmental organization (NGOs), and public water agencies (PWAs)—recently agreed to engage in a voluntary, unified effort to focus on salmonid recovery.

NGOs and PWAs working together in CSAMP initiated the Project with the support of state and federal agencies.

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The Project seeks to support the CSAMP effort to evaluate recovery initiatives holistically throughout the Central Valley watershed. Additionally, the Project leverages CSAMP's established commitments and relationships while encouraging participation from outside forums and stakeholder groups throughout the salmonid landscape to develop an inclusive, socially coherent, and geographically integrated strategy for salmonid recovery.

5. What agencies or organizations participated in the Phase 1 workshops?

In addition to the Planning Team members, the Phase 1 Workshop participants included scientists from the University of California (Davis), California State Water Resources Control Board, the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Science Program, California Department of Water Resources, The Nature Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries, United States Bureau of Reclamation, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Geological Survey, Anchor QEA, and Cramer Fish Sciences. The Planning Team invited these participants because of their technical expertise in salmonid population biology, research and monitoring, and past recovery efforts.

6. Why does the Project include the entire Central Valley watershed?

There is an urgent need to better, and more comprehensively, integrate activities across the different components of the salmonid life cycle in order to improve the condition of Central Valley salmonids. For example, quantitative objectives and metrics for gauging progress toward recovery goals are often not comparable across different geographies and sponsors, and there is no single, cohesive catalog of recovery actions underway or planned across the full landscape. Furthermore, by taking a system-wide approach, the Project hopes to bring to light impacts and trade-offs across regions.

7. How will the outcomes of this Project be used?

The Project is not designed with any formal regulatory, management or planning process in mind; however, if participants are able to reach agreement on a suite of recommended actions, then these actions could be used to inform any, or all, of these processes in the future.

8. What is a VSP parameter, and how is it being used in the Project?

A viable salmonid population (VSP) refers to an independent population that is not at risk of extinction. In developing the Phase 1 recovery definition framework, four VSP parameters (developed and described in previous salmon recovery analyses such as McElhany et al. 2000 and Lindley et al. 2007) were utilized: abundance, productivity, diversity, and spatial structure. The Phase 1 Science Workshop Participants identified metrics, objectives, and targets (or target-setting approaches) for each VSP parameter while also recognizing their interconnections. These metrics, objectives, and targets will guide the collaborative structured decision-making process in phases 2 and 3.

9. How does the Project differ from/relate to other efforts (e.g., Voluntary Agreement, CVPIA doubling goal, NOAA Fisheries Recovery Plan)?

The Project is different from other salmon recovery efforts for several reasons:

- By seeking to engage a comprehensive range of interested parties in a collaborative and transparent structured decision-making process, the Project seeks to ensure that ownership of any outcomes is shared broadly.
- The Project will attempt to develop a more holistic recovery framework that integrates objectives across four salmon and steelhead runs, covering the entire life cycle and geographies from rivers to ocean.
- Recovery targets will go beyond the Endangered Species Act (ESA) recovery definitions for listed species.

Related questions are as follows:

- *Is the Project tied to a voluntary agreement?*

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- This Project is not tied to any voluntary agreements (VAs). It is not designed with any regulatory, management or planning process in mind; however, the recovery framework could be used to inform any of these processes, including a VA, in the future.
- *Is the Project related to CVPIA's doubling goal?*
 - The Project seeks to go beyond the Central Valley Project Improvement Act's (CVPIA) goal of doubling the CV's naturally spawning population of anadromous fish. The Project differs from the doubling goal because it is focused on the recovery of salmonids (not just doubling), spans a larger spatial and temporal scale, and includes a more diverse set of stakeholders.
- *How is the Project different from the NOAA Fisheries Recovery Plan (full title: National Marine Fisheries Service Recovery Plan for the Evolutionarily Significant Units of Sacramento River Winter-Run Chinook Salmon and the Distinct Population of California Central Valley Steelhead)?*
 - While the Project's recovery definition framework often references the NOAA Fisheries Recovery Plan for minimum targets, the Project seeks to define and achieve recovery goals that are more aspirational than those in the NOAA Fisheries Recovery Plan. Additionally, the Project identifies metrics useful for tracking salmonid recovery that are not explicitly included in the NMFS Recovery Plan.
- *How will the structured decision-making (SDM) process be different from other efforts?*
 - While SDM efforts are underway at smaller regional scales in the CV (e.g., CVPIA, CSAMP Delta Smelt), this effort will be conducted at a larger scale to integrate across regions and interests, and to incorporate hatchery practices and harvest management. The SDM effort within CVPIA is oriented around how to spend CVPIA Restoration Fund monies financed by water and power users for habitat restoration and enhancement, with a target of achieving the CVPIA doubling goal for naturally reproducing salmon. This Project focuses on the broader recovery of salmonids, spans a larger spatial and temporal scale, and includes a more diverse set of stakeholders.

10. Which modeling tools will the Project use?

The Project will use the NOAA Fisheries Winter Run Life Cycle Model (WRLCM) and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) Science Integration Team (SIT) models. The Project will apply these existing life cycle models to evaluate the potential biological benefits of current, planned, and potential future actions. The project will also utilize an assortment of tools and methodologies to evaluate the actions against other stakeholder values including but not limited to economic, human health and safety, recreational, and cultural considerations that are identified during Phase 2.

11. What are the Project deliverables?

Project deliverables will include:

- A scientifically sound, clear, and measurable framework for defining salmonid recovery
- A set of implementation scenarios (i.e., suites of priority science, management, and/or monitoring actions, as well as associated rough timelines and costs for implementation)
- Specific recommendations and guidance to inform decision-making
- A process and forum for voluntary, collaborative engagement to advance salmon recovery and develop stronger relationships, mutual understanding and greater coherence among Central Valley salmon interests
- A final report defining the goal of salmonid recovery, recommending detailed implementation scenarios to achieve recovery, and documenting the technical basis for these findings
 - Note: Drafts of the final report and of interim working documents will be made available for workshop stakeholders and the Delta Science Program to comment on and provide recommendations before the final report is finalized or interim findings are made.