

Prospectus: Review of the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP)

Delta Independent Science Board

29 January 2018

The legislative mandate of the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) includes periodic reviews of scientific activities related to adaptive management in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (the Delta). Many such activities take place under the umbrella of the Interagency Ecological Program (IEP), which originated with interagency agreements nearly 50 years ago and now brings together nine state and federal agencies (<http://www.water.ca.gov/iep/>) with linkages to non-governmental organizations and university scientists. The Delta ISB will review the research, data archives, and synthesis efforts of the IEP as part of this review, along with its administrative structure and procedures.

The IEP's mission is "to provide and integrate relevant and timely ecological information for management of the Bay-Delta ecosystem and the water that flows through it. This is accomplished through collaborative and scientifically sound monitoring, research, modeling, and synthesis efforts for various aspects of the aquatic ecosystem." Challenges in meeting these important and ambitious goals range from practical chores such as scheduling the use of a multi-agency boat fleet to complex undertakings such as working with agencies and water contractors with different goals and agendas.

The Delta ISB review will identify "lessons learned" from this extensive history that could lead to improvements in IEP and perhaps to the activities of other interagency efforts in the Delta. Concurrently, the Delta ISB is conducting a review of the monitoring enterprise in the Delta (MER/Monitoring Enterprise Review), in which the IEP plays a major role. We hope to avoid duplication between these efforts, and maximize input to the MER. Our IEP review will focus on how the governance structure of the IEP supports the fulfillment of its mission. Our IEP review will include (but not be limited to):

1. The role of IEP as a synthesizer of information about the Delta and as a nexus for the analysis, synthesis, and translation of science for management of the Delta and its ecosystem;
2. The effectiveness of the IEP governance structure in providing credible and relevant scientific information that supports management of the water supply and key ecosystem components in the Bay-Delta;
3. The level of coordination among IEP agencies/programs and between IEP and other agencies/programs;
4. The level of coordination among different organizational components of IEP; and
5. The effectiveness of institutional arrangements that support the interagency investment in IEP.

Members of the Delta ISB will interview Delta scientists and managers working both within and outside the IEP. We will examine past reports and reviews of the IEP. These include:

- the IEP Annual Plan http://www.water.ca.gov/iep/docs/2017_IEP_Work_Plan_02-21-2017.pdf;
- the Science Strategy http://www.water.ca.gov/iep/docs/2016_IEP_Science_Strategy_FINAL_02-21-2017.pdf;

- and the Strategic Plan http://www.water.ca.gov/iep/docs/IEP_Strategic_Plan102214.pdf.

The expected outcome includes recommendations on how IEP could function more effectively in terms of science collaboration, integration, and use, to better inform decision making and adaptive management in the Delta. We are planning to release a preliminary draft report for public comment in mid-2018.

Contact

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