

How Can Climate Science Best Influence Public Policy in an Era of Drought? Panel Discussion

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California is in a severe drought and though its history is punctuated by long and short droughts, climate change portends a water-short future for the state. This session will bring together a range of experts for thoughtful discussion of California's drought as it relates to climate and water policy. Experts will present condensed information about the current drought vis-à-vis climate issues and water policy and then answer questions from the audience facilitated by a moderator.

Keywords: drought, climate change, public policy, extreme weather

Session Title: How Can Climate Science Best Influence Public Policy in an Era of Drought?

Session Time: Tuesday 1:35PM – 3:15PM Room 311-313

The Delta's Fiscal Orphans: A Score Card

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The decline of the Delta's ecosystem results from multiple sources of stress, caused by decades of harmful water and land uses within the greater Delta watershed. Addressing these stressors will be costly; perhaps several hundred million dollars/year for decades to come. A recent PPIC report, "Paying for Water in California", looked at California's \$30 billion a year water sector and identified areas with critical funding gaps. The Delta is home to many of these "fiscal orphans" – with inadequate funds available for ecosystem recovery (both within the Delta and upper watersheds), flood protection, management of stormwater and other polluted runoff, and governance and science programs. While it has been assumed that water users would cover the main cost of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan, the twin tunnels, it is still unclear where funding will come from for the other needed actions. Our study found that while state bonds have helped fill some of these gaps over the past decade, a broader mix of funding solutions is needed. For example, large ecosystem investments may be an appropriate use of state bond funds, but a more reliable funding source, such as a small new special tax, is needed to address ongoing governance and science in the Delta. We also recommended that California address some of the unintended consequences of constitutional reforms, such as Proposition 218, which has limited the ability of local agencies to reduce some ecosystem stressors, like stormwater, directly. Unless we address these funding gaps, California will be unable to tackle the challenges facing the Delta now and in the future.

Keywords: finance, science program, ecosystem management, governance

Session Title: Funding the Delta's Fiscal Orphans: Science, Governance, and Ecosystem Stress Relief

Session Time: Tuesday 3:35PM – 5:15PM Room 311-313

Panel Discussion on Funding Solutions with Delta Science and Management Leaders

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Improving the Delta's ecosystem will be costly. The BDCP calls for more than \$8 billion in ecosystem investments, science, and monitoring, and this excludes enhancements in the upper watershed that many scientists consider essential. The Delta science program and fledgling governance institutions – essential for supporting ecosystem recovery – have been funded largely by state bonds, and science funds are due to expire by early 2015. The four leading proposals for a new bond would only make \$0.6 to \$2 billion available for the Delta ecosystem, with unclear implications for the science program. Although other options exist – including various types of contributions from resource users and taxpayers – science and system integration have been largely left off the table to date. A failure to address this funding challenge will impede significant progress in ecosystem recovery and water supply reliability.

This panel discussion will bring together leaders from Delta science and management organizations to discuss and debate potential solutions to this major challenge. The panel will be moderated by PPIC Senior Fellow, Jeffrey Mount. Panel participants include: Chuck Bonham (director, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife), Byron Buck (executive director, State and Federal Contractors Water Agency), Randy Fiorini (chair, Delta Stewardship Council), Peter Goodwin (lead scientist, Delta Science Program), Anke Mueller-Solger (lead scientist, Interagency Ecological Program, and Western Science Center, USGS), Karla Nemeth (deputy director, California Natural Resources Agency), and Jay Lund (director, UC Davis Center for Watershed Science and member, Delta Independent Science Board) who will provide a panel wrap-up and a list of the top-ten creative funding solutions.

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