

## Science and Media Panel

Chris Austin, Maven's Minutes Blog, [maven@mavensnotebook.com](mailto:maven@mavensnotebook.com)

Mary Miller, Exploratorium, [mmiller@exploratorium.edu](mailto:mmiller@exploratorium.edu)

Lauren Sommer, KQED Science, [lsommer@kqed.org](mailto:lsommer@kqed.org)

Kelly Zito, USEPA, [zito.kelly@epa.gov](mailto:zito.kelly@epa.gov)

Over 25 million California residents are dependent on water deliveries from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta yet many do not understand the environmental, physical, or political complexity by which water is provided in their homes. Informing California residents about water supply and aquatic ecosystem issues in the San Francisco Bay Delta Estuary (Bay Delta) is a challenge the science and media communities struggle to meet. However, improving communication to California residents on water supplies and aquatic ecosystems of the Bay-Delta is imperative given the amount of public funds that are dedicated to water delivery infrastructure and natural habitat areas. Equally important, California residents should be aware they are public stewards of the Bay-Delta aquatic ecosystem and the many fisheries (e.g., Chinook salmon) that support California's natural heritage and economy. Despite the importance of the Bay Delta to California, a 2012 public survey of California residents showed that fewer than a quarter of residents are aware of the Bay-Delta as their source of water altogether. In order to make informed decisions (e.g., at the voting booth) about the direction of California's water policy and initiatives, the public deserves to have readily accessible information in a number of media outlets that distills complex science information into easily digestible and impartial reporting.

We are proposing a Science and Media Panel at the Bay-Delta Science Conference to discuss how the science and media communities can work together to improve the quality and quantity of knowledge California residents have about the Bay-Delta. The panel will review the needs and challenges of effectively communicating with a diverse audience and share methods and tools that improve information transfer. Improving Bay-Delta public knowledge is a vital step toward successfully addressing the water supply and aquatic ecosystem challenges of today and tomorrow for all Californians.

**Keywords:** Science, Communication

**Session Title:** Science and Media Panel

**Session Time:** Wednesday 8:20AM – 10:00AM Room 307