STAFF REPORT

To: **Coastside County Water District Board of Directors**

From: **Mary Rogren, General Manager**

Agenda: **November 10, 2026**

Report Date: **November 6, 2026**

Agenda Title: General Manager's Report

State Water Resources Control Board Adopts Update to the Bay-Delta Plan Incorporating the Healthy Rivers and Landscape Program

On October 30, 2026, the California State Water Resources Control Board adopted a major update to the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan that formally incorporates the "Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program" (formerly known as the Voluntary Agreements.) Attached is an article that provides more information regarding the adoption of the update.

ACWA/JPIA Liability, Property, and Worker's Compensations Programs Risk Assessment

On October 29, 2026, the District was visited by an ACWA/JPIA Risk Control Advisor who conducted a field inspection to review operations, evaluate potential risk exposures, and discuss the District's loss history. In the final report, the Risk Control Advisor noted that "all sites were clean, well secured . . . and were free of obvious hazards."

In addition, the District recently received its 2026/2027 Liability insurance invoice which reflects a reduction in the District's experience modification factor (E-Mod) from 1.14 in 2025/26 to .8637 in 2026/27 reflecting lower claims in recent years. This improvement will reduce the District's liability insurance premium by approximately $46,000 in 2026/27.

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Oct 30, 2026

Governor Newsom secures innovative approach to major Bay-Delta protections that will restore rivers and strengthen California's water future

Framework combines habitat restoration, science, and enforceable rules to protect the Sacramento River and Delta

What you need to know: Governor Newsom has successfully championed a new approach to water management reflected in this major update to California's Bay-Delta Plan that protects the rivers that supply water to millions of Californians and sustain farms, salmon, and other wildlife. The updated plan pairs river flows with large-scale habitat restoration and enforceable safeguards to improve the health of the Sacramento River and Delta while helping communities and farms prepare for a hotter, drier future.

SACRAMENTO – Governor Gavin Newsom and his administration today delivered a major breakthrough for California's water future, securing updated protections for the Sacramento River and Delta centered on an innovative approach that pairs ecosystem restoration with more reliable water supplies. Adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board, today's update to the Bay-Delta Plan incorporates the Governor's **Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program** and marks the first major update to the plan's Sacramento/Delta protections since 1995.

Governor Newsom championed the collaborative approach of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program, **bringing local, state, and federal partners together in 2022** to advance a framework for "voluntary agreements" to restore aquatic habitat while protecting water supplies. Under the Governor's leadership, his administration secured $2.9 billion in funding commitments to support this program. Today's adoption brings that work into the Bay-Delta Plan, pairing flexibility for water users with scientific monitoring and regulatory accountability.

> We don't have to choose between healthy rivers and reliable water supplies — California needs both. This plan brings people together to restore habitat, protect salmon, and support the communities and farms that depend on the Delta. And we're backing it up with enforceable commitments and science to measure what's working. That's how we build a stronger water future for a hotter, drier California.
>
> Governor Gavin Newsom

The Bay-Delta supplies water to nearly 30 million Californians and 4 million acres of farmland, while sustaining salmon, other native wildlife, and tribal communities. The updated plan combines river flows, habitat restoration, and enforceable requirements to protect this vital watershed while helping communities and farms manage their water supplies in a hotter, drier climate.

"Accelerating climate change demands a new approach to balance California's diverse water needs, and that's what the State Water Board has delivered," **said California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot.** "It will improve conditions for fish and wildlife while stabilizing future water supplies for communities across the state. With meaningful, enforceable commitments and independent scientific oversight, this framework will improve conditions in our rivers and estuaries in a way that is workable for the agencies that provide water to millions of Californians. The Board's action today recognizes that healthy rivers, thriving ecosystems, and water security are interconnected goals. We're ready to move forward and make this new water future a reality."

"This groundbreaking plan signals a new era of environmental protection, giving communities, farms and businesses the flexibility to manage their supplies while working together to produce measurable, large-scale restoration in one of California's most important and overburdened watersheds," **said State Water Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel.** "The new plan also gives us the modern tools we need — especially increased monitoring and data collection — to manage the Bay-Delta for the 21st century. Today we celebrate the collective work that brought us here and the progress this represents for the entire state."

Protecting the water Californians depend on

The Bay-Delta is the heart of California's water system. Its rivers provide water for homes and farms, support jobs and recreation, and sustain tribal cultural practices connected to rivers and native fish such as salmon.

But the watershed has long been under pressure. Native fish populations have declined, habitats have been lost, and climate change is intensifying competition for water. The updated plan is designed to improve the health of the ecosystem while helping California manage these growing challenges.

In particular, the updated plan:

- 💧 **Protects Californians' water supplies** as we confront a hotter, drier future.
- 💧 **Protects the environment** through enforceable protections tied to either participation in the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes program or a traditional regulatory pathway.
- 💧 **Harnesses creativity and collaboration** to allow water users, farmers, landowners, conservation organizations, and government agencies to develop and implement innovative strategies to achieve environmental benefits while protecting water supplies.
- 💧 **Advances tribal interests** by recognizing "Tribal Tradition and Culture" as a protected beneficial use of water for the first time, building on the Newsom Administration's efforts to right historic wrongs and support tribal stewardship.
- 💧 **Promotes the restoration** of more than 27,000 acres of aquatic habitat.
- 💧 **Supports billions of dollars in investment,** through the Healthy River and Landscapes program, in watershed-scale projects that restore ecosystem function, improve flows, and reconnect floodplains.

- 💧 **Uses best available science** to measure and build upon results, with annual reporting, triennial board review, and a dedicated science program to engage in robust data collection and monitoring of real-world outcomes.

Flexibility to deliver results. Accountability to back it up.

At the center of the updated plan are two pathways that water users can use to meet their environmental requirements.

Through the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program — also known as the voluntary-agreements pathway — participants combine river flow contributions with habitat restoration, backed by enforceable commitments and scientific oversight. A separate, traditional regulatory pathway focuses primarily on maintaining river flows without the additional environmental benefits of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program, such as habitat restoration.

The **Healthy Rivers and Landscapes** approach brings water users, farmers, landowners, conservation organizations, and government agencies together to develop projects that improve watershed health in ways that do not depend solely on zero-sum river flows. It is designed to achieve the Bay-Delta Plan's environmental objectives while also protecting water supplies for communities, farms, and businesses.

California and its partners have already been advancing investments and restoration projects to build momentum for implementation. These early efforts include:

- **Securing water for fish:** a **$360 million Instream Flow Water Purchase Program** to secure river flows during ecologically critical months.

- **Restoring tidal habitat and floodplains**: **Tide's End**, a north Delta project designed to restore and enhance more than 2,200 acres of tidal and floodplain habitat.

- **Pairing restoration with flood protection:** **Little Egbert Tract**, a roughly 3,000-acre north Delta project designed to reduce flood risk while creating habitat for native fish.

- **Rebuilding habitat for native fish:** **Prospect Island**, a 1,600-acre tidal restoration project in the Delta designed to provide habitat for native and migratory fish.

- **Improving fish passage:** The **Sunset Weir and Pumps Fish Passage Project**, which will remove the existing weir, install fish screens, and upgrade water-diversion infrastructure to restore fish passage and protect fish at the intake.

Participation in the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes pathway is voluntary, but those who choose to participate are held to binding, enforceable commitments. Flow contributions must be verified through public accounting, and habitat restoration projects must meet construction milestones. A dedicated science program, robust monitoring, annual reporting, and triennial board review will assess whether restoration efforts are improving ecological conditions and meeting the plan's objectives. The board can revisit the pathway if commitments are not met. The traditional regulatory pathway provides an enforceable backstop, including for those who do not participate in Healthy Rivers and Landscapes.

Turning commitments into action

The board's decision follows years of scientific study and public engagement, including four iterations of draft language, more than 200 days of public comment, dedicated tribal and environmental justice listening sessions, and public workshops. Environmental organizations, tribes, water agencies and local communities helped shape the updated plan.

Federal and state law require periodic review of water quality control plans and updates as necessary to protect beneficial uses, including water for communities and agriculture, fish and wildlife, recreation and tribal uses.

Today's Bay-Delta Plan update now goes to the Office of Administrative Law for approval. Following approval, board staff will release a draft implementation methodology within one year and develop implementing regulations within two years. Implementation of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program's voluntary-agreements pathway will begin no later than October 1, 2027.

More information, including an updated Frequently Asked Questions, is available on the **State Water Board's website**.