



Highlight: February 2025 Delta Science Plan Workshop activity to brainstorm strategies to address the four grand challenges.

Delta Science Plan

2026

RESOURCE H

Guidance for science workshops

This Resource describes how the Delta Stewardship Council's (Council) Delta Science Program typically organizes science workshops and suggests steps for interested parties who want to conduct a workshop or request that the Delta Science Program conduct one. This Resource describes workshops that are not subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act requirements and that are not part of an independent scientific review (see Resource G: Delta Science Program services for independent scientific review and scientific advice).

Background

As part of its mission to provide the best available scientific information to guide management and inform decision-making in the Sacramento-San

Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh (collectively referred to herein as Delta; California Water Code § 85058), the San Francisco Bay-Delta (Bay-Delta) system, and the broader San Francisco Estuary, the Delta Science Program promotes, supports, and coordinates science workshops to communicate the state of scientific knowledge on topics of importance to decision-makers. Workshops focus on an important scientific topic with significant management or policy implications, drawing on published papers, reports, and other relevant information, along with professional judgment and experience, within a short period of time. Below is a description of how Delta Science Program science workshops are conducted. See Table H-1 for examples of recent workshops hosted or coordinated by the Delta Science Program.

Decision to hold a workshop

A science workshop may be requested by the Delta Science Program, Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB), and/or an agency or other interested party. The Delta Science Program regularly partners with other collaborative groups or academic institutions to hold workshops in partnership or on the behalf of others. Workshops take many forms and prioritize scientific information related to an important topic with management or policy implications. Workshops are an opportunity to bring together diverse perspectives on a scientific topic. Workshop attendees can include agency personnel, policymakers, researchers, community-based organizations (CBOs), and interested members of the public. Those requesting a workshop should prepare a proposal that defines the high-level goals, specific objectives, and audience for the workshop. The proposal should also demonstrate how the workshop advances the Council's statutory mission.

The decision to conduct a workshop will depend on capacity and the relevance of the workshop to the goals and objectives of the Council. Further, the need for a workshop may influence the type or format of a workshop, such as:

- Public input on a science initiative or project (e.g., Delta Science Plan Update)
- Regular forum for discussion and networking (e.g., Adaptive Management Forum)
- Requested workshop (e.g., Delta Harmful Algal Blooms Workshop) or emerging scientific topics (e.g., Microplastics Pollution)

See Table H-1 for more information about all of these examples. Moreover, the Delta Science Program will only agree to conduct a workshop if sufficient funding and time are available to complete and deliver a report, if applicable, and if there is enough scientific information or sufficient scientific need to justify it. The workshop must also be consistent with the Council's mission. The ultimate decision to conduct a workshop rests with the Council in consultation with the Delta lead scientist.

Workshop planning team

A workshop planning team (team) typically forms at least six months in advance of the workshop date and meets regularly to plan the agenda and logistics. The team may continue to meet after the workshop to create summary documents or other products. The team represents the workshop's audience to the extent possible and can include agency staff, academics, CBOs, environmental justice experts, and scientists. Opportunities to build and strengthen respectful relationships between tribes and the Council are explored within the scope of the subject matter. Participants in a team communicate their expectations for the pending workshop, provide input on topics to be covered, identify tasks to be completed in advance of the workshop, consider the workshop agenda and speakers, and provide pertinent background documents or other instructional scientific materials for the workshop through the Delta Science Program.

The Delta Science Program holds workshops in a hybrid setting when possible. Remote participation enables easier public access, increases participation, and provides a straightforward pathway to record sessions for future reference. In-person workshops often allow for more informal networking and small-group discussions, but they require participants to travel. Fully online workshops can be challenging for individuals without reliable internet service or those who are not comfortable with online platforms.

Workshop format and agenda

The team develops the agenda with consideration for the goals, objectives, and audience. A workshop can include a mix of oral presentations, panel discussions, small breakout groups, poster sessions, and/or online collaboration tools. Invited presenters may be included for their experience within the Delta or for expertise outside the Delta that has



applicable lessons. The workshop can also include a public solicitation for presentations or a call for public comments to allow broader participation. Presentations often provide necessary background and regulatory context, recent and ongoing scientific research, synthetic efforts by local experts, and scientifically based expert opinion.

Workshop materials

Providing materials to presenters or attendees in advance can enhance engagement by offering background information on the workshop topic or materials that will be discussed during the workshop. These might include a preliminary synthesis report prepared by or under the direction of Delta Science Program staff. Materials are often posted on the Council's website; however, they must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility standards.

Workshop panels

When a panel is part of a workshop, it is recommended to have a broad range of institutions and expertise relevant to the workshop topic, which

may include familiarity with the geographic region, physical processes, policy issues, social science, ecosystems, and species-specific aspects. The Delta Science Program aims to increase the interweaving of Traditional Knowledges into collaborative science, elevate community-based approaches, and strengthen partnerships with tribal and environmental justice communities. Panel selection reflects these priorities and diverse voices.

Public communication

A web page accessible through the Council's website provides background information on each workshop, meeting agendas, the membership of convened panels, all background materials and presentations, and any resulting products or recordings. To the extent possible, all materials are posted on the website. Scheduling and other information about the meeting and resulting workshop report(s) are sent through the Council's email announcements.

Table H-1 | Examples of workshops hosted or coordinated by the Delta Science Program.

TITLE	DATE	ORGANIZER	FREQUENCY	EXAMPLE PRODUCT	FORMAT
Accounting for Blue Carbon in the Bay–Delta: Science, Policy, and Practice¹	March 2026	Delta Science Program and UC Davis	Standalone	Recording and summary forthcoming	Hybrid
Microplastic Pollution: Impact on the SF Bay Delta and Remediation Strategies²	May 2025	Delta Science Program and UC Davis	Standalone	Recording³ and peer-reviewed publication (in review)	Hybrid
Delta Science Plan Workshop⁴	February 2025	Delta Science Program	As needed	Day 1 Recording⁵ , Day 2 Recording⁶	Hybrid
Science for Communities⁷	July 2024	Delta Stewardship Council Staff	Standalone	Recording⁸	Hybrid
Salinity Management Workshop⁹	March 2024	Delta Science Program	Standalone	Recording¹⁰	Online
Adaptive Management Forum¹¹	May 2023	Delta Science Program	Bi-annually	Summary report¹²	Hybrid
Integrated Modeling Framework Workshop¹³	February–March 2023	Delta Science Program	Standalone	Day 1 Recording¹⁴ , Day 2 Recording¹⁵ , Summary Report¹⁶	Hybrid
Delta HABs Workshop¹⁷	November 2022	Various	Standalone	Day 1 Recording¹⁸ , Day 2 Recording¹⁹	Hybrid
Science Synthesis Workshops	Various	Various	As needed	Examples²⁰	Various

1. <https://marinescience.ucdavis.edu/events/blue-carbon>

2. https://airtable.com/appEOgQ4D9g6QsZqP/pagPFvLQjDcaITtYz/form?mc_cid=b289fced42&mc_eid=UNIQID

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUWDuOXGuJM>

4. <https://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/science-program/agenda/2025-02-20-21-delta-science-plan-workshop-draft-agenda.pdf>

5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8eYmMC9m4&t=11923s>

6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WntiNemmWEI>

7. <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/science-for-communities>

8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUp4NIUfxtw>

9. <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/science-program/flyers/2024-01-08-salinity-management-workshop-2024-save-the-date-flyer.pdf>

10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHJtLe9z0HA>

11. <https://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/science-program/agenda/2023-04-18-adaptive-management-forum-agenda.pdf>

12. <https://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/science-program/reports/2025-03-18-2023-adaptive-management-forum-summary-report.pdf>

13. <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-science-program/collaborative-modeling>

14. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ledUyQ0oP4Q&list=PLqTHClIW1HhpXrGF1gI9jjC4lpHZNJWNM&index=3>

15. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Bloczqg_Sc&list=PLqTHClIW1HhpXrGF1gI9jjC4lpHZNJWNM&index=2

16. <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/science-program/2023-07-25-2023-integrated-modeling-framework-workshop-summary.pdf>

17. <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/science-program/information-sheets/2022-07-15-delta-harmful-algal-blooms-workshop-information-sheet.pdf>

18. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntwxK7S1JSE>

19. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPIlco_FIVg

20. <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-science-program/science-synthesis>

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