



(Photo from ASC)

DELTA REGIONAL MONITORING PROGRAM

Impact of the Delta RMP on Management Decisions

Informing High-Stakes Decisions: Cities, counties, and the state are spending billions of dollars to protect and restore the waters in the Delta. Today, investments are being made to upgrade wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, reduce runoff from farms, and to manage contaminated sediment. Also at stake are decisions on how to manage water supplies.

Although dozens of agencies spend over \$10 million per year to monitor Delta water, key questions have gone unanswered. In its first three years, the Delta RMP has focused on contaminants, seeking to better understand their role in declines in the health of Delta ecosystems and fish populations.

Goals and Objectives of the Delta RMP

The mission of the Delta RMP is to inform decisions on how to protect, and where necessary, restore beneficial uses of water in the Delta, by producing objective and cost-effective scientific information critical to understanding regional water quality conditions and trends in the Delta. The RMP is an innovative collaboration between the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Aquatic Science Center, and other scientists and interested parties. The program is led by representatives of publicly owned treatment works, municipal storm water programs, irrigated agriculture, water suppliers, and state and federal agencies.

State and federal laws require dischargers to monitor waters downstream of their discharge. This monitoring provides some useful information, but equivalent funds could be used more efficiently and productively on a coordinated program of water quality monitoring. Rather than continuing uncoordinated individual water quality monitoring programs, regional monitoring allows dischargers to pool their funds and expertise to provide data to better inform management and policy decisions facing the Delta.

MONITORING PROGRAMS

- **Pesticides and toxicity** – The RMP has collected monthly sampling at 5 baseline sites for the past 2 years.
- **Nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus)** – The program has conducted important data synthesis and modeling work, and will collect its own nutrients data starting in Fiscal Year 2017–2018.
- **Mercury in fish, water and sediment** – Monitoring began in Summer 2016 focusing on areas of the Delta likely to be affected by major existing or new sources of mercury contamination.
- **Pathogens or organisms that can cause human illnesses** – A 2-year special study of *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia* was finished in March 2017.



Monitoring the Delta. (Photo courtesy of Steven San Julian, California Department of Water Resources, Municipal Water Quality Investigations (DWR-MWQI))

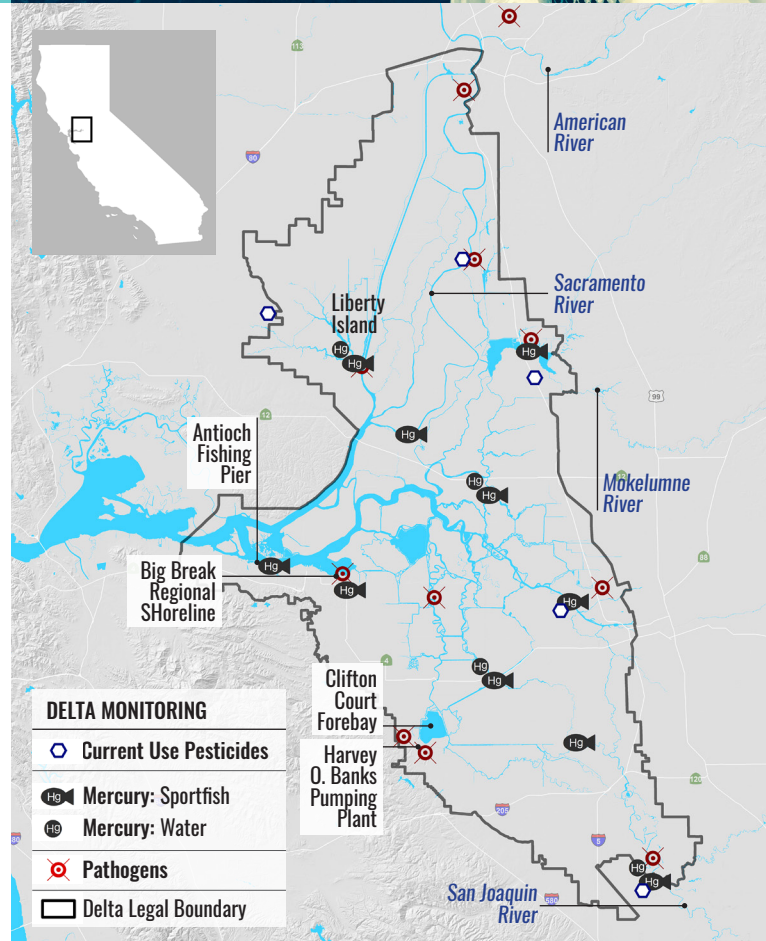
What Makes the Delta RMP Special?

Stakeholder driven and transparent: All data generated are freely available to the public via the California Environmental Data Exchange Network, www.ceden.org.

Adaptable and flexible: Our committee structure and periodic program reviews make the Delta RMP able to respond to changing management priorities and advances in scientific understanding.

Collaborative culture: The program seeks to inform a range of often competing interests (habitat restoration, flood protection, water supply) in an environment that encourages objectivity, consensus-building, and science-based decision making.

Cost-effective and efficient: Over 70% of the Delta RMP's annual budget of \$1.2 million goes toward monitoring, covering field data collection and laboratory analyses. The program also leverages in-kind contributions from state and federal agencies worth over \$250,000 each year.



For More Information Visit the Delta RMP website: <http://tinyurl.com/DeltaRMP> or contact Patrick Morris, Patrick.Morris@waterboards.ca.gov, (916) 464-4621

