

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

2024-05-20

2. Department

Department of Water Resources

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Executive Division

4. CEA Position Title

Deputy Director, Habitat Restoration

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

The Department of Water Resources proposes to revise the above CEA allocation from Deputy Director, Integrated Watershed Management Program to Deputy Director, Habitat Restoration. This position is responsible for the leadership and management of all aspects of the Department's non-State Water Project habitat restoration policies, program, initiatives, and activities. This includes responsibility for the Department's Division of Multi-Benefit Initiatives, Salton Sea Restoration Program, and Agreements to Support Healthy Rivers and Landscapes.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Director, DWR / Exempt

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain):

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

As a member of the Department's executive team, the CEA reports directly to the Director and serves as the Deputy Director of Habitat Restoration. The CEA is delegated the authority for all non-State Water Project habitat restoration-related Department policies, programs, initiatives, and projects while ensuring appropriate coordination with other Department divisions/offices and state/federal entities as needed. This includes the responsibility for all Department policy formulation and implementation related to restoring non-State Water Project habitats statewide, reducing flood risk, supporting the long-term sustainability of the Salton Sea, and specifically improving habitats and water flows in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta).

More specifically, the position is charged with implementing existing and formulating new policies to implement habitat restoration activities and ensuring coordination across multiple Department divisions and offices. The CEA develops policy and provides executive leadership for large-scale and complex flood risk reduction and habitat enhancement projects throughout the Central Valley and Delta. This includes the Delta levees and related habitat improvement programs which lead the implementation of flood risk reduction financial assistance programs and restoration actions. Additionally, the CEA formulates and implements statewide policy for, and leads DWR's Salton Sea Salton Sea Restoration Program. This program delivers wetland and dust suppression projects in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Natural Resources Agency, and various local, state, and federal agencies, to support the state's legal obligations concerning the Salton Sea restoration.

In addition, the CEA provides policy formulation and program direction for implementing the Agreements to improve the habitat and water flows in the Delta and its major rivers. These Agreements will provide substantial new water flows for the environment to help recover salmon and other native fish, create new and restored habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide significant funding for environmental improvements and water purchases. The CEA represents the Department in this effort by leading policy and program development, grant process formulation, project design, and scientific services.

The position also represents the Department and is the lead spokesperson regarding all non-State Water Project habitat restoration activities and initiatives including frequently presenting on complex habitat restoration policy issues related to the Department's efforts. The CEA makes presentations to, and interfaces directly with the Governor's Office, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary and senior staff, and various state government, federal, and local government agencies, as well as interested parties statewide.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The policies formulated and implemented by the CEA, and the programs and activities to be led and managed by this position are essential to achieving the Department's mission to sustainably manage the water resources of California, in cooperation with other agencies, to benefit the state's people and protect, restore, and enhance the natural and human environments. The CEA leads and oversees all projects and activities to implement non-State Water Project habitat restoration policies to improve ecosystems, mitigate flood risk, and improve water flows. In addition, ecosystem enhancement is crucial to levee improvement which is not only key to flood risk mitigation but to the overall health of California's ecosystems in general and native species present in these environments. Further, California's largest lake, Salton Sea, supports an abundance of fish and is a food source for millions of migratory birds. Over the last several decades, water levels have declined, and salinity concentrations have increased due to climate change, agriculture conservation measures, and reduced inflows. Given this, the urgent public and ecological health issues from the drying lake must be addressed, including issues with air quality and dust. Additionally, the Agreements will provide substantial new water flows for the environment in the Delta to help recover salmon and other native fish, create new and restored habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide significant funding for environmental improvements and water purchases.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

After careful review and evaluation, it was determined that the work of the existing Deputy Director Integrated Watershed Management position should be separated into two CEA – Deputy Director positions. Key to this decision was consolidating all non-State Water Project habitat restoration programs and activities under one Deputy to ensure seamless coordination, improved efficiency, and maximization of resources amongst the Department. Additionally, the increased workload and staffing required for, and the criticality and visibility of the Agreements program also necessitated this change. The high-profile program needed placement under a Deputy Director to ensure proper oversight and the program itself had a natural linkage and alignment with the Department’s existing non-State Water Project habitat restoration activities and initiatives. DWR's Salton Sea Restoration Program (to address the issues resulting from the drying and shrinking of the Salton Sea), is moving from the planning and design phase into the actual restorations. Many lessons learned from the Salton Sea Restoration Program can be applied in the Department’s other habitat restoration efforts which makes aligning the Salton Sea Restoration Program, Agreements, and other Department Multi-Benefit initiatives an important strategic move for the Department’s habitat restoration efforts as a whole. Also, moving the Department’s water planning function out from under a Lead Deputy Director with multiple programmatic responsibilities, and elevating that program and function to its own, new Deputy Director is essential to keeping pace with the importance of water planning statewide. Water planning has evolved out of necessity due to climate change and equity-related issues and must be managed from a global perspective. The unpredictable nature of the weather and the state’s water availability makes water planning all that more crucial to ensuring coordination with all water management programs throughout the Department.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The CEA is the principal policy maker for all non-State Water Project habitat restoration policies, including those related to a broad range of initiatives to improve habitat statewide, the Salton Sea restoration efforts, and Agreements program. The CEA creates and implements policies to advance and develop innovative, science-based methods for implementing habitat restoration and enhancement. More specifically, this position is responsible for formulating and implementing policies concerning the Department's Multi-Benefit Initiatives key to reducing flood risk, fish and wildlife habitat restoration, improved fish passage, enhanced food web production for fish, and public access to recreation. Moreover, the CEA develops policies to ensure the most effective and efficient use of public funds for projects to restore and enhance California's ecosystems. The position is responsible for policies related to enhancing the state's landscapes for its waterways and flood system through projects and initiatives that create a multitude of benefits for the state's ecosystems, habitats, and species.

Additionally, the position formulates policies to support DWR's restoration efforts of the Salton Sea – California's largest lake and home to a massive migratory bird food source. The California Natural Resources Agency's Salton Sea Management Program was created by Governor Jerry Brown's Salton Sea Task Force to address the urgent public and ecological health issues resulting from the drying and shrinking of the Salton Sea. In support of this program, the CEA formulates and implements policies to develop aquatic habitats to support fish and wildlife species dependent on the Salton Sea. This position is responsible for comprehensive construction projects to suppress dust to address air quality concerns at the Salton Sea.

The CEA is responsible for policy formulation and implementation related to the Department's Agreements program. As stated previously, these Agreements will provide substantial new water flows for the Delta to help recover salmon and other native fish, create new and restored habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide significant funding for environmental improvements and water purchases. Moreover, this effort will create 30,000 acres of new and restored habitat and allocate upwards of \$3 billion in new funding for environmental improvements and science.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

This CEA acts on and approves any and all matters under specific delegation that are not prohibited by law. The CEA has the authority to formulate, revise, and implement Department policies related to any and all matters concerning non-State Water Project habitat restoration. Specifically, the CEA has the authority to make all decisions related to all non-State Water Project habitat restoration policies, programs, projects, and activities Department-wide. This position has responsibility for all administrative and management matters, as well as approve and sign documents, correspondence, and reports within designated areas of responsibility for non-State Water Project habitat restoration in the Executive Division.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The CEA develops and formulates new and implements existing habitat restoration policies. On April 2, 2024, the Department released the California Water Plan Update 2023. The California Water Plan is a blueprint for managing and developing the state's water resources. One of the seven objectives in the plan update is "Improve resiliency of natural 'backbone' infrastructure – Built infrastructure relies on natural infrastructure, such as rivers, lakes, groundwater basins, and more. Improving resilience means faster ecosystem restoration and identifying key ecosystems and groundwater basins." Through planning, policy formulation, and leading relevant programs, the CEA will implement the near- and long-term vision and strategies for the effective and efficient integration of flood risk reduction and habitat restoration to contribute to achieving the objectives as outlined in the plan and achieve Department priorities across the state.

Additionally, the position will work with local water agencies, conservation groups, and federal agencies to develop and implement agreements to improve habitat and water flows in the Delta. These Voluntary Agreements will provide new water flows for the environment to help recover native fish, establish new habitat for wildlife, and provide funds for restoration efforts. The CEA will play a key role in implementing the agreements by providing leadership and policy development for granting processes, project design/construction and technical/scientific services. Further, the position is responsible for leading the Department's role in supporting the long-term sustainability of the Salton Sea and develop and implement policies to deliver wetland and dust suppression projects by coordinating with various local, state, and federal entities.