

WRITING, REVIEWING, AND COMPLETING THE 2013 IEP MAST REPORT

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- I. General Guidelines for the 2013 MAST Report** (adapted in part from guidelines for reports written by committees of the National Research Council)
- a) *Report Purpose and Approach.* The MAST report is a technical report intended to synthesize the latest scientific data and information on a topic of particularly high relevance to agency managers and decision makers. The topic of the 2013 MAST report is an assessment of delta smelt responses to recent changes in habitat conditions due to hydrology and management actions. The 2013 MAST report revolves around a conceptual model and uses a comparative approach focusing on four recent years with different habitat conditions and delta smelt responses (2005, 2006, 2010, 2011). The report ends with expectations for future years and data from 2012 is used to evaluate if these expectations were met, thus serving as a preliminary, limited conceptual model validation.
 - b) *Report Development.* The 2013 MAST report is a synthesis report developed and written by the IEP Management, Analysis, and Synthesis Team (MAST). The MAST is co-chaired by the IEP Program Manager and IEP Lead Scientist and includes senior scientists from IEP member agencies tasked with data analysis, synthesis, and work planning. The MAST report is the collective product of a dynamic and collaborative interagency team process involving focused team discussions at monthly MAST meetings, intensive conceptual model and report development at additional multi-day off-site meetings, presentations to and discussions with other scientists and the public (e.g. at the annual IEP workshop), and data analysis and synthesis as well as writing, integration, and revisions of report sections by MAST members with written communication via email and the MAST wiki. MAST report authors are expected to follow the MAST report guidelines described here. They are also expected to consider all internal review comments by other MAST members as well as external review comments received during the 40-day external review period. Details about the external review process are given in II.
 - c) *Report Authorship.* The “author of record” for the 2013 MAST report is the entire IEP MAST, and the responsibility for authorship lies with the entire MAST as well. Individual authorship of report sections is not credited; the report becomes a product of the IEP MAST and not of any individual author or an individual IEP member agency. All current MAST members are MAST report authors and will be listed alphabetically on the first page of the report (see III. below). Former MAST members will not be listed as authors, but acknowledged in the report. Each report section has a lead author who has primary responsibility for writing and revising the section. One designated MAST member (Larry Brown) compiles and integrates all sections and sends full draft report versions to the MAST for review by all MAST members. All MAST members send their edits and comments back to Larry Brown and the section authors for revisions. The full draft

report will be revised at least twice by the MAST before it is released for review by others outside the MAST team (see review process (II.), criteria (III.), report authors and reviewers (IV.), and timeline (V.)).

- d) *Report Organization.* The final MAST report should contain a title page, list of all authors, acknowledgements, table of contents, an introductory section with background information and report objectives, and concise sections detailing the analysis and synthesis approach, models and hypotheses, findings, and conclusions as well as illustrative tables, figures, and full references for all citations. The final report should also include an executive summary to facilitate the use of the report's findings by managers and decision makers. The executive summary should be brief (less than 5,000 words) and provide the study charge/report objectives and a synopsis of key findings. This summary should be easily comprehensible to non-experts.

- e) *Supporting Evidence.* The rationale for any findings, conclusions, and recommendations should be fully explained in the report. Whenever possible, conceptual models and hypotheses should be evaluated through analysis of the available data. Additional supporting information should be obtained from the peer-reviewed literature or from publicly accessible reports. Related or competing hypotheses and models that have been previously published in the peer-reviewed literature should be acknowledged and discussed in the report and conclusions should be based on even-handed, dispassionate consideration of all available evidence. Sources for all supporting data and information should be clearly identified and cited. Citation of personally communicated unpublished results (e.g. emails, memos) is permissible, but should be used sparingly. The IEP MAST should strive for consensus on all supporting evidence and rationale, but not at the cost of substantially weakening analyses and conclusions. Matters of unresolved disagreement should be addressed forthrightly in the report. As a final recourse, a MAST member may choose to prepare a brief dissent (no more than 5,000 words) succinctly describing the issues of contention and the evidence and arguments in support of the minority view. This statement should be included as an appendix to the draft report, with reference to it in the introductory text and Table of Contents. A dissent may not address issues outside the study charge/report objectives, misrepresent the majority's views, or contain other inaccuracies. Any questions regarding the appropriateness of supporting evidence and other material included in a dissent shall be referred to the IEP Lead Scientist.

II. Draft 2013 MAST Report Review Process

a) Who will review the draft MAST report?

The draft 2013 MAST report will be reviewed by

1. IEP Agency Managers (agency management level review, mostly IEP Coordinators)
2. Former MAST members (colleague scientific peer review)
3. 3-5 Independent Scientific Peer Reviewers (independent scientific peer review)
4. Stakeholders and the Public (the purpose is improved transparency and additional scientific review and input)

See IV for additional details. All reviewers will be acknowledged in the final MAST report.

b) How will reviewers be identified, invited, and informed?

Review by IEP agency managers will be initiated at the June 6 Coordinators meeting. The draft report will be presented and discussed during this meeting to facilitate the review.

Independent Scientific Peer Reviewers will be identified by the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Science Program (DSP) and Delta Lead Scientist. In accordance with the DSP "Procedures for Independent Scientific Peer Review,"¹ the Delta Lead Scientist determines and invites the independent scientific peer reviewers using the following selection criteria: standing in the scientific community, expertise relevant to the documents being reviewed, and free of conflict of interest. The Delta Lead Scientist may consider independent scientific peer reviewers suggested by the IEP Lead Scientist, MAST, IEP Coordinators, DSP staff, and others. The Delta Lead Scientist and IEP Lead Scientist may hold a conference call meeting with the selected independent scientific peer reviewers upon request.

All other review will be invited by email and in a notice posted on the IEP website. The draft report will also be presented and discussed during the August 14 meeting of the IEP Stakeholder Group to facilitate their review.

c) Where and how long will the draft report be available for review?

The draft MAST report and this MAST report process document will be posted on the IEP website and sent by email upon request. There will be a 40-day review period. The draft report will remain on the IEP website after the review period closes, but review comments will not be accepted after the review period has closed.

¹ http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/DSP_Review_Procedures_110712.pdf

A final MAST report will be released and posted on the IEP website only after the review process has been satisfactorily completed and all authors and the IEP Coordinators and IEP Directors have approved the revised report.

d) What is expected of MAST report reviewers?

MAST report reviewers are asked to provide written comments on any and all aspects of the draft report, but to pay particular attention to the review criteria below (see III.).

To be considered, written review comments must

- identify all authors of the review comments (name, affiliation, email address);
- clearly identify draft report sections using the **line numbers** in the draft report for all comments on specific draft report sections; if multiple authors contributed to the review comments, also identify which author(s) commented on specific sections;
- as much as possible, address the review questions listed in III.;
- be submitted by or before the end of the 40-day review period;
- not exceed **10 pages** (12 pt. font, single spaced);
- be submitted as an electronic file (preferred: MS Word document) named “[your/your group’s name]_2013MASTreportreview;”
- be sent as an email attachment to interagencyecologicalprogram@gmail.com . Write “[your/your group’s name] 2013MAST Report Review” in the email subject line. Do not include any review comments in the body of the email message.

Note: The IEP is recommending that the Independent Scientific Peer Reviewers invited by the Delta Lead Scientist follow the review procedures outlined in this document as much as possible, but all decisions in this regard rest with the Delta Lead Scientist, not the IEP or the IEP Lead Scientist, and all communication with these reviewers will be conducted by the Delta Science Program.

e) How will review comments be addressed?

The IEP Lead Scientist will compile all review comments received during the 40-day review period and prepare a brief summary of the comments. The MAST will revise the MAST report in consideration of the compiled review comments. The time line for revision and completion of the report (see V.) may have to be adjusted based on the volume and depth of review comments received. The present goal is to consider all review comments and complete the final MAST report in December 2013 (see timeline for details).

III. Criteria for Review of the Draft 2013 MAST Report

The following questions are intended to help reviewers formulate their comments. They are adapted from criteria provided to reviewers of National Research Council reports. Reviewers are asked to directly answer these questions or explain how their comments relate to these questions. This will help the IEP Lead Scientist and MAST report authors summarize and consider the review comments.

1. Are the objectives and/or questions the report seeks to address clearly described in the report? Are they fully addressed? Do the authors go beyond these objectives/questions?
2. Are the conclusions and recommendations adequately supported by evidence and analyses? Are uncertainties, alternative hypotheses and conceptual models, or incompleteness in the evidence explicitly recognized? If report content is based on unpublished results, are findings and conclusions properly attributed to an individual or a specific program/project?
3. Are the data and analyses handled competently and applied appropriately?
4. Is the report's organization effective? Is the title appropriate?
5. Is the report objective? Is its tone impartial?
6. What other significant improvements, if any, might be made in the report?

IV. 2013 MAST Report Authors and Reviewers

a) MAST Report Authors (= current MAST Members, listed alphabetically):

1. Randy Baxter, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
2. Larry R. Brown, U.S. Geological Survey
3. Gonzalo Castillo, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4. Louise Conrad, California Department of Water Resources
5. Steven Culberson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
6. Matthew Dekar, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
7. Melissa Dekar, California Central Valley Water Quality Control Board
8. Frederick Feyrer, Reclamation
9. Karen Gehrts, California Department of Water Resources
10. Lenny Grimaldo, Reclamation
11. Thaddeus Hunt, California State Water Resources Control Board
12. Joseph Kirsch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

13. Anke Mueller-Solger, Delta Stewardship Council
14. Matthew Nobriga, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
15. Steve Slater, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
16. Ted Sommer, California Department of Water Resources
17. Kelly Souza, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

b) MAST Report Reviewers:

A. IEP Agency Managers (mostly IEP Coordinators, agency management level review)

1. Lee Case, USGS
2. Carl Dealy, Reclamation
3. Gregg Erickson, CDFW (also former MAST member)
4. Roger Fujii, USGS
5. Erin Foresman, USEPA
6. Lauren Hastings, DSC
7. Jeff McLain, NOAA
8. Diane Riddle, SWRCB
9. Stephani Spaar, DWR
10. Tanis Toland, USACE
11. Erwin Van Nieuwenhuysse, Reclamation (also former MAST member)
12. David Van Rijn, Reclamation
13. Kim Webb, USFWS
14. Carl Wilcox, DFW

B. Former MAST members (colleague scientific peer review)

1. Bruce Herbold, EPA retired
2. Stephanie Fong, formerly CVRWQCB, now SFCWA

C. Independent Scientific Peer Reviewers (independent scientific peer review)

Independent Scientific Peer Reviewers will be identified and invited by the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Science Program (DSP) and Delta Lead Scientist in accordance with the DSP "Procedures for Independent Scientific Peer Review" (see II b). Independent Scientific Peer Reviewers should have appropriate expertise in aquatic ecology, fish biology, hydrology, food web ecology, comparative studies, etc.

D. Stakeholders and the Public (additional scientific review)

The purpose of inviting additional scientific review by stakeholders and the public is improved transparency and additional scientific input. Stakeholders and the public will be invited as groups without specifically inviting individual reviewers to review the draft report. This will be accomplished via oral invitation during Larry Brown's presentation about the MAST report at the public annual IEP workshop on April 24 and subsequent email invitations sent to the IEP workshop listserve and the IEP Stakeholder Group listserve as well as postings on the IEP website. The draft report will also be presented and discussed during the July 2013 meeting of the IEP Stakeholder Group to facilitate their review.

V. 2013 MAST Report Timeline (starting March 2013, subject to change)

Note: The time line for completion of the report may have to be adjusted based on the volume and depth of review comments received during the 40-day review period.

Through March: MAST report section authors write draft sections

March 29: Draft MAST report (v1) compiled & sent to MAST for review

April 11: MAST meeting to discuss revisions and next steps

April 24: MAST talk at IEP Workshop (Larry Brown, USGS)

May 2: MAST report process discussion with IEP Coordinators.

Desired outcome: Coordinators approve process

COB May 13: Draft MAST report section authors revise draft sections

May 20: Revised draft MAST report (v2) compiled & sent back to MAST

COB May 31: MAST revises draft MAST Report (v2)

June 6: Revised draft MAST report (v3) compiled and sent to IEP Coordinators and MAST

June 6: In-depth draft MAST report update and discussion with IEP Coordinators

June 13 (am): MAST meeting to discuss draft MAST report (v3) and issues that need to be addressed before releasing it for review

June 13 (pm): MAST report update to IEP Directors

By COB July 5: MAST revises draft MAST Report (v3)

July 12: Revised draft MAST report (v4) compiled and sent back to MAST for final review before release for review

- July 22:** **Draft MAST report (v4) posted on the IEP website for a 40-day review period**
- August 14: Draft MAST report presentation and discussion with IEP Stakeholder Group (see <http://www.water.ca.gov/iep/activities/calendar.cfm> for meeting details)
- COB August 30: Draft MAST report review period closes
- Sept 5: MAST report review update at Coordinators meeting
- COB Sept 9: Review comments organized, compiled and sent to MAST. Brief review summary prepared for IEP Coordinators, Directors, and Stakeholders (Anke Mueller-Solger, DSC)
- Sept 12: MAST meeting to consider and discuss reviewer comments and MAST report revisions
- Sept 17: MAST report progress & review update to IEP Directors
- COB Sept 27: MAST report section authors revise sections in consideration of reviewer comments pertaining to their sections
- Sept 30: Revised draft MAST report (v5) with review summary as appendix compiled and sent to MAST and IEP Coordinators
- COB October 14: MAST makes final revisions to draft MAST report
- October 21: Final draft MAST report (v6) compiled and sent to MAST for approval by COB October 25
- October 29: Final draft MAST report (v6) sent to Coordinators for approval
- October 30: MAST report presentation (poster) at 2013 State of the Estuary Conference
- November 7: Final draft MAST report presentation and discussion with IEP Coordinators.
Intended outcome: Coordinators approve release of final draft MAST report (v6) and the Final Draft MAST report is posted on the IEP website.
- November TBD: IEP Stakeholder Group meeting with final draft MAST report presentation and discussion.
- December 17: Final DRAFT MAST report presentation and discussion with IEP Directors.
Intended outcome: Directors approve release of FINAL MAST REPORT and the report is posted on the web.