

July 31, 2015

To: Blake Roberts, Associate Environmental Planner, Delta Protection Commission
From: Robert Benedetti and Margit Aramburu, Co-Directors Delta Narratives Project
Subject: Completion of Delta Narratives Project One Year Contract-- Project Process and Outcomes

The Delta Narratives Project:

The Delta Narratives Project (Project) was designed to develop research reports on Delta culture and history organized around four themes and an exhibition and presentation plan for multiple venues and in various formats that collectively would give cultural definition to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The project supports the concept of Delta as Place.

The four themes are:

- Managing the Garden: Agriculture, Reclamation, and Restoration
- Building Community: Economics and Ethnicity
- River Culture: Communication and Transportation
- Visioning the Delta: Writers and Artists

Study Area:

Although scholars were given flexibility in defining the Delta, the study area generally conforms to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Proposed Boundary--north to Sacramento, south to near Lathrop, and west to Vallejo and Hercules. Even though there are parts of the Primary and Secondary Zones of the Delta not in the Delta National Heritage Area as proposed, these zones in their entirety were accepted as part of the Delta for this analysis. [See attached map]

Contract and Funding:

The Delta Protection Commission (DPC) contracted with Center for California Studies at California State University Sacramento (CSUS), Steve Boilard Director, in the amount of \$80,000. CSUS served as the administrator of the contract. The one-year contract ended July 31, 2015.

Delta Narratives Project Process:

The process was conceived as open, inclusive, and measured. Key groups and institutions were solicited and agreed to participate in the process. Scholars with records of research and knowledge in multiple fields were invited to participate. Project managers with knowledge and experience in the Delta region were identified and selected to manage the Project. [See attached list of participants]

The process included regular meetings of the team members—project managers, scholars, archivists and mentor institutions—to provide input and coordination. Meetings with multiple groups and institutions in the Delta and surrounding communities were key to the overall process and provided

helpful reference information and inspiration for research. The Project included larger, more formal public meetings to share the process and outcomes.

Delta Narratives Products:

The Project has produced several products:

- four 60-110 page papers prepared by the scholars;
- a bibliography of resources used to research the multiple topics and prepare the papers;
- a chart of Delta region groups, museums, libraries and archives with descriptions and contact information;
- a list of key items of major historical interest from Delta museums;
- selection of four visual icons selected by the scholars to represent the researched topics; and
- A memo with recommendations on how to inform the Delta, the larger Bay-Delta-watershed region, the State, and the nation about the Delta's culture and history.

All the products will be made available to the public and interested parties by the DPC through a written report and website.

Delta Narratives Outreach and Coordination Meetings:

The Project hosted two workshop meetings—one in Walnut Grove on March 4 and one in Antioch on March 18—to outreach to the region's historical societies, museums, libraries, and archives. Invitations for both meetings were issued to all Delta museums, historical societies, and archives. At each meeting the overall project and process was described and the four scholars described their topics, research process, and draft outcomes.

A third meeting was held on April 11 at the Center for Sacramento History to convene the archivists and the mentor institutions and solicit ideas about how to pass the newly develop information to the general public, other researchers, and visitors. The groups addressed the audiences that include residents of the Delta, residents of the "rimlands" around the Delta, the State, and the nation. The benefits of a low cost phone and tablet app (application) were discussed to reach younger visitors and families that may not be museum visitors. Other ideas include engaging small museums and historical groups into an overall program, identifying annual themes, making use of common marketing, promoting museums through schools, focusing on different regions (north, south, east, and west), engagement of multiple groups, presenting the story of the Delta people, and making use of oral histories to appeal to modern visitors.

Delta Narratives Major Workshops:

On April 17, a special presentation was made on CSUS campus entitled "Delta Narratives: An Introduction to Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta History". The program included presentations from Steve Boilard, Dr. Benedetti who is the Visiting Scholar at the Center for California Studies, Blake Roberts, DPC staff, and the four scholars/authors (Margit Aramburu presented for Professor Garone). The audience was largely CSUS faculty, staff, and students.

A conference entitled "More than H2O: Saving the History and Culture of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta" was held on June 17 in Sacramento, also hosted by the Center for California Studies. In addition to remarks by the Steve Boilard, Blake Roberts, and Dr. Benedetti, the program included two panels.

The morning panel included the scholars (Dr. Benedetti stood in for Professor Helzer) and an afternoon panel moderated by former Senator Patrick Johnston. The panelists included regional coordinator for the National Heritage Area Program, Executive Director of the San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum, former Senator and former Executive Director of the DPC Michael Machado, and Dr. Jeff Hart—botanist, ecologist, and organic farmer. The topic was the cultural and historical aspect of the Delta and what steps should be taken to preserve this heritage?

A final workshop entitled “Make Delta Narratives Come Alive!” was held on July 16 in West Sacramento using the American Assembly process. A broad invitation was issued to groups, museums, libraries and archives to participate. Three knowledgeable community leaders—former Senator Patrick Johnston, former Senator Michael Machado, and Dr. Jeff Hart-- served as discussion leaders. Three groups addressed questions about how to better communicate information about the Delta and its culture and history to the Delta region, to the surrounding rimlands and cities, and to the entire State and the nation. Each group developed a list of recommendations, and the group as a whole ratified those recommendations they found compelling.

Delta Narratives Process Outcomes and Recommendations:

The outcomes of the final meeting serves as the exhibition and presentation plan which situates the Delta’s narratives in regional and national history, links sites of cultural significance, outlines the responsibilities of each exhibition partner and delineates how various audiences will access the information provided. Delta Narratives structured an American Assembly program in which a wide variety of Delta stakeholders were challenged to address ways to better promote partnership around Delta stories, to increase the appreciation of Delta stories in communities in Northern California, and to stimulate interest in Delta history and culture throughout California and beyond. The 40-plus stakeholders divided into three groups, each group responsible for brainstorming and then evaluating solutions. At the end of the day, all three groups brought their top results to the group as a whole, which voted on those they found most compelling.

The group that focused on internal Delta cooperation suggested two preliminary steps, the preparation of a digital map of significant historical and cultural sites and the creation of a comprehensive directory of cultural institutions, completing the work already begun by the Delta Narratives Project (see Directory of Cultural and Historical Organizations in the Appendix). The group also suggested reviving boat and bus tours of the Delta for residents as well as visitors so that its full extent could be experienced. They stressed that it was critical to involve youth from afar as well as local citizens. In both cases, those attempting to stimulate their interest would be expected to identify a truly common purpose and attempt to meet people on their own terms and in their own environment.

The group focusing on the relationship between the Delta and surrounding communities argued that the Delta's cultural groups, once they have come together, should coordinate with affinity groups beyond the Delta in an attempt to educate the citizenry of these communities beyond the Delta’s borders, targeting youths and families. They should design appealing tours and outings that would be easy to execute, involving private business to the greatest extent possible. They should be accompanied by public relations campaigns that explain the significance of Delta stories and why coming to the Delta is crucial to understanding them. The group suggested approaching three key collaborators: Sacramento State students and faculty, sites in the Bay Area and Mother Lode that have special historic ties to sites in the Delta, and the chambers of commerce in the Delta and surrounding communities, especially

Stockton, San Francisco and Sacramento. This group championed the creation of a central clearinghouse for information on the Delta that could be accessed online and at key locations in the Delta. They also considered creating a K-12 curriculum that would integrate Delta narratives into the California story. To stimulate initial visits to the Delta, the group suggested creating Delta Days to encourage visitors to sample a variety of sites.

The group charged with considering links between Delta history and the state and beyond, urged the creation of an on-going central organization to promote education, research, exhibits, and travel through the Delta. It would be an independent organization, but one willing to cooperate with state agencies. Members of this group were generally in favor of a National Heritage Area (NHA). The group believed that visitors must see the Delta to appreciate it truly and have the benefit of interpretations by specialists. They recommended creation of sophisticated school and college curricula to stimulate visits.

All three groups emphasized the need to mobilize Delta groups into a continuing organization for the promotion of culture and history. They also believe that people must see the Delta to appreciate its cultural riches and that working to integrate Delta stories into primary, secondary, and college curricula could create an appetite for visiting it. Finally, they agree that the creation of a website and/or web application (app) would help to attract people, particularly the young, to Delta narratives. All three groups believed that whatever strategies were adopted should pay particular attention to the young in the hope that they will help sustain the distribution of Delta stories to the next generation.

The conference participants did not underestimate the challenges in attempting to build on such strategies: transportation around the Delta is difficult; the area does not have a strong information technology infrastructure; and Internet, Wi-Fi and cell phone access are underdeveloped. Furthermore, there are currently only limited places to stay or to find a meal. The area is also under multiple governmental jurisdictions, making any coordinated action difficult, and lacks large or commodious buildings for exhibitions, performances and meetings.

Action Steps

What then should be the next steps? Clearly some form of Delta-wide organization is a top priority. However, it is difficult to create such a group without a clear focus and challenge at hand. Three possible projects emerged from these discussions: (1) the creation of an app/website/digital maps for the Delta, (2) the integration of Delta Stories into California's educational curriculum and (3) the organizing of regular Delta Days to announce the region's historical and cultural riches. In each case, the four topics that the scholars expanded upon could play a key role in defining the content of these outcomes. Of course, these projects will require leadership, institutional commitments and funding. They would also benefit by the inclusion of scholars from other educational and cultural institutions like the Oakland Museum, UC Davis, UC Berkeley and CSU East Bay as well as interested groups in the Bay Area and possibly, the Mother Lode. To recruit additional partners in the Delta and beyond, it may be strategic to make the securing of funding a first priority.

Contract Tasks:

I. Initial Inventories, ongoing communication and project management	Deliverables:	Products:
Build on personal contacts already established with many of the cultural institutions and brief all of them on the project		All identified museums, historical groups, archives, libraries were informed about the project and invited to participate—by email and by phone
Collect materials that describe holdings and aspirations of each	Report of holdings and aspirations of cultural and mentor institutions	A chart of all Delta museums, archives, and historical groups was prepared with brief description of program direction and holdings
Inventory Delta materials and resources available around four themes	Inventory of theme-related materials and resources	See chart described above, overall bibliography, and bibliographies for each paper.
Survey available exhibition facilities	Survey report of available exhibition facilities	All Delta museums, archives and historical groups have been visited and analyzed. The Crocker and Haggin Museums host visiting art displays. The EBRPD Delta Science Center has a small area with rotating display space. Discover the Delta facility has not yet been constructed. Small museums, libraries, archives have permanent exhibits and/or no exhibit space, especially for temporary exhibits. Other spaces available for rent would require a management entity to coordinate permitting, marketing, ticket sales, display installation, docent training, insurance, etc.
Throughout the project, seek the advice of leaders of advocacy organizations, artists, writers, photographers, journalists, scholars, and community members		All Delta museums, archives and historical groups were invited to participate in the process by attending and participating in meetings, by hosting visits from scholars, by reviewing the chart of resources, etc.
Stimulate interaction between the cultural institutions and other participants		Attendance and participation in meetings and workshops has stimulated conversations and interaction between cultural groups, and between those groups and the project participants. Additional research, work, and collaboration is

		anticipated in the future.
Provide regular updates, encourage visits to specific sites, and facilitate inquiries for information		Beyond the members of the team who provided information as needed to scholars, DPC included an article in the Fall 2014 Delta Voice about the project, Professors Swagerty and Smith wrote an article about the Delta Narratives project that was published in <i>History News</i> , newsletter of the UOP history department) in the Winter 2015 issue, and Professor Garone wrote an article about the Delta Narratives project that was published in the American Society of Environmental History's Summer 2015 newsletter.
Share draft reports for input before finalization		Draft reports were circulated to cumulative list of all attendees and all Delta museums, historic groups, and archives prior to finalization.
II. Workshops: Two workshops in or adjacent to the Delta region. Delta cultural institutions will be encouraged to attend at least one of these workshops to interact with the project team to discuss the four themes.	Deliverables:	Products:
Introduce these groups to each other	Draft and final workshop reports, to include list of participants, review of discussion, and outcomes	Minutes of every meeting and workshop have been prepared. Minutes from each workshop and attendance lists have been prepared and circulated
Generate comment on the potential of each theme to stimulate partnerships		Participants in the workshops were very generous in suggesting topics, themes, and access to archived data and materials to the scholars.
Evaluate potential exhibition sites		The lack of exhibition sites has stimulated discussion of other means of reaching the community, the general public, and tourists. Examples such as special events linking existing museums and displays, development of an APP (application for smart phone or small handheld device), and/or development of educational curriculum were presented as

		alternatives to traditional exhibition sites.
Provide training on exhibition planning		Selection, funding, and implementation of recommended display/education/outreach alternatives would be a future activity. The group of mentor intuitions and archives involved in the Delta Narratives Project would provide rich resources for such future projects.
Identify resources that might ultimately contribute to exhibitions		The group of mentor intuitions and archives involved in the Delta Narratives Project would provide rich resources for such future projects. The many Delta historic groups and museums would also provide diverse and unique resources for future display/outreach/education programs or projects. Each museum was asked to identify its most important items/artifacts. Universities in the Delta “rimlands” including UC Davis, UC Merced, CSU Sacramento, CSU Stanislaus, and University of the Pacific would be fertile providers of academics and students interested in future research and interpretive projects. Potential funding sources are also diverse—many California agencies, industries, and nonprofit groups are actively involved in educating the public about the history and cultural and natural resources of the region, i.e. The Nature Conservancy and others at the Cosumnes Preserve.
III. Research Reports:	Deliverables:	Products:
Be of journal article length and reference major narratives that relate to the themes across time, ethnic community, governmental milieu, technological innovation, environmental shifts and economic focus	Four Draft research reports Four Final research reports	Draft reports were prepared and circulated among the Delta Narratives Project team members and discussed at a project team meeting. Summaries of the four final research reports and full papers are on the DPC web site.

Clarify links between the interacting narratives and trends in California, western, and national history		The papers acknowledge the overlapping of the several themes through time and spaces. Authors edited papers to reflect links.
Situate habitats, documents, and artifacts existing in the Delta region within discussion of the themes		The final reports include maps, charts, and illustrations. The bibliographies of each report identify documents used in research of each theme.
Identify potential issues related to interpreting and presenting the themes		The scholars, and the entire Delta narratives team participated in the final workshop which identified issues related to interpreting and presenting the themes.
Indicate where further basic research, including the collection of oral histories should be pursued		The scholars, and the entire Delta narratives team participated in the final workshop which identified issues related to interpreting and presenting the themes.
Where possible identify maps and other visuals to illustrate the interaction of peoples and place		Maps and illustrations are included in the final reports. Iconic images selected by the scholars have been on display at the final workshops.
IV. Final Conference to Apply Themes to Multi-Venue Exhibition and Presentation Plan	Deliverables:	Products:
An integrative, day-long final conference will be organized to discuss the research reports with representatives of Delta cultural institutions in order to develop a strategy for multi-venue exhibitions and presentations. The conference will invite all potential partners to participate in developing this outline of realistic proposals for a future cooperative effort. The conference will be organized as an American Assembly or similar discussion model such that participants will work in committees to respond to issues raised by the prepared research reports. After each committee has developed its solutions and recommendations, a final plenary session will vote to accept, amend or reject each	One-Day Conference	The one day conference was held July 16, 2015 in the City Hall in West Sacramento. Over 35 participants attended the daylong event. The event was organized as an American Assembly. Each of the four scholars made a brief presentation. Attendees were divided into three groups, each with a leader and a secretary. Each groups was asked to address how best to outreach to the Delta, the larger Bay-Delta area (rimlands), and the State and nation. Each group developed issues and solutions, then prioritized actions. The entire assembly reviewed the materials developed by the three committees, and voted on the recommendations—the votes were: support, neutral, or not significant.

committee report.		
	Committee Reports	A memo outlining the discussions of the three groups and three topics discussed at the workshop and the outcomes identified by the attendees, and their prioritization of the outcomes has been prepared
V. Final Cumulative Statement Report and Plan	Deliverables:	Products:
Approved Committee reports will be assembled into a cumulative statement and exhibition and presentation plan, to be circulated to all participants for comments. The plan will describe a series of exhibitions, presentations and/or initiatives that relate directly to the themes and to materials and artifacts available at area sites. The plan will outline how venues are to be integrated physically and narratively so that a rich and textured exposition is achieved. Several options will be explored including: the design of special presentations at potential partner sites in the region including the space being prepared at the Discover the Delta Foundation site near Rio Vista and the San Joaquin County Museum permanent exhibitions. Among other options to be considered will be traveling exhibits, interactive media display, cultural “trails”, and in-school learning kits.	Draft and final cumulative statement and exhibition and presentation plan reports, assessing resources for exhibitions on major Delta Narratives, in hard copy and posted on line	A report describing the opportunities to distribute the outcomes of the Delta Narratives Project research through traditional means—publication of papers, creation of displays-- and alternatives means such as special events linking existing museums and displays, development of an APP (application for smart phone or handheld device), development of regional website, and/or development of educational curriculum for students is available on the DPC web site. This report makes the argument for further investment in the cultural and historical resources of the Delta and for greater cooperation between Delta cultural organizations in preparing Delta stories for wider publics. In sum, it is a case statement ready for presentation to potential partners who might assist Delta organizations in a campaign to make new audiences aware of the rich Delta heritage.
	Plans for themed exhibitions in several venues/formats based on partnerships between local and regional institutions	See above
	Presentation to possible partner sites including the Delta Discovery Center	See above

Project Participants:

Project Staff:

- Blake Roberts, Associate Environmental Planner, Delta Protection Commission representative
- Steve Boilard, Director, Center for California Studies, CSUS (Project director)
- Robert Benedetti, Visiting Scholar, Center for California Studies, CSUS (co-director)
- Margit Aramburu, formerly University of the Pacific/Delta Protection Commission (co-director)
- Margo Lentz, graduate student, CSUS

Scholars:

- Professor Gregg Camfield, UC Merced, Literature
- Professor Philip Garone, CSU Stanislaus, History
- Professor Jennifer Helzer, CSU Stanislaus, Geography
- Professor William Swagerty, University of the Pacific, History
- Emeritus Dean and Professor Reuben Smith, University of the Pacific, History

Archivists:

- Leigh Johnsen, San Joaquin County Historical Museum
- Dylan McDonald, Center for Sacramento History

Mentor Institutions:

- Marcia Eymann, Director, Center for Sacramento History
- David Stuart, Director, San Joaquin Historical Museum

Archivists and Mentor Institutions:

- Tod Ruhstaller, Haggin Museum
- Michael Wurtz, Holt Atherton Library, University of the Pacific