

Delta Voice

Highlighting unique values of "Delta as Place"



Winter 2014

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Sharing Our Stories: Delta Narratives

The Delta Protection Commission (DPC) is excited to present this issue of Delta Voice as part of the DPC's continuing effort to contribute to a **collective understanding about the Delta and its people**. In order to preserve stories of the region's unique history, cultures, communities and values, the DPC is building a library catalog of Delta books and narratives. The DPC already has a number of interesting publications on hand covering topics such as historic houses in the Northern Delta, Locke and the Chinese farming experience, and the history of Walnut Grove. However, with many historical references out of print, it is important to identify and preserve these resources in a timely manner.

DPC staff hopes to include a "Delta as Place" booklist in a future issue of Delta Voice, and would like some input from you! **What publications best capture the stories of the Delta?** Which most help educate the public about the Delta's communities? **Please submit ideas to dpc@delta.ca.gov**

Additionally, DPC staff would like to feature interviews with local authors. If you know of any **Delta-based authors** who have published material about the region, and may be interested in being interviewed, please contact DPC staff.

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) Public Meetings

Learn more about the draft BDCP and related draft Environmental Impact Report/Study.
Comments are due April 14, 2014.

January 28 - Fairfield
January 29 - Walnut Grove

January 30 - Sacramento
February 12 - Clarksburg

More information: baydeltaconservationplan.com

Delta Legacies: Japanese Historic Sites



Kawashimo

Upon arriving at Walnut Grove, referred to as “Kawashimo”, Issei resided in its Chinatown until a devastating 1915 fire. This led to the development of Walnut Grove’s Japantown, a five-acre area that remains today as the Walnut Grove Japanese American Historic District, with buildings that have changed little since construction.

Delta Protection Commission staff recently met with residents and business owners in the district, and toured several buildings that hold the stories of the Issei and the Nisei (second-generation). Community members expressed great concern about the district’s future. Local interest

First-generation Japanese immigrants, or Issei, began arriving in the Delta in the 1890s, joining Chinese immigrants in reclamation, and then as agricultural laborers and, later, tenant farmers.

A number of historic sites in the Delta remain, including two of the three pre-World War II Japanese bathhouses in the United States, though the sites’ futures are in question...

in maintaining and preserving the district’s historical integrity is strong, but little preservation of the buildings’ historical character has occurred. While several of the residents have previously received **façade**

improvement grants from Sacramento County’s Redevelopment Agency, funding for historic preservation is currently quite slim.

“We need help. It’s like the Wild West here,” said resident Victoria Brady, stressing the urgency of historic preservation while walking by the **Kawamura Barber Shop**. The shop was built in 1916 and is owned by the original owner’s granddaughter. However, with the building up for sale, its future is in question.

“You are really walking into the past here,” Victoria said as she opened the door to the Adachi

Bathhouse, which she owns, one of two remaining Japanese bathhouses in Walnut Grove. These bathhouses were the primary bathing facilities for Japanese farm laborers, as the boarding houses they resided in did not have such amenities. The bathhouse remains filled with historic artifacts including wooden boxes handcrafted by Japanese-Americans in relocation camps during World War II, that were used to transport their belongings back home. Victoria had invested in a skylight, but the rest of the building remains original. “We have all spent our fortunes and done everything we can,” she said, referring to the sheer cost to restore these keepers of Delta history.



Wooden box in the Adachi bathhouse, from Japanese-Americans in relocation camps during World War II

One block away lies the **Miyazaki Bathhouse**, owned by Eugene (Jeep) Phillips and Montserrat Wassam. Jeep and Montserrat spent seven years restoring the building, which is now the only pre-World War II functioning Japanese bathhouse in the country, serving as an art gallery and luxurious bed and breakfast with a bath, steam and lounge area. Its design aesthetic of “Old Japan meets Old American West” is simple, with charm and features including suitcases from the Issei, now used as dressers.

Over ginger tea, Victoria, Jeep, and Montserrat described amenities that would help preserve the community’s historical character and enhance its economic vitality, such as historical signage, building plaques, and walking tour maps. Better understanding of guidelines and regulation on historic homestays also could lead to more small hotels within the Delta’s historic districts, which are viewed as crucial to enhancing the Delta’s economy.



Restored Miyazaki Bathhouse

DPC staff are working to implement some of these recommendations to enhance “Delta as Place”. Additionally, the DPC and Delta Conservancy are partnering with public history faculty at California State University, Sacramento to develop curriculum for a graduate level oral history course centered around the Kawashimo, post World War II.

Holland Union Gakuen

The Holland Union Gakuen is Clarksburg’s Japanese language school, built in 1927 after prominent Issei farmer Tatsuki Sakata donated a portion of his land for the school’s development. **Prior to World War II, hundreds of Japanese-American students attended the school, often on Saturdays, to learn about Japanese language and culture.** Following the war, community events were still held there, such as New Year’s parties, picnics, and Japanese movies screenings.

Located just off of Courtland Road across the Sutter Slough stream, the Gakuen is one of the only intact pre-World War II Japanese language schools in California, with an adjacent teacher’s residence that further contributes to its uniqueness. Recently local community members have expressed interest in preserving the site. Current owner, Tom Sakata, is interested in transferring ownership to a long-term steward for reuse in a way that retains and preserves its historical integrity.

A **preservation charrette** is a next step to develop a vision for the Gakuen’s future. This one-day event will bring local community members together with technical experts to explore different sustainable reuse scenarios for the Gakuen that also share the important site history. The DPC recently received funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State Office of Historic Preservation to host the charrette, and plans to convene the event this spring in partnership with the Delta Conservancy. For more information, please contact Alex Westhoff at alex.westhoff@delta.ca.gov or 916-375-4237.



Students in front of the Gakuen, c. 1930.
Photo Credit: Tom and Stan Sakata



Teachers Mr. and Mrs. Osaki in front of the adjacent residence, c. 1940. Photo Credit: Osaki family



The Gakuen and adjacent teacher’s residence, 2013

Wild for Wintering Birds!

While the Delta is no longer the extensive network of wetlands it once was, its public lands, waterways and managed farmlands are rich with wildlife. As a Pacific Flyway stopover, the Delta is a birder's paradise - particularly during the winter months!

The Delta is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the State, contributing roughly \$6 billion to California's economy, while also being home to over 700 fish and wildlife species. Post-harvest flooding occurs on thousands of acres of agricultural land, which provides feeding and resting areas for resident and migratory birds, as well as other wildlife species. Agricultural land in the Delta was recognized in the Delta Protection Act as significant not only for economic purposes, but also for waterfowl habitat along the Pacific Flyway.

Delta Wintering Bird Checklist *Waterfowl and Shorebirds*

- Tundra Swan
- Greater White-fronted Goose
- Snow Goose
- Ross' Goose
- Green-winged Teal
- Eurasian Wigeon
- Canvasback
- Ring-necked Duck
- Lesser Scaup
- Hooded Merganser
- Black-bellied Plover
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Long-billed Curlew
- Western Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Long-billed Dowitcher

Crane Tours and Events

Sandhill Cranes are truly an iconic species of the Delta, attracting birdwatchers from near and far. Standing nearly four feet tall with wingspans over six feet, the birds' winter residences are celebrated throughout the region. This past November, the 17th annual Sandhill Crane Festival was held in Lodi. Additionally, both the Woodbridge Ecological Reserve and the Cosumnes River Preserve are hosting Sandhill Crane tours through February.



Photo Credit: California Delta Chambers and Visitor's Bureau

Cosumnes River Preserve:
cosumnes.org

Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival:
cranefestival.com

Woodbridge Ecological Reserve Crane Tours:
dfg.ca.gov/delta/cranetour/

Join in the 17th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count!

February 14-17, 2014

A project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, tens of thousands of volunteers of all ages and experience levels participate in this international event to track bird populations. More info: birdcount.org



Thanks to those who helped celebrate DPC's 20th Anniversary in November 2013. It was great to see so many past and present Commissioners, staff, and friends. And, a huge thanks to East Bay Regional Park District for hosting us at the beautiful Big Break Visitor Center.

Coalition for Working Landscapes

As Delta residents and visitors know, a strong agricultural economy is part of the backbone of the region. The DPC has worked with residents for two decades to identify and implement tools to preserve and advance agriculture in the Delta. For example, the DPC is currently working to develop a **Delta brand** that might be used in marketing efforts (see Delta Voice, Fall 2013). Recently, DPC funded a study by UC Davis, analyzing a promising alternative data-collection method for **water diversion reporting**.

In 2013, DPC also completed a series of “working landscapes” projects with partners Ducks Unlimited and Hart Restoration, funded by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. These demonstration projects showed how farmers can **integrate habitat restoration into farming practices**, potentially to the benefit of the farming operation as well as wildlife. “Working landscapes” are farms, forests and ranches that provide food, fiber and other economic products. In addition to food, fiber, and wildlife

habitat, working landscapes in the Delta have the potential to provide opportunities for recreation, carbon sequestration, subsidence reversal and water quality improvements. These opportunities may be translated into **diversified farm revenue** from recreation, tourism, hunting, and other activities. Economic activities also extend to businesses in the Delta that provide food, lodging and visitor amenities.

As a primary agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta, the **Delta Conservancy**, created in the Delta Reform Act of 2009, has convened a coalition of organizations with interests in **enhancing the habitat value and benefitting agriculture** on working landscapes in the Delta. The coalition was initiated in 2013, and is intended to both work collaboratively and coordinate individual activities to realize better relationships with Delta agricultural interests and greater conservation achievements.

The coalition currently consists of the Delta Conservancy, DPC,

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Delta County Resource Conservation Districts, Point Blue Conservation Science (previously Point Reyes Bird Observatory, “PRBO”), The Nature Conservancy, Audubon California and Ducks Unlimited.

Coalition members seek to connect farmers and agencies with similar interests as well as corresponding needs and resources. Instead of working in isolation, coalition members’ outreach efforts act synergistically to build on and expand existing relationships.

The coalition meets quarterly to exchange information and look for areas to collaborate, and welcomes any organization interested in working with Delta land owners to improve habitat value of working landscapes. For more information about the coalition, or about potential assistance integrating habitat benefits into your farming operation, please contact Kristal Davis Fadtko, Senior Environmental Scientist at the Delta Conservancy, at kmdavis@deltaconservancy.ca.gov or 916-375-4994.



Upcoming Events!

January

29th - 31st: California King Tides. californiakingtides.org

February

8th: Delta Days Art Walk. oldsugarmill.com

12th: Free Workshop - Marketing Your Delta Business: Using Delta Stories and Cross-Promotional Strategies. deltaconservancy.ca.gov

13th: Free Workshop - Delta Science and Climate Change.
watereducation.org/docuserfiles/files/Delta_WorkshopFlyer_Climate_.pdf

14th - 17th: Great Backyard Bird Count. birdcount.org

March

1st: Delta Blues Festival Benefit Concert, Antioch. deltabluesfestival.net

27th: Delta Protection Commission Meeting in Stockton. delta.ca.gov

April

4th - 12th: Sacramento County Creek Week. creekweek.net

14th: Draft BDCP and EIR/EIS comments due. baydeltaconservationplan.com

25th - 27th: Asparagus Festival, Stockton. asparagusfest.com

Spring

TBA: Holland Union Gakuen Charrette, Clarksburg. delta.ca.gov



Delta Protection Commission

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