



Delta Protection Commission Annual Report

2013



Commission Membership

Larry Ruhstaller (*Chair*), Supervisor
San Joaquin County

Mary Piepho (*Vice-Chair*), Supervisor
Contra Costa County

Brian Bugsch, Chief, Land Management Division
CA State Lands Commission

Diane Burgis, Councilmember
City of Oakley

Christopher Cabaldon, Mayor
City of West Sacramento

Robert K. Ferguson
South Delta Reclamation Districts

Brian Kelly, Secretary
CA State Transportation Agency

John Laird, Secretary
CA Natural Resources Agency

Mike McGowan, Supervisor
Yolo County

Kathy Miller, Councilmember
City of Stockton

Don Nottoli, Supervisor
Sacramento County

Karen Ross, Secretary
CA Department of Food and Agriculture

Michael Scriven
Central Delta Reclamation Districts

Skip Thomson, Supervisor
Solano County

Topper Van Loben Sels
North Delta Reclamation Districts

Ex-Officio Members

Honorable Mark DeSaulnier
California State Senate

Honorable Jim Frazier
California State Assembly

Staff

Erik Vink
Executive Director

Catherine Caldwell
Assistant Executive Director

Raymond Costantino
Associate Environmental Planner

Bree Kaminskas
Clerk to the Commission

Alex Westhoff
Associate Environmental Planner

Jessica Tucker-Mohl
Deputy Attorney General

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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Executive Summary

The Delta Protection Commission has worked since its inception in 1993 to recognize, preserve, protect and enhance the unique resources of the Delta as an evolving place. In 2013, we continued our efforts under the Delta Protection Act of 1992 and the Delta Reform Act of 2009 to be the voice of those who live, work and play in the Delta.

In addition to its regulatory role in Delta land use, the Commission engages in activities to support economic sustainability, recreation and tourism development, emergency response planning and other community enhancements. The Commission is also recognized as a forum for Delta residents to get involved in actions to recognize and enhance the unique cultural, recreational and agricultural resources of the Delta.

The following Delta Protection Commission activities were highlights of 2013:

- **PRIMARY ZONE LAND USE** To ensure that local government land use decisions were consistent with the statewide plan for the Delta, Commission staff reviewed proposed land use changes in the Primary Zone of the Delta and found that more than half were consistent with the Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP).
- **NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA** U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congressman John Garamendi introduced S. 228 and H.R. 1004, respectively, to designate the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area (NHA). A recommendation of the Delta Plan, NHA designation would be a project of the Commission and would promote the history, resources, and economy of the Delta community.
- **BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN:** The Commission heard from Delta businesses and residents about the effects of the proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan and advocated for

analysis of other alternatives, before taking a position to oppose it.

- **DELTA FLOOD PREPAREDNESS WEEK:** The Commission kicked off Delta Flood Awareness Week 2013 with an emergency preparedness mailing to Delta residents. Staff also met with Delta residents in Walnut Grove to display an emergency preparedness kit and answer questions about resources available to Delta residents.

- **REGIONAL LEVEE ASSESSMENT DISTRICT:** The Commission negotiated funding to analyze the feasibility of establishing a regional levee assessment district, with work to commence in 2014. A recommendation of the Delta Plan, the levee assessment district would distribute the costs of levee maintenance and improvement among a broader group of levee beneficiaries, including water and energy interests that currently pay nothing.

- **DELTA BRANDING EFFORTS:** The Commission initiated an effort to establish a brand identity for the Delta as a destination, agricultural hub, cultural landscape, and for possible use for the proposed National Heritage Area. The Commission is partnering with the Delta Conservancy on this work.

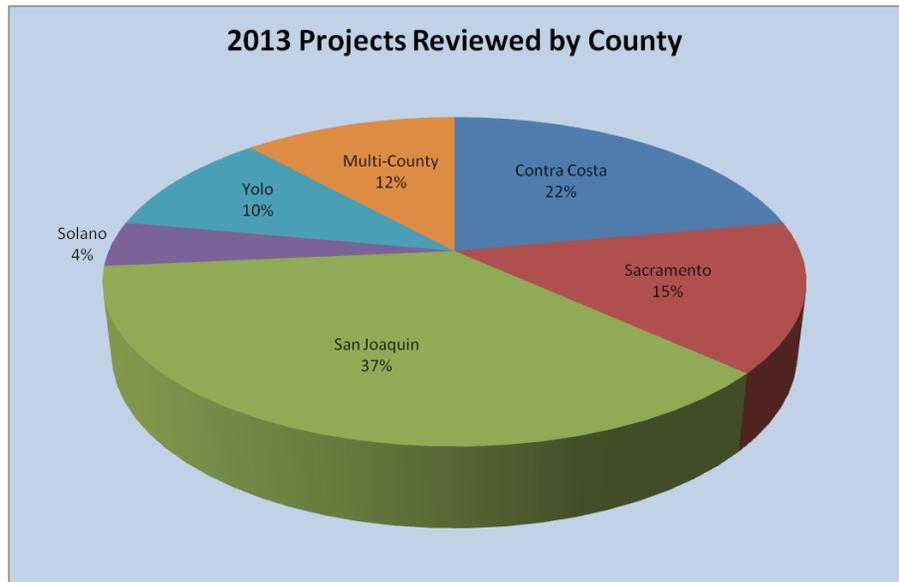
- **WELCOME NEW STAFF:** The Commission bid farewell to Executive Director Mike Machado and welcomed new staff members Bree Kaminskas (Commission Clerk), Raymond Costantino (Planner for Sacramento and Yolo counties) and Erik Vink (Executive Director).



DPC Staff (left to right): Raymond Costantino, Bree Kaminskas, Erik Vink, Alex Westhoff, Catherine Caldwell

Land Use

The Delta Protection Act of 1992 created the Delta Protection Commission to administer a long-term resource management plan for land uses within the Delta's Primary Zone. The Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP) includes seven elements (land use, agriculture, natural resources, recreation & access, water, levees, and utilities & infrastructure), with goals and policies aimed at protecting, maintaining, enhancing, and restoring the



overall quality of the Delta environment. Commission staff reviews proposed plans and projects within the Primary Zone for consistency with the LURMP. Projects and plans within the Secondary Zone are also reviewed, and advisory comments are provided if the Primary Zone could be impacted

Project information is received from many different sources, such as city and county planning offices, State agencies, special districts, and utility companies. In addition to reviewing impacts to Delta land use resources, projects are also reviewed for impacts to other Commission projects. In 2013, approximately 40% of projects reviewed were found to have an impact to the Delta and therefore monitored by DPC staff.



2013 Projects Monitored

County	Projects	Total	Primary Zone	Secondary Zone	Both Zones
Contra Costa	Brentwood Country Club Site Plan (26 acres) Telecommunication Facility on Delta Road (1,200 ft ²) WesPac Pittsburg Energy Infrastructure Project (164 acres) Clifton Court Forebay Fishing Facility (500 ft of pier) DeFremery Minor Subdivision (31 acres)	5	2	3	0
Sacramento	South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (project area of 341,000 acres) Williamson Act Amendment & Grading Permit (77 acres) Pacific Fruit Farms Lot Reduction Permit (parcelization of 275 acres) Capital South East Connector Project Special Planning Area Amendments - Initiation of Courtland, Locke, and Walnut Grove 2013 Update Floodplain Management Ordinance Hwy 160 Levee Seepage Repair Project (4 acres) <i>Closed Projects:</i> Race Track Road Subdivision (Approved with Mitigation) (139 acres)	8	6	1	1
San Joaquin	Medford Island Levee Rehabilitation Project (levees protecting 1,165 acres) South Lathrop Specific Plan (315 acres) San Joaquin County General Plan Update Ashley Lane LP Minor Subdivision (parcelization of 1,117 acres)	4	2	1	1
Solano	Lindsey Slough Tidal Marsh Wetland Enhancement Project (restoration of 965 acres) Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project (restoration of 1,600 acres)	2	2	0	0
Yolo	Bogle Wind Turbine Use Permit & Flood Hazard Development Permit Yolo County Zoning Code Update Lower Yolo Restoration Project (restoration of 3,795 acres) Capitol Conservation Bank Use Permit, Flood Hazard Development Permit, and Williamson Act Open Space Agreement (restoration of 320 acres) Southport Sacramento River Early Implementation Project (6 miles of levee reconstruction)	5	4	1	0
Multi-County	Yolo Bypass Salmonid Habitat Restoration and Fish Passage Project (activities covering up to 20,000 acres) Delta-wide Small Erosion Repair (approx. 300 miles of levees) <i>Closed Projects:</i> The Delta Plan (Approved with Changes)	3	0	0	3
	Totals	27	16 (59%)	6 (22%)	5 (19%)

Protecting and Enhancing the Delta as Place



Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers in Contra Costa County

Engaging & Educating

The Commission continues to serve as the voice for those who live, work and play in the Delta.

In 2013, the Commission revived its newsletter, now known as Delta Voice. To be issued quarterly, the fall edition featured early branding of Delta produce as well as tourist destinations. For current editions, see www.delta.ca.gov/DeltaVoice.htm

The Commission also continued its long-term sponsorship of Delta Waterway Clean-up sites in collaboration with the California Coastal Commission and new partner, the Delta Conservancy. Commission staff coordinated sites in each of the five Delta counties.

In 2013, the Commission heard that the effects of the proposed Bay-Delta Conservation Plan were not acceptable to Delta residents, and advocated for analysis of other alternatives, before officially taking a position to oppose it. For more information, see www.delta.ca.gov/BDCP.htm

Commission staff also shared the good word about Delta activities at conferences and workshops, including a keynote presentation at the biennial State of the Estuary conference.

Emergency Preparedness

Flood Preparedness Week. In November of 2013, the Commission kicked off the inaugural Delta Flood Preparedness Week as part of a statewide awareness effort. Delta residents received emergency preparedness tools to customize for their location, and staff hosted a Flood Preparedness information table for Delta residents to learn more about flood risks and how to prepare for a flood emergency. The Commission intends to continue and increase these public awareness efforts in 2014. For more information, see www.delta.ca.gov/BePrepared.htm

A graphic titled "California Flood Preparedness" with a blue background and a green vertical bar on the right that says "Be Aware, Be Prepared". It includes contact information for the State-Federal Flood Operations Center (1-800-952-5530) and the County Office of Emergency Services. There are fields for "Reclamation District:" and the website "www.delta.ca.gov/BePrepared.htm". A circular logo for the State of California Delta Protection Commission is also present.

California Flood Preparedness

State-Federal Flood Operations Center: 1-800-952-5530
(For General Inquiries and Daily River and Flood Conditions)

County Office of
Emergency Services: _____

Reclamation
District: _____

www.delta.ca.gov/BePrepared.htm

Be Aware, Be Prepared

Regional Assessment District. The Commission's 2012 Economic Sustainability Plan and the Delta Stewardship Council's 2013 Delta Plan both recommend formation of a regional assessment district to provide flood control, response, and recovery for all beneficiaries of Delta levees, including landowners, infrastructure owners, and water users who rely on levees to protect water quality. In 2013, the Commission successfully negotiated for funding to analyze the feasibility of establishing a regional assessment district, with work to commence in 2014. The research will include: an analysis of beneficiaries, benefit levels, and impacts; analysis of contributions toward levee maintenance and improvement, and emergency preparedness, response and recovery; and recommendations regarding the feasibility of establishing an assessment district.

Economic Development

The Commission continues to implement pilot projects as part of its Delta Heritage Area Initiative (DelHAI). With the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan effective September 2013, the Commission also pursues implementation of its related recommendations.

Delta Branding. In 2013, the Commission initiated an effort to establish a brand identity for the Delta as a destination, agricultural hub, cultural landscape, and for possible use for the proposed National Heritage Area (NHA). In partnership with the Delta Conservancy, this effort is expected to position the Delta as a top tourism destination in the country; increase economic opportunities for Delta businesses, residents, and communities; and help protect the Delta's heritage and natural beauty. The Commission has engaged services of a branding specialist and joined the Conservancy to co-sponsor related workshops in the Delta. The Commission's initiative has already resulted in additional funding for future implementation through partnerships with the Delta Conservancy and the federal Economic Development Administration. Additional public workshops will be held in 2014.

Agriculture and Evapotranspiration. In 2013, the Commission engaged the University of California, Davis, to evaluate use of remote sensing data for gauging evapotranspiration related to agricultural water uses. Research showed that satellite data provided a high degree of detail and results similar to currently accepted estimation methods. The Commission provided this information to the Delta Watermaster to suggest that satellite data be used for the region in order to reduce regulatory reporting burdens on Delta agricultural producers. For more information, see www.delta.ca.gov/landscapes.htm

Working Landscapes and Delta Economy. The Commission continues to participate in the Department of Water Resource's agricultural mitigation working group, and ongoing discussions related to restoration project opportunities. In 2016, the Commission will review the Delta Economic Sustainability Plan and amend it as needed (Public Resources Code section 29761.5).

Recreation

Inventory Update. In 2013, the Commission initiated an update of its Recreation Inventory, originally drafted in 1994 and updated periodically since. With assistance from California State Parks, the Recreation Inventory is expanding to include the diversification of agritourism, to include u-pick operations, Christmas tree farms, pumpkin patches, farm trails, and other unique Delta tourism attractions, in addition to wineries. Thanks to the partnership with State Parks, new visitor data will be collected in a comprehensive user survey in coming years.

Delta Trail. The Commission also hosted a well-attended public workshop in Clarksburg to advance the Eastern Region Blueprint for the Great Delta Trail. The workshop resulted in a draft Vision, Goals and Policies document.

Abandoned Vessels. In 2013, the Commission has revitalized its Abandoned Vessels Working Group to facilitate removal of these navigational and environmental hazards in the Delta. New partnerships, technology, legislative changes and funding availability support progress in managing this long-term problem.



The Year Ahead

The year 2014 will be another full year of activity for the Delta Protection Commission.

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP): Staff will analyze the Bay Delta Conservation Plan to determine its consistency with the Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP) and the Economic Sustainability Plan. Staff will also review its effects on "Delta as Place" -- the impacts on the unique cultural, agricultural and recreational values of the Delta.

Levee Assessment District: The Commission will analyze the feasibility of establishing a regional levee assessment district to distribute the costs of levee maintenance and improvement among a broader group of levee beneficiaries, including water and energy interests that currently pay nothing.

DPC Strategic Plan: Initiated in 2013, the Commission will complete a Strategic Plan through the year 2020 that will guide Commission staff in activities to enhance the unique cultural, recreational and agricultural resources of the Delta.

Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP) update: The Commission's LURMP guides local government land use decisions within the Delta Primary Zone and has been the guiding document of the Commission since its inception. The Commission intends to initiate an update of the LURMP in 2014, with likely adoption in the following year. The update will ensure that the LURMP is consistent with changes to the Delta Protection Act made in the 2009 Delta Reform Act.

DelHAI (Delta Heritage Area Initiative): As part of ongoing efforts to promote and enhance the Delta's unique values, the Commission will continue its branding and historic resources inventory efforts, along with continued work on the Great California Delta Trail, abandoned vessels work group and a recreational inventory update, among others.

Delta Protection Advisory Committee: A reformed Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC) will operate under a revised charter and with added momentum to provide advice to the Commission from the Delta's diverse interests.

The Commission wishes to thank partner organizations:

*Bank of Rio Vista
California Coastal Commission
California Conservation Corps
California Delta Chambers and Visitors Bureau
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Department of Water Resources
California Natural Resources Agency
California Preservation Foundation
California State Lands Commission
California State Parks
California State University, Sacramento
Clarksburg Boy Scout Troop 83
Contra Costa County
Delta Stewardship Council
Discover the Delta Foundation
Ducks Unlimited
East Bay Regional Parks District
Farmers & Merchants Bank
Friends of the Great California Delta Trail
Friends of the Marsh Creek Watershed
Friends of the Sacramento River Parkway
Hart Restoration/Delta Ecofarms
Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail Council
National Parks Service
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Office of Historic Preservation
Preserving California's Japantowns
Recreational Boaters of California
Rivertown Preservation Community Group
Sacramento, City of
Sacramento City Councilmember Darrell Fong
Sacramento County
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
San Francisco Estuary Partnership
San Joaquin County
San Joaquin River Partnership
Solano County
Stockton Rowing Club
University of California, Davis
Visit California
West Sacramento, City of
Yolo County*