



Delta Protection Commission Annual Report

Staff Draft, Subject to Commission approval

2012



Commission Membership

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Cover Image Source: California Department of Water Resources

Executive Summary

California's Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers feed into an inverted delta, one of the few in the world. The Delta drains those watersheds through the San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean. It is a place where people live and work, and Californians come to play -- to take advantage of its serene landscape for camping, fishing, hunting, boating, and wildlife viewing. The people and historic towns of the Delta contributed to the development of an emerging state. Agriculture and natural resources found in the Delta are essential parts of California's economy today. Both the Delta Protection Act of 1992 and SB7X-1 of 2009 affirm the policy of the State to recognize, preserve, protect and enhance unique resources of the Delta as an evolving place, for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.

A primary role of the Commission is to maintain and implement a resource management plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta to guide projects impacting land use, agriculture, natural resources, water, levees, and utilities and infrastructure. General plans and projects in the five Delta counties must be consistent with the management plan, and are subject to review by the Commission.

The legislature also recognized the Commission as a forum for Delta residents to engage in decisions regarding actions to recognize and enhance the unique cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources of 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.

During 2012, long-term efforts culminated in several important events:

- The Economic Sustainability Plan was released, using “state of the art” methods to analyze economic output of various sectors of the Delta economy. It underscored the importance of levees for maintaining the regional economy, as well as the importance of water quality, water supply, and the ability to divert water in the Delta. The Delta Plan incorporated all or part of 25 of 26 recommendations applicable to current conditions.
- The Commission completed a Delta National Heritage Area Feasibility Study and submitted it to Congress for consideration. The Delta Stewardship Council also received the Study and included Delta National Heritage Area designation as a recommendation in the Delta Plan.
- The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force released its Report. The Commission participated on the Task Force, developing recommendations for creation of a unified command system and an emergency preparedness and response strategy. Implementation of these recommendations is even more important, with increased uncertainty about FEMA assistance in a flood event.

Looking forward, the Commission will focus on implementation of the Economic Sustainability Plan; establishing a Delta Heritage Area Initiative to further define and promote the Delta as a destination; continuing to develop the Delta Trail to enhance recreation opportunities; and exploring options to support improved emergency preparedness and response. The Commission takes great pride in its role of contributing to the stewardship of the Delta by providing a strong voice for those who live, work, and play in the Delta.

Background

In addition to being the largest estuary on the West Coast of the Americas, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) is home to people, agriculture, unique plant species, and wildlife. The Delta played a prominent role in the history of California as a young state, and today makes a significant contribution to its economy – more than \$6 billion annually, with 30,000 jobs from agriculture, recreation and tourism. It is a recreational destination with more than 12 million visitors a year, and the switching yard for transporting domestic and agricultural water from Northern to Southern California. Its major utility and transportation corridors serve large parts of the state, and the Delta provides flood protection for these resources and surrounding urban areas. The Commission’s stewardship of the Delta is of critical importance to those who live, work, and play there.

The Delta Protection Act of 1992

Statute. The Delta Protection Commission (Commission) was created by the Delta Protection Act of 1992 (Act), codified in the Public Resources Code (PRC) beginning with section 29700, and most recently amended by SBX7-1 (also known for the purpose of this report as the “Delta Reform Act”) in November 2009. The Act declared that the Delta is a natural resource of statewide, national, and international significance, containing irreplaceable resources, and that it is the policy of the State to recognize, preserve, and protect those resources of the Delta for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations, in a manner that protects and enhances the unique values of the Delta as an evolving place (PRC sections 29701-2). The Commission is a forum for Delta residents to engage in decisions regarding actions to recognize and enhance the unique cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources of the Delta [PRC section 29703.5(a)].

Commission membership

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Board of Supervisors
Yolo County Board of Supervisors
Cities of Contra Costa and Solano Counties
Cities of Sacramento and Yolo Counties
Cities of San Joaquin County
Central Delta Reclamation Districts
North Delta Reclamation Districts
South Delta Reclamation Districts
Business, Transportation and Housing
Department of Food and Agriculture
Natural Resources Agency
State Lands Commission

Regulatory duties. The Act delineates Primary and Secondary Zones within the Legal Delta, and requires that the Commission adopt and maintain a resource management plan (Management Plan) for land uses in the Primary Zone. The Management Plan establishes land use policies that protect cultural values, economic vitality, agricultural viability, renewable resources, fish and wildlife habitats, levee systems, water quality, open space, recreational opportunities, public access, navigation and public safety.

Local government general plans and approved projects must be consistent with the Management Plan. In addition, the Commission may comment on proposed projects in the Secondary Zone that have the potential to impact the Primary Zone.

The Commission also serves as an appeal body if a project in the Primary Zone is challenged (by the Commission or the public) as inconsistent with the Management Plan. If the appeal is upheld, the proposed project must be brought into conformity with the Management Plan before it can proceed.

Ongoing programs and activities. The Commission administers additional programs to achieve its other statutory mandates in support of the Delta as an evolving place. Such activities include:

- technical studies related to regional economic sustainability, including tourism development such as the potential National Heritage Area designation
- facilitation of regional and recreational planning and support, such as the Great California Delta Trail (Delta Trail) effort, collaboration with state and local agencies in removal of abandoned vessels, and boater education programs
- implementation of working landscape and habitat restoration projects, in collaboration with sister agencies, non-governmental organizations, and landowners
- facilitation of public involvement and Delta representation, as a forum for Delta residents in regional and Statewide planning efforts
- education, outreach, and promotion of Delta values and sustainability

The Delta Protection Act of 1992 is available at www.delta.ca.gov/protection_act.htm. Related regulations are available at www.delta.ca.gov/regulations.htm.

The Commission's Strategic Plan

In 2006, the Commission adopted a Strategic Plan that articulates its mission as follows:

Mission - To adaptively protect, maintain, and where possible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the Delta environment consistent with the Act and the Management Plan, including, but not limited to agriculture, wildlife habitat and recreational activities; to ensure orderly, balanced conservation and development of Delta land resources and improved flood protection.

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for implementing the Management Plan and other provisions of the Act, in part by identifying program, funding and leadership strategies to be implemented over the long-term by the Commission and its staff. While the Commission has largely been focused on meeting statutory mandates arising from SBX7-1 since 2009, it is now reviewing and updating the Strategic Plan, with completion anticipated in 2013.

See the 2006-2011 "Strategic Plan" at www.delta.ca.gov/res/docs/strat_plan_2006-2011.pdf.

Purpose of the Annual Report

This report describes progress in achieving the objectives to the Act, and is submitted to the Governor and the Legislature in accordance with PRC section 29780.

Implementation of Land Use and Resource Management Plan

Throughout 2012, the Commission continued to serve as a forum for Delta residents to engage in decisions regarding actions to recognize and enhance Delta resources. The Commission also reached major milestones in its efforts to protect, enhance and sustain the unique values of the Delta as an evolving place. Significant activities arose from the Commission's regulatory role in implementation of its Land Use and Resource Management Plan. These and other major accomplishments advanced the Commission's efforts toward economic sustainability and enhancement of Delta communities, as described below.

Primary Zone Boundary Clarification

The 1992 Delta Protection Act specified that the Primary Zone is the land and water area of primary State concern and statewide significance, situated within the boundaries of the Legal Delta (defined in section 12220 of the Water Code). The Primary Zone does not include land that is within either the urban limit line or sphere of influence line of any local government's general plan or studies existing as of January 1, 1992 (PRC section 29728). General plan maps in 1992 did not have well-defined outlines of urban areas in the unincorporated areas that maps do today. Nor did the 1992 maps show land use designations conforming to subsequent applicable legislation, as well as other relevant state and federal regulations.

The Commission addressed this issue in 2012 by adopting a resolution to accept current zoning maps specifying residential, industrial and municipal uses in the unincorporated towns of the Delta as deemed to be consistent with the requirements of the 1992 Act. These new maps more precisely reflect actual land uses, and are sufficiently detailed to be used by counties in land use administration. Further, the maps are compliant with the requirements of the variety of other jurisdictions that influence land use in the Delta. In accepting these maps, the Commission clarified the boundaries of its jurisdiction in the Primary Zone (and local counties' jurisdiction in the Secondary Zone) relative to unincorporated towns in the Delta. The effect of this clarification is that areas within the boundaries of the unincorporated towns are in the Secondary Zone of the Delta and subject to County jurisdiction, while areas outside the boundaries of unincorporated towns are in the Primary Zone. Land use in the Primary Zone must be consistent with the Commission's Management Plan.

Ongoing Administration

The Commission also reviewed numerous proposed projects within the Primary Zone for consistency with the Management Plan. Commission staff maintains a log of the variety of projects, the Commission's consistency determination, and the projects' statuses. There were no appeals of land use decisions; neither were there any Commission-initiated reviews of land use decisions in the Primary Zone in 2012.



The 2009 Delta Reform Act was a significant development in evolving efforts to preserve and protect the Delta. It established the coequal goals of water reliability and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem, in a manner that protects and enhances the unique values of the Delta as an evolving place. It also reorganized the Commission and expanded its responsibilities, with specific direction to analyze and recommend actions to sustain the Delta's economy. This section describes several Commission activities that advance regional economic sustainability and opportunity.

Delta Working Landscapes and Habitat Restoration

The Working Landscapes Program developed wildlife-friendly agriculture and wetland restoration pilot projects as examples of what private landowners could adopt on larger scales throughout the Delta, in support of the interagency Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP) administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Commission received California Bay-Delta Program grant funding in 2010 (subsequently administered through ERP) to implement projects with assistance from Hart Restoration and Ducks Unlimited.

The objectives of the Program were to:

- improve the environmental quality of existing landscapes in the Delta
- demonstrate economic benefits of habitat-friendly cultural practices
- understand the social, economic, environmental and governmental policy hurdles and/or incentives to perform conservation practices
- communicate the advantages wildlife-friendly agricultural practices to landowners

Initial results. The pilot projects total 6.5 miles of enhanced levees and waterways, and 312 acres of seasonal and permanent wetlands. Many of the re-vegetated areas are thriving with native plant life, have been repopulated by wildlife, and filter agricultural drainage of pesticides and sediment, which improves water quality and enhances levee stability. Monitoring shows that multiple species of waterfowl are using the restored wetland habitats for brooding and feeding, and staying later into the season. Adding these diverse sites contributes to waterfowl health by dispersing flocks over a larger area.

The projects also indicate landowners can benefit from reduced weed control costs, revenue opportunities from hunting or wildlife viewing, improved levee stability, and possible reduced regulatory oversight due to improved water quality from agricultural runoff. Challenges include prior long-term use of pesticides and herbicides, costs for physical land alterations, and in some cases, cumbersome permit requirements.

Conclusions. In October 2012, the Commission released the “Delta Working Landscapes: Public and Private Partnerships for Habitat” report at a community meeting, and discussed the challenges and benefits of wildlife-friendly agricultural practices. The Commission will complete work and final analyses under the grant in early 2013, to include recommendations for further implementation.

The “Delta Working Landscapes” report is available at www.delta.ca.gov/landscapes.htm.

Economic Sustainability Plan

Among other duties, the 2009 Delta Reform Act required the Commission to prepare an Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP) for the Delta region, which was adopted in January 2012 (PRC section 29759). The ESP includes information and recommendations that inform the Delta Stewardship Council's policies concerning the socioeconomic sustainability of the Delta region.

The ESP incorporates input from community meetings and stakeholder discussions, as well as recommendations from the California Department of Parks and Recreation's Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh report, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Evaluation of Policy Alternatives to Benefit Agriculture in the Delta report. It also includes additions and refinements based on an independent peer-review convened by the Delta Science Program -- which inspired a thoughtful discussion of the effect of levee standards on water supply reliability, and recognized the ESP's statistical analysis of Delta agriculture as "state of the art."

Recommendation topics include:

- levees, public safety, and updates of the Department of Water Resource's (DWR) flood management plan for the Delta
- local government general plans and economic efforts affecting Delta agriculture, infrastructure, and Legacy Communities
- options to encourage recreational investment in the Delta

A key finding in the ESP was that water quality, water supply, and the ability to divert water in the Delta are essential to the sustainability of habitat and ecosystem improvement, agriculture, tourism and recreation in the Delta.

Economic Development Challenges. A major challenge to achieving long-term sustainability in the Delta is action-oriented government and public/private coordination. While the Delta holds great potential for new recreational facilities and enhanced Legacy Communities in the future, the public sector must promote and manage sustainable growth in an integrated and holistic fashion.

The ESP found that "Legacy Communities represent key focal points of Delta culture, and provide logical locations for supporting functions related to agriculture-, recreation-, and population-serving amenities. As with any community, the physical layout and condition of these communities requires adaptation and improvement over time by private sector investors in order to remain viable. However, this endeavor is not simple in the Delta, and the paucity of recent investment reflects a local land use policy regimen that is problematic in terms of predictability and economic viability. These communities are not living up to their economic potential as catalysts or revivers of economic diversification and growth." Without simplification and coordination of the local investment climate, it is unlikely that the potential of these communities as recreation and population-serving centers will be realized.

Substantial coordination needs to occur to meet economic sustainability goals in the following areas: recreation enhancement, strategic levee protection, streamlined entitlement processes, and historic preservation. The ESP recommends that a well-funded facilitator organization provide planning consistency in the Delta, guide public and private projects through the regulatory process, contribute technical assistance, and offer compelling marketing services. Such an organization could engage in planning, permit processing, economic development tasks, financial guidance, marketing initiatives, and operation and management responsibilities; which could include implementation of the NHA management plan, Delta Trail activities, and coordination with law enforcement and emergency response.



The ESP finds that the Commission is potentially suited to act as the facilitator organization for economic development in the Delta. Furthermore, many of the activities identified above are ongoing Commission activities, and goals within its Management Plan.

ESP Findings

Economic Output of the Delta:

Sector	Employment	Output
5-County Impacts		
Agriculture	13,179	\$2,647,124,544
Recreation & Tourism	3,064	\$329,229,232
California Impacts		
Agriculture	25,125	\$5,372,014,752
Recreation & Tourism	5,317	\$654,415,364

Key Factors for Economic Sustainability in the Delta:

- Levee System and Conveyance
- Water Quality, Supply and Flow Standards
- Present and Future Contribution of Agriculture, Recreation and Tourism
- Legacy Communities – ‘Delta as a Place’
- Habitat Restoration and Impact on Agriculture

The “Economic Sustainability Plan for the Delta” is available at www.delta.ca.gov/Final_ESP_Jan_2012.htm. California State Park’s “Recreation Proposal for the Delta and Suisun Marsh” is available at www.parks.ca.gov/planning.htm. California Department of Food and Agriculture’s “Evaluation of Policy Alternatives to Benefit Agriculture in the Delta” report is available at aic.ucdavis.edu/publications/AIC_Delta_study_final.pdf.

Recreation and Tourism Planning and Development

National Heritage Area Designation. The Delta Reform Act charged the Commission with developing a proposal to protect, enhance, and sustain the unique cultural, historical, recreational, agricultural, and economic values of the Delta as an evolving place (Water Code section 85301). The proposal includes a plan to establish state and federal designation of the Delta as a place of special significance, which may include application for a federal designation of the Delta as a National Heritage Area (NHA).

A NHA is a region designated by the United States Congress, where natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally-distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. NHAs tell nationally important stories, through both the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved within them.

The Commission completed a NHA Feasibility Study, incorporating public involvement throughout its process via public meetings and presentations, stakeholder interviews, review memos, and study team meetings. Public involvement and partnerships are crucial to NHA planning and management; they reflect local stakeholder ownership of the NHA, as well as local capabilities to recognize, maintain, and enhance the heritage resources of the region. Numerous organizations have expressed interest in serving as partners to assist with various projects and programs to support the Delta NHA.

Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congressman John Garamendi introduced legislation in January 2011 to designate a Delta NHA, with the Commission as the management entity. In June 2012, the National Park Service reviewed and found that the Commission's Feasibility Study met the criteria for NHA designation, subject to Congressional approval.

The Commission accepted the study in July 2012 and forwarded it to Congress for consideration of designating the Delta as a NHA. The study was also submitted to the Delta Stewardship Council for inclusion in the Delta Plan. While the 2011 Congressional legislation did not advance, it is anticipated that legislation to establish a Delta NHA will be introduced in the 113th Congress.

The "Delta NHA Feasibility Study" is available at www.delta.ca.gov/FeasibilityStudyforaSacramento-SanJoaquinDeltaNHA.htm.

The Commission wishes to recognize and thank

NHA partner organizations:

Bay Point Garden Club

California Delta Chambers and Visitors Bureau

California Preservation Foundation

Contra Costa County

Dutra Museum Foundation

Friends of the Great California Delta Trail

Isleton Brannan-Andrus Historical Society

Isleton Chamber of Commerce

Kerry Motts, Antioch

Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail Council

Sacramento County

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

San Joaquin County

San Joaquin County Historical Society

Solano County

UC Small Farm Program

University of the Pacific

Visit California

Yolo County

The Great California Delta Trail. In 2006, Senate Bill 1556 (Torlakson) mandated that the Commission develop a plan and implementation program for a continuous recreational corridor trail network through all five Delta counties, linking the San Francisco Bay Trail system to the planned Sacramento River trails in Yolo and Sacramento Counties, pending funding availability (PRC section 5854). The Plan for the Delta Trail is to include routes for bicycling and hiking, with interconnections to other trails, park and recreational facilities, and public transportation. Planning prioritizes implementation on existing public lands, and otherwise working with willing private landowners for access. Water trails will ensure trail continuity in places where land trails are not feasible. Sensitive habitat areas and private uses will not be adversely affected.

The Commission serves as a facilitator for this effort, working in partnership with local entities to coordinate planning and implementation across jurisdictional boundaries. The Commission has received grant funding and/or other support from the California Coastal Conservancy, Contra Costa County, and the National Parks Service, which allowed it to initiate the planning process in Contra Costa and Solano Counties. A Blueprint Report was created to set the foundation for future master planning in those jurisdictions.

Progress in 2012 includes:

- installation of Delta Trail signage at Vallejo's Glen Cove Waterfront Park in Solano County
- adoption of the Sacramento River Parkway Trail as a Delta Trail alignment, and installation of signage along this thirteen-mile corridor
- passage of resolutions of support for bicycle lanes in the Delta along State Routes 4, 12, and 160, as well as bicycle lanes in the Delta along improved levees
- coordination of a public meeting to review progress, benefits of a regional trail system, comparable case studies, an outline of a finished blueprint report, and further opportunities for public involvement
- initiation of planning for the regional Blueprint for San Joaquin, Sacramento, and Yolo Counties, with assistance from NPS

The Commission wishes to recognize and thank

Delta Trail partner organizations:

California Coastal Conservancy

California Delta Chambers and Visitors Bureau

Contra Costa County

East Bay Regional Parks District

National Parks Service

Recreational Boaters of California

City of Sacramento

Sacramento County

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

San Joaquin County

Solano County

City of West Sacramento

Yolo County

Related documents are available at www.delta.ca.gov/trail.htm.

Next Steps in Advancing Regional Economic Sustainability

Working Landscapes and Habitat Restoration

The ERP grant for Working Landscapes will conclude in early 2013. The Commission is considering options to extend and expand restoration project opportunities, including working with the Delta Conservancy and other agencies on habitat projects in support of the Act's coequal goals.

In its role as an existing forum for Delta residents, the Commission will also continue to participate in the BDCP (Bay Delta Conservation Plan) and Delta Farmland Agency Group initiated by the Department of Water Resources. The group focuses on integrating habitat mitigation and restoration with farming, and involves the Department of Conservation, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Food and Agriculture, Delta Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, among others. The Commission has commented on DWR proposals for habitat restoration geared to encourage private landowner participation as part of the implementation of the BDCP.

Economic Sustainability Plan

The Commission will review and update the ESP, with the next edition due in 2016. In the interim, the Commission will monitor and report on the Delta economy and its economic output, and consider options for advancing economic development activities.

Recreation and Tourism Planning and Development

Delta Heritage Area Initiative. In conjunction with the Delta NHA Feasibility Study, Commission staff is embarking upon a Delta Heritage Area Initiative to further protect, enhance, and sustain the unique values of the Delta as an evolving place. By advancing activities and projects that elevate and promote the Delta, this initiative demonstrates the region's capacity for NHA designation. It also complements the Delta Heritage Corridor designation described in State Park's Recreation Proposal for the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

Public education, historic preservation, tourism and recreation development, visitor amenities, and economic development activities, such as marketing and branding coordination, are all areas in which to promote the Delta's heritage and role in the national story. Early activities will include an update of the Commission's Recreation Resource Survey, as well as a new comprehensive Historical Resource Inventory. Commission staff will pursue additional project opportunities to support a Delta Heritage Area in collaboration with interested funders and partners. This includes pursuing the establishment of a facilitator organization to assist in permitting/CEQA and funding coordination to stimulate economic development.

The Great California Delta Trail. Commission staff will continue to move forward with blueprint planning for Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Yolo Counties; in anticipation of presenting the Eastern Region Blueprint Report to the Commission and included counties for adoption. A Delta Trail master planning process for the entire region will be initiated following the completion of this Blueprint Report. Staff will continue to seek additional opportunities to implement Delta Trail segments in partnership with local jurisdictions, and provide opportunities for public education and input.

Enhancing Delta Communities

All of the Commission's activities arguably enhance both regional economic sustainability, as well as Delta communities themselves. The Commission's work to advance NHA designation, as well as its work toward the Delta Trail, will provide obvious enhancements for those who live, work and play in the Delta – in addition to providing a framework to contribute to a sustainable economy. The Commission also engages in a variety of other activities that enhance Delta communities, such as public education, coordination of abandoned vessel removal efforts, and participation in emergency response planning and preparation.

Public Education and Outreach

The Commission's involvement in a variety of forums facilitates increased understanding of the unique values of the Delta, and the challenges that face its communities. Public education and outreach are a way to engage in discussions that yield new ideas for protecting and enhancing the Delta as an evolving place. The Commission is proud to have sponsored the Water Education Foundation's Delta Levees Standards Conference to examine public safety benefits of the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) level contrasted with the Public Law 84-99 Standard (PL 84-99). Additionally, the Commission

participated with a diverse group of stakeholders, convened by the Center for Collaborative Policy, to develop recommendations on near-term Delta projects that should move forward, which were delivered to the Governor for support and funding consideration.

Local Activities

- *Coastal Cleanup*
- *Courtland Pear Fair*
- *San Joaquin County Historical Society*
- *Isleton Chamber of Commerce*
- *Walnut Grove Rotary Club**
- *San Joaquin County Delta Coalition**

Regional Collaborations

- *Delta Protection Advisory Committee*
- *Delta Stewardship Council**
- *Delta Conservancy**
- *Delta Water Agencies**
- *Yolo Bypass Working Group**
- *UC Davis Ag Leadership Program**
- *Center for Collaborative Policy*
- *Sacramento County**
- *Estuary Partnership Implementation Committee*
- *Delta Water Users Association**
- *Bay Delta Science Conference**
- *Contra Costa Transportation Authority**
- *Northern California Water Agencies**
- *Stockton-San Joaquin County Public Library**
- *Highway 12 Corridor Committee*
- *Tri-Link State Route 239 Working Group*

Statewide Activities

- *American Planning Association**
- *CORO Foundation – Los Angeles**
- *Urban Water Users Association**
- *Association of California Water Agencies**
- *Groundwater Association**
- *California Foundation for the Economy**
- *Delta Vision Foundation**

Interagency Participation

- *Agency Implementation Council*
- *Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee*
- *BDCP Farmland Mitigation/Habitat Committee*
- *Delta Strategic Plan Committee*
- *Department of Food and Agriculture*
- *CalEMA*

**Organizations which received presentations*

Emergency Response Preparedness

SB 27 Task Force. As directed by SB 27 of 2008 (Water Code section 12994.5), the Commission participated in development of the “Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force Report”, published in January 2012. The statute required the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to coordinate the task force, which included the Commission, DWR, and one representative from each of the five Delta counties. The task force made recommendations to OES (now known as California Emergency Management Agency, CalEMA), for creation of an interagency, unified command system and emergency preparedness and response strategy for the Delta region, as well as implementation of an all-hazard emergency response exercise in the Delta.

The SB 27 Task Force Report recommends the following actions:

- **Implement a common regional Interagency Unified Command Organizational Framework**
- **Adopt and implement a Delta Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS)**
- **Coordinate identification of potential threats and consequences**
- **Identify emergency planning and response authorities, capabilities and roles**
- **Adoption and implementation of a Regional Mass Evacuation Plan.**
- **Develop and implement a region-specific Interoperability Communications Plan**
- **Actively participate in federal and state flood and evacuation contingency mapping**
- **Develop a Delta Catastrophic Flood Incident Plan**
- **Conduct Golden Guardian 2011 as an all-hazard, multi-agency Delta emergency exercise**
- **Develop and conduct all-hazard emergency response drills and exercises**
- **Develop emergency management policy development training.**

Regional assessment district. Commission and Delta Stewardship Council staff continued discussions regarding the feasibility of a regional assessment district to coordinate funding for levee maintenance and repair, as well as emergency preparedness and response, as was contemplated in the ESP and incorporated into the draft Delta Plan. Costs would be allocated on a benefits-received basis, to include beneficiaries who are not currently assessed. The Commission seeks to conduct a technical study on the subject, with possible funding from DWR.

Levee standards and FEMA assistance. In October of 2012, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) terminated its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CalEMA “Regarding Criteria for Public Assistance Eligibility for Reclamation Districts in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Legal Delta”, which provided for FEMA reimbursement in flood events related to levees maintained locally to the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) level. As a result, the availability of FEMA assistance in the event of a flood is in question until a new MOU is executed.

The “Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Multi-Hazard Coordination Task Force Report” is available at www.delta.ca.gov/emergency.htm.

Next Steps Towards Enhancing Delta Communities

As described above, the Commission will actively pursue recreation and tourism development activities that promote the Delta as an evolving place (like NHA designation and the Delta Trail), with the effect of increasing economic sustainability while enhancing Delta communities. In addition, the Commission will continue work in the following areas.

Public Education and Outreach

To provide an effective forum and convey the voice of those who live, work and play in the Delta, reliable transfer of news and information is essential. In 2013, the Commission intends to expand its capacity to provide useful information in a timely manner by increasingly utilizing electronic tools and other venues to promote the Delta's unique values. Efforts may include:

- participation in and sponsorship of local community events and fairs that celebrate and promote the Delta as unique place
- continued support of the Delta Protection Advisory Committee
- work with the Delta Conservancy and other partners to promote environmental education; and awareness among boating, hunting, fishing, and recreation communities
- presentations of technical and policy information at scientific, recreational, and agricultural conferences at the State, local and national level
- coordination of local sites as part of the Coastal Commission's Coastal Cleanup Day
- Web site update to include news of current and ongoing activities, in addition to a reliable archive of past activities
- development of an electronic newsletter

Emergency Response Preparedness

The question over availability of FEMA funding has put a greater emphasis on implementation on the findings of SB 27 Task Report. The Commission will continue to work with the Delta Stewardship Council and DWR to explore the regional assessment district concept. It will also continue to coordinate the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Regional Flood Response Project, bringing together participating reclamation districts, cities and counties, to identify and implement regional projects. The Commission will serve as the applicant and administrator for a joint application for emergency preparedness funding from DWR in 2013.

Abandoned Vessel Removal

The Commission continues to work with State Lands Commission, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the California Department of Boating and Waterways, the U.S. Coast Guard, local law enforcement, recreational boaters, and other stakeholders to coordinate abandoned vessel removal. Major challenges remain lack of funding, and clearing vessel registration title. Legislation is being explored that would expedite title search and clearance. Private sector interest in vessel removal is strong, but success in harnessing private business interest is dependent on resolving title issues, as well as salvage values and/or other available funding.

While the Commission has completed a number of important projects in 2012, its contributions are becoming perhaps more important than ever. As provisions of the Delta Reform Act are implemented, the array of stakeholders involved in achieving the coequal goals requires increased collaboration among all parties; including the Commission as a forum for Delta residents.

Status of Environmental Thresholds

The landscape has changed significantly since the Delta Protection Act was enacted in 1992, with the decline in fisheries, rapid growth in the number and amount of invasive species, changes in levee standards, water conveyance challenges, quality of water discharged from all sources into the Delta, and changing agricultural and recreational uses.

These changes have brought new challenges and more players involved in Delta issues. The Commission welcomes the opportunity for collaboration with more recent arrivals like the Delta Conservancy and the Delta Stewardship Council, working together to achieve the coequal goals of water reliability and ecosystem restoration, in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources of the Delta, for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.

Land Use Oversight

With the global economic recession and policy uncertainties related to implementation of the Reform Act, there have been few project proposals in the areas under the Commission's jurisdiction in recent years. Final approval of the Delta Plan, adoption and implementation of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and related habitat restoration, and State Water Resources Control Board determinations of Delta water quality and flows, will all have significant impacts on future land uses, as well as related economic and community activities. The Commission anticipates initiating review and update of the Land Use and Resource Management Plan in 2014 to reflect evolving policies and conditions.

Economic Sustainability and Community Enhancement

The Commission will also review and update its Strategic Plan in the near future. Efforts will continue in the following areas:

- Economic sustainability and development
- Delta Heritage Area Initiative
- Delta Trail planning and implementation
- Regional emergency preparedness and response
- Abandoned vessel removal
- Habitat-friendly agriculture
- Public education and technical research

Through all of its efforts, the Commission remains committed to serve as a forum for Delta residents to engage in the conversations and efforts that recognize and protect the unique values of the Delta as an evolving place.



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