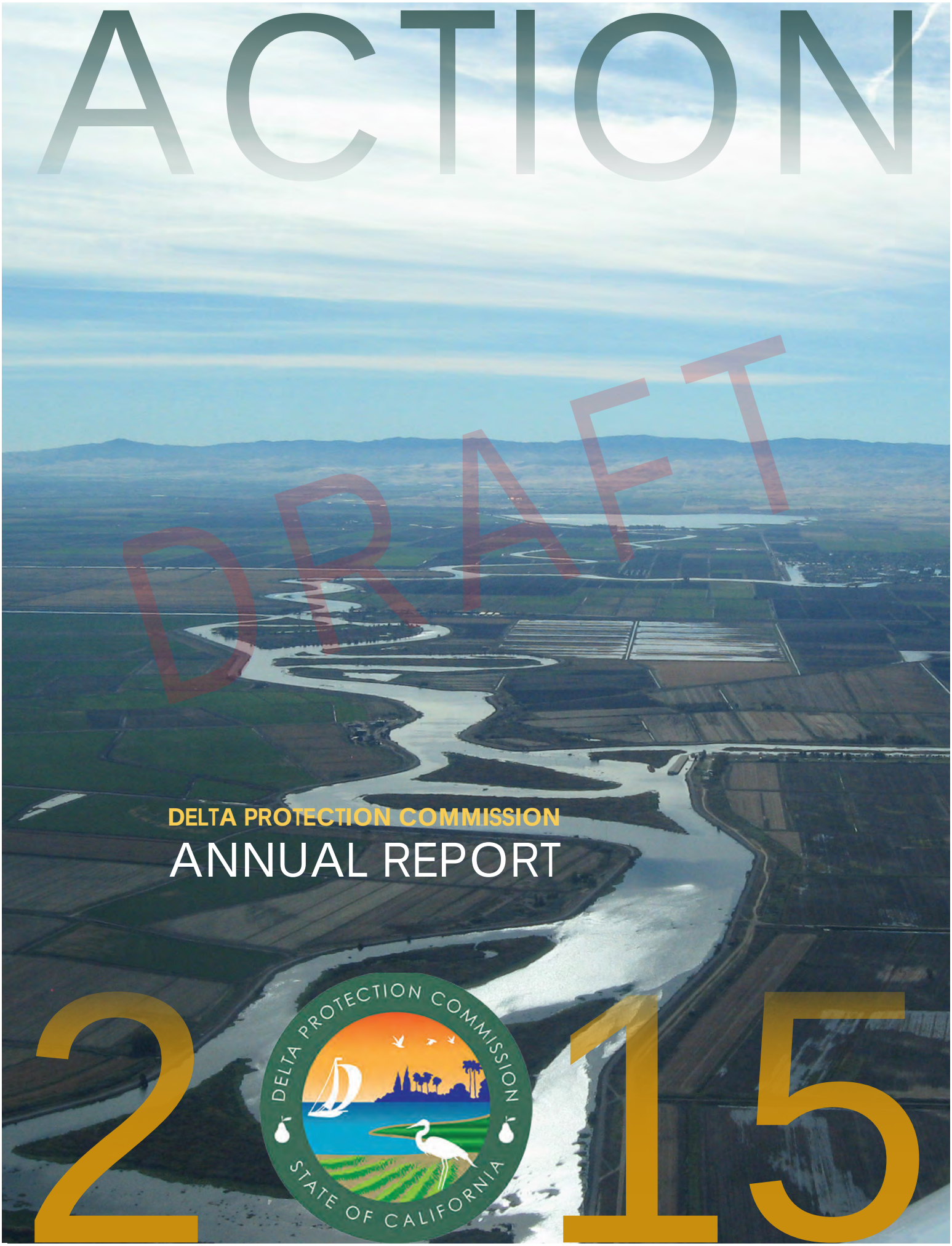


ACTION

DRAFT

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

January 21, 2016

Honorable Edmund G. Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Members of the California State Senate and California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: 2015 Annual Report of the Delta Protection Commission

Dear Governor Brown and Members of the State Senate and State Assembly:

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Resources Code § 29780, I am pleased to submit the 2015 Delta Protection Commission Annual Report for your review.

2015 brought renewed clarification and purpose to the Commission in the form of Vision 2030, the Strategic Plan that will guide the Commission's efforts for the next fifteen years. Our updated Mission Statement, "Committed to the Protection and Health of the Delta" and this compelling Plan define an energized Delta with clear goals for protecting and enhancing a sustainable, healthy and celebrated Delta way of life.

With this guiding document, the Commission and its dedicated staff have made great strides in 2015 across all of our Strategic Themes and have begun laying the groundwork for more productive and effective efforts as we move forward.

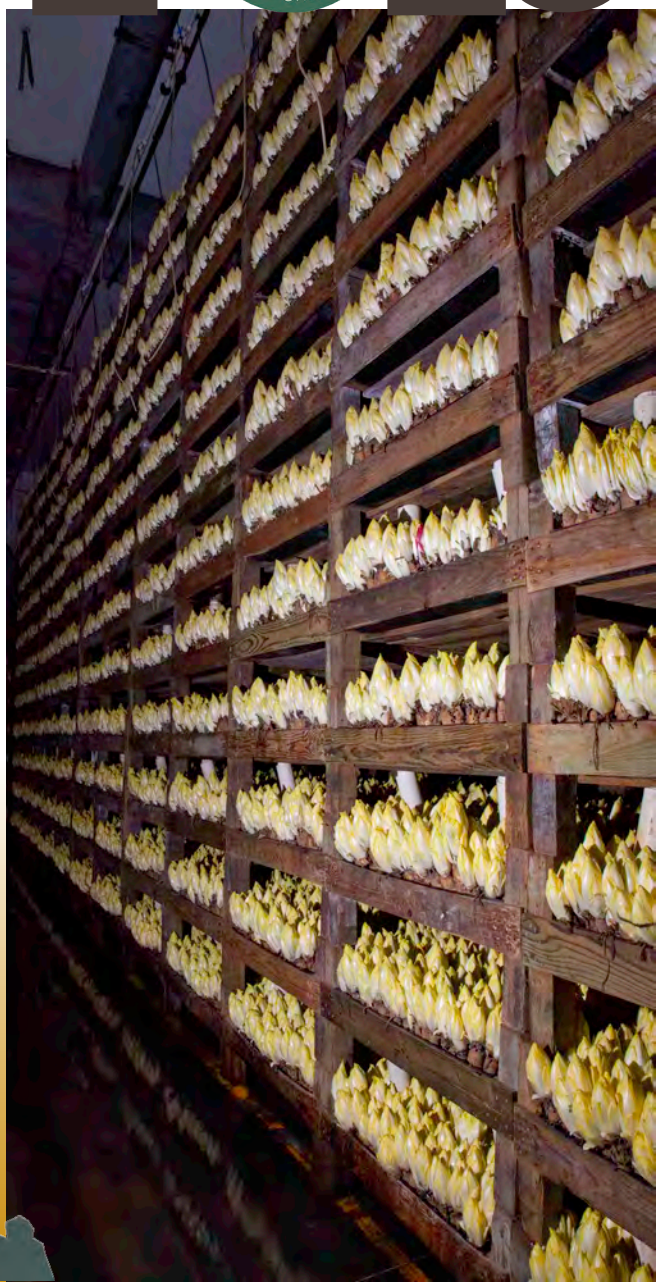
It is with great pride that I and the rest of the Commissioners offer you the Delta Protection Commission Action 2015.

Sincerely,

Mary Nejedly Piepho
Chair

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Committed to the Protection and Health of the Delta"

The crafting and adoption of Vision 2030, the Strategic Plan outlining the Commission's areas of focus, goals and objectives for the next fifteen years, was a primary accomplishment of the Delta Protection Commission in 2015. Vision 2030 updated the Commission's mission statement (above), discussed current challenges for the Delta, defined operating principles, and grouped Commission priorities into seven Strategic Themes and two Capacity Building areas. This Annual Report reviews actions in 2015 in terms of Vision 2030, tracking progress towards the fulfillment of Commission goals. Alpha-numeric citations throughout the document refer to Vision 2030 Plan objectives.

Land Use & Resource Management

In the Commission's regulatory role, staff reviewed many land use projects in 2015, and commented on 47. Forty-six percent of projects receiving comments were in the Primary Zone, 28% were in the Secondary Zone, and 21% were in both Zones. The remainder were on projects outside the Legal Delta. More than half of these projects were considered "substantial", that is, involving major construction, large land areas, or multiple potential effects on Delta resources. The highest number of projects by county receiving comment were in Sacramento (19%) and San Joaquin (17%).

Land & Water

The Commission submitted comment letters on the California WaterFix Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and to the US Army Corps of Engineers requesting public meetings in the Delta and urging deferral of the WaterFix permit request. Staff also submitted comments on the Department of Water Resources' Emergency Drought Barrier proposals.

Levees & Emergency Response

In 2015, work began on the Delta Flood Risk Management Assessment District Feasibility Study, and Commission staff coordinated with the Delta Stewardship Council on its Delta Levee Investment Strategy. Staff submitted comments requesting clarification on the Department of Water Resources' Small Community Flood Risk Reduction Program, and promoted Flood Preparedness Week with public service announcements, a Flood Safety Fair, and a 2016 Flood Preparedness Calendar produced in partnership with DWR's Delta Levees Programs.

Regional Economy

Commission staff worked with Contra Costa County and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) to address agricultural sustainability and identify strategies to enhance rural economies. In addition, the Commission contracted with University of California's Center for Regional Change to conduct a Regional Opportunity Index assessment of the Delta, and advocated for socio-economic research to be included in the topics offered to Delta Science Fellows.

Delta Heritage

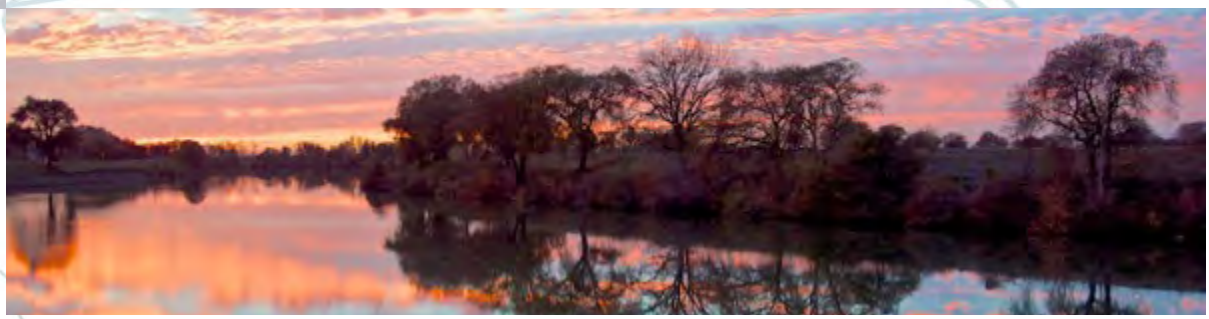
The Commission concluded the first phase of its Delta Narratives project with presentations of scholars' papers at two workshops, and is now exploring recommendations for promoting the Delta's fascinating history. To further enhance Delta values, the Delta Community Action Planning pilot program convened residents of Walnut Grove and Courtland to brainstorm ways to enhance their communities, and Commission staff held the first meeting of the Delta As Place Interagency Working Group, focused on facilitating Delta As Place projects.

Recreation & Tourism

Work continued on the Recreation Facility Inventory, while contracts were initiated with California State University, Sacramento, to research boating and recreation infrastructure needs, and to develop research proposals for gaps in existing Delta recreation data. In partnership with the Delta Conservancy, work began on a regional Delta tourism website, and a logo and brand standards were created for the Great California Delta Trail.

Outreach & Education

A partnership was formed with the new Delta Regional Foundation, whose mission is to support and promote cultural, recreational and agricultural community projects throughout the Delta, and the initial fundraiser featured prominent artists' Delta-inspired work. The Delta Voice newsletter continued to garner positive reviews, and Commission staff engaged in several community projects, including leading Delta sites for Coastal Cleanup, "Adopting-A-Highway" along Highway 12, and supporting Angels of the Fields in their annual holiday endeavor for Delta families in need.



The Delta Protection Act was adopted by the Legislature in 1992 and updated in 2009. The Delta Protection Act declares that the Sacramento-San Joaquin 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."

The Delta Protection Commission was created under the 1992 Act to recognize and protect the unique cultural, recreational, natural and agricultural resources of the Delta, and is further defined as "the appropriate agency to identify and provide recommendations to the Delta Stewardship Council on methods of preserving the Delta as an evolving place." With this mandate, the Commission focuses on the oversight of Delta land use and resource management, levees and emergency response, the support of Delta agriculture, recreation, tourism and local economic development, and the protection of Delta historic, cultural and natural resources.

The fifteen members of the Commission include a member of the County Board of Supervisors from each of the five Delta counties (Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo); three elected city council members representing cities in the North, Central, and South Delta; representatives from North, Central and South Delta Reclamation Districts; and representatives from the California State Transportation Agency, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and the California State Lands Commission. Two ex-officio members represent the California State Senate and the California State Assembly.

As required by Public Resources Code § 29780, each year the Commission submits to the Governor and the State Legislature this Annual Report, describing the progress Commission actions have made towards fulfilling the requirements of the Delta Protection Act.

BACKGROUND

LAND USE & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Commission is responsible for implementation of the Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP) for the Primary Zone. There are two components of LURMP implementation:

1. The Commission reviews and approves proposed local government general plan amendments affecting the Primary Zone.
2. Local governments are responsible for ensuring that land use decisions in the Primary Zone are consistent with the LURMP. Commission staff review proposed projects and provide comments to local governments on consistency with the LURMP and other Commission policies. The Commission also serves as an appeal body if a local land use decision is challenged as inconsistent with the LURMP.

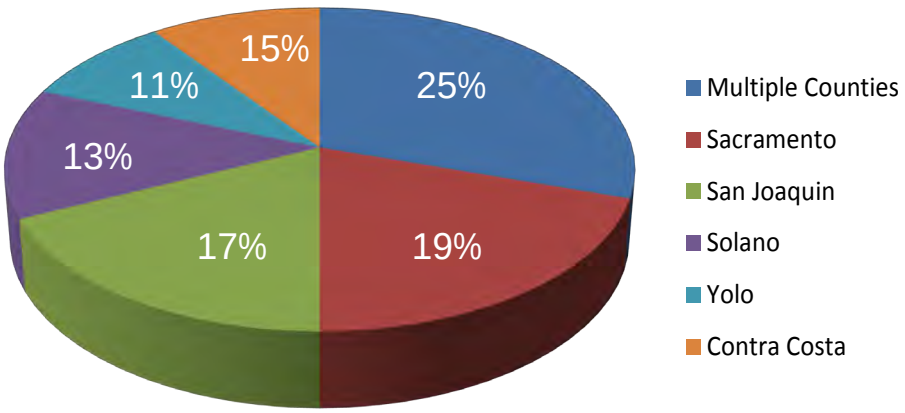
Commission staff may also comment on proposed projects in the Secondary Zone and State and federal projects that have the potential to impact the Primary Zone and Delta as Place values. Commission staff provide comment letters on only a portion of the projects that they review over the course of the year.

Most of the comment letters provided in 2015 were for projects in multiple counties and Sacramento County. Of the 47 projects commented on by the Commission this year, nine had the potential to convert agricultural land to a non-agricultural use beyond an additional rural homesite and two of these projects were for residential subdivision-scale conversions of agricultural land in the Secondary Zone.

In addition to comment letters in 2015, the Commission found that the Clarksburg Area Community Plan was consistent with the LURMP, and did not hear any appeals.

The Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program will complete updates for all Delta counties in 2016. This data describes conversions of agricultural land; Commission staff will review and analyze the data as it is available, and report findings in the 2016 Annual Report.

2015 Land Use Comment Letters Provided by County



COMMISSION COMMENT LETTERS in 2015

County	Projects	Total	Substantial	Primary Zone	Secondary Zone	Both Zones	Out of Legal Delta
Contra Costa	NOP for 2014 Update to Contra Costa County Comprehensive Transportation Plan NOP for Recirculated EIR for the WesPac Pittsburg Infrastructure Project East Cypress Corridor Specific Plan Projects (Dal Porto South Subdivision and Lesher Subdivision) IS/ND for Contra Costa County Climate Action Plan Dutch Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Wireless Telecommunication Facilities Ordinance Amendment IS/MND for Balfour Road Shoulder Widening	7	1	1	4	2	
Sacramento	American River Common Features Report (15.5 miles of levees) California American Water Sanitary Sewer Connection Sacramento Area Flood System Improvements (6 miles of levees) Negative Declaration for Sherman Island Cell Site (24 acres) Twitchell Island Habitat Enhancement (45 acres) Van Loben Sels Lot Line Adjustment (48 acres) Sherman Island Cell Site Use Permit Brannan Island Wireless Facility Use Permit Vasquez Williamson Act Contract Rescission	9	3	5	3		1
San Joaquin	River Islands at Lathrop Phase 2B City of Lathrop General Plan Amendment, SB 5 200-Year Flood Protection (Citywide) City of Stockton General Plan Amendment, SB 5 200-Year Flood Risk and Protection (Citywide) Fourteenmile Slough Levee Project MND (1.4 acres) County of San Joaquin Draft 2015-2023 Housing Element Smith Canal Gate Project EIR South Fork of Mokelumne River Wildlife Habitat Areas – Conservation Easement Monitoring Minor Subdivision Application	8	4	3	4	1	
Solano	Solano County Urgency Ordinance Solar Energy (Countywide) IS/ND for Liberty Island Ecological Reserve Management Plan IS/MND for Solano County Habitat Restoration Projects: McCune Watershed and Cronin Ranch (4.5 acres) Zone Text Amendment for Commercial Solar Energy Facilities SolAgra Corporation Solar Test Plot on Ryer Island (4.7 acres) IS/ND for Miner Slough Bridge Project (6 acres)	6	4	6			
Yolo	City of West Sacramento SB 5 Flood Protection Policy Residential "No-Build" Restriction Parcel (near Clarksburg) Clarksburg Area Community Plan Watermark Farms, LLC Agricultural Surface Mining Permit (60 acres) Bogle Wind Turbine Use Permit & Flood Hazard Development Permit (60 acre parcel)	5	2	3	1	1	

County	Projects	Total	Substantial	Primary Zone	Secondary Zone	Both Zones	Out of Legal Delta
Multi-County	Sacramento River Bank Protection Project (80,000 l.f. in and outside of Legal Delta) DWR Emergency Drought Barriers (3 proposed barriers) US Army Corps of Engineers Permit for Emergency Drought Barriers NOP for DWR Operations and Maintenance on Sacramento River Flood Control Project (levees, channels, etc.) Delta Levee Investment Strategy Principles (DSC) & NOP for Delta Levee Investment Strategy Policy update Twitchell and Mandeville Island Dredged Material Placement Sites DSEIS for Delta Wetlands Project (4 islands in San Joaquin and Contra Costa Counties) Butte Sink, Willow Creek-Lurline, and North Central Valley Wildlife Management Areas Draft Plans Bay Delta Conservation Plan/California WaterFix Statement RDEIR/SDEIS & Comment Period Extension U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Permit for CA WaterFix DWR/USFWS Delta Research Station Small Community Flood Risk Reduction Program Draft Guidelines	12	11	4	1	6	1
	Totals	**47**	**25**	**22** (47%)	**13** (28%)	**10** (21%)	**2** (4%)

The Heart of California

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan highlights the fact that "water is the lifeblood of the Delta" and reiterates the Commission's legislative mandate to conserve agricultural land and economically sustainable agricultural operations in the Delta. Actions regarding Land and Water are the core of the Commission's mission - protecting the fields and waterways that are the natural treasures of the Delta.

Monitoring Land Use A.2.1

The Commission commented on 47 land use projects, 47% of which were located solely in the Primary Zone where the Commission exerts land use authority over local government projects. For more detail, refer back to pages 6-8 and the table of Commission Comment Letters in 2015.

California WaterFix Comments W.1.3

In addition to comments on local land use projects, the Commission prepared lengthy comments on California WaterFix, the latest iteration of the proposed twin tunnel project to convey water from the Sacramento River in the North Delta directly to the export pumps in the South Delta. The Commission also presented information at its meetings on the proposed project and helped gather comments from the Delta community on the potential effects of California WaterFix on Delta agricultural, natural resource, cultural and recreational values.

West False River Barrier W.1

In the fourth year of drought, the California Department of Water Resources proposed emergency drought barriers (rocks dams in water channels) in three Delta waterway locations to repel the intrusion of salt into the interior Delta. Ultimately, only a barrier at West False River was constructed, with installation occurring in May/June and the removal concluding in November. The Commission provided comments on the proposed barriers and presented information at its meetings for the Delta community.

Citations refer to Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives

The Year Ahead

Land Use and Resource Management Plan Update A.2.2

The Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP) is the Commission's plan to ensure that local land use decisions in the Delta Primary Zone are consistent with the Delta Protection Act. Commission staff initiated an update of the LURMP in 2015 and will present a draft revision to the Commission in 2016. The updated LURMP will address current land use conversion challenges in the Delta that are not adequately addressed in the current LURMP, including alternative energy development and large-scale habitat restoration.

California EcoRestore Assistance A.2.3, A.3.1

The Commission will advise on proposed projects to meet the targets of California EcoRestore, the Governor's Administration-led effort to restore more than 30,000 acres of habitat in the Delta. The Commission will continue to advocate for the restoration of lands already owned by public agencies or conservation organizations before additional private lands are acquired for habitat restoration.

Delta Conservancy Proposition 1 Consultation A.2.4

Proposition 1 requires the Delta Conservancy to consult with the Commission on its bond-funded grantmaking activities. The Commission provided input to the Conservancy on the pre-proposals it received in 2015, and will assist with reviewing full proposals for funding in 2016.

Agricultural Analysis for Delta Counties A.1.2

Building on work conducted in Contra Costa, Yolo and Solano Counties (see Regional Economy), and pending support from the Delta Conservancy's Proposition 1 planning funds, the Commission seeks an agricultural analysis for Delta counties using the Rural-Urban Connection Strategies (RUCS) model pioneered by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. RUCS would identify important agricultural resources and value-added opportunities, as well as help guide habitat restoration efforts to minimize impacts to agriculture.

Statewide Water Reliability Consistent with Delta Values W.1.1, W.1.2, W.1.3

Assuming continued uncertainty over the proposed twin tunnel plan, the Commission will work to promote statewide water solutions that reduce reliance on Delta water supplies and retain through-Delta conveyance.

LEVEES & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

A Year of Strategies

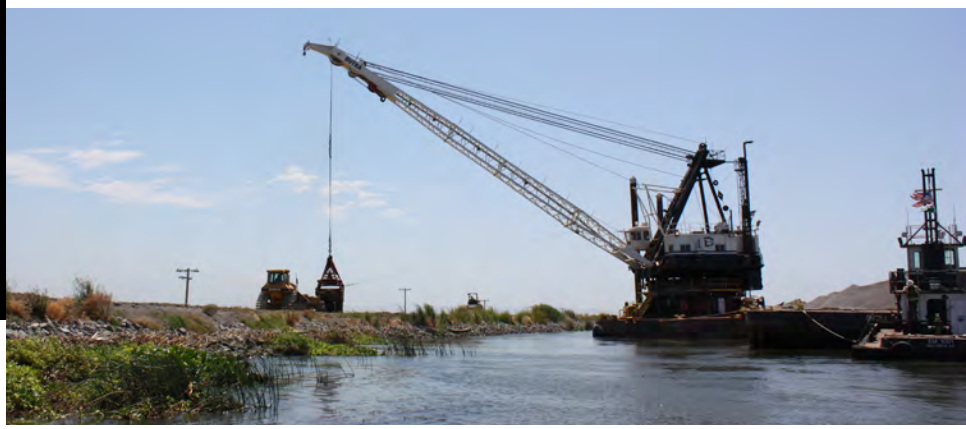
The Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan is required to "restore, improve and manage levee systems by promoting strategies, including, but not limited to, methods and procedures which advance the adoption and implementation of coordinated and uniform standards among governmental agencies for the maintenance, repair, and construction of both public and private levees." [Public Resources Code § 29760(b)4]

Delta Flood Risk Management Assessment District Feasibility Study L.1, L.2

In 2015, Commission staff engaged a team of consultants, led by resource economics consulting firm M.Cubed, to identify a range of possible financing mechanisms to pay for Delta levee improvements. This Feasibility Study will consider the legal, institutional, financial, and political feasibility of the most promising mechanisms. It will also identify the major classes of relevant beneficiaries and their assets, and characterize their ability to contribute financially. Initial efforts included meetings with key stakeholder groups and a first round of stakeholder interviews.

Delta Levee Investment Strategy (DLIS) L.2.2, L.2.3, L.2.4

The Delta Plan calls for its 2010 interim levee investment policies "to be used until a comprehensive investment methodology could be developed" (RR P1). The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) began to develop this methodology, which includes a planning tool to help prioritize Delta levee investments in order to reduce flood risk to State interests. Throughout 2015, the Commission staff coordinated with the Council on this project as well as the Feasibility Study. Commission staff frequently reminded the Council of the importance of considering the Delta as a system (rather than individual tracts and islands) and advocated for ongoing funding for the Delta levee subventions and special projects programs as proven methods of reducing flood risk to State interests.



Small Communities Flood Risk Reduction Grant Program L.2

Commission staff commented on the Department of Water Resources' Small Community Flood Risk Reduction Grant Program Guidelines, calling for clarification of the program's eligibility criteria for feasibility studies versus projects. The program could provide significant flood protection to the Delta's legacy communities, assisting them in planning for projects that will achieve the 100-year flood protection standard.

Other Actions in 2015:

Flood Preparedness Week L.1.1, O.1.1, O.1.6

Commission staff created public service announcements in English and Spanish, hosted a Flood Safety Fair and mailed a Flood Preparedness calendar containing important Delta-specific emergency information and planning tools to every zip code in the Primary Zone (see Education and Outreach).

The Year Ahead

Delta Flood Risk Management Assessment District Feasibility Study L.1, L.2

Stakeholder workshops for the Feasibility Study will be held to gather data on beneficiaries and assets, the data will be analyzed and the Feasibility Study Implementation Report will be completed by the fall.

Delta Levee Investment Strategy (DLIS) L.2.2, L.2.3, L.2.4

Commission staff will continue to monitor and coordinate with the Delta Stewardship Council on revisions to the Delta Plan levee investment policies and the application of the planning tool.

Citations refer to Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives

A Template for Economic Development

The Commission's activities to advance the regional economy are guided by its 2012 Economic Sustainability Plan (ESP). Public Resources Code § 29761.5(a) requires that the Commission update it every five years as needed due to changing conditions. In 2015, Commission staff continued to develop resources needed for an update, now planned for 2018, and creatively address components as opportunities arise – some further described below. **E.1**

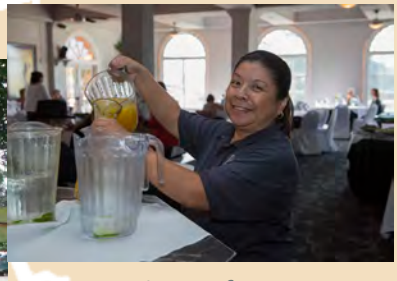
Regional Agriculture Economy Analysis & Strategy Research and Development **E.2.1, E.3.1**

In 2015, an analysis of eastern Contra Costa County's agricultural economy was completed, under contract with the County. The County developed a strategy to maintain and enhance the viability of the agricultural economy in the Delta region, with changes in specialty crop production, improved access to local and Bay Area markets, further development of local value-added food processing and packing, and increased facilitation of agritourism (see the Commission website at www.delta.ca.gov/Regional_Economy.htm for final reports).

In addition, the Commission contracted with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) for an update of Sacramento and Yolo Counties' Delta-area "Rural-Urban Connection Strategy" (RUCS). RUCS looks at regional growth and sustainability objectives from a rural perspective – including land use and conservation, agricultural infrastructure, economic opportunities, and applicable regulations. Initial work identified the need for increased regional crop packing, processing, storage, marketing and distribution facilities in the region – forming what some call a "food hub." Updated data is expected in 2016.

Delta as Place: the Social Economy **E.2.1, E3.1**

Commission staff joined the Delta Agency Science Workgroup, coordinated by the Delta Stewardship Council, to add a voice for socio-economic research so critical to preserving and enhancing unique Delta values. Efforts resulted in inclusion of Delta economic research topics offered to Delta Science Fellows, and further definition of socio-economic Delta research needs such as necessary infrastructure development -- in addition to biological, climatological and engineering studies more typically requested.



Citations refer to Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives

Delta as Place: the Social Economy (continued)

In addition, the Commission contracted with the University of California's Center for Regional Change to conduct a Regional Opportunity Index (ROI) assessment of the Delta. The ROI uses publicly available data, such as the U.S. Census and American Community Survey, to identify social educational, economic and environmental assets and challenges by geographic regions. Findings available appear to be fairly typical for rural areas in California (see www.delta.ca.gov/ROI.htm), and identify opportunity for investment by business, non-profit and government sectors – including the Commission's Delta Investment Fund (if funded). One such opportunity that the Commission seeks to explore in the future is improvement of broadband internet access.

Other Actions in 2015:

Recreation Research — E.2.1

A contract was initiated with California State University, Sacramento to create a comprehensive recreation research agenda (see Recreation & Tourism).

Invasive Aquatic Weed Abatement — E.2.2, A.1.2

Commission staff monitored and coordinated information exchange related to invasive aquatic weed abatement throughout the spring and summer season (see Recreation & Tourism).

Delta Tourism Market Research — E.2, R.1.4

Commission staff presented extensive tourism market research, with a focus on opportunities for Delta-specific tourism, to Delta businesses and communities (see Outreach & Education).

The Year Ahead

Economic Sustainability Plan Update — E.1

Commission staff will continue to work to identify funding to fully update the ESP.

Rural-Urban Connection Strategies — E.2.2, A.1.2

The analysis of Sacramento and Yolo Counties' Delta agricultural economies will conclude and the Commission will pursue a Delta-wide RUCS, pending availability of funding (see Land & Water).

Economic Indicators Report — E.1

The Commission will undertake an Economic Indicators Report as an implementation of the ESP and a step towards its 2018 ESP Update.

DELTA HERITAGE

Preserving and Enhancing "Delta as Place"

The Commission's Delta Heritage Area Initiative (DelHAI) seeks to protect, enhance, and sustain the unique values of the Delta. By advancing activities and projects that promote the Delta's culture and history, DelHAI focuses on "Delta As Place" -- and demonstrates the region's qualifications for a National Heritage Area designation.

Delta Narratives H.2.3

The Commission concluded work on the Delta Narratives project in July 2015. The project, which was contracted through Sacramento State's Center for California Studies and involved a range of regional academic and cultural experts, compiled data into narratives forming the foundation for an exhibition plan on the Delta's central role in California and American history, for Delta museum and cultural venues. The project included public workshops and a conference entitled "More than H_2O: Saving the History and Culture of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta". The final report included recommendations on how to better communicate information about the Delta, its culture and history.

Delta Community Action Planning H.3

Commission staff teamed with Sacramento County and Sacramento State's Center for Collaborative Policy on the Delta Communities Action Planning project (DCAP), to develop Action Plans for two pilot communities, Courtland and Walnut Grove. The first round of workshops featured community participants identifying and prioritizing actions concerning quality of life, economic development, historic preservation, and public safety. During the second round of workshops, community participants developed these actions further, specifically by determining project goals, resources needed, who can help, and next steps, and discussed the formation of a group to help implement the actions. Completed Action Plans will detail these priorities, potential partners, and schedules for action.

Commission staff plan to expand the Delta Community Action Planning project to other communities in 2016.

Citations refer to Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives

Delta As Place Interagency Working Group E.1

Commission staff held the first meeting of the new Delta As Place Interagency Working Group in November. The working group, which is comprised of staff from State agencies and local governments, is focused on facilitating Delta As Place projects, including those involving cultural and historic preservation, economic development, infrastructure, quality of life, and recreation.

Moving forward, recommendations and efforts of the Working Group will be reported to the Commission and the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee, and provide guidance to the Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Independent Science Board, and Delta Science Program.

The Year Ahead

Cultural and Historical Resources Inventory H.2.1

The Commission has been reviewing and assembling the cultural and historical assets of the Delta region, working with local governments, historical societies, and others. Work will continue on the inventory into 2016, and will inform a Management Plan for the proposed National Heritage Area.

Delta Community Action Planning H.3

2016 will see the completion and implementation of Action Plans in Courtland and Walnut Grove, and the expansion of the DCAP project to other Delta communities.

Community Enhancement H.2.4

As the Community Action Planning project proceeds, the Commission will actively assist local groups with community enhancement efforts, including historic preservation efforts as they are identified and funding is secured.

Delta As Place E.1

Commission staff will continue to facilitate implementation of the Delta Plan "Delta As Place" recommendations through the Delta As Place Interagency Working Group.

One Thousand Miles of Waterways...

...and so much more. Recreation in the Delta is a cornerstone of the regional economy and will play an important role in the Delta's future, and as such is an important priority for Commission actions.

Recreation Facility Inventory R.1.1, E.2.1

Substantial research toward the update of the Delta Protection Commission's Recreation Facility Inventory was completed with contracted assistance from California State Parks. For the first time, agritourism providers will be included in the Inventory. Data confirmation and finalization of the Inventory is expected in 2016.

Abandoned Vessels R.3.1

Delta Protection Commission staff continues involvement in the Abandoned Vessel Working Group. In a related effort, the Commission is leading a collaboration with the Department of Water Resources, U.S. Coast Guard, State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways and local law enforcement to develop a regional derelict vessel database. The database will heighten awareness of abandoned vessels, document abatement efforts across counties, provide trend analysis of abandonments in the Delta and provide support for much-needed increased funding.

Boating Needs Assessment and Recreation Research R.1.2, E.2.1

Commission staff contracted with California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) to survey existing and potential Delta boaters to identify patterns of boating use and spending, as well as infrastructure needs. CSUS is also assisting the Commission with identifying other gaps in the current recreation data for the region and developing specific research proposals to address this. Moving forward, both studies will contribute to the Commission's Economic Sustainability Plan and Land Use and Resource Management Plan updates.

Photo courtesy of VisitLodi

Citations refer to Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives

RECREATION & TOURISM

Invasive Aquatic Weeds R.4

During the summer, Delta Protection Commission staff monitored and coordinated information exchange with Delta interests (marinas, recreational boaters, farmers and water agencies) related to current status and treatment activities of the State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways' (DBW) Aquatic Weed Control Program. Presentations by DBW informed Commissioners and the public of the Division's treatment efforts to control aquatic weeds, which have significant impacts on the Delta's recreation and transportation (shipping) economies.

Other Actions in 2015:

Delta Awareness Project O.1.6, R.1.4

The Delta Awareness Project moved forward in 2015 with the Delta Conservancy's selection of a consultant for the second phase and the commencement of construction on a comprehensive website that will treat the Delta region as a single tourism destination linked to the State's VisitCalifornia.com, greatly improving visitor access to Delta information. Commission staff also presented extensive market research on tourism trends collected in the first phase to Delta recreation operators, businesses and agritourism entities, with an emphasis on trends affecting Delta tourism opportunities.

The Great California Delta Trail O.1.6, R.1.2, H.4.2

A Great California Delta Trail logo was completed, which can be used by businesses on or affiliated with the Trail, to coordinate promotion with an easily recognizable image - in addition to providing distinctive signage marking Trail segments.

The Year Ahead

Delta Trail Blueprint R.1.3

Work continues on the Great California Delta Trail Eastern Region Blueprint, for San Joaquin, Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Commission staff will continue to partner with local governments and regional agencies to identify existing and planned trail networks to adopt into the Delta Trail.

Recreation Research and Assessments R.1.2

The CSUS research directed at identifying Delta recreational data needs will continue in 2016, along with the Delta Boating Needs Assessment and the Recreation Facility Inventory.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

The Voice of the Delta

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan prioritized the expansion of outreach within and beyond the Delta, and implementation of a Communications Plan to enhance knowledge of issues and activities among Delta stakeholders. With this focus, Outreach activities fulfill objectives across the full range of the Strategic Themes defined in Vision 2030. Highlights include:

DeltaFOREVER Art Show — O.1.6, F.1.1, F.2.2, H.2.3

A group of Northern California artists seeking to support the proposed Delta National Heritage Area and Delta as Place values mounted a major exhibit of Delta landscapes in May of 2015, attracting highly respected names in the art world as participants. In the process, the group created the Delta Regional Foundation with collaboration from Commission staff (see Capacity Building) and with Commission assistance with promoting the event, exceeded fundraising targets for seed money for Delta projects.

Adding to this success, the original exhibit has morphed into a moving show, adding artists and venues, with more planned for 2016.

Flood Preparedness Week — L.1.1, O.1.1, O.1.6

For California Flood Preparedness Week, the Commission created and aired a series of public service announcements in English and Spanish, urging flood preparedness actions in insurance, planning and emergency response. A third well-attended Delta Flood Safety Fair was held with increased participation from a wide range of agencies, including a team from the School of Public Health at California State University, San Jose (see photo on page 12). A 2016 Delta Flood Preparedness Calendar was published in partnership with the Department of Water Resources' Delta Levees Programs. The calendar, featuring Delta towns, farms, people and wildlife along with safety information and useful preparedness steps, was mailed to every zip code in the Primary Zone, Isleton and Bethel Island.

Citations refer to Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives

Flood Preparedness Week (continued)

Efforts will continue in 2016 with a new Calendar in partnership with DWR and additional promotion of the fourth annual Delta Flood Safety Fair.

Other Actions in 2015

Commission Communications Plan O.1.1

Strategies, messaging, target audiences, effective channels and associated deadlines across all projects are incorporated to produce timely, accurate information for systematic release.

Delta Voice Newsletter O.1.3

The Delta Voice newsletter continued to improve in both design and content, garnering very positive feedback both from within the Delta community and outside agencies. The Commission is proud to be producing the go-to newsletter celebrating Delta As Place.

Community Involvement Benefiting the Delta O.1.6, R.1.2, H.4.2

The Commission "Adopted a Highway" along 3.5 miles of Highway 12 near Rio Vista, and continued to support the Ocean Conservancy's Coastal Cleanup by serving as captains for five Delta sites. In addition, the Commission led an effort joined by the Delta Conservancy and Delta Stewardship Council to support Angels of the Fields, a worthy organization that brings holiday cheer to farm worker families and others in need in the Delta, with donated gifts, clothing and a Holiday Carnival for the children.

The Year Ahead

Delta Narratives Curriculum O.1.2, H.2.3

Research is beginning to develop a school curriculum based on Delta Narratives scholar papers, emphasizing the importance of the Delta in California and American history.

Delta Leadership Program O.1.1, O.1.3

In partnership with the Delta Regional Foundation, nominations were solicited and an inaugural class selected for a 2016 leadership development program to cultivate and enhance informed and energetic leadership within the Delta community.

DeltaFOREVER Art Map E.2, R.1.5, O.1.3

A Delta Regional Foundation artist has been selected to create a map of the scenes showcased in DeltaFOREVER landscapes. The map will be distributed in Delta galleries, wineries and shops, giving visitors the chance to experience the Delta's beauty from their own perspective.

Increasing Our Ability To Serve

The Delta Protection Commission promotes a culture of leadership and excellence among Commission members and staff, and creatively develops funding to increase the overall feasibility and sustainability of all of the Commission's actions.

Strategic Plan Adopted, Implementation Plan Developed C.3.1

In May 2015, the Commission approved Vision 2030, a Strategic Plan to guide the Commission's efforts through the next fifteen years. The Plan was drafted through the cooperative efforts of Commission staff, the members of the Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC), and a Commission subcommittee. With this comprehensive Vision document in place, the Commission looks forward to coordinated, productive and effective efforts in the future.

As a companion document to Vision 2030, the Implementation Plan details the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan, defining tasks and assigning timelines. Each Commission staffer's individual Work Plan integrates Implementation Plan tasks, and is reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis, creating a systematic, accountable road map for timely fulfillment of Commission goals over the life of the Strategic Plan.

Full Staffing Levels Reached C.3.2

In 2015, for the first time since the expansion of the Commission's mission with the Delta Protection Act amendments of 2009, the Commission enjoyed a full complement of staff. With careful selection, a team has been assembled that can fully realize Commission initiatives and bring expertise and knowledge to discussions of Delta issues as a voice for the Delta.

Citations refer to Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives

CAPACITY BUILDING

Partnership with Delta Regional Foundation F.2.2

During 2015 the Commission was approached by members of the public wishing to highlight Delta As Place values. The group used input from Commission staff to create the Delta Regional Foundation, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) community benefit corporation. The mission of the Delta Regional Foundation is to support and promote the following, throughout the Delta:

1) cultural and historical preservation, education and events;
2) tourism and recreation operations;
3) agricultural projects and programs.

The Commission is proud to partner with this committed group of Delta supporters and looks forward to a long and fruitful association with the Delta Regional Foundation.

The Year Ahead

DeltaFOREVER Continues at California State University, Sacramento F.2.2

The Delta Regional Foundation's inaugural fundraiser, an art show of Delta landscapes created by a cadre of noted Northern California artists, surpassed all goals during two shows in early summer 2015. The show – with more artists and new pieces - is scheduled to reopen at California State University, Sacramento in March 2016.

Pursue Funding Opportunities F.2.3

Commission staff are monitoring potential funding opportunities to assist with implementation of multiple Vision 2030 Strategic Plan objectives.

2015 COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Mary N. Piepho, Chair
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

Skip Thomson, Vice-Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors

Brian Bugsch
California State Lands Commission

Christopher Cabaldon
City of West Sacramento

Bob Elliott
San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors

Robert K. Ferguson
South Delta Reclamation Districts

Brian Kelly
California State Transportation Agency
Alternate: Kate White

John Laird
California Natural Resources Agency
Alternate: Todd Ferrara

Susan Lofthus
City of Stockton

Don Nottoli
Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

Norman Richardson
City of Rio Vista

Karen Ross
CA Department of Food and Agriculture
Alternate: Jenny Lester-Moffitt

Michael Scriven
Central Delta Reclamation Districts

Justin van Loben Sels
North Delta Reclamation Districts

Oscar Villegas
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