

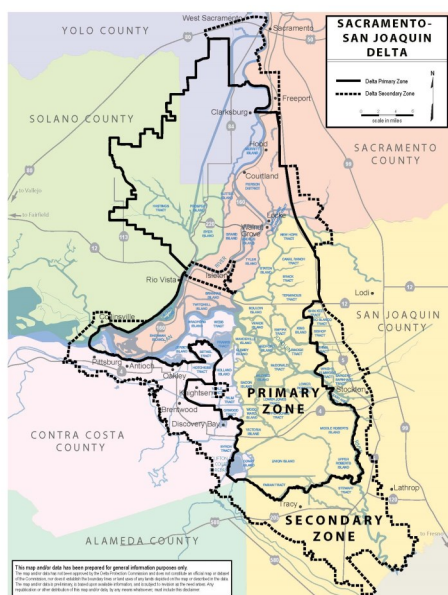
# Conservancy Currents

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy's Newsletter

*A partner for balanced ecosystem restoration and economic development in the Delta*

Winter 2015 Volume 4, Issue 1

## Proposition 1 Brings New Opportunities for Delta Communities and the Conservancy



*The Conservancy will have funding from Prop. 1 for projects to benefit the legal Delta and Suisun Marsh.*

*Map from Delta Protection Commission.*

Under the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Prop. 1), \$50 million is identified for the Conservancy for “competitive grants for multibenefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects in accordance with statewide issues.” The Conservancy intends to grant funds for restoration and enhancement, water quality, and agricultural sustainability projects.

Conservancy staff has been developing draft grant guidelines and a solicitation package that will ensure high quality projects that have local support and that meet criteria established in Prop. 1, the Conservancy’s enabling legislation and strategic plan, as well as statewide priorities identified in the

California Water Action Plan and the Delta Plan.

The Conservancy is also working with the other State conservancies, the Department of Water Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to coordinate the development of grant guidelines and the solicitation of projects.

The Conservancy currently is developing draft guidelines that should be available for public comment in April. Upon completion of the public comment period, the guidelines will be revised and submitted to the Resources Agency and the Conservancy Board for final approval. The Conservancy hopes to be able to open a first solicitation during summer 2015.

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## Delta Awareness Campaign: The Delta as a Destination

Boaters know the Delta for its 1,000 miles of waterways. Birders know of its location on the Pacific Flyway. Windsurfers know the Delta for its strong winds. Wine aficionados are increasingly visiting the Delta to enjoy the grapes grown and wine created in the fertile soil of the region. The economic data also knows it, “Recreation is an integral part of the Delta, complementing its multiple resources and contributing to the economic vitality of the region. Residents of nearby areas visit virtually every day, generating a total of roughly 12 million visitor days of use annually and a direct economic impact of more than a quarter of a billion dollars in

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*Chair's Corner**Conservancy Poised to Support Restoration*

With the passage of Proposition 1 (Prop. 1), the Conservancy is poised to support needed restoration and habitat, water quality, and agricultural sustainability projects. Since its inception in 2009, the Conservancy has worked with

Delta community members, and local, state, and federal agencies to identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership that address the Conservancy's dual-mission of habitat restoration and economic development and respond to the region's needs.

The Conservancy is developing a grant program (see the cover story) that will address these priorities. Using technical reviewers to help review grant proposals, the Conservancy plans to ensure that funded projects truly address the priorities identified in the Prop. 1 bond language, statewide and regional priorities, and the Conservancy's strategic plan.

Never before has the Delta experienced an opportunity to foster and support programs that will benefit the region in this manner. The Conservancy is excited to be able to work with Delta stakeholders to implement long-lasting Delta projects.

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*NRCS Program**Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Program Ready to Assist Delta Farmers and Migratory Birds*

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced a program in the Delta that provides incentives to farmers for voluntarily modifying their agricultural land management practices. These small changes benefit migratory birds without taking the land out of production. The Delta's agricultural lands provide critical food and other resources for many species of waterbirds during migration and throughout winter. With the small tweaks in management supported by this program Delta farms can become even more valuable resources for birds.

The program is an expansion of NRCS's Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Program (WHEP) that launched in the Sacramento Valley's ricelands in 2012. This year's program has been expanded to include corn, early harvested crops like wheat, sunflower, safflower, and fallow fields. Eligible short-term practices include post-harvest flooding of corn, chop-and-roll of corn post-harvest, and short-duration late summer flooding. No long-term commitment is required in this one-year program. EQIP-eligible producers in Yolo, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Contra Costa, and Solano counties can apply. Since 2012, over 120,000 acres and 220 farms have enrolled in rice management practices, including staggered drawdown (February and March) which prolongs the availability of shallow water habitat in the late winter. WHEP will be available in early 2015 for Delta farmers and practices will be implemented later that year. For more information about this program, please contact Khara Strum at Audubon California, [kstrum@audubon.org](mailto:kstrum@audubon.org).

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*Sandhill Cranes are one of the species that migrate through the Delta and could benefit from the NRCS Program.*



[Carol Jensen](#)

## *The Delta Has Been Featured in Many Movies Throughout the Years*

Harold F. "Hal" Schell wrote about the California Delta for four decades. His publications include five books and thousands of articles and columns. Hal's "Dawdling on the Delta" column was a monthly "must read" for all boating enthusiasts. The following article is an excerpt from one of Hal's monographs reporting on the starring role played by the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta in the movies.

Movie making has been a cottage industry in the Delta for a very long time. Back in 1914 Rio Vistans were all excited about the filming locally of *Cameo Kirby*, starring Dustan Farnum and Winifred Kingston. It was our earliest Delta location silent film now lost to time due to fragile nitrate film. Location shooting continued with *Jim Bludso* (1917). The script called for a fire aboard the vintage 1890 sternwheeler *Grace Barton*, moored at Wood Island, since dredged away. Movie fires in those silent film days were created with smoke pots- all smoke but little or no flames. Something went awry. The old riverboat caught unintended fire and soon destroyed by flames. They say there was quite a bit of realism to that movie as passengers were fleeing the inferno.

As movies advanced into talkies, the city of Sacramento realized that there was good business in films. Its environs



Mickey Rooney starred in the 1939 version of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which featured a Delta steamboat.

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## *New Delta Brand: The Delta As a Destination*

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spending." (Delta Protection Commission, 2012: Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta).

With the completion of the new Delta brand, the region is poised to develop and implement a marketing campaign to increase awareness of the Delta as a destination. The goal of the campaign is not just to increase the number of visitors to the Delta, but also help existing visitors understand the various types of recreation and tourism opportunities that exist in the region.

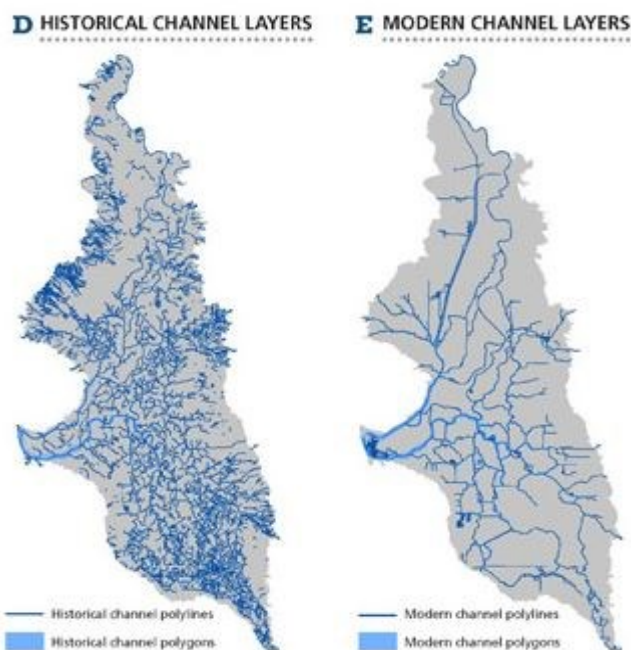
The Conservancy has contracted with Jungle Communications to develop the marketing plan and conduct the initial implementation. The Conservancy is also working closely with the Delta Protection Commission and the Delta Marketing Task Force to ensure a thorough approach to this effort. The task force is comprised of a cross-section of Delta recreation, business, agriculture, and tourism representatives. The next few months will be spent working with the contractor beginning to outline the multi-year marketing campaign.



*This logo was selected by Delta residents as the first step in a regional marketing plan.*

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## New SFEI-ASC Report Explores Delta Transformation



Maps depicting historical as well as modern attributes of the Delta can be found in SFEI-ASC's latest report about the Delta ecological functions, spatial metrics, and landscape change. Photo from SFEI-ASC report, *A Delta Transformed: Ecological Functions, Spatial Metrics and Landscape Change in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*.

more than 50-fold. The increase in isolated patches has negative implications for marsh wildlife population dispersal, foraging, gene flow, and resilience to disturbance.

The landscape metrics presented in this report are tools that can be used for the analysis, design, and evaluation of Delta restoration scenarios. The next phase of the Delta Landscapes Project will build upon these metrics to develop landscape restoration conceptual models.

This report was funded by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Ecosystem Restoration Program and can be found at [www.sfei.org/projects/delta-landscapes](http://www.sfei.org/projects/delta-landscapes).

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## EcoAtlas Continuing to Grow with More Data

The Conservancy has received a new grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to collect, visualize, and share high-priority, site-specific datasets for the Delta. The Conservancy is working with local, State and federal partners to collect datasets and share the datasets through EcoAtlas, and provide new dynamic data

summaries. EcoAtlas is a tool for visualizing the condition and extent of California's aquatic resources and contains a wealth of map-based information and rapid assessment data. EcoAtlas, however, has a limited amount of site-specific quantitative data. This effort builds upon the Conservancy's current effort enhancing the functionality of

EcoAtlas for tracking Delta restoration projects. The project will develop better data standardization, visualization, and sharing tools to provide greater insight into and tracking of the environmental benefits of projects at local and regional scales.

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The San Francisco Estuary Institute-Aquatic Science Center (SFEI-ASC) recently released the report, "A Delta Transformed: Ecological Functions, Spatial Metrics, and Landscape Change in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta," as part of their Delta Landscapes Project. This report identifies important landscape-scale ecological functions that support native species and analyzes how they have changed since the development of the Delta. In the context of this report, ecological functions are defined as the processes or manifestations of processes that support organisms. The extent and distribution of ecological functions in the historical and modern Delta were assessed using landscape metrics, which quantify particular aspects of the physical landscape. Thirteen metrics were developed to assess the following functions: those that provide habitat and connectivity for fish; marsh wildlife; waterbirds; riparian wildlife; and, marsh-terrestrial transition zone wildlife.

One metric used to evaluate habitat and connectivity for marsh wildlife is the average distance from a marsh patch to the nearest large marsh. Historically, marsh patches in the Delta were close together and allowed for wildlife movement to maintain genetic diversity. In the modern Delta, marsh patches are significantly smaller and the average distance to the nearest large marsh has increased



## *Delta WIN Efforts Are Expanding to Include Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge Water Quality Monitoring*

The Delta Watershed Initiative (Delta WIN) was created in 2014 to coordinate and facilitate a regional network of locally initiated projects that improve the health of the watershed.

One way Delta WIN assists local and regional efforts is by analyzing historical data and coordinating monitoring. In coordination with the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), the Conservancy has compiled and analyzed historical data from the Refuge and used this data to inform a water quality monitoring plan.

Conservancy staff will begin monitoring dissolved oxygen, temperature, electrical conductivity, and pH of the water at several sites in the Refuge beginning in 2015. With additional funding, the Conservancy and Refuge could monitor other constituents such as metals, pesticides, and bacteria that historically have been present at the Refuge.

The goal of this effort is to understand the quality of the water that the Refuge uses for wildlife, and screen for potential water quality problems that may require further investigation or the implementation of best management practices.

The Stone Lakes monitoring effort will benefit from the Conservancy's current efforts with the San Francisco Estuary Institute-Aquatic Science Center(ASC/SFEI) to expand the San Francisco Regional Data Center (SFRDC) to include water quality data from the Delta. There are four Regional Data Centers in California



*Shorebirds using a seasonal wetland at the Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge. Delta WIN will be conducting water quality monitoring at such sites. Photo from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Amy Hopperstad photographer.*

which supply data for the California Environmental Data Exchange (CEDEN), which in turn provides the public with access to data collected throughout the State. The expansion

SFRDC is funded by the US EPA 2014 National Environmental Information Exchange Network Program.

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## The Delta in the Movies

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As movies advanced into talkies, the city of Sacramento realized that there was good business in films. Its environs and the Delta's vast waterways system could look like most any place in the world requiring waterways. Hundreds of Sacramento skid-row bums picked up a few dollars playing the parts of grizzled sourdoughs for Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush* (1924) and later in *Winds of Chance* (1925). Between 1914 and 1935, at least 45 feature-length movies were filmed in the Sacramento area. The Delta waterways doubled as the Mississippi River in over half of them.

The Delta fleet of steamboats could rival that of the Mississippi. All a movie producer had to do to transform a Delta steamer into one that would look right at home on the Mississippi River was to add a bit of plywood gingerbread and tack on an extra smokestack. Certainly one of the impressive transformations was that of the 144-foot sternwheeler *Leader*, which played the part of the *Claremore Queen* in the Will Rogers movie *Steamboat Round the Bend* (1935), filmed in both the Stockton and Sacramento areas. The ship had put its time in on the river, often making the unglamorous upriver run on the San Joaquin River towing barges. This was heady living for this plain-Jane steamer starring in movies, hearing the rustle of crinoline skirts, enjoying the

sound of music, and experiencing dancing feet on her tired decks.

The venerable Stockton sternwheeler *Capt. Weber* starred with Mickey Rooney in the first talkie version of *Huckleberry Finn*. The petite sternwheeler *Flora*, 141 feet in length and built in 1885, played the part of *Dixie* in the movie and ultimately perished in the terrible Broderick fire that swept the Sacramento waterfront in 1932 took a score of steamboats to their graves. The 146-foot *Jacinto*, built in 1889, play her part in the same movie. She also perished in the Broderick conflagration.

It is doubtful that any Hollywood actor captured the hearts of Stocktonians as did John Wayne when in town with Lauren Bacall for the filming of *Blood Alley* (1954). "Duke" would return to the old Stockton Hotel dog-tired after a long day of filming out to waiting lines of 100 to 400 kids seeking autographs. Night after night, he would accommodate all of them. Wayne, a boater himself, made the 86-foot former Geodetic Survey boat *Virginia S* his unofficial headquarters in Stockton.

The Delta almost never gets to be itself. It doubled for places in the Yukon for filming of *Gold Rush* (1924); became China for *Shanghai Bound* (1927); imitated Burma's Irrawaddy River in *Mandalay* (1934); and mocked Vietnam for the spoof *Hot Shots! Part Deux* (1993). Producer Clint Eastwood shot parts of *Pink Cadillac* (1989) in the Sacramento area. He filmed portions of his movie about Jazz great Charlie Parker, *Bird* (1988), in both Bird's



A real-life "Tom Sawyer" on the Delta, known as the Lauritzen boy of Antioch, shows off his catch.





*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its riverboats have helped in the Hollywood dream factory by being featured in many films. The Delta has doubled for places as diverse as the Yukon, China, and Vietnam.*

*Top: Will Rogers and Anne Shirley starred in "Steamboat Round the Bend" in 1935. The part of Claremore Queen was played by the Delta sternwheeler Leader.*

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## *Fairs & Festivals*

### **Delta Loop Crab Feed**

February 28  
deltaloop.net

### **Delta Blues Festival**

March 7  
deltabluesfestival.net

### **Stockton Asparagus Festival**

April 17-19

### **Delta Waterway Cleanup**

April 18, 2015  
deltaconservancy.ca.gov

*Photo courtesy of ZoArt.*

## *Sacramento-San Joaquin Conservancy Board*

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*Yolo County*

**Dan Taylor, Vice-Chair**  
*Appointed Public Member*

**Darla Guenzler, PhD.**  
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**Don Nottoli**  
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*Delta Protection Commission*

*The Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of every other month, beginning with January. For Board materials, please see the Conservancy website at: [www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov](http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov).*

## *Watershed Education Projects Coming this Spring to River Delta School District*

The Conservancy is partnering with the River Delta School District, River Delta Unified School District and the nonprofit Hawks, Honkers and Hoots to provide 80-120 science students classroom training on the importance of watershed stewardship, including how it impacts wildlife, and how to use water quality monitoring test equipment. Funded by grants from the Teichert Foundation, and the Rose Foundation, and the Sacramento Area Creeks Council, the education projects further students' scientific knowledge, deepens their commitment to watershed stewardship, and helps teach science in a fun and meaningful way. Additionally, 40-60 students will participate in a field trip and conduct hands-on water quality testing at a site in the Delta.

Grant funds were used to purchase state-of-the-art testing instruments that can analyze water quality conditions, including dissolved oxygenation, conductivity, and pH. This equipment will support water quality monitoring to be conducted at Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Marsh Creek, the Sacramento River at Freeport, and the North Davis Channel.

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## *Spring Clean Up Scheduled for April 18*

The Spring Delta Waterways Cleanup is scheduled for April 18, 2015. The cleanup provides opportunities for the public to get their hands dirty and remove trash from Delta waterways. The Conservancy plans to host two cleanup sites, one at Sherman Island and one in the Bufferlands, a nature area near Freeport. The cleanup is part of the county-wide Creek Week cleanup event organized by the Sacramento Area Creeks Council. The Conservancy will also partner with Bridgestone Tires to offer Delta residents an opportunity to safely dispose of illegally-dumped tires. In addition to the cleanup, volunteers may be treated to a windsurfing demo on Sherman Island and a guided nature walk in the Bufferlands.

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SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN

**DELTA CONSERVANCY**

*A California State Agency*

*A partner for balanced ecosystem restoration  
and economic development in the Delta*

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