



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN

DELTA CONSERVANCY

A California State Agency

2022 to 2027
Delta Conservancy
Strategic Plan



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2021-2022

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California Coastal Conservancy

Central Valley Flood Protection Board

Delta Protection Commission

San Francisco Bay Conservation and
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South Pacific Division, U.S. Army Corps of
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Susiuin Resource Conservation District

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

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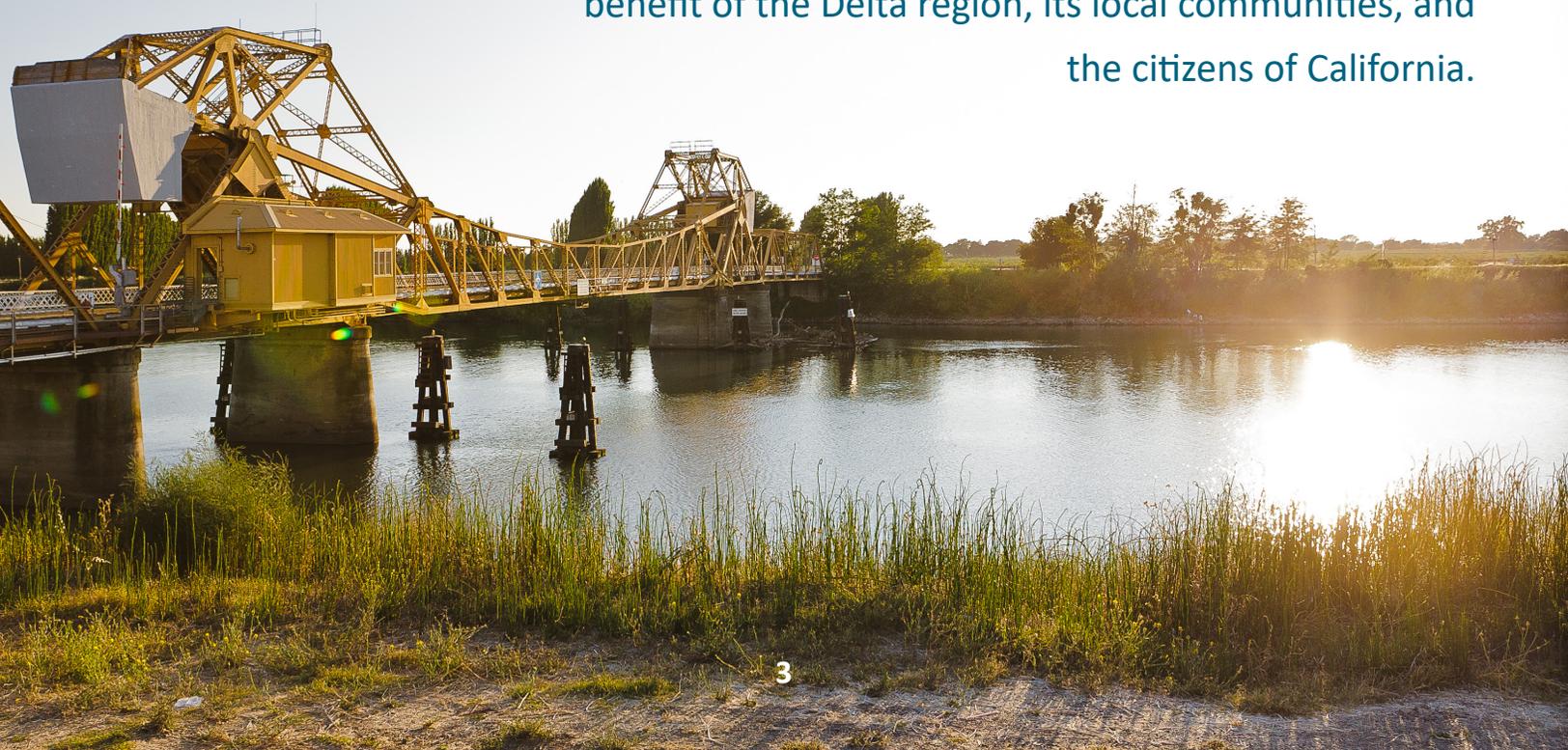
U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service

Yolo Basin Foundation

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The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy’s Mission:
Working collaboratively and in coordination with local communities, the Conservancy will lead efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta’s economy, agriculture and working landscapes, and environment for the benefit of the Delta region, its local communities, and the citizens of California.



I. Introduction

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Reform Act of 2009 established the statutory framework for the Delta Conservancy to oversee actions that would result in mutual benefits to the Delta and Suisun Marsh ecosystems and economies. With hard work and diligence, the Conservancy continues to meet this statutory mission. This Strategic Plan not only acts as a roadmap for enhancing the ecosystem and economy of the Delta and Suisun Marsh, but also builds off past successes to carry the Conservancy's mission forward during the next five years (2022 to 2027).



Community Involvement, Outreach, and Engagement — A Guiding Principle

The Conservancy's success in implementing this plan is centered on a commitment to meaningful involvement of the Delta community. This commitment has been a guiding principle for the Conservancy since it was established and is at the heart of its identity as a reliable collaborator, effective convener, and valued partner. The fundamentals of partnering and coordinating with the Delta community are interwoven with the goals, objectives, and performance measures that comprise this plan.

Conservancy's Guiding Principles:

- Acts in collaboration with the communities of the Delta and Suisun Marsh to implement multi-benefit initiatives.
- Operates with integrity in a transparent and accessible manner.
- Supports efforts that advance both environmental protection and the economic well-being in a complementary manner.
- Uses best available science.
- Recognizes and values the unique nature of the history, culture, communities, and ecosystems of the Delta and Suisun Marsh.
- Believes that access to natural resources, the benefits of ecological health, and the advantages of economic growth should be equitably distributed and accessible for all.
- Is committed to creating an inclusive workplace that promotes and values diversity.

A Foundation of Future Success

The Conservancy's successes since it was established in 2010 serve as the foundation for decision-making and action during the next five years. Key accomplishments include the following.



Proposition 1 Grant Program

Proposition 1, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014, allocated \$50 million to the Conservancy to support multi-benefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects in accordance with statewide priorities. The Conservancy Board and staff established a successful grant program focused on 1) ecosystem protection, restoration, and enhancement, (2) water quality, and (3) water-related agricultural sustainability.

The Conservancy has administered four rounds of grants, awarding approximately \$39 million for 29 projects, including: restoration of upland, floodplain, and wetland ecosystems; invasive species control; water related enhancement of agricultural land; acquisition of flood and conservation easements; and planning efforts for water quality improvements on working lands and restoration projects. Awards for the fifth, and perhaps final, grant solicitation are scheduled to be completed in early 2022.



Proposition 68 Grant Program

Proposition 68, the California Drought, Water, Park, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018, allocated \$12 million to the Conservancy to support projects that enhance Delta communities and strengthen their economies. The Conservancy established a grant program to support 1) recreation and tourism, (2) historic and cultural preservation, and (3) environmental education. As of October 2021, the Conservancy has awarded \$514,000 for two projects. Activities that have been funded include planning and implementation projects that are improving existing and developing new community park facilities, establishing trail systems, and supporting renovation of a historic building.



Delta Carbon and Subsidence Management

The Conservancy has been a lead coordinator for a large partnership working to reduce subsidence and associated carbon emissions in the Delta. This effort has resulted in the development of a carbon protocol that incentivizes landowners to consider rice cultivation or creation of managed wetlands in the deeply subsided areas of the central Delta. In late 2019, the first wetland carbon credits were certified in the Delta and many pilot projects are in development, which could result in significant conversion of lands in the coming years.

Collaborative Planning

The Conservancy has led several comprehensive regional planning efforts for the advancement of Proposition 1 eligible projects. There remains a need to continue this planning for other Delta subregions and to support the development of restoration strategy that integrates habitat restoration, water quality enhancements, regional flood improvements, and sustainable agriculture in an effort to identify projects that would be eligible for future funding in support of Delta Plan ecosystem restoration targets.

The Conservancy stands ready to lead or support sister agencies and the Delta community in future planning efforts.

Delta Science

The Conservancy supports Delta-related science projects through the acquisition of competitive grant funding. These efforts include the creation of the Delta Aquatic Resource Inventory and the implementation of the Fish Friendly Farming program. Conservancy staff facilitate and co-chair the Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination Team. In addition, staff participate in the Interagency Adaptive Management Integration Team, the California Wetland Monitoring Workgroup, and the forthcoming Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee's restoration sub-committee. Staff also provide comment and participate in co-creation of updates to the Delta Science Plan and the Science Action Agenda. Through these and future efforts, Conservancy scientists bring best available science to all the Conservancy's programs and contribute to the advancement of the Delta science enterprise.

II. Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: *Enhance ecological conservation, restoration, and climate adaptation in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh*

OBJECTIVES

- 1A. Increase visibility, diversity, and resilience of the Delta and Suisun Marsh ecosystems
- 1B. Adapt landscapes to be resilient to climate change

METRICS

Acres and types of landscapes restored, enhanced, or conserved, and actions taken to support strategies identified in Delta Adapts: Creating a Climate Resilient Future, Pathways to 30x30, Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, and the Delta Plan.

Goal 2: *Support economically and ecologically sustainable working lands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh*

OBJECTIVES

- 2A. Increase implementation of sustainable and ecologically beneficial farming and agricultural practices
- 2B. Reduce and reverse land subsidence and associated carbon emissions

METRICS

Actions taken to support sustainable and ecologically beneficial uses and management practices, reduce or reverse land subsidence, reduce carbon emissions, and further carbon market engagement.

Goal 3: *Support and enhance communities and economies in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh*

OBJECTIVES

- 3A. Foster robust and sustainable economies in the Delta and Suisun Marsh
- 3B. Preserve, enhance, and increase awareness of the unique history, culture, and values of the Delta and Suisun Marsh
- 3C. Increase public access to Delta and Suisun Marsh landscapes, communities, and cultural resources

METRICS

Actions taken to increase public access to and enhancements of recreation and tourism opportunities and natural landscapes, and engagements with those opportunities and landscapes.

Goal 4: *Enrich understanding of the ecological, cultural, and historical value of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh; the importance of resilience, diversity, and inclusivity; and the need for stewardship*

OBJECTIVES

- 4A. Broaden opportunities for education about the Delta and Suisun Marsh ecosystems, and cultural, and historical values among individuals, groups, organizations, and decision makers

- 4B. Strengthen the Conservancy's role as a collaborative state and community partner

METRICS

Educational opportunities presented; engagements with organizations, decision makers, and the public; educational outcomes realized; and collaborative partnerships supported.

Goal 5: *Maintain an effective, sustainable, adaptable, and inclusive organization*

OBJECTIVES

- 5A. Provide a safe, creative, inspiring, equitable, and inclusive working environment at all levels

- 5B. Establish and maintain adequate resources and efficient operations and structure

METRICS

Opportunities provided for employee development; evaluative staff measurement of the Conservancy as a safe, creative, inspiring, equitable, and inclusive environment; and actions taken to support organizational effectiveness and sustainability.



III. Preparing this Strategic Plan

This Plan reflects extensive input gathered through the development of the two previous strategic plans (2012 to 2017 and 2017 to 2022) and input from Conservancy Board members and members of the public via a 30-day public comment period. The document has been prepared by Delta Conservancy Staff.

This Plan is consistent with the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Plan, the Delta Protection Commission's Land Use and Resource Management Plan, the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, the 2011 Suisun Marsh Habitat Management Plan, and the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act.

A copy of this Strategic Plan can be found at the Conservancy's website:

<http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov>. A printed copy may be requested by contacting the Conservancy by email at contact@deltaconservancy.ca.gov or by telephone at (916) 375-2084.



Appendix A:

Important Delta Conservancy Documents

The Delta Conservancy's 2022 Strategic Plan was developed with the following documents serving as a foundation and a guide.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy 2012 Strategic Plan and 2017-2022 Delta Conservancy Strategic Plan:

- http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/docs/Delta_Conservancy_Strategic_Plan_Designed_20June2012.pdf
- http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2017-2022-Strategic-Plan_12-11-19.pdf

The Conservancy's enabling legislation requires its Strategic Plan to be consistent with each of the following documents.

The Delta Conservancy's Governing Statutes:

<http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/about-delta-conservancy/>

The Delta Plan:

<https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-plan/>

The Delta Protection Commission's Land Use and Resources Management Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta:

<http://delta.ca.gov/land-use/management-plan/>

The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan:

<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Flood-Management/Flood-Planning-and-Studies/Central-Valley-Flood-Protection-Plan>

The Suisun Marsh Management Plan:

<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/3/Suisun-Marsh>

The Suisun Marsh Preservation Act:

https://bcdca.gov/plans/suisun_marsh_preservation_act.html

Appendix B:

Statutory Responsibilities

The Delta Conservancy was established as part of SBX7 1, enacted in November 2009, to carry out two mandates beginning in February 2010:

- Act as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta (Public Resource Code §32320(a)), and
- Support efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents (Public Resource Code §32320(b)).

For the Delta Conservancy, supporting efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of the Delta residents can be thought of as “coequal” responsibilities.

The Legislature entrusted the Conservancy with responsibility for supporting efforts that:

1. Protect and enhance habitat restoration.
2. Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes.
3. Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation.
4. Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.
5. Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.
6. Protect and improve water quality.
7. Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy’s Program.
8. Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.
9. Protect, conserve and restore the region’s physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources.
10. Assist local entities in the implementation of their Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) and Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCP).
11. Facilitate take protection and safe harbor agreements under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.), the California Endangered Species Act (Chapter 1.5, commencing with §2050, of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code) for adjacent landowners and local public agencies.
12. Promote environmental education through grant funding.

The Legislature also directed the Conservancy to “undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public” when supporting such efforts. (Public Resource Code §32322(c)).





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