



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN

DELTA CONSERVANCY

A California State Agency

2025 Implementation Plan

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Introduction

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Delta Conservancy) seeks to achieve its mission through strategic planning, funding allocation, and collaborative efforts with stakeholders. This Implementation Plan outlines the goals, objectives, and key actions to be undertaken in 2025 to align with the Conservancy's [2022-2027 Strategic Plan](#).

Mission Statement

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.



2024 at a Glance

- **Implementing Restoration** – In 2024, the Conservancy advanced nature-based solutions on more than 11,000 deeply subsidized acres in the Delta by funding four new projects to plan, implement, and acquire property for habitat restoration and incentivize farmers to convert existing agriculture to wildlife/carbon-friendly rice. The projects were funded by \$34.2 million from the State’s Nature Based Solutions funding.
- **Building Community** – The Conservancy funded four new community projects to plan a public fishing dock, a new museum, enhancements to an existing museum, and land acquisition for gateway monuments using \$1.8 million from Proposition 68 funds.
- **Providing Technical Guidance** – The Delta Drought Response Pilot Program (DDRPP) provided valuable insights on conserving water through agricultural practices in the unique hydrology of the Delta. In 2024 staff amended six grants to allow ongoing research through 2026, closed remaining grants, synthesized program results, and reported findings to various audiences.
- **Building Partnerships** – The Conservancy deepened relationships with partners and the Delta community in 2024 through regular meetings, communication, outreach, social media presence, participating in project development, and facilitating funding requests.
- **New Program** – Recognizing the need for additional funding to support Delta projects, the Conservancy applied for multiple funding sources and was awarded the Clean Vessel Act Program (CVAP), which provides clean, safe, and enjoyable recreational boating in California by providing boater education and monitoring of boat sewage and disposal. The Conservancy will launch the program in 2025.
- **New Funding** – The Conservancy expects to receive \$29 million from Proposition 4 (the Climate Bond) – a bond measure that passed in November to fund various water, wildfire, and climate projects. Setting priorities and guidelines for the new funding will be a major focus of 2025.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Ecological Conservation, Restoration, and Climate Adaptation

Objectives

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

Strategy 1.1: Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation (ERCA) Program

The Delta Conservancy's ERCA Program funds projects for ecosystem protection, restoration, and enhancement; water quality improvement; sustainable agriculture; and climate resilience. In 2024, the Conservancy advanced nature-based solutions on more than 11,000 deeply subsidized acres in the Delta by funding four new projects to plan, implement, and acquire property for habitat restoration and incentivize farmers to convert existing agriculture to wildlife/carbon-friendly rice. The projects were funded by \$34.2 million from the State's Nature Based Solutions funding.

Staff managed 15 active projects and 24 closed projects that require monitoring in 2024.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Engage non-profits, state partner agencies, and local entities to identify and recommend projects that advance ecosystem restoration and climate adaptation in the Delta and Suisun Marsh
- Prepare and release grant guidelines and solicitation for Climate Bond funding
- Streamline grant application procedures using statewide initiatives and strategies (e.g. Resource Agency Project Tracker and Reporting software, Plain Language, Cutting the Green Tape, etc.)
- Identify and apply for alternative funding sources to support current and future ERCA projects
- Continue to enhance equity in programs by analyzing guidelines and requirements for barriers and providing support to applicants from small organizations and/or organizations that represent disadvantaged communities
- Continue to monitor and close out existing ERCA projects

Strategy 1.2: A Collaborative State Partner

Working with partners to solve critical conservation challenges and advance collective work in the Delta is a core function of the Conservancy.

Delta Interagency Invasive Species Coordination (DIISC) Team

To support the Conservancy's guiding principles to work collaboratively and use the best available science, the Conservancy facilitates and co-leads a team of invasive species professionals working across sectors, including local, state, and federal government staff, NGO staff, academic researchers, and extension specialists. In 2024, the DIISC Team built collaboration by holding quarterly meetings, convening a working group on the management of invasive aquatic vegetation in tidal wetland restoration sites, and educating the public on the role of connectivity and early detection in aquatic weed management, which were the topics of the 2023 and 2021 Delta Invasive Species symposiums.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Hold quarterly team meetings to coordinate and exchange information
- Hold the sixth biennial Delta Invasive Species Symposium
- Complete collaborative development of guidelines for the management of invasive aquatic vegetation in tidal wetland restoration sites

Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) Restoration Sub-Committee (RSC)

To implement restoration at the pace and scale necessary to fulfill the objectives of the Water Resilience Portfolio, Cutting the Green Tape Initiative, the Governor's California Biodiversity Initiative, and the amendment to Chapter 4 of the Delta Plan, DPIIC recommended that the Delta Stewardship Council and the Conservancy create a DPIIC Restoration Subcommittee. In 2024, the DPIIC Restoration Subcommittee raised awareness of the impacts, risks, and management of invasive aquatic vegetation in tidal wetland restoration projects and highlighted opportunities, the role of restoration in levee maintenance, and the relationship between restoration and agriculture.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Host two RSC meetings, a Delta Restoration Forum, and at least one collaborative adaptive management forum on important cross-jurisdictional topics
- Create educational material that helps connect partners and agencies toward common goals

Goal 2: Economically and Ecologically Sustainable Working Lands

Objectives

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

Strategy 2.1: Delta Drought Response Pilot Program (DDRPP)

The Delta Drought Response Pilot Program is an experimental program that was launched to test drought-resistant field management practices in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed given its unique hydrology. While most of the projects are complete, a University of California (UC) Davis research team is using micrometeorological stations to continue collecting data to help inform remote sensing technologies and improve future responses to drought. In 2024, Conservancy staff shared the DDRPP findings through a public forum, a [final report](#) on outcomes of the 2023 program, and a site visit for Board members to a DDRPP project where water conservation practices are being implemented.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Give community access to program findings by making the 2023 DDRPP data publicly available online and preparing one or more public-facing products
- Support the UC Davis research team as they continue to gather data and create a second year of field level water budgets

Strategy 2.2: Sustainable Agricultural Practices, Delta Carbon, and Subsidence Management

Statewide strategies, including Delta Adapts and the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy, recognize the significance of Delta subsidence and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. In accordance, they set targets, including re-wetting 50,000 acres of deeply subsided, highly organic soils in the Delta by 2045. Conservancy staff, in partnership with other state and federal agencies, non-profits, tribes, and local districts, are addressing these targets by working to implement rice cultivation and wetland restoration in deeply subsided areas of the Delta.

In 2024, staff advanced four carbon emission and subsidence reduction projects. These projects included planning for all 5,000 open acres of Webb Tract to be converted to rice and wetlands, implementation of about 400 acres of wetlands on Staten Island, rice conversion on about 2,500 acres of privately owned land throughout the Delta, and the completed acquisition of a 600-acre parcel on Bethel Island for future wetland conversion.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Convert an additional 10,000 acres to rice in the deeply subsided Delta by convening an interagency collaborative group to research, fund, and implement subsidence and GHG reduction solutions, including federal, state, local, and non-profit partners

- Identify and apply for alternative funding sources to support current and future subsidence and GHG reduction projects
- Educate landowners about wetland restoration and carbon farming

Goal 3: Community and Economic Enhancement

Objectives

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

Strategy 3.1: Community Enhancement Program (CEP)

The Conservancy's Community Enhancement Program is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Delta residents by fostering economic vitality, recreational opportunities, and cultural preservation in the region. In 2024, the Conservancy funded four new community projects to plan a public fishing dock, a new museum, enhancements to an existing museum, and land acquisition for gateway monuments using \$1.8 million from Proposition 68 funds. As of December 31, 2024, there are 11 active projects, one approved, and four closed projects.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Engage non-profits, state partner agencies, and local entities to identify and recommend projects that enhance Delta communities
- Prepare and release grant guidelines and a solicitation for Climate Bond funds
- Streamline grant application procedures using statewide initiatives and strategies (e.g. Resource Agency Project Tracker and Reporting software, Plain Language, Cutting the Green Tape, etc.)
- Identify and apply for alternative funding sources to support current and future projects
- Continue to enhance equity in programs by analyzing guidelines and requirements for barriers and providing support to applicants from small organizations and/or organizations that represent disadvantaged communities
- Recommend projects for the remaining \$2.6 million in Proposition 68 funding
- Continue to monitor and close out existing CEP projects

Strategy 3.2: Delta Waterway Cleanups

The Delta Conservancy organizes and participates in cleanup events to promote awareness of the importance of protecting and improving water quality in the Delta for both humans and wildlife. In 2024, the Conservancy and the Rio Vista Windsports Association partnered to hold

two waterway cleanups on Sherman Island. Staff and volunteers collected enough trash along the Sacramento River on Sherman Island to fill a 40-yard dumpster (generously donated by Waste Management).

Goals for 2025 are:

- Increase the number of volunteers at cleanups
- Track and quantify impact
- Expand partnerships and support additional cleanups

Goal 4: Education and Enrichment

Objectives

- Broaden opportunities for education about the Delta and Suisun Marsh ecosystems, and cultural and historical values among individuals, groups, organizations, and decision-makers
- Strengthen the Conservancy's role as a state and community partner

Strategy 4.1: Communications and Outreach

Environmental, cultural, and historical education and enrichment are important components of the Conservancy's programs and are reflected in its initiatives. Additionally, a robust communications strategy is essential to effectively engage interested parties, promote the Conservancy's mission, and advocate for the Delta's ecological and economic wellbeing. In 2024, Conservancy staff participated in an array of in-person events, including the State of the Estuary Conference, Native American Day at the Capitol, and the Bay-Delta Science Conference. Conservancy staff also designated time to educate California students, speaking to high school and college students about the Delta.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Foster relationships with local communities, government agencies, NGOs, and private entities
- Maintain an informative, interactive, user-friendly website
- Support collaboration by participating in and facilitating events
- Create and disseminate engaging and informative social media content
- Engage students with presentations and written material

Strategy 4.2 Clean Vessel Act Program (CVAP)

Recognizing the need for additional funding to support projects in the Delta, the Conservancy applied for multiple sources of funding in 2024. The Conservancy received a grant from California State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways to lead the Northern California CVAP.

The purpose of the program is to provide clean, safe, and enjoyable recreational boating in California by providing boater education and monitoring of boat sewage and proper disposal.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Partner with California State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways and San Francisco Estuary Partnership for knowledge transfer
- Conduct outreach and education to the boating community about resources, tools, materials, and funding to promote clean boating activities
- Monitor pumpout stations and help find resources to correct problems using the Pumpout Nav mobile app

Goal 5: Effective, Sustainable, Adaptable and Inclusive Organization

Objectives

- Provide a safe, creative, inspiring, equitable, and inclusive working environment at all levels
- Establish and maintain adequate resources for efficient operations and structure

Strategy 5.1: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

To further the Conservancy's commitment to serve the Delta community and the state of California, it is critical that it addresses equity issues and remove barriers to accessing state resources, employment, and Conservancy programs. In 2024, the Conservancy assessed barriers in grant process and hiring that inhibit equal access to state resources; provided technical assistance to applicants and grantees from small organizations and underrepresented communities; and increased our knowledge and tools by participating in trainings and workgroups.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Continue to build partnerships that promote equity in Conservancy programs
- Ensure Climate Bond guidelines support equitable grant-making and historically underserved communities
- Continue to participate in committees, community gatherings, and learning opportunities
- Work with the Delta Stewardship Council to implement joint actions from their equity plan

Strategy 5.2: Tribal Engagement

The Conservancy recognizes that tribes were the original inhabitants of the land and should be part of ongoing Delta land management. To this end, the Conservancy will work with tribes and

tribal entities. In 2024, the Conservancy expanded outreach to tribes, initiated its first tribal consultation, and took training to increase skills.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Create grant guidelines that strongly encourage grantees to work with tribes or tribal entities on land management and acquisition projects
- Work with CNRA and the Legislature to change the Conservancy code to allow grants to tribes
- Continue to build relationships with tribes and tribal entities
- Continue to participate in committees, community gatherings, and learning opportunities

Strategy 5.3: Administration

The Conservancy will continue to complete required administrative and operational work in collaboration with all staff. In 2024, the Conservancy met all required goals, reports, and tasks and initiated a cloud-based system.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Establish Conservancy core values through a collaborative process
- Implement a Records Retention Plan
- Maintain a sound organization by updating policies, procedures, and processes, and creating division manuals
- Keep staff up to date by encouraging professional development and providing cross-training opportunities
- Comply with State requirements by submitting administrative and operational reports, plans, and proposals
- Stay up to date on requirements and policy changes by participating in meetings and trainings with other state agencies

Strategy 5.4: New Funding Sources

The Conservancy relies on state bond funding to support its work. Given the uncertainty of funding and that the funding in the Climate Bond is small compared to the Delta's needs, staff intends to pursue additional funding for Delta work. In 2024, the Conservancy submitted multiple grant proposals and received funding for the CVAP program.

Goals for 2025 are:

- Submit applications for federal, state, and private funding as it becomes available
- Amplify the impact of Conservancy funds by supporting partners' grant applications and strategizing on opportunities

Funding at a Glance

The Conservancy utilizes multiple funding sources to support its mission. These include annual general and special fund appropriations, one-time general fund appropriations, bond funding, and reimbursement agreements.

Funding Source	Amount Allocated	FY 24/25 Allocation	Programs Supported
General Fund	\$1,471,000	\$1,471,000	All programs
Climate, Access, and Resource Funding	\$11,400,000	\$358,000	Community Enhancement Program and Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation (ERCA) Program
Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration Funding	\$36,000,000	\$1,276,000	Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation (ERCA) Program
Environmental License Plate Fund	\$130,000	\$130,000	All programs
Reimbursements	\$681,000	\$0	Community Enhancement Program
Delta Drought Response Pilot Program	\$19,000,000	\$128,000	Community Enhancement Program
Clean Vessel Act	\$271,046	\$135,523	Community Enhancement Program
Proposition 1	\$50,000,000	\$475,000	Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation (ERCA) Program
Proposition 4	\$29,000,000	\$0	Ecosystem Restoration and Climate Adaptation (ERCA) Program
Proposition 68	\$12,000,000	\$429,000	Community Enhancement Program

Next Step

The Conservancy will prepare an update on the 2025 Implementation Plan for presentation at the July 2025 Board meeting.