

A California State Agency

2025 Implementation Plan Mid-Year Update

July 2025

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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 <u>2022-2027 Strategic Plan</u>.

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.



2025 at a Glance

- Proposition 4 The Climate Bond has been the primary focus of the Conservancy. To ensure
 that the funding is impactful and meets community need, the team worked formally with
 over 20 stakeholders, distributed a survey with more than 40 responses, had conversations
 with countless others, and held internal conversations. Notably, the solicitation will be
 competitive with a staggered timeline across the three programs and introduces a small
 grant program for capacity building and other efforts.
- **Coordination with partners** The Conservancy has been coordinating with partners on multiple issues including the Climate Bond, invasive species, and project funding. The Conservancy is convening three key efforts of note:
 - Advanced Delta-wide carbon collaboration by organizing and hosting the first two Delta Carbon Team meetings on May 27 and June 24. More than 20 people, representing various public and non-profit organizations, attended each meeting. Additional meetings will be held throughout the year.
 - Delta Restoration Forum: Hosted over 80 people and highlighted over 20 projects at the third Delta Restoration Forum on May 1 at the Clarksburg Schoolhouse.
 - Planning for the sixth biennial Delta Invasive Species Symposium is underway. The theme is "Modeling and Managing Invasive Species for Tomorrow's Delta" and it will be held December 4, 2025.
- **Outreach** The Conservancy has been increasing outreach by tabling at new events, distributing a Delta-wide survey, expanding social media, and thinking more strategically about how to connect with audiences.
- Funding opportunities The Conservancy has been seeking additional funding sources to support the important work in the Delta. This effort has had limited success given the current state of the state and federal budgets. Partnering with other state agencies to work toward shared goals has shown the most progress. The Conservancy is continuing to seek opportunities inside and outside of state government.
- Architectural and Engineering (A&E) Authority The Conservancy received A&E authority providing more contracting flexibility. This will allow the Conservancy to advance the Franks Tract work and support future opportunities.
- **Clean Vessel Act Program (CVAP) launch** The Conservancy launched CVAP and conducted the first evaluations of marinas. This program will help keep the Delta clean.
- **Proposition 68** The Conservancy has fully allocated Proposition 68 funding.

The following is a detailed update to the Implementation Plan. The original plan (that was approved in January 2025) is updated by inserting work that was done between January and July 2025 in bold and colored type below the original goal.

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.

- 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
 - Engaged with more than 25 partner agencies, participated in California Natural Resources Agency-wide (CNRA) planning meetings, and received more than 40 responses to a public survey on Climate Bond funding.
- Prepare and release grant guidelines and solicitation for Climate Bond funding
 - Prepared solicitation notice and applications 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.)
 - Coordinated grant process with entities in CNRA by participating in work groups.
 - Simplified grant procedure and materials for the Climate Bond solicitation, making it easier for applicants.
 - Made small projects easier for applicants by creating a small grant program.
- Identify and apply for alternative funding sources to support current and future ERCA projects
 - The Conservancy continues to monitor potential funding opportunities, including state and federal sources to support 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
 - Enhanced equity in programs by elevating community engagement and support, DEI principles, outdoor access for all, and tribal engagement in process and evaluation criteria.
 - Provided more directions to applicants on how to implement meaningful community and tribal engagement.
 - Advanced inclusion by providing technical assistance to small organizations or organizations that work in disadvantaged communities.
 - Made small projects easier for applicants by creating a small grant program.
- Continue to monitor and close out existing ERCA projects
 - Three ERCA projects are scheduled to close out later in 2025.

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.

Goals and **updates** for 2025 are:

- Hold quarterly team meetings to coordinate and exchange information
 - Held first two quarterly meetings on February 19 and May 21.
- Hold the sixth biennial Delta Invasive Species Symposium
 - Held first planning team meeting in April. Symposium theme is "Modeling and Managing Invasive Species for Tomorrow's Delta" and it will be held on December 4.
- Complete collaborative development of guidelines for the management of invasive aquatic vegetation in tidal wetland restoration sites
 - Created a draft invasive species management plan and sent to collaborators for review in June. Anticipate publishing the product on the Conservancy's website in 2025.

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. 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
 - Hosted over 80 people and highlighted over 20 projects at the third Delta Restoration Forum on May 1 at the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse.
 - Coordinated with and provided information on: the Wetlands Regional Monitoring Program's Representation in Wetland Decision-Making survey, permitting approaches for accelerating restoration, and the connections between Delta Adapts and the Restoration Subcommittee.
 - Submitted a proposal to facilitate a forum discussion at the October 2025 State of the Estuary Conference on how regulatory streamlining efforts (such as Cutting the Green Tape) are being implemented across the entire San Francisco Estuary with the Delta Stewardship Council.
- Create educational materials that help connect partners and agencies toward common goals
 - Delta restoration outreach flyer completed in June.
 - Created collateral for multiple events.

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.

- Give community access to program findings by making the 2023 DDRPP data publicly available online and preparing one or more public-facing products
 - $\circ~$ Planned publication and release date with the DDRPP team.

- Support the UC Davis research team as they continue to gather data and create a second year of field level water budgets
 - Board approved an increase in the budget by \$300,000 and extension of 14 months to allow for a full three water years of data collection and completion of all final reporting.

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.

- 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
 - Advanced Delta-wide collaboration on rice by organizing and hosting the first two Delta Carbon Team meetings on May 27 and June 24. More than 20 people, representing various public and non-profit organizations, attended each meeting. Additional meetings will be held throughout the year.
 - Created a workplan for the group and solicited volunteers from various agencies to lead the efforts.
- Identify and apply for alternative funding sources to support current and future subsidence and GHG reduction projects
 - The Conservancy continues to seek funding opportunities, including state and federal sources, to support sustainable agricultural practices, carbon and subsidence in the Delta.
 - Began collaborating on potential funding through the Delta Carbon Team.
 - Engaged with state partners to support proposed acquisition projects.
 - Identified CDFA Healthy Soils Program as a potential source of funding and worked with CDFA and CalEPA to support the adoption of the practice.
- Educate landowners about wetland restoration and carbon farming
 - Engaged the public at an outreach event to inform and solicit feedback about the Webb Tract projects on February 12 at Big Break Visitor Center.
 - Presented pertinent information to the public on a regular basis at existing meetings (e.g., Delta Stewardship Council) including basic concepts and progress made toward wetland restoration and carbon farming opportunities.

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 2025, the Conservancy board approved two new community projects, funding the implementation phase of the Freeport Gateway Monuments project and acquisition of the Darrahville property in Stockton, using \$2.6 million from Proposition 68 funds.

- Engage nonprofits, state partner agencies, and local entities to identify and recommend projects that enhance Delta communities
 - Engaged over 25 partners in one-on-one meetings about priorities and potential projects for the Climate Bond.
 - Made potential applicants aware of upcoming funding by reporting at meetings (i.e. collaborative groups, DSC meetings, DPC meetings)
 - Solicited broad feedback from the public by publishing a Climate Bond survey that received more than 40 responses.
 - Met with all potential applicants who contacted the Conservancy office to help them prepare for upcoming funding.
 - Engaged the public to spread awareness of the Climate Bond by tabling at events.
- 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.)
 - Streamlined grant application process by creating consistency across CNRA agencies, including updates to indirect cost rates and advanced payments.
 - Simplified/streamlined Conservancy grant application materials in preparation to release the solicitation.
- Identify and apply for alternative funding sources to support current and future projects
 - The Conservancy continues to seek funding opportunities, including other state and federal sources, to support community enhancement 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
 - Enhanced equity in programs by elevating community engagement and support, DEI principles, outdoor access for all, and tribal engagement in evaluation criteria and process.
 - Provided more direction to project applicants on how to incorporate meaningful community and tribal engagement in their projects.
 - Made small projects easier for applicants by creating a small grant program.
 - Advanced inclusion by providing technical assistance to small organizations or organizations that work in disadvantaged communities.
- *Recommend projects for the remaining \$2.6 million in Proposition 68 funding*
 - Awarded \$500,000 in Proposition 68 funding for Freeport Gateway Monuments implementation in January 2025.
 - Awarded \$2.1 million for the acquisition of the Darrahville property in Stockton in May 2025.
- Continue to monitor and close out existing CEP projects
 - One CEP project is expected to close out later in 2025.

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.

- Increase the number of volunteers at cleanups
 - Increased attendance at the April Sherman Island cleanup event by creating publicity collateral and coordinating with the Rio Vista Windsports Association (RVWA) to promote via printed flyers, social media, and RVWA's newsletter. The event drew over 30 volunteers despite rainy conditions.
 - Will use similar techniques to increase participation in Coastal Cleanup Day, California's largest annual volunteer event, which will take place in September. The Conservancy will coordinate with the California Coastal Commission and other groups to encourage volunteer participation and promote the event.
- Track and quantify impact
 - Measured the impact of the April event by quantifying the waste (filled a 40-yard dumpster provided by Waste Management), taking before-and-after photos at targeted cleanup areas, documenting how many volunteers attended (over 30), and surveying volunteers on how they heard about the event.

- Expand partnerships and support additional cleanups
 - Supported a new partnership with Sacramento County to remove agricultural plastics from the waste stream and support farmers in complying with regulation. At the Sacramento County plastic recycling event at KLM Ranch, Sequoia Environmental Compliance Counsel recycled more than 16,000 pounds of plastic containers from the 62 farmers and ranchers who participated.

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 decisionmakers
- 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.

- Foster relationships with local communities, government agencies, NGOs, and private entities
 - Expanded the Conservancy's connection with the community by regularly attending meetings and events for the purpose of information sharing, project collaboration, and gathering feedback.
 - Became more strategic in identifying key audiences and important messages through a new communications implementation plan.
 - Attended community events, including Earth Day at California Natural Resources Agency, Honored Elders Day, Oakley Summer Fest, and Native American Day at the Capitol (in September).
- Maintain an informative, interactive, user-friendly website
 - Made information about the Conservancy's impact more accessible to the public by creating a searchable table and interactive maps for Conservancyfunded projects.
 - Ensured the site is accessible by continuing to improve site design, development, and maintenance.
 - Increased user-friendliness of the website by using information gained through tracking website traffic and user activity.

- Support collaboration by participating in and facilitating events
 - Increased collaboration through regular speaking engagements at public meetings and Delta events.
 - Facilitated the third Delta Restoration Forum on May 1 to bring together over 60 agencies, scientists, implementers, and members of the public to collaborate on Delta funding and critical projects.
 - Advanced collaboration around invasive species by planning the sixth biennial Delta Invasive Species Symposium that is scheduled for later this year.
- Create and disseminate engaging and informative social media content
 - Highlighted the importance of and built community connection to the Conservancy through coordinated, staff-wide social media content on a variety of topics, including clean boating, invasive species, Conservancy project milestones, and events.
 - The Conservancy has continued to grow an online presence, particularly on Instagram. Additional social media campaigns are planned for the remainder of the year.
- Engage students with presentations and written material
 - Taught young people about the role of soil in the Delta at an interactive booth at the CNRA Earth Day celebration.

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.

- Partner with California State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways and San Francisco Estuary Partnership for knowledge transfer
 - Gathered important information from SFEP critical to guiding Conservancy CVAP implementation.
- Conduct outreach and education to the boating community about resources, tools, materials, and funding to promote clean boating activities
 - Transferred knowledge to the boating community through the following:
 - The Sacramento Boat Show in March 2025.
 - Planned attendance at the Sausalito Boat Show in September 2025.

- 9 social media posts about the Conservancy's Clean Vessel Act Program and will share more content throughout 2025.
- Created and launched the Conservancy's Clean Vessel Act Program webpage: <u>www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov/cvap</u>.
- Monitor pumpout stations and help find resources to correct problems using the Pumpout Nav mobile app
 - Monitored 66 marinas, surveyed 81 pumpout stations and five dump stations.
 Additional monitoring planned for October 2025.

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.

- Continue to build partnerships that promote equity in Conservancy programs
 - Advanced Conservancy DEI practices and policies by participating in CNRA, Delta, and CalHR workgroups.
 - Took an active role in planning CNRA's Women's History Month events.
 - Actively participated in CNRA's tribal coordination meetings.
- Ensure Climate Bond guidelines support equitable grant-making and historically underserved communities
 - Participated in CNRA's Climate Bond planning meetings general, tribal, and SDAC focused.
 - \circ $\,$ Incorporated DEI principles into the Climate Bond grant solicitation.
 - \circ Solicited community feedback by conducting a survey of Delta communities.
 - Ensured community need was being met in the Climate Bond solicitation by conducting extensive outreach to partner agencies (over 25 partners).
- Continue to participate in committees, community gatherings, and learning opportunities
 - Honored Elders event
 - Oakley Summer Fest

- Native American Day at the Capitol (happening later in the year)
- Ongoing participation in multiple DEI committees.
- Work with the Delta Stewardship Council to implement joint actions from their equity plan
 - Submitted a joint request to the Governor's Truth and Healing initiative to support implementation of the equity plan.
 - Held regular conversations with the Council about their implementation progress.
 - The Council is working internally to prioritize objectives and then will engage the Conservancy.

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.

- Create grant guidelines that strongly encourage grantees to work with tribes or tribal entities on land management and acquisition projects
 - Participated in CNRA's Climate Bond planning meetings general, tribal, and SDAC focused.
 - Incorporated tribal inclusion principles into grant solicitation.
 - \circ $\,$ Conducted a survey of Delta communities to support community need.
 - Conducted extensive outreach to partner agencies to ensure that community needs were being met in the solicitation.
- Work with CNRA and the Legislature to change the Conservancy code to allow grants to tribes
 - Submitted Budget Change Proposal language that would make the code change.
 - Submitted a proposal to the Governor's Truth and Healing proposal to change the language.
- Continue to build relationships with tribes and tribal entities
 - The Conservancy is coordinating with the Delta Protection Commission and the DSC to:
 - Streamline funding mechanisms for Delta-related tribal needs (e.g., knowledge, skills, expertise).
 - Communicate pertinent information to tribes.
 - Identify opportunities to engage tribes in the collective work.

- Continue to participate in committees, community gatherings, and learning opportunities
 - Participated in CNRA and Delta workgroups to advance the understanding of tribal issues and contribute to policies and programs that represent diverse constituencies.
 - Actively participated in CNRA's tribal coordination meetings.
 - Attended CNRA's annual tribal training.

Strategy 5.3: Administration

The Conservancy will continue to complete required administrative and operational work in collaboration with all staff.

- Establish Conservancy core values through a collaborative process
 - In March, the Conservancy established core values through a collaborative process with all staff. The core values are Integrity, Transparency, Equity, Adaptability, and Collaboration. A core values flyer was created and posted in the office and added to our website in June. https://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/about-delta-conservancy/
- Implement a Records Retention Plan
 - Staff completed the agency's Records Retention Plan and submitted it to the California Secretary of State for final review. The plan will be completed in fiscal year 2025/26.
- Maintain a sound organization by updating policies, procedures, and processes, and creating division manuals
 - Staff continue to update policies, procedures, and processes, and create division manuals. Staff are currently updating 30 policies. Of these, 18 are being reviewed internally, seven require input from other state agencies, one is under legal review, and four need substantial revisions. The policies will be completed in fiscal year 2025/26.
- Keep staff up to date by encouraging professional development and providing crosstraining opportunities
 - The Conservancy is implementing several cross-training opportunities as part of annual Individual Development Plans.
 - Encouraged staff to register for professional development trainings by forwarding CalHR CalLearns emails, forwarding and/sharing other types of trainings that are available outside CalLearns, such as lunch talks, webinars, etc., making announcements at weekly All Hands meetings, and having

supervisors/managers promote trainings with their staff during weekly one-onones.

- Comply with state requirements by submitting administrative and operational reports, plans, and proposals
 - The Conservancy continues to comply with state requirements by submitting administrative and operational reports, plans, and proposals. Currently, the Conservancy is updating its Workforce Plan, Workplace Violence Prevention Plan, Illness Prevention Plan, and recently completed the Energy Emergency Alert Action Plan. The plans noted should be completed this fiscal year.
 - Responded to drills, requests for information and other urgent needs from CNRA, CA Department of Finance and others.
- Stay up to date on requirements and policy changes by participating in meetings and trainings with other state agencies
 - Staff continue to stay up to date on requirements and policy changes by participating in relevant meetings and trainings with other state agencies. Most meetings are ongoing.

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.

Goals and updates for 2025 are:

- Submit applications for federal, state, and private funding as it becomes available
 - The Conservancy continues to monitor for funding opportunities, including other state and federal sources, to support the Conservancy's mission.
 - Applying for an additional year of funding.
- Amplify the impact of Conservancy funds by supporting partners' grant applications and strategizing on opportunities
 - \circ Supported the National Heritage Area in pursuing various funding sources.

Funding at a Glance

The Conservancy uses 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 a 2025 annual report and the 2026 Implementation Plan for presentation at the January 2026 Board meeting. A new strategic plan will need to be completed by January 2027.