

# Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan



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# Executive Summary - Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan

## Introduction

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area (NHA) was designated by Congress in March 2019 as part of the passage of the *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act*. The legislation mandated the development of this management plan, which outlines the significance and purpose of the NHA; long-range policies, goals, actions, and strategies; and the programs and projects that the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) as local coordinating entity and a regional network of partners will undertake. Starting in 2020, the DPC, in conjunction with the NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee, Point Heritage Development Consulting, LLC, and California State Parks, convened a regional planning process that resulted in this plan.

## Culture and History

In the heart of California, nestled between sprawling cities and golden hills, lies the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This landscape is crisscrossed by a mesmerizing labyrinth of channels, most notably the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, that weave through lush wetlands and fertile farmlands, creating a large inland delta connected to the San Francisco Bay through the Carquinez Strait. Rural, suburban, and urban communities are connected by an intertwined network of waterways, levee-top highways, and bridges.

The history of this region traces its origins to the numerous Native American tribes that lived along the banks of its meandering waterways. These first inhabitants found sustenance in abundant fish, waterfowl, and plant life, using and stewarding the region's resources in a relationship with the land that continues to the present day. While Native Americans experienced waves of disease, systemic genocide, and forced removal from their ancestral lands, they have survived to carry on their traditional knowledge and culture and their influence on the land remains profound. Many places in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – like Carquinez, Suisun, Yolo, and others - bear names derived from Native American languages.

With the arrival of European colonizers and settlers from around the world, the Delta witnessed a dramatic cultural and physical transformation. The Spanish faced stiff resistance from Native Americans and were not able to move into inland California. Later, early settlers like Marsh, Sutter, and Weber became leaders of the Delta's political and social life during the Mexican and early American eras. With the California gold rush, immigrants from many different backgrounds sought to harness the lands and waterways for agriculture and transportation and the region became a hub of innovation and resilience. Eventually, Chinese, Filipino, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, and Portuguese immigrants, and American settlers came to the region to serve as commercial fishers, farmers, industrial workers, and laborers, performing demanding jobs that helped transform the Delta into an agricultural cornucopia and industrial center.

Physical changes have resulted in severe environmental consequences, particularly for fish. In addition to the reshaping of waterways and conversion of wetlands to farmland, the Delta is at the center of two major water infrastructure facilities – the Central Valley Project and State Water Project – constructed during the mid-20th century. The two projects provided a water barrier to repel seawater intrusion in the Delta, flood control and navigation, water supply for a large percentage of California agriculture and municipal water uses, and hydroelectric power generation.

Navigating through the cities and towns that dot the Delta, a blend of influences is evident, illustrating the stories of the many cultures who lived and worked here through time. The historic streetscapes of Isleton, Locke, and Walnut Grove retain the memories of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese immigrant laborers who played a pivotal role in shaping the region's agricultural legacy. Benicia's Victorian architecture, the mix of Spanish, Italianate, and Art-Deco styles in Martinez, and Clarksburg's fields of vineyards stand as testaments to the resilience of communities.

Today, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region balances its agricultural legacy with recreational opportunities. The waterways, once highways for paddle wheel steamboats, now invite explorers to embark on journeys by kayak or fishing boat. The Suisun Marsh's vast expanses are an important migratory stop along the Pacific Flyway, making it a prime destination for birdwatchers and waterfowl hunters. Hiking, windsurfing, and other recreational opportunities provide a respite from the hustle and bustle of modern life.

Over time, the Delta has become a place where diverse communities have converged, creating a fusion of cultural elements that is uniquely Californian. Today, the region hosts a mix of residents – established and new – drawn by the Delta's natural beauty, agricultural opportunities, and historic charm. The blending of cultures is celebrated in local events, festivals, and community

gatherings, fostering an environment where shared experiences and traditions form a modern and dynamic cultural landscape.

## The Plan

This management plan's development involved the participation of residents, business owners, nonprofit leaders, and governmental officials who were undeterred by a global pandemic and determined to convene, both virtual and in-person public meetings, to ensure the Delta's story will be told and its special resources cared for. Throughout this process, the partnership network for the NHA coalesced around a shared vision for the region. The planning process yielded a concise articulation of the region's story, the creation of an inventory cataloging Delta heritage assets integral to that narrative, and the formulation of a mission, vision, goals, objectives, and strategies. The *Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan* details a comprehensive approach for guiding the DPC and its network of partners.

The NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee and Interpretive Planning Task Group developed a statement of national significance, five primary interpretive themes, and three supporting themes, providing the NHA and its partners with a framework through which to highlight the region's many and diverse stories, sites, and resources.

**Statement of National Significance:** At the heart of California lies a vast tidal estuary where the state's two largest rivers converge, forming a rare inland delta, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – California's most crucial water and ecological resource. The Delta is a place that nurtures a unique ecosystem and has supported a culturally diverse population for millennia. The region's water, fertile land, and proximity to the San Francisco Bay fuels California's economy and is a critical linchpin in California's ongoing struggle to balance environmental conservation with critical water infrastructure. As California's population has grown, the Delta has served as an important recreational respite for the surrounding bustling cities.

### Primary Themes

1. Water: Precious Lifeblood for the Delta and California – The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is California's oasis, located at the center of the state's water challenges and opportunities, and a water passage between the Pacific Ocean and inland California.
2. The Beating Heart of Natural California – The Delta lies at the center of California's biological and physical environment, supporting numerous

biologically diverse species and connecting California's freshwater resources to the Pacific Ocean.

3. Abundance, Diversity, Resistance, and Survival – Native Americans in the Delta – Native Americans thrived in the Delta prior to European settlement, developing complex and diverse societies, deeply rooted in the landscape, that have endured despite existential threats such as disease and genocide.
4. The Delta Becomes California's Cornucopia – Through capital, human labor, and technology, the Delta became one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions, with the ability to grow a large variety of crops, farmed by large and small operations.
5. Cultural Influences of the Delta – Enduring Legacies of American, Asian, European, and Latin American Immigrants: Bringing their own ambition and skills to the Delta, cultural and ethnic communities from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States shaped the region's agriculture and industry during the late 19th century and early 20th century and continue to leave an indelible imprint on the landscape.

### Supporting Themes

1. Northern California's Inland Defense (1850s-1940s) – A place of both defense and defiance, the military installations of the Delta and Carquinez Strait tell a story of local support for U.S. military operations throughout the Pacific and incalculable sacrifice by African American sailors.
2. The Creative Inspiration of the Delta (1900s-Present) – Distinctive urban, rural, and aquatic landscapes, labor and leisure, and relaxed lifestyle have drawn many writers and artists to the Delta for solace and inspiration.
3. Delta as Recreational Retreat (1950s-Present) – The Delta's waters and rural communities provide a retreat from our busy lives and reconnect us to the land and each other.

A mission statement grounds the NHA and the heritage partnership with the following purpose:

*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area is a partnership coalition working together to recognize, enhance, and promote the National Heritage Area as an ecological, agricultural, recreational, historical, and cultural treasure.*

The heritage partners involved in the management planning process also developed an inspiring vision for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA:

*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area supports living links among the past, present, and future and among farmed, developed, and wild lands in the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and the Carquinez Strait. This globally significant estuary sustains a remarkable and diverse blend of*

*natural and human communities that have emerged over millennia. Through partnerships, the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta NHA affirms and protects this living landscape – the appreciation of Delta cultures, relationships with water and landscapes, rewards of labor and commerce, and the revitalizing benefits of recreation – and shares it with Californians and visitors from around the world.*

The management plan provides a background on the NHA, its legislative foundation, and outlines the planning process. It presents the nationally significant heritage of the region and its people and offers guidance for stewarding the region's cultural, historic, natural, and recreational resources. The plan also focuses on sustainable tourism and those strategies that can help attract more visitors to the Delta, the Suisun Marsh, and the Carquinez Strait. To accomplish all of this, the document highlights the remarkable network of heritage partners ready to take on the responsibility of conserving the Delta's rich heritage. Finally, the plan presents an implementation approach grounded in the responsibility of sustainable operations, while supporting the heritage partnership with financial and technical assistance to undertake programs and projects throughout the region.

**Introduction** – The introduction provides a background on the NHA, its legislative foundation, and outlines the planning process. It discusses key partners and establishes foundational elements such as mission, vision, goals, significance, and themes.

**Chapter 1: Understanding and Appreciating California's Delta** – This chapter presents an interpretive thematic framework based on significance and themes, discussing the context for interpretation and education and the existing interpretation in the NHA, and identifying target audiences.

**Chapter 2: Stewarding the Delta's Resources** – Highlighting the importance of heritage conservation, Chapter 2 outlines significant resources in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. It includes an overview of the required resource inventory, challenges, opportunities, and strategies for resource stewardship.

**Chapter 3: Supporting Tourism and Economic Development** – Focusing on sustainable tourism, this chapter analyzes current trends, describes tourism in the NHA, and addresses challenges, opportunities, objectives, and strategies for heritage development and tourism.

**Chapter 4: Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network** – Detailing the partnership network involving federal, state, and local entities, this chapter outlines objectives and strategies for building and maintaining the network, enhancing partners' capacity, and funding projects.

**Chapter 5: Establishing Sustainable Governance** – The business plan discusses the local coordinating entity, the DPC, and potential opportunities for governance in the future. It outlines the mission, vision, and recommendations for the management and governance structure, supported by a 5-year financial projection.

**Chapter 6: Implementation, Evaluation, and Conclusion** – The closing chapter provides an overview of the implementation plan until 2034, divided into short-, mid-, and long-term strategies. It outlines the roles of the NHA in executing strategies and includes evaluative measures for documenting success.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta reflects the complex coexistence of nature and human endeavor and highlights the region's rich history and cultural diversity. NHA designation and planning for the future has been achieved by a partnership of citizens, businesses and industry, cultural, natural resource, and tourism groups, and governments committed to a heritage conservation strategy ensuring the delicate balance between progress and preservation. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area stands as an inviting gateway for those with an adventurous spirit and a yearning to connect with, understand, and appreciate the past. Embarking on a journey through this storied landscape is an odyssey through time, a chance to witness the confluence of tradition and innovation, and a reminder that some treasures are worth preserving.

# Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

## Introduction

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area (the NHA), California's first National Heritage Area, includes land in Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo counties. The region is defined by waterways and marshland, in particular the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, the Carquinez Strait, and the Suisun Marsh, and rural, suburban, and urban communities connected by an intertwined network of waterways, levee-top highways, and bridges.

In 2009, the California State Legislature passed a comprehensive package reforming governance of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) and related aspects of statewide water management. In Section 85301 of Senate Bill X7-1 (*Delta Reform Act of 2009*), the legislature charged the Delta Protection Commission (DPC), a state agency committed to the protection and health of the Delta environment and economy, with developing:

"A proposal to protect, enhance, and sustain the unique cultural, historical, recreational, agricultural, and economic values of the Delta as an evolving place... The Commission shall include in the proposal a plan to establish state and federal designation of the Delta as a place of special significance, which may include application for a federal designation of the Delta as a National Heritage Area."

This charge originated in the *Delta Vision* process, a Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger-directed effort, whose recommendations formed a major basis of the Delta Reform Act. The concept of NHA designation for the Delta originated not with the governor's appointed *Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force*, but with the process's *Delta as a Place* work group, which was comprised predominantly of Delta residents. Their recommendation to consider the appropriateness of NHA designation for the Delta was formally included in the task force's 2008 *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* and subsequent state legislation.

Federal legislation for a National Heritage Area was initially introduced to Congress in 2010, and the *Feasibility Study for a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area* was completed by the DPC staff in 2012. Following development of the study, the DPC staff continued to work with the region's

cultural and natural resources and historic communities as part of their mandated work in the Delta. The NHA was Congressionally designated in March 2019 along with five other NHAs as part of the *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act* (Public Law 116-9, Section 6001, included in Appendix A).<sup>1</sup> Prior to designation, Senator Dianne Feinstein in the U.S. Senate and Congressman John Garamendi in the House of Representatives repeatedly introduced bills to establish the NHA with support from former Senators Barbara Boxer and Kamala Harris and current and former Representatives Ami Bera, Mark DeSaulnier, Josh Harder, Zoe Lofgren, Doris Matsui, Jerry McNerney, George Miller, and Mike Thompson. The DPC was named as the NHA's local coordinating entity in the designating legislation.

The designating legislation mandated the development of a management plan. An NHA management plan outlines the significance and purpose of the NHA; long-range policies, goals, actions, and strategies; and the programs and projects that the local coordinating entity and a regional network of partners will undertake in the 15 years following designation, through 2034. The management plan was developed through a collaborative process led by the DPC (see Appendix B for the List of Key Participants and Preparers). This document is the culmination of the management planning process that began in early 2020.

## Brief Description of the Region

At their core, NHAs are defined by the past and present relationship between people and land. For the NHA, the region's primary physical features, cultural landscapes, and historical significance provide important context for the management plan. The information in this section is based on the description of the region in the *Feasibility Study for the Sacramento-San Joaquin National Heritage Area*, developed by the DPC in 2012.<sup>2</sup> A longer description can be found in Chapter 1, Understanding and Appreciating California's Delta, and a map of the NHA is found in Appendix C

California's two largest rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, meet southwest of the state's capital as they carry water toward the Pacific Ocean. These rivers, smaller tributaries, and tidal flows form an inland delta comprised of more than 1,000 miles of sloughs and waterways. The Delta, along with the Suisun Marsh, Carquinez Strait, and San Francisco Bay, make up the second

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<sup>1</sup> Title VI—National Heritage Areas, Section 6001, *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act*, Public Law 116-9, <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ9/PLAW-116publ9.pdf>, accessed July 15, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> *Feasibility Study for a Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area*, Delta Protection Commission, July 2012, <https://delta.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Delta-National-Heritage-Area-Feasibility-Study-508.pdf>, accessed July 15, 2023.



largest estuary on the west coast of the Americas, the outlet of a watershed that encompasses nearly half of California's surface area. In a state where water is increasingly at the center of environmental and economic discussions, the Delta is a unique and significant place.

The region was one of the most biologically productive and diverse ecosystems on the West Coast. The confluence of the two rivers formed a system of freshwater and brackish marshes from which spread a variety of habitat types: grasslands, seasonal wetlands, oak-woodland savannah, chaparral, and riparian habitats. Rich peat soils that dominated the Delta landscape had been formed from centuries of tule and bulrush decay. Natural levees vegetated with oak, sycamore, walnut, and willow trees bordered the Delta waterways.

Native Americans have inhabited the Delta for millennia, utilizing and stewarding the Delta's rich flora and fauna. They stopped the Spanish from pushing deeper into California but later during the Mexican era they were devastated by diseases, which led to displacement to inland areas. The discovery of gold in 1848 led to a large influx of immigrants, who used the Carquinez Strait and Delta waterways as a transportation corridor from San Francisco to the mining districts in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

Settlers soon recognized the agricultural potential of the region's rich peatlands and the abundant fish population. The late 19th and early 20th centuries were marked by significant landscape transformation. Reclaimed farmlands were subject to constant flooding, and Chinese immigrant laborers began building the first set of levees to hold back the flood waters. In the 1870s, steam-powered clamshell dredges revolutionized levee construction by dredging deep cuts into the riverbed to allow for higher and stronger levees.

Communities started developing along the banks of the Sacramento River during the Gold Rush, serving the early farmers and settlers in the area. These towns became agricultural shipping centers and river boat stops, linking the Delta to the rest of the world by shipping freight from the Delta, and supplying Delta residents with food, clothing, and other goods necessary for survival. Eventually, two deep water ship channels were developed to export agricultural goods produced in the Central Valley from the cities of West Sacramento and Stockton.

By the 1930s, the Delta was no longer a system of wetlands, but rather a complex system of levees, farmlands, and waterways. A diverse number of crops were produced for local consumption, as well as shipment throughout the world. Waves of Asian, European, and Latin American immigrants, whose living traditions continue to contribute to the region's vibrancy, initially came to the area to fish, farm, and work in canneries. The Delta was a Silicon Valley for the

invention of agricultural equipment, most notably the Caterpillar tractor, which is now used throughout the world for agriculture, construction, military, and other applications.

The Delta is at the center of two major water infrastructure facilities - the Central Valley Project (CVP) and State Water Project (SWP) - constructed during the mid-20th century. The two projects provided a water barrier to repel seawater intrusion in the Delta, flood control and navigation, water supply for agriculture and municipal water uses, and hydroelectric power generation. The SWP is the world's largest publicly funded water and power development and conveyance system. The CVP and SWP are linked to the Clifton Court Forebay, where water is pumped into the California Aqueduct and the Delta-Mendota Canal, which serve California's highest population centers - the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California - and the San Joaquin Valley, the nation's largest agricultural economy.

The Delta today boasts agricultural, cultural, historical, natural, and recreational resources that tell a unique American story and enrich California's quality of life and economy. Fertile soil and abundant water contribute to an agricultural cornucopia. The maze of levees, sloughs, and waterways serves as a recreational playground for boaters and anglers. American settlers and Chinese, Filipino, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, and Portuguese immigrants have established lasting legacies in the landscape. Despite the harmful effects of reclamation, the Delta remains an ecological gem for wildlife, as waterfowl have adapted to using the farmlands as habitat, and anadromous fish travel its waterways between the Pacific Ocean and the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

## How National Heritage Areas Work

NHAs are living landscapes where people and land – culture and nature – have had a significant impact on one another through time, resulting in a special region with a distinct identity. NHAs are also a strategy for conserving and managing large landscapes through partnerships that lead to collaborative conservation and economic development. The first NHA was established by Congress in 1984; President Ronald Reagan called them a marriage of heritage conservation, recreation, and economic development. Every administration since Reagan's has contributed to the development of the NHAs in the U.S. today.

NHAs serve as a regional organization or “big tent” under which a variety of interests and organizations convene. They work in the following areas:

- *Historic Preservation* – preserving and protecting special places and living traditions.
- *Cultural Conservation and the Arts* – creative placemaking through conserving living traditions and using arts as an economic driver.
- *Interpretation and Education* – sharing the places, traditions, and the important stories they hold with visitors and students of all ages.
- *Natural Resource Stewardship and Enhancement* – conserving natural resources and building on scenic and recreational opportunities for people to enjoy.
- *Heritage Tourism* – driving visitation by supporting marketing and/or developing tourism infrastructure.
- *Community Revitalization and Economic Development* – using heritage assets as economic drivers through tourism and revival.

As part of the National Park Service's (NPS) process of developing a strategy to evaluate NHAs, the Conservation Study Institute, a former NPS program dedicated to enhancing the stewardship of landscapes and communities, analyzed the way in which NHAs achieve these outcomes.<sup>3</sup> The findings from that analysis are useful in understanding the elements that contribute to successful NHAs.

NHAs are built on the premise that heritage has the potential to link people to place, serving as an organizing concept to engage partners across a region in landscape-scale projects and programs. The hallmark of NHAs is the development of a network of partners. This network consists of community leaders, local government officials, state and federal agencies, and the business community, as well as environmental and preservation organizations. The network is woven together by the NHA's shared heritage-based vision, which helps to sustain the network while encouraging organizations to work across areas of interest. The feasibility study and management planning processes are designed to engage partners and build constituencies, with an important outcome being to position an NHA and its management organization to be a catalyst that can activate and manage a network of partners and collaborators.

The Conservation Study Institute's analysis led to the recognition of four critical elements for NHA success – nationally significant heritage, a collaborative framework, NPS involvement, and building the network.

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Laven, et al., "Evaluating U.S. National Heritage Areas: Theory, Methods, and Application," *Environmental Management* (2010) 46:195-212. The Conservation Study Institute more recently transitioned into the Stewardship Institute.

**National heritage** provides a shared mission, a context for community engagement, and a sense of pride.

**A collaborative framework** serves as a broad, regional umbrella through which a variety of organizations can find mission alignment. The NHA provides the structure for that framework, and NHA staff exhibit collaborative leadership in facilitating and enhancing partnership building within the framework.

**NPS involvement** brings the credibility of a national brand, both for the integrity of the resources involved and for the expertise the federal agency has in interpretation and resource conservation. Access to NPS staff, leadership, and technical assistance is another benefit an NHA brings to a region.

An NHA must help **build a partnership network** and, serving as a hub, maintain the network using influence instead of power. Using influence includes:

- Building capacity for smaller organizations, often through grant-making or connections to technical assistance;
- Securing sustainable funding to support consistent staffing and long-term commitments; and
- Time to accomplish capacity building in smaller organizations, time for more established organizations to see value in working across areas of interest, and time to integrate resource conservation objectives with economic development goals.

Through management planning, the NHA builds an effective partnership network and leads the development of a regional vision based on shared, nationally significant heritage. In planning and beyond, the local coordinating entity plays a variety of roles in a complex and dynamic network, connecting partners in different ways. At its best, this network is far more than the sum of its parts.

## **Designating Legislation – Authorities, Duties, Prohibitions, and Requirements**

Title VI of the U.S. Congress' *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act* clearly establishes authorities, duties, and prohibitions for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area. The NHA program is under the auspices of the Delta Protection Commission, which was named the local coordinating entity in the designating legislation. Throughout the document, "the NHA" refers to the designated region and "the DPC" refers to the local coordinating entity.

## Authorities

A series of authorities are granted to the DPC to manage the NHA. These authorities allow the DPC and the partnership network to achieve the NHA goals set forth in the Foundation section, below. Authorities include:

- making grants;
- entering into cooperative agreements;
- hiring and compensating staff;
- obtaining funding and services from federal programs in addition to the NPS Heritage Partnership Program (HPP) funds;
- contracting for goods or services; and
- serving as a catalyst for activities that further the NHA and are consistent with an approved management plan.

## Duties

Several duties are articulated in designating legislation. One is the preparation of a management plan that is submitted to the Secretary of the Interior, which this document shall fulfill. Other duties include reporting on the activities and associated NHA expenditures and encouraging regional economic viability. Consistent with the tenets of the National Heritage Areas program, one of the primary duties is to assist public and private partners in implementing activities incorporated in the management plan, including:

- programs and projects that recognize, protect, and enhance resources;
- interpretive exhibits and programs;
- recreational and educational opportunities;
- the development of a greater awareness of and appreciation for the NHA's special qualities;
- historic preservation consistent with NHA themes;
- a wayfinding system;
- partnerships among the federal government, state, Tribal, and local governments, organizations, and individuals to further the NHA; and
- consideration of interests of diverse units of governments, businesses, organizations, and individuals in planning and implementation.

## Prohibitions

The NHA has no regulatory power. To underscore this important limitation, designating legislation created by the U.S. Congress provides legislative prohibitions and protections regarding water and private property. The NHA "shall not be interpreted or implemented in a manner that directly or indirectly has a negative effect on the operations of the Central Valley Project, the State

Water Project, or any water supply facilities within the Bay-Delta watershed."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, like all other NHAs, legislation prohibits the acquisition of real property with federal funds appropriated for the NHA for the above purposes and sets forth specific protections for private property rights and the existing jurisdiction of regulatory entities in the region.

## Requirements

Designating legislation contains specific requirements that must be included in the management plan. The planning process incorporated consideration of all the requirements. They are listed in the table below, along with the location(s) where each requirement is addressed in the plan.

Requirements in Designating Legislation – Public Law 116-9, 133 STAT. 580 (or footnoted)	Location in the Management Plan
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(A) Incorporate an integrated and cooperative approach for the protection, enhancement, and interpretation of the natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources.</b></p>	<p>All five goals reflect the intent of this requirement. Specifically, the objectives and strategies in Chapter 1 (Understanding and Appreciating California's Delta); Chapter 2 (Stewarding the Delta's Resources); Chapter 3 (Supporting Tourism and Economic Development); and Chapter 4 (Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network) include a cooperative approach to the protection, enhancement, and interpretation of the NHA's resources. Appendix J (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan), also meets this requirement as it includes a summary of the objectives and strategies from the chapters listed here.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Title VI—National Heritage Areas, Section 6001, *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act*, Public Law 116-9, <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ9/PLAW-116publ9.pdf>, accessed July 15, 2023.

<p><b>Requirements in Designating Legislation – Public Law 116-9, 133 STAT. 580 (or footnoted)</b></p>	<p><b>Location in the Management Plan</b></p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(B) Take into consideration Federal, State, local, and Tribal plans and treaty rights.</b></p>	<p>Plans and treaty rights are considered in the Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA), and chapters 1 (Stewarding the Delta’s Resources), and 4 (Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network). Appendix J (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan) also meets this requirement as it includes a summary of the objectives and strategies from the chapters listed here.</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(i) [Include] an inventory of the resources located in the National Heritage Area, and any other property within the National Heritage Area that is related to the themes of the National Heritage Area and should be preserved, restored, managed, or maintained because of the significance of the property.</b></p>	<p>Chapter 2 (Stewarding the Delta’s Resources) contains a description of the resource inventory. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Resource Inventory is included as Appendix F.</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(ii) [Include] comprehensive policies, strategies and recommendations for conservation, funding, management, and development of the National Heritage Area.</b></p>	<p>Policies, strategies, and recommendations for conservation are found in Chapter 2 (Stewarding the Delta’s Resources). Policies, strategies, and recommendations for funding, management, and development are located in Chapter 5 (Establishing Sustainable Governance). Appendix J (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan) also meets this requirement as it includes a summary</p>

<p><b>Requirements in Designating Legislation – Public Law 116-9, 133 STAT. 580 (or footnoted)</b></p>	<p><b>Location in the Management Plan</b></p>
	<p>of the objectives and strategies from the chapters listed here.</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(iii) [Include] a description of actions that the Federal Government, State, Tribal, and local governments, private organizations, and individuals have agreed to take to protect the natural, historical, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area.</b></p>	<p>Actions to protect natural, historic, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources are found in Chapter 2 (Stewarding the Delta's Resources), as well as in Appendix L (Letters of Commitment and Support).</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(iv) [Include] a program of implementation for the management plan by the local coordinating entity that includes a description of actions to facilitate ongoing collaboration among partners to promote plans for resource protection, restoration, and construction, and specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any government, organization, or individual for the first 5 years of operation.</b></p>	<p>The implementation plan is described in Chapter 6 (Implementation, Evaluation, and Conclusion) and is included in its entirety in Appendix J (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan). Specific commitments are found in the strategies that support goals 1 through 4 (Chapters 1-4), as well as in Appendix L (Letters of Commitment and Support). The partnership network is included as Appendix G (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Partners).</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(v) [Include] the identification of sources of funding for carrying out the management plan.</b></p>	<p>The primary source of matching funding is described in Chapter 5 (Establishing Sustainable Governance). Additional sources are included in Appendix I (Potential Funding Sources).</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(vi) [Include] analysis and recommendations for means by which Federal, State, local,</b></p>	<p>Analysis of Federal, State, local and Tribal roles is found in the Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta</p>



<p><b>Requirements in Designating Legislation – Public Law 116-9, 133 STAT. 580 (or footnoted)</b></p>	<p><b>Location in the Management Plan</b></p>
<p><b>and Tribal programs, including the role of the National Park Service in the National Heritage Area, may best be coordinated to carry out this subsection.</b></p>	<p>NHA, and chapters 2 (Stewarding the Delta’s Resources), 4 (Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network), and 5 (Establishing Sustainable Governance).</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(vii) [Include] an interpretive plan for the National Heritage Area.</b></p>	<p>Chapter 1 (Understanding and Appreciating California’s Delta) contains the interpretive plan. The Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA contains foundational elements of the plan, including the statement of significance and primary themes. Appendix J (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan) includes a summary of the objectives and strategies in the interpretive plan.</p>
<p><b>Sec. 6001(c)(2)(D) Recommend policies and strategies for resource management that consider and detail the application of appropriate land and water management techniques, including the development of intergovernmental and interagency cooperative agreements to protect the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area.</b></p>	<p>Chapter 2 (Stewarding the Delta’s Resources) contains strategies for resource management and Chapter 4 (Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network) describes the network with which cooperative agreements may be developed. Appendix J (Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan) also meets this requirement as it includes a summary of the objectives and strategies from the chapters listed here.</p>

## Role of the National Park Service

Congressional designation as an NHA signals the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's historical, cultural, and natural significance. This designation not only lends credibility and prestige to the region, but also establishes a direct affiliation with the federal government, facilitated through the Secretary of the Interior.

The legislative framework governing the NHA empowers the Secretary, acting through the DPC, to leverage funding for cooperative agreements, direct assistance to partners, and other measures aimed at facilitating the implementation of the approved management plan. The responsibility for administering assistance to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA is delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to the National Park Service. The NPS Washington DC Office and regional offices nationwide manage the National Heritage Areas Program. Funding for this program is channeled through the NPS Heritage Partnership Program.

The federal funding appropriated by Congress and distributed through NPS is critical to the NHA's success. This financial support serves as the organizational seed money that supports the initiatives outlined in the management plan. The Sacramento-San Joaquin NHA is affiliated with the NPS Pacific–West Regional Office for regions 8, 9, 10 and 12, which manages the cooperative agreement to distribute HPP funding to the NHA and provides technical assistance and guidance in alignment with the designating legislation. During the transition of NHA staff in that office, the NHA has worked with staff from the NPS Intermountain Regional Office for regions 6, 7, and 8.

Locally, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA collaborates closely with John Muir National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, all of which have resources within the legislated boundary of the NHA. Nearby San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park stewards resources that are significant for the NHA and interprets history associated with the Delta and the Carquinez Strait. The Pony Express National Historic Trail also crosses through the region and has the potential to be a future partner.

The multi-faceted relationship between the Sacramento-San Joaquin NHA and NPS is fundamental to the successful implementation of the management plan, contributing to financial sustainability and underscoring the integrity and significance of the NHA within the broader context of national heritage preservation.

## Management Planning

In order to meet the legislative mandates, management planning began in 2020, immediately before the pandemic. The DPC staff led the planning process in conjunction with a consulting team from Point Heritage Development Consulting. A National Heritage Area Management Plan Advisory Committee (henceforth Advisory Committee) provided oversight and input at every stage of the planning process. California State Parks led development of an interpretive plan for the NHA. The National Park Service provided oversight, technical assistance, and review. Throughout the planning process, the public and partners provided input through a variety of outreach opportunities. This section provides an overview of the planning process and key planning partners.

### Key Planning Partners

#### **DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION AND STAFF**

The Delta Protection Commission, established by Section 29735 of the California Public Resources Code in the Delta Protection Act of 1992, is named as the local coordinating entity in the NHA's designating legislation. The 15-member state commission is structured to have predominantly local representation. The DPC includes supervisors and city council members from the five Delta counties (Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo), reclamation district members from the central, north, and south Delta, and state agency partners (California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Natural Resources Agency, California State Lands Commission, California State Transportation Agency), as well as ex-officio representation from the California State Legislature. A list of members is found in Appendix B.

The NHA is one of many programs overseen by the DPC and managed by the eight-person DPC staff. The Program Manager for the Delta National Heritage Area Program led the planning process for the DPC. Other staff members, including the Executive Director, a second Program Manager, a Senior Environmental Planner, and Staff Services Manager also assisted with the project. The Executive Director chairs the Advisory Committee.

#### **NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TASK GROUPS**

The DPC established the Advisory Committee in late 2020. The 15-member volunteer committee and additional ex officio members were tasked with providing recommendations on the development of the plan, including

expanding outreach to solicit input from diverse stakeholders. The committee membership is reflective of the breadth of the NHA, including geographic, cultural, and multigenerational representation. It includes representatives of:

- Community organizations
- Cultural organizations
- Natural resource conservation organizations
- Recreation organizations
- Agriculture
- Business organizations
- Educational institutions
- Museums
- Tourism entities
- Tribal governments
- Local government
- National Park Service
- Other public agency representatives

The synergy and collaboration within this committee and the task groups lay at the heart of the planning process and the emerging partnership network. A list of participants is found in Appendix B.

### **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

As the lead federal agency associated with the NHA, NPS provides the DPC and the NHA partnership network with technical assistance on planning. NPS staff have played several roles. The planner representing John Muir National Historic Site and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial sat on the Advisory Committee as an ex officio member and participated in multiple management planning task groups. The National Heritage Areas Program Regional Coordinators from both the Intermountain and Pacific-West regions reviewed elements of the plan, participated in Advisory Committee meetings, and provided guidance. The National Heritage Areas Program staff in DC, which provides guidance to the NHA Program Regional Coordinators, will complete the review of the final documents and forward the management plan to the Secretary of the Interior's Office for approval and signature. That office will also lead the formal Tribal consultation process for the final management plan.

### **POINT HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING, LLC**

Point Heritage Development Consulting (PointHDC) participated in two phases of planning: from January 2020 to June 2022, and from February 2023 through the plan's completion. The five-member consulting team included two individuals with NHA management experience, a heritage tourism specialist, a

retired NPS employee with experience in NHAs, and a graphic designer. Four of the five team members have previous management planning experience. The Sacramento-based graphic designer qualifies as a Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise in California.

## CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

The DPC contracted with California State Parks, a sister state agency, to develop the interpretive plan. California State Parks operates nine park units within the NHA, offers interpretation programs at its historic sites and wildlife areas, and offers a variety of recreational opportunities. As an NHA partner, California State Parks can assist other partners with interpretation. The four-member team participated in the planning process, including public meetings, Tribal consultation, and an online survey of interpretive providers, from June 2020 through January 2023.

## TRIBAL NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

From prehistory to the present, California has a rich and complex legacy of Indigenous culture. Today, no federally and non-federally recognized Tribes have territorial holdings within the NHA, although many Tribal members still call the Delta home. The Delta remains a culturally significant place for Tribes, many of whom have ancestral ties to the region and continue to maintain a relationship with the region through a wide variety of cultural and conservation initiatives, as well as state and federal consultations. Both state and federal consultation are required for the development of this management plan per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, designating legislation for the NHA, and Governor Jerry Brown's Executive Order B-10-11 of 2011. The California Native American Heritage Commission identified 21 Tribes with historical connections to the Delta, including 11 federally recognized Tribes. Another federally recognized Tribe participated in a Delta Stewardship Council listening session in April 2023. All 22 were invited to participate in planning, including the offer of government-to-government consultation for the federally recognized Tribes. Tribal engagement and consultation are described in the section entitled *The Planning Process*, below. A list of Tribes invited to participate in planning and details of the engagement and consultation process are found in Appendix D.

## The Planning Process

Seven years passed between the development of the feasibility study and Congressional designation of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area. During that period, the DPC staff were engaged with heritage-related projects, though planning for a National Heritage Area was a lower

priority given uncertainty over Congressional action. Immediately following NHA designation, the DPC staff pivoted to meet the requirements and benefits of designation, contracting with PointHDC to assist in with management planning, contracting with California State Parks to develop an interpretive plan, and establishing the Advisory Committee.

Following orientation meetings with PointHDC in February and early March 2020, the planning process immediately shifted course due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic led to a protracted planning process because of uncertainty over the length of pandemic-related restrictions and a difficult shift to virtual meetings, particularly in a region with limited internet coverage. These conditions made building a coalition of communities, organizations, businesses, and residents challenging. Through the DPC's commitment to the NHA, as well as the participation of volunteers on the Advisory Committee and related task groups, planning proceeded, and a coalition began to grow. Over the course of the planning process, the DPC and the consultant team employed a wide range of activities to document the NHA's foundational elements, identify needs and opportunities in the region, gather public input, and develop the programmatic and organizational recommendations in this plan.



*Produce and other local foodstuffs abound in the Delta (Stacy Hayden/Delta Protection Commission)*

## Background Research

Site visits, the development of project charters related to several aspects of management planning, and an analysis of existing information provided critical background information for the planning process.

### **POINTHDC TEAM SITE VISITS**

Team members participated in three sites visits to gain an understanding of the Delta's unique natural and engineered landscape. Visits included the Delta's legacy communities (11 rural communities identified in state legislation), cities along the Carquinez Strait, the Suisun Marsh, John Muir National Historic Site, and many other important sites and landmarks. During the visits, the planning team met with the DPC staff, NPS staff, Advisory Committee members, business owners, elected officials, and representatives from several nonprofit organizations. In addition, they attended the DPC and Delta Protection Advisory Committee meetings.

## PROJECT CHARTERS

The consultant team was initially contracted to develop a series of project charters that would serve as a road map for planning, then was contracted to develop the management plan. The charters provided information on key areas of focus in the management plan, including interpretation; implementation and funding; resource inventory; resource stewardship; heritage development and tourism; and management and organization. Each of the charters contained information on objectives and benefits, potential risks and constraints, stakeholders, and evaluative criteria.

## STUDIES AND REPORTS

Numerous existing studies and reports contain information that helped ground the management plan by providing context and ongoing initiatives, as well as describing existing needs and opportunities. A few are listed here, and many others are described in subsequent chapters. Significant time, effort, and funding have been applied to planning in the region by many state, federal, and local agencies and organizations. These planning endeavors include many opportunities for collaborative implementation by the DPC and the NHA partnership network.

- The Delta Blue Ribbon Task Force's 2008 *Delta Vision Strategic Plan* contained both the seeds of the NHA concept and the *Delta Plan*. The *Delta Plan*, a regional plan mandated by the California State Legislature's 2009 *Delta Reform Act* and coordinated by the Delta Stewardship Council, addresses the state's coequal goals for the Delta – a more reliable statewide water supply and a healthy and protected ecosystem – in a manner that protects and enhances the unique characteristics of the Delta as an evolving place. First completed in 2013, the plan is updated periodically and includes recommendations to enhance community development, cultural resource protection, recreation, and heritage tourism.
- The *Feasibility Study for the Sacramento-San Joaquin National Heritage Area* (2012) includes a discussion of water and land uses and identifies significant natural, cultural, and historic resources that justify the region's designation as an NHA.
- The *Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta* (2012) contains extensive information on economic and natural resources, a description of the Delta's ecosystem and possible conservation measures, a review of county policies for resource use, and risk management strategies for floods, earthquakes, and sea-level rise.



- More recently, the *Great Delta Trail Master Plan (2022)* has descriptions of the Delta's landscape and resources including levees, agriculture and agritourism, rivers and waterways, roads, bridges, ferries, recreational facilities, and wildlife areas in addition to recommendations for trail development.
- In addition to these region-wide plans, historic district and individual site nominations to the National Register of Historic Places provide historical context for significant places.

At the mid-point of the management planning project, the consultant team prepared the *Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Foundational Report (2022)*. This report collected the results from the first phase of planning and established recommendations for completing the plan. The report included the foundation elements of the NHA, including: the mission; vision; significance; themes; partnership network; and objectives. The document laid the groundwork for projects, programs, and organizational development.

As a draft of this management plan was in preparation, the results of the inaugural *Delta Residents Survey* were released by the Delta Science Program, a subsidiary program of the Delta Stewardship Council.<sup>5</sup> The report contains important baseline information on residents' perceptions of quality of life, sense of place, governance, and risk and resilience to climate change. As many of these are factors on which NHAs hope to assert a positive influence, the longitudinal implementation of the survey will provide important evaluative information about the success of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA.

## Outreach and Engagement

Partnerships and public engagement are critical to the success of NHAs. The network of partners and coalition of residents established during planning can help sustain an NHA throughout its existence and likely will evolve and grow over time. As such, management planning includes activities that engage partners and the public, soliciting their input and investment in the mission, vision, goals, and projects and programs of an NHA.

Public engagement has been a hallmark of this plan. Through in-person and virtual public meetings, the annual Delta Heritage Forum, public presentations and lectures by the DPC NHA Program Manager, stakeholder interviews, Tribal consultation, and an electronic survey, the DPC sought to include residents' and partners' voices, ideas, and aspirations. Moreover, both the DPC and the Advisory Committee are structured to provide representation for the residents

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<sup>5</sup> Rudnick, J., Tomari, K., Dobbin, K., Lubell, M., and K. Bidenwig. *2023 Delta Residents Survey Summary Report*. Report developed for the Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Science Program. Sacramento, CA.

and organizations in the Delta, serving as important conduits for information during the planning process and into the future.

As the *Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan* is implemented, public engagement will continue and is built into many of the strategies found in the chapters that follow. In addition, the DPC staff, in conjunction with the Advisory Committee, will provide an annual update to the Delta Protection Commission and the public so that all residents and stakeholder organizations remain informed of and have the opportunity to participate in the management plan's implementation.

### **MANAGEMENT PLANNING TASK GROUPS**

Four task groups were formed to address elements of the management plan: 1) Interpretation, 2) Resource Stewardship, 3) Heritage Development and Tourism, and 4) Organization. Participants in the task groups included members of the Advisory Committee, stakeholders, and subject matter experts. Task group members participated in multiple meetings to help analyze and prioritize the information from an online survey, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings. They crafted the mission, vision, and goals for the region, laying an important foundation for all future work. They also identified key opportunities for program and project development, prioritizing them through the development of objectives and strategies. Finally, they helped delineate the appropriate role of and structure for the local coordinating entity. A list of members of the four task groups is found in Appendix B.

### **ONLINE SURVEYS**

The PointHDC team developed an online survey that Advisory Committee members promoted through newsletters, social media, and other outlets. The survey was designed to gather information from residents on the needs of the Delta and potential activities for the NHA. The survey yielded 94 responses. Survey results demonstrated a lack of awareness about the importance of the region's history as well as a need for funding to conserve resources in the region. These are two areas on which the NHA could have a positive impact. In addition, California State Parks distributed an interpretive program survey to NHA partners asking about existing interpretive services, themes, opportunities, and challenges.

### **STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

The PointHDC team completed 12 interviews with stakeholders from across the region that could provide insight into various aspects of the NHA. These confidential interviews provided more in-depth information than the conversations that occurred during the site visits, providing valuable ideas on

potential projects and programs, partner relationships, regional needs, and future NHA management practices. California State Parks also interviewed interpretive providers to learn more about existing interpretive programs and how their organization and sites related to the NHA interpretive themes, and to discuss potential collaboration opportunities.

## **THE DELTA HERITAGE FORUM AND PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The Delta Heritage Forum, an event held annually for the past five years, was a vital component of public outreach. During the management planning process, virtual Forums were held in November of 2020 and 2021, and the event returned to an in-person format for 2022. Since designation, the day-long Forum has included a focus on the management plan. The Forum will continue as a public engagement event for the NHA in the future.

In 2020, many partners from cultural, historical, and natural resource partners gave presentations on existing activities that align with NHA practices, and PointHDC presented an overview of the management planning process. In 2021, sessions on management planning and the development of hubs within the NHA dovetailed with each other. Partners and planners hosted breakout groups on several emerging actions: tourism development and promotion; cultural and living traditions; recreation; preservation of the built environment; and conservation of natural resources. In the discussions, participants discussed each action area and considered potential roles for the local coordinating entity. In 2022, the Forum featured the interpretive plan, with a discussion on themes and potential activities, panels by local heritage practitioners and a professional from another NHA, and a presentation of the *Foundational Report*.

In addition to the annual Delta Heritage Forum, PointHDC planned and conducted two in-person public meetings to gather input for the plan. One was held in Benicia on August 30, 2021, and a second was held in Walnut Grove on August 31, 2021. The agenda for both meetings included an overview of NHAs and a timeline for development of the management plan. Attendees participated in breakout groups to discuss opportunities in interpretation, education, tourism, recreation, and stewardship of cultural, natural, and historic resources. Participants identified challenges and opportunities related to each topic as well as potential NHA partners. Information from the meetings provided the foundation for the work of the task groups in developing the plan's draft objectives and strategies.

In February 2024, a final series of meetings to present the management plan to the public were held in Sacramento and Contra Costa counties, as well as online.

## TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

As noted above, the Delta is a culturally significant landscape for many of California's Native American Tribal Nations and communities. As both a California state agency and NHA local coordinating entity, the DPC must engage with Tribal governments during the NHA management planning process. These mandates are described below. However, the DPC staff have sought to exceed these basic requirements to establish a strong foundation for long-term engagement with federally and state-recognized Nations and Tribes.

The DPC invited the 22 Tribes with past and present connections to the Delta to be key management planning partners, and the 12 federally recognized Tribes were offered the opportunity to participate in formal government-to-government consultation. The process and results are summarized below, and additional information is found in Appendix D.

Governor Jerry Brown's Executive Order B-10-11 (2011) requires that each California state agency have a tribal liaison that engages in open, respectful, ongoing consultation with appropriate Native American Tribes or groups to properly manage areas, places, objects, or burials associated with their heritage, sacred sites, and traditional cultural properties or cultural traditions. Governor Gavin Newsom's Executive Order N-15-19 (2019) reaffirms the principles in Governor Brown's Executive Order and acknowledges and apologizes on behalf of the State for the historical violence, exploitation, dispossession, and attempted destruction of Tribal communities, which dislocated Native Americans from their ancestral land and sacred practices. The NHA Program Manager serves as the DPC Tribal Liaison and participates in the California Natural Resources Agency's Bay-Delta Tribal Engagement Working Group with other tribal liaisons.

The National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 and the National Environmental Policy Act require consultation between federal agencies, State Historic Preservation Officers, and appropriate Tribal government officials, including Tribal Historic Preservation Officers. Federal Executive Order 13175 and the Department of the Interior Policy on Consultation with Native American Tribes require park units to conduct government-to-government consultations with federally recognized Native American Tribes when undertaking any Federal action that may have a direct impact on Tribes or Tribal lands. Appropriate Tribal officials are contacted at the earliest possible point in the planning process so that Tribal input can be incorporated into planning documents.

Initial efforts at Tribal consultation included appointing Native American Tribal members to the Advisory Committee and task groups. In June 2021, the DPC staff mailed and emailed letters to 33 Native American contacts in the NHA from

23 Tribes (provided in Appendix D). California's Native American Heritage Commission provided the contact information. The California State Parks team sent a separate consultation letter, follow-up emails, and phone calls to the Native American Heritage Commission list in April 2022 requesting meetings for the interpretive plan. Six Tribes responded with interest in a consultation, and the team set up virtual meetings and corresponded via email to share documents and receive input. These Native American Tribes requested the DPC continue consultation throughout the planning process and expressed interest in participating in a Tribal advisory committee recommended in this plan. Interested Tribes were also added as ex officio members of the Advisory Committee.

In September 2021, the DPC staff organized a meeting of the Tribal Engagement Working Group. The working group included representatives of the Advisory Committee, a staff person from the California State Parks tribal liaison office, and the California State Parks and PointHDC teams. The working group was instrumental in identifying objectives related to resource conservation, Tribal access to lands and resources in the NHA, intergenerational education, and interpretation.

In April 2023, the DPC's sister agency, the Delta Stewardship Council, hosted representatives from four California Native American Tribes for a listening session. Topics covered during the session included Indigenous peoples' ties to the Delta, their sovereignty and relation to the State, and their input regarding Delta management. The DPC's Tribal Liaison and several Advisory Committee members participated in the session, which provided an opportunity to hear Tribal perspectives and ask questions to facilitate a shared understanding that informs Tribal engagement in the Delta.

In January 2024, after receiving an updated contact list from California's Native American Heritage Commission, the DPC sent letters to 47 representatives of 22 Tribes to solicit input on the administrative draft chapters and to alert them that the draft copy of the full plan will be sent to them concurrently with submission to NPS for an additional 30-day review. Tribes will submit comments to the DPC, who will directly note and address Tribal comments in the revised final management plan version.

The NPS and the Tribes will receive the revised final management plan concurrently, meaning that consultation on the final plan will occur within the NPS 180-day window to review the plan. Tribes will submit comments to NPS on the final plan within 30 days. NPS will communicate with them on this final stage consultation effort prior to Secretary of the Interior approval. Any additional comments provided by the Tribes during this time may necessitate revisions by the local coordinating entity.

At time of writing, the following Tribes have responded to outreach and participated in planning:

- Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians
- Confederated Villages of Lisjan
- Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
- Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
- United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
- Wilton Rancheria
- Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

Regardless of whether Tribes provide comment or engage in formal consultation for the management plan, the local coordinating entity and partnership network will continue outreach to the Tribes with ties to the Delta and will remain open to Tribal participation in implementing the plan.

### The Review Process

*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan* underwent many levels of review prior to its final submittal to the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service.

#### **THE DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION AND THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE REVIEW**

The Advisory Committee reviewed individual planning components, including the themes and significance, interpretive plan, goals, and implementation plan, along with completing an administrative review of all chapters prior to release of a public review draft. An appointed subcommittee of the DPC also reviewed the administrative draft plan. As the designated local coordinating entity, the full DPC reviewed the draft plan and approved the final plan for submittal to the Secretary of the Interior.

#### **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REVIEW**

National Park Service staff helped usher the document from one phase to the next, providing review of individual planning components, chapters, and the complete draft prior to public release of the document. Initial technical review occurred at the regional level, while final review of the plan and submittal to the Secretary of the Interior is the responsibility of the National Heritage Areas Program staff in the NPS Washington, DC office.

#### **PUBLIC REVIEW**

The draft plan was released to the public for review on February 5, 2024, to begin a 30-day comment period. Comments were collected via email and

writing, as well as during a public meeting held to share the draft plan. Following the comment period, the consultant team compiled and addressed substantive feedback provided by partners and the public, incorporating input, as appropriate, into the final planning document submitted to the Secretary of the Interior. A summary of the public engagement and review process is found in Appendix E.

## **Federal Laws and NEPA Categorical Exclusion**

As the local coordinating entity, the DPC will ensure federal laws pertaining to preservation and conservation are properly applied in the NHA. Such laws include the Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The development and approval of the management plan will have no potential for significant adverse impacts on the many cultural and natural resources in the region within the designated boundary of the NHA. The suggested actions taken in the NHA should have substantially beneficial effects. As such, the NEPA pathway proposed for the federal approval of this management plan is a Categorical Exclusion (CE), according to the National Park Service (NPS) Director's Order No.12, "Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making," and associated guidance, NPS NEPA Handbook (2015), Chapter 3.2 R: CE 3.2R, for the "adoption or approval of surveys, studies, reports, plans and similar documents which will result in recommendations or proposed actions which would cause no, or only minimal, environmental impacts." If, or when, future projects of the NHA are developed that have a direct effect on cultural or natural resources in the region, the entity responsible for the individual project will review the project through appropriate pathways, such as the NHPA Section 106 and NEPA processes, as applicable.

## **State Laws and CEQA**

The DPC will ensure state laws pertaining to preservation and conservation are properly applied in the NHA. Such laws include the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (CalNAGPRA), and California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Like NEPA, CEQA is intended to inform government decision makers and the public about the potential environmental effects of proposed activities and to prevent significant, avoidable environmental damage. The California State Legislature provides an exemption from Environmental Impact Reports or

Negative Declarations for planning studies for possible future actions that have not been approved, adopted, or funded (CEQA Guidelines Section 15262). As the CEQA lead agency, the DPC will prepare a Notice of Exemption for this management plan. If, or when, future projects of the NHA are developed that have a direct effect on cultural or natural resources in the region, the entity responsible for the individual project will review the project through appropriate pathways, such as the CEQA processes as applicable.



*An agricultural landscape slows the pace in the Delta. (Stacy Hayden/Delta Protection Commission)*

## **Foundation – Significance, Mission, Vision, and Goals**

This section introduces the foundational elements of the NHA, including the primary characteristics, policies, and practices that underpin planning in the region, present and future.



## Significance and Themes

As described previously, nationally significant heritage is the unifying element that anchors a shared mission and regional sense of pride and provides partners and the public with a context for engagement. Articulating that significance and the themes that help express it is an important part of planning, as everything that occurs in the NHA ultimately connects to this foundational element. Interpretive planners from California State Parks worked with the Advisory Committee's Interpretive Planning Task Group to develop the following statement of national significance and the themes that support it. The national significance statement and themes are introduced here and explained in more detail in Chapter 1 (Understanding and Appreciating California's Delta), which contains the interpretive thematic framework.

### **STATEMENT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE**

At the heart of California lies a vast tidal estuary where the state's two largest rivers converge, forming a rare inland delta – the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – California's most crucial water and ecological resource. The Delta is a place that nurtures a unique ecosystem and has supported a culturally diverse population for millennia. The region's water, fertile land, and proximity to the San Francisco Bay fuels California's economy and is a critical linchpin in California's ongoing struggle to balance environmental conservation with critical water infrastructure. As California's population has grown, the Delta has served as an important recreational respite for the surrounding bustling cities.

### **PRIMARY THEMES**

California State Parks and the Advisory Committee's Interpretive Task Group developed a robust series of primary themes, storylines, and supporting themes. A summary of each primary theme is shared here and storylines, as well as the objectives and strategies built around the thematic framework, are found in Chapter 1. Supporting themes, which are interesting enhancements to the primary themes, are also listed in Chapter 1.

#### **THEME 1: WATER: PRECIOUS LIFEblood FOR THE DELTA AND CALIFORNIA**

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is California's oasis, located at the center of the state's water challenges and opportunities, and a water passage between the Pacific Ocean and inland California.

The storylines for this theme describe how water plays a different role in the Delta than in other areas of the United States, the importance of Delta waterways as a transportation corridor, and the growing challenges of water management for the region and California.

## **THEME 2: THE BEATING HEART OF NATURAL CALIFORNIA**

The Delta lies at the center of California's biological and physical environment, supporting numerous biologically diverse species and connecting California's freshwater resources to the Pacific Ocean.

Storylines detail how multiple factors made the Delta home to a rich ecosystem, how the Delta affects West Coast fish, wildlife, and plant life, and how the side effects of the Gold Rush on the Delta shaped the environmental movement.

## **THEME 3: ABUNDANCE, DIVERSITY, RESISTANCE, AND SURVIVAL – NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE DELTA**

Native Americans thrived in the Delta prior to European settlement, developing complex and diverse societies, deeply rooted in the landscape, which have endured despite existential threats such as disease and genocide.

This theme, which will continue to be vetted by Tribes with roots in the Delta, contains storylines about how important the Delta is for Tribal culture, society, and ecology in northern California, Native American management of Delta resources, the tremendous diversity of Native Americans in the Delta, and Native American's resistance and survival despite colonialism, disease, displacement, and genocide.

## **THEME 4: THE DELTA BECOMES CALIFORNIA'S CORNUCOPIA**

Through capital, human labor, and technology, the Delta became one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions, with the ability to grow a large variety of crops, farmed by large and small operations.

Storylines describe the demanding conversion of the Delta from wetland to farmland, including the innovative engineering technologies and techniques that made the transformation possible, efforts to distribute Delta products globally, and ongoing challenges resulting from reclamation.

## **THEME 5: CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF THE DELTA – ENDURING LEGACIES OF AMERICAN, ASIAN, EUROPEAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS**

Bringing their own ambition and skills to the Delta, cultural and ethnic communities from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States shaped the region's agriculture and industry during the late 19th century and early 20th century and continue to leave an indelible imprint on the landscape.

The storylines for this theme describe the vibrant immigrant communities that settled in the Delta in different waves and whose legacy is still visible on the landscape. Centered on agricultural and industrial labor, the communities were a source of innovation, and despite discrimination and difficult working

conditions, demonstrated persistence in securing change for themselves and the immigrant communities that followed.

## **SUPPORTING THEMES**

The three supporting themes identified by California State Parks and the Interpretive Task Group are important stories in the Delta but not central to the region's overarching historical, cultural, and natural narrative. The interpretive plan, Chapter 1, includes descriptions of the supporting themes, associated resources, and interpretive opportunities.

### **SUPPORTING THEME 1: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S INLAND DEFENSE (1850S-1940S)**

A place of both defense and defiance, the military installations of the Delta and Carquinez Strait tell a story of local support for U.S. military operations throughout the Pacific and incalculable sacrifice by African American sailors.

### **SUPPORTING THEME 2: THE CREATIVE INSPIRATION OF THE DELTA (1900S-PRESENT)**

Distinctive urban, rural, and aquatic landscapes, labor and leisure, and relaxed lifestyle have drawn many writers and artists to the Delta for solace and inspiration.

### **SUPPORTING THEME 3: DELTA AS RECREATIONAL RETREAT (1950S-PRESENT)**

The Delta's waters and rural communities provide a retreat from our busy lives and reconnect us to the land and each other.

## **Mission and Vision**

Mission and vision statements establish the long-term direction and goals that guide an NHA's daily operations. The mission and vision provide the foundation for programs, services, communications, structure, and organizational culture. The mission and vision are found below; a more detailed description is included in the business plan in Chapter 5 (Establishing Sustainable Governance).

The two statements are related yet distinct. A mission statement guides an organization's daily work, defines its purpose, and provides the basis for judging its success and programs. A vision statement inspires action and highlights an organization's long-term impact. The Organization Task Group led development of the mission and vision statements for the NHA, below, which were ultimately adopted by the Advisory Committee.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area is a partnership that works together to recognize, enhance, and promote the Delta to help cultivate*

*and retain appreciation and understanding of the National Heritage Area as an ecological, agricultural, recreational, historical, and cultural treasure.*

## **VISION STATEMENT**

*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area supports living links among the past, present, and future and among farmed, developed, and wild lands in the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and the Carquinez Strait. This globally significant estuary sustains a remarkable and diverse blend of natural and human communities that have emerged over millennia. Through partnerships, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area affirms and protects this living landscape – the appreciation of Delta cultures, relationships with water and landscapes, rewards of labor and commerce, and the revitalizing benefits of recreation – and shares it with Californians and visitors from around the world.*

## **Goals and National Heritage Area Emphasis**

The 2012 Feasibility Study set forth a series of goals that provided an initial direction for the initiative. These included general concepts like supporting heritage tourism and economic development, providing resources for historic preservation, and raising awareness of the region's significance. The goals also included specific actions to create maps that highlight partners and develop an interpretive sign program.

Participants in the management planning process built upon these early goals by identifying gaps in the region's services and programming that could be an emphasis for the NHA. The consensus was that the NHA would play a significant role in tourism and stewardship of the built environment by building capacity and supporting cultural and historical organizations. Additionally, stakeholders agreed that the NHA would most likely take a supporting role in resource stewardship of natural resources because there are already several agencies with leadership roles in the Delta.

The Organization Task Group generated five goals that the Advisory Committee refined and approved. The goals serve as a bridge between the NHA's high-level mission and vision and the specific objectives and strategies that the local coordinating entity and partners will carry out over the next 10 years.

## **GOAL 1, INTERPRETATION**

Guided by interpretation, and through institutional leadership and community projects, promote and instill an evolving understanding and appreciation of the historical and ongoing changes in the Delta's land, water, wildlife, and communities.

## **GOAL 2, RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT**

Steward the heritage and culture of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, by identifying, preserving, conserving, and enhancing the unique identity, resources, and living traditions of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

## **GOAL 3, HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Support sustainable tourism and economic development by encouraging responsible use of, and visitation to, the Delta's unique resources and communities.

## **GOAL 4, PARTNERSHIP**

Connect and support collaboration among governmental and non-governmental partners, businesses, and residents to establish a brand that readily identifies the Delta NHA and increases public awareness.

## **GOAL 5, ORGANIZATION**

Seek, establish, and maintain collaborative partnerships, effective governance principles, and sustainable business practices to manage the local coordinating entity and the NHA.

# **The Plan**

The *Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan* provides guidance to the DPC and the collaborating network of partners through 2034, 15 years after the initial designation of the NHA. The remaining chapters of this management plan are organized around the goals and include all legislative requirements.

- Chapter 1: Understanding and Appreciating California's Delta – The interpretive plan contains a detailed interpretive thematic framework based on the statement of national significance and themes. The chapter also contains the context for interpretation and education, including existing interpretation in the NHA and audiences that the NHA will target. Objectives and strategies for interpretation support Goal 1.
- Chapter 2: Stewarding the Delta's Resources – This chapter begins with an explanation of the importance of heritage and the ways in which it can be conserved. A description of the NHA's significant resources follows, including an overview of the resource inventory required by legislation and the challenges and opportunities related to the region's resources. The objectives and strategies for resource stewardship and enhancement support Goal 2.

- Chapter 3: Supporting Tourism and Economic Development – This chapter opens with a definition of sustainable tourism and an analysis of current tourism trends. This is followed by a description of tourism in the NHA, including a listing of existing partners and resources and a description of challenges and opportunities. Heritage development and tourism objectives and strategies support Goal 3.
- Chapter 4: Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network – The NHA's partnership network described in this chapter includes federal, state, and local entities that will be involved in the collaborative implementation of the management plan. The objectives and strategies for building and maintaining the network, increasing partners' capacity, and funding projects and programs support Goal 4.
- Chapter 5: Establishing Sustainable Governance – The business plan includes a description of the local coordinating entity for the NHA, the DPC, an analysis of the benefits and challenges of having a state agency in that role, and possible future coordinating entities. The chapter also contains the mission and vision that guide the NHA's local coordinating entity and partnership network, and recommendations for a management and governance structure. Finally, the chapter includes a 5-year financial projection. The objectives and strategies in the business plan support Goal 5.
- Chapter 6: Implementation, Evaluation, and Conclusion – The closing chapter features an overview of the implementation plan that will guide activities in the NHA through 2034. Implementation is divided into short, mid, and long-term strategies. The chapter also contains a description of the various roles that the NHA can play in carrying out the strategies. Finally, the chapter includes evaluative measures that can assist in documenting the NHA's success.



*A sign welcomes motorists leaving West Sacramento, Calif., to the National Heritage Area (Holly Heyser/Delta Protection Commission)*

## Chapter 1 – Understanding and Appreciating California’s Delta (Interpretation)

### Introduction to Interpretation

Authentic and accurate storytelling is a significant part of National Heritage Areas' responsibilities. Designating legislation for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA specifically requires that the management plan include an interpretive plan (Public Law 116-9 Section 6001.c.2.C.vii), which is the focus of this chapter. The management plan is required to incorporate an integrated and cooperative approach for the interpretation of natural, cultural, historic,

scenic, and recreational resources (c.2.A). Interpretation helps increase public awareness of, and appreciation for, natural, historical, scenic, and cultural resources (b.2.B.iv). Interpretive and educational programs and NHA partner projects directly support recognition, protection, and enhancement of the NHA's important resources (b.2.B.i).

As the local coordinating entity, DPC is directed to assist partners to establish and maintain interpretive exhibits and programs and to develop educational opportunities (b.2.B.ii,iii). Through collaboration, many NHA partners and stakeholders interpret the stories of their individual sites within the larger NHA context (b.2.B). DPC also assists partners in ensuring that clear, consistent, and appropriate signs identifying points of public access and sites of interest are posted throughout the NHA (b.2.B.vi).

Based on the legislative guidance, the Advisory Committee adopted the NHA's first goal:

*Guided by interpretation, and through institutional leadership and community projects, promote and instill an evolving understanding and appreciation of the historical and ongoing changes in the Delta's land, water, wildlife, and communities.*

The management plan directly addresses the designating legislation's requirements for interpretation and education through the information and strategies outlined in this chapter. The chapter serves as a long-range plan to guide interpretive and educational programming decisions for the DPC and its partners. The text identifies the NHA's important stories and places, describes existing interpretive resources, and provides objectives and strategies for telling the region's stories. NHA partners and interpreters will incorporate the interpretive themes and storylines as they develop content, programs, exhibits, interpretive panels, and online media related to their site and the NHA. These tools help partners discover common themes, coordinate content, and develop complementary interpretive services.

## **Interpretive Thematic Framework**

### **Role of Interpretive Themes in the NHA**

The stories of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta reflect a rich tapestry of Native Americans and immigrants from around the world, natural beauty, wildlife, engineering marvels, bustling metropolitan areas, picturesque rural towns, and public access to a vast array of recreational opportunities. The Delta is the heart of California – both geographically and metaphorically. Nestled between Northern California's largest and most influential metropolitan areas, the San



Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento, the region is an important economic engine and transportation corridor connecting the agricultural powerhouse of the Great Central Valley to the world. The Delta is rich in history and the experiences of Delta communities enhance people's understanding of California and American history.

Interpretation fosters opportunities to make meaningful connections to resources. Interpretation goes beyond facts; it reveals the meaning and relevancy of an object, place, feature, or event. Connections are made through hands-on involvement with an object, a landscape, a natural feature, or a site. Interpretation helps people build intellectual, emotional, or spiritual connections with the ideas, beliefs, and values inherent in the resources.

The Delta, which here refers to the entire NHA, including the Carquinez Strait, encompasses a large geographic area rich in natural history, biological diversity, cultural heritage, and abundant natural and historic resources. Connection to place can be found within the large landscape of the Delta's meandering waterways, through a historic site or event, and through the stories of the many cultures, ethnic groups, and communities that have called the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta home. Interpretation takes these interconnected pieces and organizes them into an inclusive, cumulative story that communicates important messages about the Delta's significance and resources. Each story, event, location, and resource is linked to the other, with the waters of this rare inland delta serving as the universal lifeblood.

### Interpretive Concepts

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is an area with countless stories grounded in cultural and natural heritage. An interpretive framework organizes these stories under themes that communicate important messages about the Delta's significance and resources and what they mean. Themes reinforce the "sense of place" that makes the Delta special and unique. The following narrative provides a statement of significance, five primary themes and underlying storylines, and three supporting themes for the NHA.

A **statement of significance** describes how and why a place is important. **Primary themes** are the core ideas or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting an area. They inspire emotional connection and provoke deeper thought and reflection. Subthemes or **storylines** are derived from primary interpretive themes, are narrower in scope, and explore specific ideas in greater depth. Storylines are the ideas that drive the development of specific interpretive projects and programs. **Supporting themes** are like storylines but depart from the primary themes enough to warrant separate status.

The DPC and its partners will use themes and storylines to connect their stories and places to the larger interpretive framework. Local stories can illustrate and bring themes to life, align them with authentic places, and connect the themes to the lives of real people to which visitors can relate. The themes are broad in scope. Every NHA partner will be able to find a place within the framework. The NHA theme statements will be incorporated directly or indirectly into interpretive content developed for local sites.

Each of the NHA themes and storylines is discussed below, including the general concept and publicly accessible sites where the storyline is currently presented or could be presented. The list of existing and potential interpretive sites is not meant to be exhaustive. The resource inventory, found in Appendix F, identifies important cultural, historical, natural, and recreational resources in the NHA along with the relevant themes that the resource represents. Partner sites will further develop each storyline in conjunction with DPC staff. Implementation may begin with the most high-profile storylines and those already represented by existing visitor attractions and sites. Flexibility is encouraged, and some of the storylines may be modified and new storylines added.

### Statement of Significance

At the heart of California lies a vast tidal estuary where the state's two largest rivers converge, forming a rare inland delta, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California's most crucial water and ecological resource. The Delta is a place that nurtures a unique ecosystem and has been supported and shaped by a culturally diverse population for millennia. The region's water, fertile land, and proximity to the San Francisco Bay fuels California's economy and is a critical linchpin in California's ongoing struggle to balance environmental conservation with critical water infrastructure. As California's population has grown, the Delta has served as an important recreational respite for the surrounding bustling cities.

### Primary Themes

#### **THEME 1: WATER – PRECIOUS LIFEBLOOD FOR THE DELTA AND CALIFORNIA**

**Theme Statement:** *The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is California's oasis, located at the center of the state's water challenges and opportunities, and a water passage between the Pacific Ocean and inland California.*

Water is the backbone of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's natural ecosystem, key to shaping the region's settlement patterns, vital to the development of the Delta and its role in the American story, and crucial to the

continued sustainability of its communities and economy. Freshwater from inland California meets saltwater in the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and Carquinez Strait and flows into the San Francisco Bay. Together, these waterways form the second largest estuary on the West Coast of North America that provide a critical corridor for fish, wildlife, and commerce.

Prior to European settlement, Native Americans settled at high points in the region and used the waterways and surrounding habitat for food, basketmaking materials, and other resources, a practice that continues to the present. The rivers served as routes of European and American exploration and colonization under the Spanish and Mexican governments from the late 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. Starting with the discovery of gold in 1848, the Carquinez Strait and Delta rivers connected San Francisco and other Bay Area settlements with the Mother Lode mines. Many of the Delta's small historic communities began as steamboat landings during and after the Gold Rush, where freight was transported to nearby urban centers for consumption or shipment overseas. The Delta's waterways enabled California agriculture to be a key component of the world market.

Over the past century, the Delta has been the heart of California's largest water supply delivery system, providing a large portion of the water necessary to support 25 million residents, the state's \$3.3 trillion economy, and more than three million acres of productive farmland.<sup>6</sup> Rainfall runoff and snowmelt is captured in upstream reservoirs for flood protection and recreation, and released downstream for power generation, maintenance of fish habitat, and preservation of low salinity In Delta waters for agricultural and human use. In the Delta, water is moved via pumps to urban and agricultural users in the San Francisco Bay Area and central and southern California, creating challenges for Delta farmers, residents, and wildlife.

### **STORYLINE 1.1: STEWARDSHIP OF A PRECIOUS RESOURCE (1930S-PRESENT)**

**Storyline Statement:** *A finite, unpredictable, and much-desired resource for California, Delta water is an ongoing lesson in stewardship by public and private partners that will grow more difficult with the impacts of climate change.*

Water management has been integral to Delta life since early American settlers transformed an extensive area of tidal rivers, sloughs, and wetlands into

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<sup>6</sup> Public Policy Institute of California, "The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta," October 2016, [https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/content/pubs/report/R\\_1016JM5R.pdf](https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/content/pubs/report/R_1016JM5R.pdf), accessed on December 1, 2023; California State Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy, "Fast Facts on the California Economy," <https://ajed.assembly.ca.gov/sites/ajed.assembly.ca.gov/files/1-%20CA%20Economy%20Fast%20Facts%20updated%20Nov%2015%202022.pdf>. Accessed December 1, 2023.

farmland and communities. Periodic floods deposited fertile alluvial soils but also limited early development and necessitated development of the region's flood control facilities. Many contemporary Delta waterways were constructed for water circulation, shipping, and irrigation and to obtain material for levee construction.

The Central Valley Project and State Water Project, both developed in the mid-20th century, have played a significant role in the environmental health of the Delta. The federal Central Valley Project, authorized by Congress in 1937, was for flood control and navigation, water supply for agriculture and municipal water uses, and hydroelectric power generation. The magnitude of water diversions through the Delta from the Sacramento River increased dramatically after the 1960s, when the State Water Project was implemented. The Central Valley Project and State Water Project are linked south of the Clifton Court Forebay, where water flows into the Delta-Mendota Canal and California Aqueduct, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

Water quality issues in the Delta revolve around pollutants and salinity. There are many sources of pollution given the size of the watershed, including residual mercury from Gold Rush-era mining, treated municipal and industrial wastewater, untreated urban stormwater, and agricultural runoff. Seasonal and annual salinity levels are driven by the amount of freshwater flowing into and through the Delta. Both natural and human-made actions affect salinity, including tidal forces, agricultural run-off, water diversions, and freshwater inflow from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers.

Delta ecosystem health is strongly tied to water supply management in the Delta watershed. The Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers' flows are highly managed to support agricultural and urban water supply, maintain water quality, and reduce flood risk. Natural seasonal and year-to-year variability of river flows has given way to more stable, artificially regulated conditions. Less variable flow conditions interrupt natural estuarine processes and create improved habitat conditions for nonnative invasive species.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- Central Valley Project sites, including Delta Cross Channel (Walnut Grove)
- Clifton Court Forebay
- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista

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<sup>7</sup> Phillip Garone, "Managing the Garden: Agriculture, Reclamation, and Restoration in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta," in Delta Protection Commission, *Delta Narratives: Saving the Historical and Cultural Heritage of The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*, 2015.

- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- Fishing access points
- Fishing events and tournaments, such as the Bay Point Sturgeon Derby and Rio Vista Bass Festival and Derby
- Marinas
- Recreation areas, such as Benicia State Recreation Area and Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- State Water Project sites, including Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates
- Urban waterfronts, including Antioch, Benicia, Crockett, Hercules, Martinez, Pittsburg, Port Costa, Rio Vista, Vallejo, and West Sacramento

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Bay-Delta Model, Sausalito
- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Museum of Science and Curiosity, Sacramento
- Urban waterfronts such as the Old Sacramento Waterfront and Stockton's Weber Point

### **STORYLINE 1.2: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S WATER HIGHWAY (1840S-1940S)**

**Storyline Statement:** *The Delta's maze of interconnected waterways and levees and narrow Carquinez Strait creates a vital transportation corridor from the Pacific Ocean to the Central Valley, bringing forty-niners to the goldfields, uniting small farming communities and larger metropolitan areas, and transporting agricultural and industrial goods.*

The Delta's natural waterways were the reason that boats were the primary mode of early transportation. Marshy ground made construction of trails and roads difficult, so most goods were transported by small watercraft, beginning with Native American boats constructed from harvested tules (a large bulrush plant, particularly *Schoenoplectus acutus*). Tule marshes in current-day Oakley caused the Anza expedition's 1776 journey through coastal Contra Costa County (now memorialized by the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historical Trail and a portion designated as the Delta de Anza Trail) to turn to the south back to Monterey.

Sacramento and Stockton, located on the eastern edge of the Delta, developed into large cities during the Gold Rush (1848-1855) because they served as transfer points for travelers arriving by boat through the San Francisco Bay and the Delta to overland transportation. Although they were less vulnerable than other parts of the Delta, Sacramento and Stockton still

experienced flooding, most notably the Great Flood of 1862. Traveling through Delta waters was initially treacherous due to snags and obstacles.<sup>8</sup> By the early 1850s, the steamboat was a common sight on the Delta and ferry routes were developed to move people across waterways. Communities along the Carquinez Strait and Sacramento River developed initially as steamboat stops and agricultural shipping points. Between the late 19th century and early 20th century, the largest ferries in the world at the time carried entire trains between Benicia and Port Costa.

Despite the proximity of the transcontinental railroad, railroad routes through the Delta were slow in coming due to easy access to water transportation. Automobiles, which began widespread use in the 1910s, eventually replaced steamboats, ferries, and the railroad as the primary means of transportation through the Delta. The Delta landscape required creative roadway engineering. Highways were constructed along levee tops, which sometimes buckle due to settling of peat soils, and bridges were moveable to provide unobstructed boat traffic. These now historic bridges, including five Strauss Heel Trunnion Bascule bridges (see Chapter 2), are icons of the Delta.

While steamboats no longer travel through the Delta, the region still plays an important role for commercial shipping, particularly agricultural goods from the Delta and Central Valley, making use of the inland ports of Stockton and West Sacramento. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers became active in maintaining and improving the Delta shipping lanes when runoff and debris impeded shipping (discussed more in Storyline 2.3).

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- Amtrak Capitol Corridor route, including Martinez train station
- Antioch Historical Museum, Antioch
- Carquinez Strait Loop
- Delta King, Sacramento
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Former packing sheds such as the Locke Boathouse Marina and River Road Exchange in Hood
- Freeport Railroad Route
- Howard Landing Ferry
- Juan Bautista de Anza National Historical Trail
- Pony Express National Historic Trail
- Port Costa Museum

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<sup>8</sup> Swagerty and Smith, 25.

- Port of West Sacramento, West Sacramento
- Ryer Island Ferry
- Sacramento Northern Railroad Route
- Sacramento Southern Railway Route
- Strauss-Truncheon Heel Bascule Bridges (Freeport Bridge, Isleton Bridge, Paintersville Bridge, Steamboat Slough Bridge, and Walnut Grove Bridge)
- Tower Bridge, Sacramento/West Sacramento
- Vallejo Ferry
- Victory Highway Route

Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- California Automotive Museum, Sacramento
- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento
- Delta King, Sacramento
- Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Sacramento
- Port of Stockton, Stockton
- Sacramento History Museum
- San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, San Francisco, including the Alma
- Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum
- Western Railway Museum, Rio Vista

## THEME 2: THE BEATING HEART OF NATURAL CALIFORNIA

**Theme Statement:** *The Delta lies at the center of California's biological and physical environment, supporting numerous biologically diverse species and connecting California's freshwater resources to the Pacific Ocean.*

Before the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Delta and Suisun Marsh ecosystem was one of the most biologically productive and diverse ecosystems on the West Coast. The confluence of the two rivers formed a system of freshwater and brackish marshes from which spread a variety of habitat types: grasslands, seasonal wetlands, oak-woodland savannah, chaparral, and riparian habitats. Rich peat soils which dominated the Delta landscape had been formed from centuries of tule decay. Natural levees bordered the Delta waterways that were vegetated with oaks, sycamores, walnuts, willows, and more. The region was incredibly rich with a diversity of wildlife prior to large alterations beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The relative stability of the climate in the Carquinez Strait makes the area particularly abundant with endemic plant species in California. Several diverse plant communities are represented in the Carquinez Strait, including foothill and

valley grasslands, oak/bay woodlands, central coastal scrub, northern coastal salt marsh, coastal brackish marsh, and coastal and valley freshwater marsh.

Native wildlife has been impacted by changes to the ecosystem over the past 150 years, including loss of habitat, loss of access to upstream habitat from dam construction, diking and draining for reclamation, urbanization, changes in flows, invasive species, pollutants, export pumping, and more. Large mammals such as bear and elk, which historically lived in and around the Delta, have either been eliminated or reduced to extremely low numbers. In recent years, fish populations, most notably the Delta smelt, have experienced significant declines in the Delta.

Today's natural areas are remnants of the once extensive native habitats, but still reward visitors with skies filled with waterfowl and birds, including the iconic sandhill crane, in flight, runs of salmon and sturgeon beckoning anglers, or quiet evenings beneath starry skies. Delta farmlands also serve as valuable habitat, particularly for waterfowl and shorebirds. In response to a growing understanding of the importance of the natural environment over the last fifty years, efforts to protect and restore the Delta's wildlife and fish and their habitats have become more common at sites throughout the region.

### **STORYLINE 2.1: THE DELTA'S TERRAIN AS FOUNDATION FOR LIFE**

**Storyline Statement:** *Weathered mountains, water flowing from the Sierra Nevada mountains through five rivers (Sacramento, San Joaquín, Calaveras, Cosumnes, and Mokelumne), and the tidal influences of the Pacific Ocean have supported the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's abundant ecosystem.*

Geologically, the Delta is a relatively recent creation. Warming temperatures at the beginning of the Holocene Epoch, approximately 11,700 years ago, caused glaciers to melt and sea levels to rise, creating a large tidal freshwater marsh. By 10,000 B.P. (before present), the Pacific Ocean advanced eastward from the edge of the Farallon Islands through the Golden Gate and soon flooded the valleys that became San Francisco Bay. By 6,000 B.P. the advancing ocean exerted tidal influence through the Delta and backed the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers out of their channels, creating a labyrinth of hundreds of miles of sloughs.

Like many river deltas, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is an evolutionary product of running water and erosion, sediment transport, and deposition. The Delta, however, is an atypical, inverted river delta where the sediment from the Sacramento and San Joaquin drainage system fills the area of river confluence rather than exiting and dropping its sediment load into the San Francisco Bay. Sediment accumulated behind the narrow Carquinez Strait over the years formed low-lying peat islands and natural levees.



The pre-reclamation Delta was a heterogeneous landscape. The “tule” lands, or freshwater tide lands, were dominated by bulrush thickets and grasses. The higher lands along the island margins and on scattered mounds in the central Delta supported shrubs, predominately willows. Along the major rivers, and especially the Sacramento River, high natural levees formed by depositions from overbank flows supported woodlands. Wetland vegetation, partially decomposing over thousands of years, formed layers of peat up to 60 feet thick in the central Delta and thinner layers toward the inland fringes.

As described in Theme 4, the Delta landscape has been dramatically transformed from marshland into farmland. However, the Delta now includes a variety of types of protected lands, including some on which agriculture is managed to be compatible with wildlife. Parts of the region have been restored to resemble the pre-reclamation era, but maintenance of restoration projects requires direct human intervention, which demonstrates how highly engineered the Delta is. Profoundly affected by the consequences of statewide water projects, the Delta has suffered from a prolonged decline in water quality and the ability of its aquatic ecosystem to support life.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- Fishing access points
- Fishing events and tournaments, such as the Bay Point Sturgeon Derby and Rio Vista Bass Festival and Derby
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Marinas
- Pacific Flyway Center, Fairfield (under construction)
- Publicly accessible habitat restoration projects, including Dutch Slough near Oakley
- Recreation areas, including Benicia State Recreation Area and Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Wildlife areas, including Grizzly Island Wildlife Area, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Rush Ranch Open Space, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve), and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

## Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Bay-Delta Model, Sausalito
- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Museum of Science and Curiosity, Sacramento

## STORYLINE 2.2: THE DELTA SHAPES WEST COAST ECOLOGY

**Storyline Statement:** *The Delta is part of the second largest estuary on the West Coast of North America and a significant part of the wintering grounds for a variety of waterfowl along the Pacific Flyway.*

The Bay-Delta Estuary's watershed extends from the ridgeline of the Sierra Nevada mountains to the strait of the Golden Gate which connects the San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean, including almost 60,000 square miles and nearly 40 percent of California. Half of the state's surface water supply falls as rain or snow within this region. The estuary's waters and wetlands are a biological resource of tremendous importance, providing critical winter-feeding habitat for over a million migratory birds such as sandhill cranes, Canada geese, snow geese, and tundra swans, a productive nursery for many species of juvenile fish and shellfish, and a year-round home for a vast diversity of plants and animals.

The Pacific Flyway is the westernmost of the four great North American transcontinental flyways for migratory waterfowl and other avian species. The flyway stretches from the arctic and subarctic regions of Alaska and western Canada, across the western United States, to western Mexico and beyond. For thousands of years, migratory waterfowl of the flyway have bred in the far north during the short arctic summer, migrated southward during the fall to winter in places with more moderate climates, and returned to northern latitudes during the spring. The primary wintering grounds for the Pacific Flyway are in California's Central Valley, including the Delta and Suisun Marsh. Although the valley's estimated four million acres of permanent and seasonal wetlands at the time of statehood (1850) decreased to only 700,000 acres by the mid-20th century—primarily because of conversion to agriculture—the valley still supports an astonishing 60 percent of the wintering waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway.

The Cosumnes River Preserve, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area are the largest and perhaps the best-known protected areas in the Delta region, but there are other refuges such as Grizzly Island Wildlife Area, Hill Slough Wildlife Area, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve, and White Slough Wildlife Area. Together, these various refuges, created through efforts of nonprofit conservation organizations and the state and federal governments, have restored relatively small but ecologically important parts of the Delta for migratory waterfowl.

#### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- Fishing access points
- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Marinas
- Pacific Flyway Center, Fairfield (under construction)
- Publicly accessible habitat restoration projects, including Dutch Slough near Oakley
- Recreation areas, including Benicia State Recreation Area and Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Wildlife areas, including Grizzly Island Wildlife Area, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Rush Ranch Open Space, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve), and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

#### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Museum of Science and Curiosity, Sacramento

### **STORYLINE 2.3: THE DOWNRIVER ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY OF THE GOLD RUSH (1853-1884)**

**Storyline Statement:** *The environmentally destructive effects of hydraulic mining on the Delta and its watershed led to early court decisions that dramatically influenced federal and state environmental policy.*

The Gold Rush (1848-1855) fundamentally changed the Delta in many ways, including the devastating effect on Native Americans, the growth of water transportation, and rapid urban development, but the environmental effects occurred well after the discovery of gold in 1848. Gold mining was initially focused on streambeds, but when that resource was exhausted, miners and mining companies turned to hydraulic mining starting in 1853. Water shot through a nozzle at high pressure onto the face of cliffs washed away boulders, gravel, dirt, and any gold.

Hydraulic mining dumped cubic miles of sediment and debris, including toxic mercury, into the Yuba and other rivers, which filled up the channels and

caused widespread flooding in the Sacramento Valley and the Delta. By 1914, more than an estimated 800 million cubic yards of mining debris traveled through the Delta. This type of mining prevented boats from navigating specific channels, the commercial fishery to collapse, and water tables in the Delta to rise. The higher water table reduced the quality and quantity of stone fruits (peaches, cherries, apricots) in the north Delta, eventually leading farmers to plant water-tolerant pears.

When legislative efforts to resolve the issue failed, farmers instituted injunction proceedings against the miners. In *People v. Gold Run Ditch and Mining Company* (1881) and *Woodruff v. North Bloomfield Gravel Company* (1884), judges placed injunction on companies that sought to dump debris into the North Fork of the American River and Yuba River, respectively, because of the harm to downriver riparian lands and navigation. These landmark state environmental court decisions sided with the farmers. Hydraulic mining was effectively ended in the *Woodruff* decision. Nevertheless, it would take several decades for the detrimental sediment to be flushed downstream.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center, Oakley and other East Bay Regional Park District parks
- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- Fishing access points
- Great California Delta Trail routes, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, West Sacramento River Walk
- Marinas
- Pear Fair, Courtland
- Port of West Sacramento, West Sacramento
- Recreation areas, such as Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Strauss-Trunton Heel Bascule Bridges (Freeport Bridge, Isleton Bridge, Paintersville Bridge, and Walnut Grove Bridge)
- Tower Bridge, Sacramento/West Sacramento
- Urban waterfronts such as Rio Vista Waterfront Promenade and West Sacramento River Walk
- Wildlife areas, including Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve), and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites

- Museum of Science and Curiosity, Sacramento
- Port of Stockton, Stockton

- Urban waterfronts such as Old Sacramento Waterfront and Stockton's Weber Point

### **THEME 3: ABUNDANCE, DIVERSITY, RESISTANCE, AND SURVIVAL – NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE DELTA**

**Theme Statement:** *Native Americans thrived in the Delta prior to European settlement, developing complex and diverse societies, deeply rooted in the landscape, that have endured despite existential threats such as disease and genocide.*

From time immemorial, Nisenan, Yokuts, Miwok, Ohlone, and Patwin speaking people have called the Delta home. The Delta is the heart of their culture. Prior to European colonization in the late 18th century, the areas surrounding the marshlands in the Delta's core were densely populated by Native Americans who actively managed the land and harvested plants and animals for their livelihood. European colonization brought the introduction of malaria into the Central Valley during the 1840s. American and Californian genocidal policies in the mid-19th century and reclamation projects from the 1860s to 1930s forever altered Delta Native American communities, forcing Tribes off their ancestral lands. In the 21st century, Native Americans continue to use the Delta as a vital source of traditional foods, natural medicines, and materials for traditional arts and to celebrate their heritage and connection to the land.

Much of the history of Native Americans in the region has been researched and written by scholars, scientists, and first-hand accounts of settlers. These histories provide valuable accounts of Native American culture and livelihoods before and after European contact, but do not reflect the Native American perspective or lived experience.

During the management planning process, the DPC and California State Parks staff conducted intensive outreach to Native American Tribes to ensure that interpretive themes and strategies incorporate their perspective and needs. Tribal representatives provided numerous recommendations for the interpretive themes and other aspects of the NHA's work, which are included in different parts of the management plan. They expressed a desire for time to work with their members to determine appropriate stories and locations to tell them. The DPC commits to partnering with Native American Tribes to tell their stories and history fully and accurately.

Tribes that are closely connected to the NHA and with whom all public agencies and the NHA will continue to consult include, but are not limited to:

- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista
- Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians

- Cachil Dehe Band of Indians of the Colusa Indian Wintun Community
- Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians
- Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe
- Confederated Villages of Lisjan
- Cortina Rancheria Kletsel Dehe Band of Wintun Indians
- Guidiville Indian Rancheria
- Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan
- Lone Band of Miwok Indians
- Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area
- Nashville Enterprise Miwok-Maidu-Nishinam Tribe
- North Valley Yokuts Tribe
- Ohlone Indian Tribe
- Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians
- Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
- Tamien Nation
- Tsi Akim Maidu
- Tule River Indian Tribe
- United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
- Wilton Rancheria
- Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band.
- Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

While the discussion of Tribal culture here is limited to the NHA boundaries, Native Americans consider the Delta to be a much larger place than the conventional boundaries for the Delta. For them, the Delta includes the entire watershed that stretches from the California-Oregon border to the Tehachapi Mountains north of the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and the area west to the Pacific Ocean. As a result, many Tribes throughout California have an interest in the Delta and the NHA's work.

### **STORYLINE 3.1: THE DELTA IS A LIVING ORGANISM**

**Storyline Statement:** *The Delta is the heart and soul of Native American Tribal culture, society, and ecology within the Delta watershed.*

The Delta is home – a sacred place at the heart of Native American culture. The region's trees, plants, insects, fish, shellfish, birds, and small and large mammals provided sustenance. Abundant tule and grasses provided materials for baskets, boats, clothes, and homes. Water provided nourishment for soil, food, shells for jewelry and money, and a place for travel. The land nurtured plant life, served as living space, and received ancestors' bodies. The Delta's water, plants, animals, and the most prominent geological feature in the region, Mount Diablo, have been integral to spiritual life.

Delta Native American culture values their deep connectivity with the environment. Don Hankins, a professor and Plains Miwok traditional cultural practitioner, states that Native Americans in the Delta have long recognized the "interrelated and interdependent nature of everything from the individual to the universe" that exists across space, time, and environmental scale. Therefore, they consider the Delta's environmental health as integral to the health of their culture.<sup>9</sup>

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center, Oakley
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Crockett Museum
- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- East Contra Costa Historical Museum
- Fishing access points
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
- Locke Historic District (National Historic Landmark), including the Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum
- Marinas
- Martinez Museum
- Pacific Flyway Center, Fairfield (under construction)
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Chicago National Naval Memorial, Concord
- Port Costa Museum
- Publicly accessible habitat restoration projects, including Dutch Slough near Oakley

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<sup>9</sup> Don Hankins, "Ecocultural Equality in the Miwko Waali," *San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science*, 2018, 16(3).

- Recreation areas, such as Benicia State Recreation Area and Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Rio Vista Museum
- Tribal sites accessible to the public
- Wildlife areas, including Grizzly Island Wildlife Area, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Rush Ranch Open Space, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve), and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Mount Diablo State Park, Clayton
- Museum of Science and Curiosity, Sacramento
- Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Sacramento
- Sacramento History Museum
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi
- Tribal community centers, interpretive centers, libraries, museums, and sites, such as the Maidu Museum and Historic Site, Roseville, and Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Exhibits and Collections Center, Placerville

### **STORYLINE 3.2: ENDURING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DELTA LANDSCAPE**

**Storyline Statement:** *Native American Tribes managed Delta landscapes to support permanent settlements and large populations sustainably and continue to utilize Delta resources, despite the loss of their traditional homeland.*

For all time, the Delta's waters, land, plants, and wildlife have nurtured the people, and they, in turn, have protected and managed the land to ensure its health. Native Americans in the Delta region did not engage in Western agricultural practices prior to European colonization, but they took advantage of wetlands and waterways by harvesting and tending a variety of food sources: acorns, grasses and forbs, and various wetland plants; shellfish, including freshwater clams and mussels; fish, including chinook salmon and sturgeon; waterfowl; and large game, including deer, pronghorn antelope, and elk (West and Welch). They modified their environment in important ways, including using controlled fire, pruning, digging, selective harvesting, and other methods to sustain healthy habitats comprising hundreds of plants and animals. Central Valley inhabitants used fire widely to manage game, stimulate the production of food crops, decrease insect pests, and facilitate food gathering.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Phillip Garone, "Managing the Garden: Agriculture, Reclamation, and Restoration in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta," in *Delta Narratives: Saving the Historical and Cultural Heritage of The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*, 2015.



Today's residents now live on the ancestral lands of Native Americans, who are still here, and from whom contemporary society has so much to learn about this special place. As noted in Storyline 3.1, many Native American belief systems about the Delta have a common understanding that there is a reciprocity between the health of the natural landscape and cultural well-being. Don Hankins writes that environmental disturbance "disrupts the balance among physical, cultural, and metaphysical properties at multiple scales (e.g., site-specific to beyond regional)."<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, restoration of the natural environment is critical to revitalization of traditional Native American culture. Today's Native American Tribal members still gather foods, medicinal herbs, and traditional art materials in the Delta. Government agencies are learning from and incorporating Delta Native American land management practices and values, often referred to as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), to address ecological challenges, while respecting and enhancing cultural values and properties. The Delta Science Program within the Delta Stewardship Council is working with Tribes to assess uses for traditional knowledge, such as controlled burns, in Delta science and decision-making.<sup>12</sup>

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center, Oakley
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Crockett Museum
- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- East Contra Costa Historical Museum
- Fishing access points
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

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<sup>11</sup> Hankins 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Maven's Notebook. "Delta Stewardship Council: Integrating Social Sciences in the Delta." Accessed on February 1, 2024. [https://mavensnotebook.com/2023/03/16/delta-stewardship-council-integrating-social-sciences-in-the-delta/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1706804584.4484961032867431640625](https://mavensnotebook.com/2023/03/16/delta-stewardship-council-integrating-social-sciences-in-the-delta/?doing_wp_cron=1706804584.4484961032867431640625)

- Locke Historic District (National Historic Landmark), including the Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum
- Marinas
- Martinez Museum
- Pacific Flyway Center, Fairfield (under construction)
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Chicago National Naval Memorial, Concord
- Port Costa Museum
- Publicly accessible habitat restoration projects, including Dutch Slough near Oakley
- Recreation areas, such as Benicia State Recreation Area and Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Rio Vista Museum
- Tribal sites accessible to the public
- Wildlife areas, including Grizzly Island Wildlife Area, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Rush Ranch Open Space, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve), and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

#### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Mount Diablo State Park, Clayton
- Museum of Science and Curiosity, Sacramento
- Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Sacramento
- Sacramento History Museum
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi
- Tribal community centers, interpretive centers, libraries, museums, and sites, such as the Maidu Museum and Historic Site, Roseville, and Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Exhibits and Collections Center, Placerville

### **STORYLINE 3.3: ONE PEOPLE OF THE DELTA, MANY COMMUNITIES**

**Storyline Statement:** *Native American cultures of the Delta and adjacent central California are exceptionally diverse in languages, histories, cultural practices, and world views.*

Anthropologists divided the 19th century Native Americans of the Delta into six linguistic groupings. The Nisenan occupied the far northeastern part of the Delta, occupying lands to the east of the Sacramento River between the Cosumnes and American rivers. The Plains Miwok occupied both banks of the

Sacramento River from just below Sacramento to Rio Vista as well as much of the eastern Delta from the Cosumnes River to the Mokelumne River. The territory of the Northern Valley Yokuts included the southern Delta. The Bay Miwok occupied the far western portion of the Delta from Rio Vista to the southern shore of Suisun Bay (and as far south as Mount Diablo). The Patwin occupied the extreme northwestern portion of the Delta from west of the Montezuma Hills to the north shore of Suisun Bay, and beyond to the northeastern tip of San Pablo Bay (as well as far into the Sacramento Valley to the north). The Karkin group of the Ohlone were located on both sides of the Carquinez Strait, which bears their name. <sup>13</sup>

Prior to European colonization, Native American communities in the Central Valley were organized in small sovereign nations, sometimes called triblets or village communities. These nations had complex relationships with other nations based on intermarriage, trade, and ceremonial reciprocity, but there was no overarching governance. Triblets had no compelling need for political or military alliance under one leader or a confederated polity. Nor did they need to farm to be fully self-sufficient, if not relatively affluent. Archeologists Kent Lightfoot and Otis Parrish (the latter a member of the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria) stated:

"Although technically they are hunter-gatherers, many Native California communities exhibited traits more typically associated with well-developed agrarian societies. That is, they enjoyed sizeable population densities, had relatively sedentary villages, amassed significant quantities of stored foods and goods, and maintained complex political religious organizations."<sup>14</sup>

Native Americans' skill in utilizing the region's abundant resources was the reason the Delta supported one of the highest population densities in pre-Columbian North America outside of Mexico.<sup>15</sup>

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center, Oakley
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez

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<sup>13</sup> Garone 2015, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> William R. Swagerty and Reuben W. Smith, "Stitching a River Culture: Communication, Trade and Transportation to 1960," in *Delta Narratives: Saving the Historical and Cultural Heritage of The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*, 2015, p. 3; Kent G. Lightfoot and Otis Parrish, *California Indians and Their Environment: An Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 2-13,

<sup>15</sup> Hankins 2018.

- Crockett Museum
- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- East Contra Costa Historical Museum
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
- Locke Historic District (National Historic Landmark), including the Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum
- Martinez Museum
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Chicago National Naval Memorial, Concord
- Port Costa Museum
- Rio Vista Museum
- Tribal sites accessible to the public

#### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Mount Diablo State Park, Clayton
- Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Sacramento
- Sacramento History Museum
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi
- Tribal community centers, interpretive centers, libraries, museums, and sites, such as the Maidu Museum and Historic Site, Roseville, and Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Exhibits and Collections Center, Placerville

### **STORYLINE 3.4: NATIVE AMERICAN RESISTANCE AND SURVIVAL IN THE DELTA TULE (1790S-1840S)**

**Storyline Statement:** *Native Americans in the Delta resisted settler colonialism by defending their homeland with force, experienced waves of disease, systemic genocide, and forced removal from their ancestral lands, yet survived to carry on traditional knowledge and culture.*

The 1769 Portolá expedition was the beginning of Spanish efforts to establish the new colony of Alta California, construct a network of missions and presidios

(forts), and, overall, fortify the northern frontier of New Spain. The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail marks the travels of a party under the command of de Anza, which entered the Delta in 1776. Delta Native American freedom fighters actively resisted the Spanish, protecting Native Americans who fled the missions on the coast and fighting to prevent the Spanish from penetrating into California's interior.

Arriving in the early 19th century, Hudson's Bay Company fur trappers inadvertently introduced malaria into the Delta and Central Valley, which had devastating consequences for Native Americans and their culture. The Native American population in the malaria-affected parts of the Central Valley may have been reduced by as much as 75 percent between 1833 and 1846.<sup>16</sup> Such profound death reduced survivors' resistance to the incoming wave of white settlers who arrived during the Gold Rush in 1848 and further appropriated Native American territory, precipitating the final collapse of independent Delta Native American cultures. Beginning in the 1850s, many of the remaining Native Americans were forcibly driven onto reservations away from economically valuable areas or killed by California- and Federal-sponsored genocide campaigns and bounties.<sup>17</sup>

In 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom formally apologized on behalf of the State of California for the historical violence, exploitation, dispossession, and attempted destruction of Tribal communities, which forcibly and violently removed Native Americans from their ancestral land and sacred practices. Despite Tribes being violently removed from their ancestral lands, Native American traditions, languages, and traditional land management practices are very much alive in the Delta and, as noted in Storyline 3.2, evolving to meet today's challenges and needs. Although events within the NHA are limited, there are pow wows and other events in nearby communities such as Auburn, Berkeley, Davis, Fairfield, Napa, Oakland, Richmond, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Stockton.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center, Oakley
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Crockett Museum
- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista

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<sup>16</sup> Sherburne F. Cook, "The Epidemic of 1830–1833 in California and Oregon," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 43, no. 3 (1955): 318.

<sup>17</sup> Garone 2019, p. 11-13.

- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- East Contra Costa Historical Museum
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
- Locke Historic District (National Historic Landmark), including the Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum
- Martinez Museum
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Chicago National Naval Memorial, Concord
- Port Costa Museum
- Rio Vista Museum
- Tribal sites accessible to the public

#### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Mount Diablo State Park, Clayton
- Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Sacramento
- Sacramento History Museum
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi
- Tribal community centers, interpretive centers, libraries, museums, and sites, such as the Maidu Museum and Historic Site, Roseville, and Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians Exhibits and Collections Center, Placerville

## **THEME 4: THE DELTA BECOMES CALIFORNIA'S CORNUCOPIA**

**Theme Statement:** *Through capital, human labor, and technology, the Delta became one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions, with the ability to grow a large variety of crops, farmed by large and small operations.*

An important part of the Delta story since the Gold Rush is the dramatic transformation of the area from marshlands to one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world. Reclamation of the Delta was achieved by innumerable hours of human labor, initially by Chinese immigrants under harsh conditions and for minimal pay, significant financial investment, especially in the low-lying central Delta, and innovations and technologies for earth moving and

levee building that would eventually be used on agricultural fields and construction sites throughout the world. The Delta's rich peat and silt soils, flat land, and freshwater availability made growing crops easier than in other regions of California. The rivers provided easy access to markets in Sacramento, San Francisco, Stockton, and elsewhere.

Delta agriculture experienced several phases of development as the popularity of different crops rose and fell, and new crops and processing methods were introduced. Today, the Delta grows over 70 different crops on 415,000 farmed acres. Pasture and field crops dominate the west and central Delta where elevations and water quality are typically lower than other areas of the Delta. Higher-value vineyards and deciduous fruit and nuts such as pears and almonds, are commonly found along the northern, eastern, and southern perimeter of the Delta. Vegetable and berry crops are common in the south Delta. In 2016, Delta farms and related food and beverage manufacturing supported over 23,000 jobs across California and \$4.6 billion in output.<sup>18</sup>

#### **STORYLINE 4.1: TRANSFORMING WETLANDS INTO FARMLAND (1860S-1930S)**

**Storyline Statement:** *Conversion of the Delta from wetland to farmland was one of the most significant land reclamation projects in United States history; the technologies, techniques, and infrastructure that were invented locally revolutionized agricultural and earth-moving practices around the world.*

The prevailing 19th-century view of wetlands was that they represented an obstacle to cultivation, settlement, and the fulfillment of America's Manifest Destiny. The outbreak of malaria in the Central Valley provided an additional incentive to drain and reclaim the wetlands. In 1850, the federal Swamp and Overflow Land Act conveyed over 2 million acres of wetlands to the state, including nearly 500,000 acres within the Delta. Reclamation in the Delta was slow at first, since farmers were focused on higher and more easily reclaimed lands but accelerated after 1868 when the state removed limits on the number of acres an individual could purchase. Reclamation of deep tule lands, such as those of the central Delta, required larger capitalized efforts only possible with large properties.<sup>19</sup> Investors and farmers quickly purchased marshland and land in the Delta became predominately privately owned, though the land underlying navigable waterways is held in the public trust.

Chinese laborers constructed the bulk of early levees in the 1870s and 1880s. Both individual landowners and land-reclamation corporations utilized a system of contract labor. The employer negotiated directly with Chinese bosses

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<sup>18</sup> Delta Protection Commission 2020

<sup>19</sup> John Thompson, "Early Reclamation and Abandonment of the Central Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta," *Sacramento History: Journal of the Sacramento County Historical Society* VI, no. 1-4 (2006): 46.

who were skillful middlemen able to connect labor supply with labor demand. The average wage for Chinese laborers working for Tide Land Reclamation Corporation was one dollar per day, far less than the \$1.52 average wage for a laborer in 1870.<sup>20</sup> Many Chinese emigrated from the Pearl River Delta, a region like the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and used construction techniques from their homeland.

Sloughs were sometimes dammed or gated to create a larger reclamation area or integrated into internal drainage works, turning small islands into larger islands. Unfortunately, much of these levee building methods would eventually prove inadequate, which led to the development of innovative government organizations and pioneering earth-moving equipment to build a more resilient system. By 1930, levees and drainage systems were largely complete and most of the area was reclaimed for agricultural use.

Levee building and soft peat soils made Delta agriculture challenging, but also made the region a center for developing innovative farming and earth-moving equipment. Companies in San Francisco and Stockton manufactured dredges, a floating barge used to bring up soil from a riverbed for levee construction and enhanced navigation, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These firms played an important part in Stockton's development as a center for equipment manufacturing and industry. In 1904, one company, Holt Manufacturing, led by Benjamin Holt, first added a caterpillar tread to a steam tractor, allowing it to travel more easily across peat soils. In 1906, Holt sold his first gasoline-powered Caterpillar tractor, which would soon revolutionize farming and earth-moving, not only throughout the Delta, but throughout the United States and the world. Antone Dutra, a Portuguese immigrant, established a dredging business in Rio Vista that has evolved into an international company that remains family owned.

Beginning in 1922, Stockton mechanic and construction contractor Robert G. LeTourneau invented a series of new scrapers, earthmovers, and grading equipment to better level Delta and other Central Valley land for irrigation and drainage. By the 1940s, LeTourneau machines represented nearly 70 percent of the earth moving and engineering equipment used by the Allied forces during World War II. Other notable equipment invented in the Delta included a sugar beet harvester, the first bean harvester, the asparagus ripper, the asparagus plow, the mechanical tomato harvester, and several other plows, discs, backhoes, cultivators, and subsoilers.

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<sup>20</sup> Clarence D. Long, *Wages and Earnings in the United States, 1860-1890*, Princeton University Press, 1960, <https://www.nber.org/system/files/chapters/c2500/c2500.pdf>.



#### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Agritourism venues such as Bacchini's U-Pick in Brentwood, the Delta Farmer's Market near Rio Vista, Old Sugar Mill in Clarksburg
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- Dutra Museum of Dredging, Rio Vista
- East Contra Costa Historical Society Museum
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Isleton Museum
- Locke Boarding House State Park
- Rio Vista Army Base
- Rio Vista Museum

#### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Rio Vista Army Base
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi

### **STORYLINE 4.2: DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL AND GLOBAL MARKET FOR DELTA GOODS (1880S-1950S)**

**Storyline Statement:** *The Delta's productive farmland, rich fishing opportunities, and access to waterways inspired the development of industries to facilitate the distribution of food to the nation and world.*

Wheat and later barley were the first widely planted crops in the Delta. More grain was produced and exported from the upper San Joaquin Valley and western Delta in the 1870s than the entire Mississippi Valley.<sup>21</sup> The Southern Pacific and Central Pacific railroads collected the wheat harvest from throughout the Central Valley and delivered it to waiting ships in San Francisco Bay and in the Carquinez Strait at Port Costa, the busiest wheat-shipping point in California at that time. The ships then carried the wheat around the world, especially to Australia, China, and Great Britain.<sup>22</sup>

During the early days of the Delta's agricultural enterprises, most of the region's produce was traded in Bay Area cities, shipped from towns along the Sacramento River, San Joaquin River, and other waterways. Fruit and vegetable

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<sup>21</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Phillip Garone, p. 38.

growing expanded when eastern markets opened with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Refrigerated railroad cars became far more commonplace after the turn of the century, due in part to the efforts of local farmer cooperatives and investors, and made it possible to ship fresh, rather than canned, asparagus – as well as other fresh Delta produce – throughout the country. Companies established canneries throughout the Delta at the turn of the 20th century to pack and ship produce, such as asparagus, to distant markets. As a result, asparagus became one of the defining crops of the Delta.<sup>23</sup>

John Muir National Historic Site, one of the NHA's two National Historic Landmarks along with the town of Locke, contains historic orchards and vineyards that provide insight into farming practices in the Carquinez Strait during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The site provides an example of the transition from water to rail transportation for agricultural goods. John Muir provided land for a right-of-way for the railroad within his property to facilitate shipping of goods.

The Carquinez Strait's strategic location between the Pacific Ocean and inland California made the area a magnet for industrial uses, not just agricultural manufacturing but also fossil fuel production and chemical plants. The history of the towns that developed along the strait has been indelibly intertwined with these industries. Crockett's shoreline and economy has been defined by the giant C&H Pure Cane Sugar sign and refinery. Hercules was named after the now defunct Hercules Powder Works, an explosive manufacturer. Pittsburg's former name, Black Diamond, alludes to the importance of coal mining in the hills south of the city in the 19th century. Four oil refineries, located in Benicia, Martinez, and Rodeo, have provided transportation fuels for Northern California and Nevada for decades.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Agritourism venues such as Bacchini's U-Pick in Brentwood, the Delta Farmer's Market near Rio Vista, Old Sugar Mill in Clarksburg
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Crockett Museum
- Former cannery sites
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk

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<sup>23</sup> Garone, p. 46.

- Isleton Museum
- John Muir National Historic Site, Martinez
- Locke Boarding House Museum
- Martinez Museum
- Port Costa Museum
- Port of West Sacramento, West Sacramento
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Rio Vista Museum

Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites

- California State Railroad Museum, Sacramento
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Port of Stockton, Stockton
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi

**STORYLINE 4.3: CHALLENGES OF A RECLAIMED DELTA (1930S-PRESENT)**

**Storyline Statement:** *While large-scale land engineering has allowed people to harvest the Delta's rich resources, the Delta continues to face natural and human-made stresses that resulted from reclamation and the impacts of climate change.*

Humans have dramatically transformed the Delta landscape over the past 170 years, resulting in a substantial conversion of wetland, riparian, and floodplain ecosystems. Large-scale levee construction, draining of wetlands, forest clearing, and grazing began in the mid-1800s. Many of the levees were raised to keep floodwaters from entering uplands, even though the subsequent higher flood levels resulted in increased flooding of unprotected lands. As a result, approximately 95 percent of the native ecosystems and vegetation communities were lost in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The loss of riparian and wetland vegetation, and construction of fish migration barriers, have limited the space on the landscape that can serve as species habitat, straining the resilience of Delta ecosystems.

Draining and farming the Delta's historical wetlands exposed the peat soils to oxidation, compaction, and wind erosion, resulting in widespread land subsidence (or sinking). Due to historic and ongoing subsidence, much of the Delta lies substantially below mean sea level – by as much as 26 feet in the interior Delta. Many Delta islands lie well below low tide and, if flooded, would become deepwater habitat (as happened with Franks Tract and Mildred Island) instead of tidal marsh. The widespread conversion of the Delta's natural communities has had several interrelated consequences for the Delta ecosystem, including: 1) a reduction in habitat extent, 2) loss of habitat diversity, 3) loss of connectivity within and among habitat types, 4) degradation of

habitat quality, and 5) disconnection of habitats from the physical processes that form and sustain them. Subsidence can also impact the safety of residents due to flooding, damage waterways, and result in loss of agricultural land.

The geometry of the Delta's main tidal channels has also been highly modified since the mid-1800s. Most of the channels in the modern Delta are lined with steep, constructed levees armored with bank protection that isolate the channel from adjacent habitats and prevent the channel from naturally meandering and shifting course over time. The large channels of the Delta were straightened, as well as dredged and widened to facilitate navigation. These modifications created channel networks with conditions (e.g., salinity, temperature, nutrients, etc.) that are more homogenous and less suitable for life, particularly for native fish. The altered geometry of the channels also tends to flush water through the Delta more quickly, compared to historical conditions when water slowed down within twisting channels and regularly overflowed onto tidal wetlands and seasonal floodplains. These changes inhibit the productivity of the aquatic food web.

While a series of factors, such as inadequate freshwater flowing into the Delta, loss of habitat, and degraded water quality, have made recovery efforts for the Delta's waterways difficult, significant progress has been achieved in wetland protection and restoration. Various refuges, created through the efforts of nonprofit conservation organizations and the state and federal governments, have restored relatively small but ecologically important parts of the Delta, and although these refuges are managed landscapes, they offer a glimpse of the Delta and its abundance of wildlife in a time before reclamation.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center (proposed), Isleton/Rio Vista
- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- Fishing access points
- Fishing events and tournaments, such as the Bay Point Sturgeon Derby and Rio Vista Bass Festival and Derby
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Marinas
- Pacific Flyway Center, Fairfield (under construction)

- Publicly accessible restoration projects, including Dutch Slough near Oakley
- Recreation areas, such as Benicia State Recreation Area and Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Rio Vista Army Base
- Wildlife areas, including Grizzly Island Wildlife Area, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Rush Ranch Open Space, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve), and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Bay-Delta Model, Sausalito
- California Indian Heritage Center (proposed), West Sacramento
- Museum of Science and Curiosity, Sacramento

## **THEME 5: CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF THE DELTA – ENDURING LEGACIES OF AMERICAN, ASIAN, EUROPEAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS**

**Theme Statement:** *Bringing their own ambition and skills to the Delta, cultural and ethnic communities from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States shaped the region's agriculture and industry during the late 19th century and early 20th century and continue to leave an indelible imprint on the landscape.*

The Delta was an important crossroads during the post Gold Rush period, and the inhabitable lands of the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys proved enticing to settlers. Diverse cultures forged distinct communities during the Delta's land reclamation phase and subsequent agricultural development. The Delta included corporate farming and agribusiness in the late 19th century, small family farms that epitomized much of North American agriculture at the time, and commercial fishing in the western Delta. Meanwhile, commercial fishing and early industrial development was concentrated along the Carquinez Strait. The diversity of labor opportunities in the area led to different experiences among cultural and ethnic communities.

The Delta's ethnic communities share a tale of sequential occupancy, but on two tracks – one led to prosperity and community, while the other provided few options and pathways towards advancement. Many large employers sought agricultural, industrial, and other types of labor from immigrant groups from around the world: Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, and immigrants from Central American countries. Settlers were initially drawn to the Delta's promise of agricultural development and employment, but groups experienced differing access to agricultural employment, owning land, and building family and community.

The same employers who sought labor from these groups then lobbied for federal and state legislation that prevented further immigration and land ownership. Some overcame barriers and were able to establish enclaves such as Chinese and Japanese housing and commercial districts in several Delta towns. European groups did not face the same levels of discrimination as other groups and were able to enjoy higher levels of prosperity in the region.

Seasonal work was common in the Delta. It forced many to leave the region for long periods of time and did little to enhance long-term community-building. Some ethnic groups dedicated themselves to specialized crops that allowed for economic mobility and the establishment of small communities. The lack of family support or even the ability to form families due to miscegenation laws, which prevented relationships between people of different ethnic groups, often hindered community formation. The Sikhs and Japanese found unique ways to circumvent these policies and create communities despite these barriers, but in the end, few stayed in the region. These issues prevented the development of a long-term, sustainable presence of workers, the primary population in the Delta. In most cases, people simply left the region when their work was done.<sup>24</sup>

### **STORYLINE 5.1: DEVELOPMENT OF ROBUST PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL COMMUNITIES WITH AMERICAN, ASIAN, EUROPEAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN INFLUENCES (1860S-1940S)**

**Storyline Statement:** *Through adversity and perseverance, immigrants from Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States built their lives in enduring Delta communities.*

Since the mid-19th century, numerous ethnic groups made the Delta home, including Italians, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, South Asians, African Americans, and Mexicans and other Latino groups. Some of these groups congregated in the rural towns along the Sacramento River and far east Contra Costa County; others preferred urban areas such as Sacramento, Stockton, and larger communities along the Carquinez Strait.

Italians started settling in the Delta region during the Gold Rush, though the most significant wave of immigration began in the 1880s. Many Italian immigrant families settled near Stockton and the town of Freeport and owned and operated small farms that supplied produce to Sacramento, while others focused on farming and fishing on the Carquinez Strait. Portuguese immigrants, who largely immigrated from the Azores and Madeira Islands, preferred rural areas, particularly along the reach of the Sacramento River from Sacramento's Pocket neighborhood to Clarksburg, Isleton and Rio Vista, and east Contra Cosa

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<sup>24</sup> Helzer, pp. 38.

County. The Lisbon School District near Clarksburg, which operated until 1923, was one of the few ethnic-run school districts in the state.<sup>25</sup> The Delta still has a significant Portuguese American presence, as illustrated by numerous celebrations of the Holy Ghost Festa around the region.

Asian immigrants faced greater challenges in establishing themselves in the Delta. When Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants experienced success in agriculture in the Delta and other parts of California, federal, state, and local authorities responded to public anti-Asian sentiment with discriminatory laws, beginning with the federal 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. The state barred most Asian immigrants from owning land in California in 1913 and allowed the establishment of separate schools in 1921. Delta school districts such as Courtland, Walnut Grove, and Isleton, established separate schools for Asian children. Discrimination also applied to Filipinos, even though they were nationals until 1934 and were thus entitled to American passports and allowed to come and go freely. At one time, Stockton was home to the largest Filipino population in the world outside of Manila, but the Little Manila neighborhood was largely destroyed when the Crosstown Freeway was built in the early 1970s.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast to more urban parts of California, the physical infrastructure of some of these Sacramento River ethnic enclaves is still present. For example, Chinese districts that developed along the Sacramento River from 1870-1915 are still preserved in Courtland, Isleton, Rio Vista, Walnut Grove, and most significantly, Locke, which is a National Historic Landmark. Japanese districts are still present in Isleton and Walnut Grove. Portuguese culture remains in areas such as Clarksburg, Freeport, and Rio Vista. Italian immigrants were common in communities throughout the Delta and Northern California. The fishing village of Collinsville was the most distinctly Italian community in the area.

More recent ethnic groups to the region include African Americans, Mexicans, and other Latino groups. There were African Americans among the earliest settlers of Antioch and Vallejo, despite an Antioch ordinance that did not allow African American residents to remain in town after dusk. However, the African American population in the San Francisco Bay Area remained small until the second wave of the Great Migration from 1940 to 1970. Wartime jobs in the shipyards and post-war jobs in manufacturing increased the African American population by more than 300,000 people in just 30 years. African American populations are highest in Carquinez Strait communities and Stockton.

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<sup>25</sup> Helzer, pp. 28-33.

<sup>26</sup> Helzer, pp. 17-28, 33-36.

A significant Mexican population in California emerged in the 1920s due to labor shortages from restrictive immigration policies from Asian countries. The Delta was the epicenter of the federal Bracero program, which sought Mexican agricultural labor during World War II. Braceros faced myriad injustices and abuses, including substandard housing, discrimination, unfulfilled contract agreements, and being cheated out of wages, which would contribute to the formation of the agricultural labor movement. Stockton native Dolores Huerta was a key participant in the formation of the United Farm Workers union. Mexican and other Latino groups now form the largest minority group within the Delta.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- African American communities, such as Antioch, Bay Point, Pittsburg, and Vallejo
- Asian American festivals, such as Asian New Year celebrations in Isleton and Locke
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Courtland Chinese District
- Crockett Museum
- East Contra Costa Historical Museum
- Isleton Chinese and Japanese Commercial Districts
- Italian communities, such as Freeport, Martinez, Pittsburg, and Rio Vista
- Locke Historic District (National Historic Landmark), including the Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum
- Martinez Museum
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Chicago National Naval Memorial, Concord
- Port Costa Museum
- Portuguese communities, such as Benicia, Clarksburg, Freeport, Isleton, or Rio Vista, and festivals, such as the Holy Ghost Festa
- Rio Vista Museum
- Walnut Grove Chinese-American and Japanese American Historic Districts
- Walnut Grove Gakuen (Japanese Language School)

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Filipino American National Historical Society Museum, Stockton
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Old Sacramento State Historic Park, Sacramento



- Sacramento History Museum
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi

### **STORYLINE 5.2: AMERICAN, ASIAN, EUROPEAN, AND LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS AS THE FOUNDATION OF DELTA AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY (1860S-1970S)**

**Storyline Statement:** *Delta agriculture and industry was built on the tireless labor, knowledge, and skill of people from many cultures, including those who fought for labor rights that impacted the development of the United Farm Workers.*

People of many different nationalities and ethnic backgrounds used their skills to transform the region's physical and geographical attributes into one of the world's most productive agricultural regions. As one of the earliest immigrant groups in the Delta, Chinese immigrants were particularly important in the evolution of agriculture. Their experience with agricultural production in the Pearl River Delta provided the ideal opportunity for land developers in the Delta to launch large-scale reclamation projects. As they shifted to become tenant farmers, they were credited with transforming California from growing wheat and cattle ranching to an agricultural cornucopia of diversified crops. They were particularly responsible for the increase in potato and asparagus crops in the Delta.

Ethnic groups arriving later built on these advancements. Japanese farmers are credited with high-quality standards and effective practices that created California's successful large-scale agricultural operations. Italian Americans introduced Mediterranean crops that were important in their homeland, pioneered mechanized tomato harvesting and packing companies, and were instrumental in founding growers' organizations in Stockton and San Joaquin County. They were involved in the distribution and marketing of commercial agricultural products, both throughout the state, and to eastern markets.<sup>27</sup>

The Delta attracted agricultural entrepreneurs of many different ethnicities. Chinese immigrant Chin Lung and Japanese immigrant George Shima each became known as "potato kings" for their business acumen in the potato cultivation business. Unfortunately, their success made them targets for xenophobic state laws preventing land ownership by Asian immigrants, which ultimately destroyed their considerable empires.<sup>28</sup> Tillie Lewis, the daughter of Austrian Jewish immigrants raised in Brooklyn, revolutionized Delta farming in multiple ways starting during the Great Depression when she partnered with an Italian investor to build the first tomato cannery in the region in Stockton.

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<sup>27</sup> Helzer, pp. 18-32.

<sup>28</sup> Garone, pp. 42-44.

Tomatoes soon became a large-scale crop in the Delta and Central Valley.<sup>29</sup> When she faced labor shortages in supplying foods for American troops, she was instrumental in bringing Mexican workers through the Bracero program.

The Delta was critical to the creation of the modern agricultural labor movement. Laborers experienced poor working conditions, substandard housing, discrimination, corrupt hiring practices, unfulfilled contract agreements, and low or missing wages. One example of poor working conditions was the use of the short-handled hoe, known as *el brazo del diablo* or "devil's arm," which caused long-term, debilitating back injuries because workers had to continuously bend over.<sup>30</sup>

Following the example of earlier Japanese workers, Filipinos staged work slowdowns and strikes, and they fought head-to-head with police and armed guards to protect their jobs. Filipino American labor leaders Larry Itliong, Rudy Delvo, Philip Vera Cruz, and Pete Velasco were among those who formed the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee within the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations in 1959. Headquartered in Stockton, the Committee organized Delano's Filipino American grape workers to strike in 1965. The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee partnered in the Delano strike with the National Farm Workers Association, led by Cesar Chavez and Stockton's Dolores Huerta. The two organizations merged in 1967 to become the United Farm Workers.<sup>31</sup>

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Asian American festivals, such as Asian New Year celebrations in Isleton and Locke
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Courtland Chinese District
- Dutra Museum of Dredging, Rio Vista
- East Contra Costa Historical Museum
- Isleton Chinese and Japanese Commercial Districts
- Isleton Museum
- Italian communities, such as Freeport, Martinez, Pittsburg, and Rio Vista
- Locke Historic District (National Historic Landmark), including the Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House

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<sup>29</sup> Garone, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Helzer, pp. 35, 37-38.

<sup>31</sup> National Park Service, "Larry Itliong", <https://www.nps.gov/people/larry-itliong.htm>, accessed October 16, 2023.

Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum

- Martinez Museum
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Costa Museum
- Portuguese communities, such as Benicia, Clarksburg, Freeport, Isleton, or Rio Vista, and festivals, such as the Holy Ghost Festa
- Rio Vista Museum
- Walnut Grove Chinese-American and Japanese American Historic Districts
- Walnut Grove Gakuen (Japanese Language School)

Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Dolores Huerta Plaza, San Joaquin Delta College, Stockton
- Filipino American National Historical Society Museum, Stockton
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- San Joaquin County Historical Museum, Lodi

## Supporting Themes

### **SUPPORTING THEME 1: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S INLAND DEFENSE (1850S-1940S)**

**Theme Statement:** *A place of both defense and defiance, the military installations of the Delta and Carquinez Strait tell a story of local support for U.S. military operations throughout the Pacific and incalculable sacrifice by African American sailors.*

In the early period of California statehood, most American military installations were devoted to maintaining domestic order, including quelling Native American-white violence in the state's remote areas. The military constructed few permanent facilities during this period. The core of the American military was a string of small army camps and forts.

Benicia Arsenal, a 252-acre parcel of land adjoining the east side of Benicia city limits, was one of a few early permanent facilities. The Benicia Arsenal played a role in many wars, including use as a western staging area for Union troops in the Civil War and a garrison until 1898 when troops moved to the Philippine Islands during the Spanish-American War. The arsenal provided ordnance support to all large western army installations during World War I and to American expeditionary forces in Siberia following the war.<sup>32</sup> The post was decommissioned in 1963. The installation is known for housing the only Camel Corps, a group of camels intended for military service, which was an idea

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<sup>32</sup> National Park Service 2020

advocated by then-Secretary of War Jefferson Davis. Although the Camel Corps was only active for eight years, the Camel Barn, built in 1855 and named for the camels corralled behind it, serves as the home of the Benicia Historical Museum.

Another military installation that predated World War II was the Rio Vista Army Base, which is located south of Rio Vista. Opening in 1911, the base originally was used to house equipment, including large barges used to dredge, deepen, and straighten the Sacramento River. After World War II, there was a shift to housing military harbor craft that was used during the Vietnam War and in 1980, use as a training facility for Army reservists until its closure in 1992. The city is currently proposing to redevelop the property.

As the United States ramped up support for the war effort during World War II, the Delta saw an increase in the number of military installations, particularly because the region was more insulated from possible foreign attack than coastal areas. Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg was an Army troop staging area used for transporting soldiers, materials, and supplies to the Pacific Theater from World War II through the Korean War. The Delta was the location of temporary Prisoner of War (POW) camps and the western United States' secret interrogation center at Byron Hot Springs, a former resort hotel. Active from June 1942 to September 1945. German and Italian prisoners of war arrived for a brief stay at Byron Hot Springs, which was made to look like a processing center, before being sent to an established POW camp. The U.S. Army employed this deception to circumvent Geneva Convention provisions on interrogating prisoners.<sup>33</sup>

Concord Naval Weapons Station was established in 1942 and is best known for the disaster at the portion of the facility known as the Point Chicago Naval Magazine. On July 17, 1944, munitions being loaded on the SS E.A. Bryan exploded and killed 320 men and injured 390 – the most extensive domestic loss of life during World War II. Approximately two-thirds of the dead and injured were African American. When white officers ordered African American sailors to return to loading munitions without sufficient safety precautions, the sailors revolted, resulting in the largest Naval mutiny in U.S. history. The court martial of 50 men after the mutiny, which involved civil rights pioneer and future Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall, was a significant event in the fight to desegregate the U.S. military.<sup>34</sup> Port Chicago Naval Magazine was established as a National Memorial in 1992 and became a unit of the National Park Service in 2009.

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<sup>33</sup> Osbourne 2017

<sup>34</sup> National Park Service 2022

Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- Benicia Arsenal
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Camp Stoneman site, Pittsburg
- Former Prisoner of War Camps (multiple locations)
- Port Chicago National Naval Memorial, Concord

Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Byron Hot Springs
- Rio Vista Army Base
- Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum

## **SUPPORTING THEME 2: THE CREATIVE INSPIRATION OF THE DELTA (1900S-PRESENT)**

**Theme Statement:** *Distinctive urban, rural, and aquatic landscapes, labor and leisure, and relaxed lifestyle have drawn many writers and artists to the Delta for solace and inspiration.*

Flanked by the urban fringes of both the Bay Area and Central Valley, the region faces development and population pressures from all sides, and commuters and city dwellers alike seek refuge on its back roads, numerous waterways, and in its culturally diverse communities. For writers and artists, the region's unique rural landscape and urban rimlands have multiple meanings: a region of intense beauty and recreation; a symbol of either the success or the failure to achieve the American or, more accurately, the Californian dream; a place of labor conflict, inequality, and exclusion; and a place of cultural diversity.

Stories of the Delta begin with the oral history traditions of the Native Americans who live in the Delta. Although not printed, they were cultural records and continue today. Writers who have chronicled the region include Joan Didion, William Everson, Erle Stanley Gardner, Ernesto Galarza, Leonard Gardner, Bret Harte, Maxine Hong Kingston, Ursula Le Guin, John Muir, Frank Norris, Mark Twain, and numerous local historians and residents. Joan Didion, one of California's greatest writers, wrote her first novel, *Run River* (1963), about wealthy Delta farmers, using the Delta as a place where she could explore shifting perspectives on California life. Leonard Gardner's *Fat City* (1969) provides a different perspective, looking at the lives of itinerant laborers who work the land and of the working-class city dwellers whose lives are nonetheless shaped by the agricultural community that surrounds Stockton. Erle Stanley Gardner, who was most well-known for the Perry Mason novels, wrote three books -- *The World of Water*, *Gypsy Days on the Delta*, and *Drifting down the Delta* -- about his leisurely days drifting down the thousand miles of inland waterways in the Delta.

Like Gardner, Jack London enjoyed the region's waterways and port towns, boating throughout the region and haunting saloons along the Carquinez Strait. Writers who have focused on Delta history and life include Carol Jensen, Phil Pezzaglia, and Hal Schell. A project supported by the DPC, Robert Benedetti's *Imagining the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta: An Anthology of Voices Across Centuries* (2022), provides excerpts from these and other writers.

Artists and photographers have been drawn to the region's unique landscapes such as the geometric aerial images and the interplay between waterways, land, and the distant Mount Diablo. Renowned artist Wayne Thiebaud began a series of Delta paintings in the 1990s, which featured unusual vantage points, playful colors, and toy-like scale. His friend and colleague Gregory Kondos' Delta paintings tended to focus on a particular image or set of images such as houses and trees, often utilizing the Sacramento River and other waterways as a reflection of the image or a simpler counterpoint to the land side. Chinese-born Ning Hou, who settled in Locke, has focused on the beauty of the Delta's agricultural landscape. Local favorite Marty Stanley's paintings are complex portrayals of the Delta landscape, often utilizing bright colors that dramatized the beauty of the region. Stanley's son, Skyler, James Motlow, and Rich Turner are also established photographers of the Delta. The legendary Dorothea Lange traveled through the Delta in the early 1940s to capture images of laborers on local farms.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Art galleries
- Benicia Historical Museum
- Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, Martinez
- Crockett Museum
- East Contra Costa Historical Museum
- Isleton Museum
- Libraries and bookstores
- Locke Historic District (National Historic Landmark), including the Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum
- Martinez Museum
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Costa Museum
- Rio Vista Museum

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites Outside of NHA

- Art galleries
- California Museum, California Hall of Fame, Sacramento
- Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento
- Haggin Museum, Stockton
- Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis

## **SUPPORTING THEME 3: DELTA AS RECREATIONAL RETREAT (1950s-PRESENT)**

**Theme Statement:** *The Delta's waters and rural communities provide a retreat from our busy lives and reconnect us to the land and each other.*

Many visitors are often introduced to the Delta through the tremendous diversity of recreation opportunities, including fishing, motorized and non-motorized boating, windsurfing, bird watching, hunting, bicycling, and hiking, though the most common activities involve the water. The Delta Stewardship Council's 2023 Delta Resident Survey found that 44% of respondents personally valued outdoor recreational opportunities as part of living in the Delta.<sup>35</sup>

One of the first recreational activities in the Delta was duck hunting, which occurred as early as the 1860s in the Suisun Marsh. Facilitated by railroad access between Benicia and Suisun City, the first duck clubs were established in the western portion of the marsh beginning in 1879. Reclamation efforts there eventually faltered and many of the islands were intentionally reflooded and managed as freshwater wetlands for the benefit of ducks and duck clubs. At least 380 clubs have existed in the marsh at one time or another since 1879.<sup>36</sup>

Although fishing initially started as a commercial industry in the Delta and Carquinez Strait, it also has a long history as recreational activity. Today's anglers target striped bass (a species introduced to the region in 1879), salmon, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, crappie, bluegill, shad, catfish, crawdads, and sturgeon. Area festivals reflect the importance of fishing. The annual October Bass Festival and Derby has been held in Rio Vista since 1933. Bay Point hosts a parallel Sturgeon Derby mid-winter, while the Isleton Crawdad Fest is held in June, followed by a Seafood Festival on the Pittsburg waterfront in September. For many years Walnut Grove hosted a Catfish Jubilee in August.<sup>37</sup>

Delta marinas, resorts, and boat launches are prevalent throughout the Delta, though they are concentrated in areas such as the Delta Loop southeast of Isleton, the south end of the Antioch Bridge, Bethel Island, Stockton, and Walnut

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<sup>35</sup> Delta Stewardship Council, *Delta Residents Survey Summary Report, 2023*, <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/social-science>.

<sup>36</sup> Garone, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> Swagerty and Smith, p. 89.

Grove. Many private marinas date to the Great Depression, including Korth's Pirates' Lair Marina on the Delta Loop.<sup>38</sup> There are also twenty private yacht clubs within the NHA. In contrast to marinas, yacht clubs are social organizations, sponsoring formal group events and informal time together at club restaurants and bars. The Sacramento Yacht Club, located in West Sacramento, dates to 1929. Another popular water recreation activity is windsurfing. The Sacramento River between Rio Vista and the tip of Sherman Island remains one of the best windsurfing areas in the world.

The NHA is also home to several trail systems, including the Great California Delta Trail, a continuous regional recreation corridor extending around the Delta, including the shorelines of five Delta counties, and linking trail systems from Sacramento to the San Francisco Bay. The trail system includes routes for bicycling and hiking, with interconnections to other land and water trail systems, recreational facilities, and public transportation. The DPC works in partnership with local entities to coordinate planning and implementation. Trail segments are conceived, developed, built, and managed locally. The *2022 Delta Trail Master Plan* recommended the creation of adventure hubs, which are launching points for local exploration that would coordinate with NHA interpretive themes.

### Existing and Potential Interpretive Sites in NHA

- East Bay Regional Park District parks, including Big Break Regional Shoreline Visitor Center in Oakley, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline between Crockett and Martinez, and Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez
- Fishing access points
- Fishing events and tournaments, such as the Bay Point Sturgeon Derby and Rio Vista Bass Festival and Derby
- Great California Delta Trail segments, including Big Break and Marsh Creek Trail, Carquinez Loop Trail, Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, Sacramento River Parkway, and West Sacramento River Walk
- Isleton Crawdad Festival
- Marinas
- Pacific Flyway Center, Fairfield (under construction)
- Recreation areas, such as Benicia State Recreation Area and Brannan Island State Recreation Area
- Sherman Island County Park
- Suisun Marsh
- Wildlife areas, including Grizzly Island Wildlife Area, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Rush Ranch Open Space, Stone Lakes National Wildlife

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<sup>38</sup> Swagerty and Smith, p. 89.



Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve),  
and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

## Context for Interpretation and Education

### Existing Interpretation

The storylines described in the previous section can be experienced in programs hosted by a collection of institutions, organizations, and informal groups with a variety of missions and resources. Each has loyal volunteers and delivers significant services to audiences ranging from national and international visitors to residents of small communities. There are also many publicly accessible but non-staffed sites, trails, preserves, natural areas, communities, and other locations that are appropriate for inclusion in NHA-wide interpretation.

Together, the region's attractions offer a broad and high-quality set of interpretive experiences for visitors and a solid foundation for NHA's network of partnerships. Current efforts to coordinate these partners to tell broader stories about the region owe a debt to the team responsible for Delta Narratives, a DPC-sponsored project that issued a 2015 report with action steps, four scholarly essays on different topic areas, and a directory of Delta cultural and heritage institutions.

While the broader region is host to larger cultural institutions featuring public programming with professional staff, and a full range of visitor services, few of these are located within the NHA boundaries. Two large cities that are home to several larger institutions, Sacramento and Stockton, are located beyond the NHA boundaries.

There are notable exceptions. Two National Park Service units and segments of two National Historic Trails – the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historical Trail and the Pony Express National Historic Trail – lie within the NHA. John Muir National Historical Site in Martinez, a National Historic Landmark, preserves conservationist and national park advocate John Muir's home, carriage house, windmill, orchards and vineyard, and gravesite, the Mount Wanda open space, and 1849 Martinez Adobe, which is expected to be closed for repairs until 2026. The site features a visitor center, interpretive signs, and self-guided and ranger-led tours. The other National Park Service unit in the NHA, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, located just north of Concord, commemorates the site of the largest homeland disaster during World War II. The memorial has significant limitations on site access and currently no dedicated visitor center, although ranger-led tours are offered periodically, and a new regional park nearby will eventually include a joint-agency visitor center.

There are also several staffed state and local institutions in the NHA. The Benicia Capitol State Historical Park, managed by California State Parks, is staffed by park rangers. The Benicia Historical Museum, which is focused on the city of Benicia, has staff and numerous events throughout the year. The Big Break Regional Shoreline includes a visitor center with displays about the Delta, outdoor interpretation that features an interactive scale map of the Delta and staffing by park district naturalists. Cosumnes River Preserve, which is owned by seven partners, contains a visitor center that features permanent indoor and outdoor interpretive exhibits and physical and virtual self-guided tours of three different trails.

DPC staff can work with potential gateway partners, larger institutions outside of the NHA. These potential partners, many of them only within 1/4-mile of the boundary, include:

- California Automobile Museum (Sacramento)
- California Museum, which contains the California Hall of Fame featuring people with strong connections to the Delta (Sacramento)
- California State Capitol Museum (Sacramento)
- California State Railroad Museum (Sacramento)
- Crocker Art Museum, the oldest art museum in the West, which includes Delta artists (Sacramento)
- Haggin Museum, which features both art and history of the region (Stockton)
- Old Sacramento State Historical Park
- Sacramento History Museum
- San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum (Lodi)
- SMUD Museum of Science and Curiosity (Sacramento)
- Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum
- Western Railway Museum (west of Rio Vista)

Another potential gateway partner site currently in development outside of the NHA is the California Indian Heritage Center in West Sacramento. While the center will feature Native American heritage from throughout the state, the site's proximity to the NHA and location at the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers provides an opportunity to highlight the Delta landscape and Tribes that call the Delta home.

Within the boundary of the NHA, there are 15 smaller museums that are primarily volunteer run and open to the public on a limited basis. For the most part they offer self-guided exhibits that are supplemented with public programming and events. They represent an important part of overall interpretation within the region and of local community history.

Thirteen are dedicated to a particular community or subregion, consisting of:

- 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse
- Antioch Historical Museum
- Crockett Museum
- East Contra Costa Historical Society Museum
- Isleton Museum
- Martinez Museum
- Pittsburg Historical Museum
- Port Costa Museum
- Rio Vista Museum
- Four museums that focus on specific parts of Locke's history -- California State Parks' Locke Boarding House Museum State Historic Park, Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, and Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum.
- Two museums focus on a particular topic of regional significance - Dutra Museum of Dredging (Rio Vista), and Sacramento Regional Fire Museum (West Sacramento).

Not specifically included in the list of smaller museums is the West Sacramento Historical Society History Gallery, which is in an alcove of the West Sacramento Community Center and is not staffed. The Filipino American National Historical Society Museum in Stockton, which is outside of the NHA boundary, is focused on a national audience, but given the number of Filipino immigrants who lived and worked in the Delta, has an important relationship to the region.

There are also numerous historical societies not directly connected to a museum that have developed collections such as the Contra Costa County Historical Society, organized programs such as the Sacramento Historical Society, published books such as the Sacramento River Delta Historical Society, and frequently engage in these activities and more. Tribes whose traditional homeland is in the Delta, including Confederated Villages of Lisjan, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, United Auburn Indian Community, and Wilton Rancheria, offer educational and outreach programs and interpretive services for local institutions and museums. Valuable archival collections are housed at the Center for Sacramento History in Sacramento and the University of the Pacific Holt-Atherton Special Collections in Stockton, which were both active participants in the Delta Narratives project. Other archives include local libraries and two state-government entities in Sacramento – the California State Archives and California State Library.

There are also numerous sites that feature education programs, guided tours, and self-guided tours. Sites include federal, state, and local parks, preserves, and trails such as Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline, Grizzly Island Wildlife Area,

Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area, Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline, Rush Ranch Open Space, Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve), and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, which extends from Nogales, Arizona to San Francisco and passes through north Contra Costa County, features interpretive exhibits at the John Muir National Historic Site, which are housed within the temporarily closed Martinez Adobe, Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline, Big Break Regional Shoreline, and Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline. The National Park Service also includes an online interactive map that provides the diary entries from the de Anza expedition for every stop in the NHA. When taken as a whole, these sites provide opportunities for significant enhancement of self-guided interpretive experiences.

Cultural, natural, and agricultural festivals and special events draw visitors to the region and highlight the NHA's interpretive themes. Special events are important for the local economy and are important venues for partners to raise interest in the NHA. Events like the Courtland Pear Fair and the Taste of the Delta celebrate the Delta's agricultural history. Cultural events like the Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival, Isleton Asian Festival, Antioch Multicultural Festival, Benicia Diversity Festival, and free-admission days at museums invite people to explore the region's cultural history. Fishing and boating events and guided hikes encourage people to recreate safely and responsibly. Several events explore the environment, raise awareness of plants, wildlife, and habitat health, and promote stewardship and conservation, such as the California Duck Days, bird counts, winter bird festivals, and clean-up days. Many of these events offer hands-on activities for families, children, and visitors, and directly involve them in citizen science and restoration efforts.

Although these centers of activity are significant, they only begin to address interpretation in the region. For example, there is no site presenting Native American patterns of life in the Delta except for limited displays at the Haggin Museum, the San Joaquin County Historical Society and Museum, and one in development at the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse. Although the California Indian Heritage Center will be near the NHA boundary, the center will be focused on Native American culture statewide.

The objectives and strategies outlined in this chapter will build on this existing interpretation to accomplish Goal 1. Every interested organization and site with stories or programs related to the themes, storylines, and supporting themes in this chapter is invited to participate in NHA interpretation. Participation may include support and promotion through NHA and the ability to coordinate with other sites. Threshold levels of quality and experience will be required for participating sites.

## Audiences for Interpretation

Good interpretation must consider a wide array of audiences and learning styles. The needs and interests of different audiences shape the information content visitors are seeking, as well as the format in which they take in information, whether written, visual, auditory, or experiential. The casual visitor may only look at a few images or read a headline, or only listen to the introduction of a program. The mainstream visitor will look at images and a sampling of the text and will pay attention to the parts of the program that interest them. The deeply engaged visitor will read nearly everything, pay close attention to the program, and will want to learn more.

Designing effective interpretive experiences requires different types of products or programs to reach the full range of audiences. The following section describes known audiences, as well as strategies and specific actions that will enable NHA's network of partners to reach them. Chapter 3 will discuss the need for market research to define current and potential audiences.

Out-of-area or out-of-state visitors have varied interests, as described below. Most of these visitors will not be familiar with the history, culture, and natural amenities of the region, particularly since the Delta is very different than more visited parts of California and Northern California. They may be interested in stories of the region and how that history relates to their own interests and experience. Out-of-area and out-of-state visits include:

- **Get-away trips or long weekends** -- This type of visitor is often from urban areas within less than a day's drive. If they have a positive experience and see more of interest they would like to experience, this is a prime group for return visits and increased engagement.
- **Long vacations** -- While the traditional long vacation may have declined in recent years, still the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento regions attract visitors from outside Northern California, those on longer road trips, and international travelers. They will want to learn about, absorb, and experience the variety of the area. They may need more contextual information about an area they have not experienced before, and in some cases may need translation from other languages. Often, this may be their only trip to the area.

Local and regional resident visitors are from the region or within day-trip distance. They will have a variety of interests but are more likely to be familiar with the area and to have intrinsic interest in, and connection to, special places and stories. This group has more potential for repeat visitation and can share word of mouth about their experiences. They are also potential supporters of the NHA and/or of individual sites and programs.

- **Residents from NHA communities** -- Residents may visit sites multiple times, attend special events, and bring friends. They will be more likely to attend off-season events and activities. There are also underserved residents, possibly requiring translation, and those with accessibility challenges, whether cultural, financial, transportation, or disability. Dedicated efforts will be needed to engage them and offer opportunities and participation that may reach their community, family, or personal interests.
- **Day travelers from within the region** -- Day travelers may explore sites in other communities and may also be repeat visitors and attend multiple events. This audience could be more difficult to reach than in other parts of California because nearby residents are often not familiar with the Delta despite its proximity to them.

Whether visitors are from out of the area or are residents of the region, audience interests will likely have different interests:

- **General interest audience** -- Traveling for multiple reasons, this audience often includes adult small groups and families. They may be exploring the area and communities, driving for scenic beauty, or looking for something to do. Interpretation can provide an overview and pique their interest in interpretive stories.
- **Family groups with children** -- This audience also travels for multiple reasons, but interpretation and experiences need to account for the varying interests and needs of different family members and a variety of ages. Children should be provided with age-appropriate interpretation, not just a simplified version of adult messages.
- **Generational audiences** -- Audiences may be categorized by generational groups. Age and generational characteristics may affect interests and activity levels, as well as, in some cases, learning style preferences, comfort with technology, and need for translation.
- **Niche interest visitors** -- Individuals interested in specific topics will be looking for different types of interpretation than more general visitors. Many will be students looking for in-depth information with a high degree of accuracy. This audience is also a source of long-term support, contributing to stewardship of the resources. Niche interest topics may include:
  - People interested in specific historical eras or topics -- Topics include the Gold Rush, agricultural or industrial history, steamboats, architecture, etc.
  - Cultures and ethnic groups -- This audience may include Native Americans, Chinese, Filipino, Italian, Japanese, and Portuguese immigrant groups, and other groups with ties to the region. In some cases, translation may be necessary.
  - Family or community history buffs -- This audience includes genealogists and family or community reunion visitors.

- Visitors seeking California culture, food, art, and music – People who want to experience the culture, in addition to learning about it, may engage in local experiences through media or in-person connections, events, performances, participation, and shopping opportunities.
- Nature studies – This audience includes birders or people interested in wildlife or habitats.
  - **Outdoor recreation visitors** – Many of these visitors come to participate in specific recreational experiences and may be less likely to intentionally engage with interpretation. They can be offered opportunities, both in preparation for their trip and while recreating, to learn more about the outdoor experience, stewardship of the environment, and the historic events that occurred in the landscape they are traversing.
  - **Group tours** – Motorcoach tours and groups will usually be following pre-planned itineraries, often with guides. Quality training for these guides as interpreters can help reach a larger audience. Sites visited by groups can offer enhanced interpretive experiences adapted to their interests and demographics.
  - **People with specific accessibility challenges** – This audience includes people with physical, visual, hearing, learning, and language challenges. It is important to provide accessible interpretation within the primary interpretive experience to the extent possible, and with alternative access options when needed.
  - **Interpreters and front-line tourism workers** – This audience includes group tour operators and guides, visitor center and heritage site managers and docents, bait shops, and hospitality industry front-line workers who can be trained to share effectively both interpretation about themes and information about the area. They can be offered training so they can share interpretive messages and support cross-promotion to encourage broader visitation.
  - **Curriculum-oriented visitors** – This educational audience includes participants in workshops and learning opportunities for specific topics, life-long learners, and college students. They will often want more depth, and to devote more time, than other visitors.
  - **Youth groups** – This audience includes school groups in classroom and out-of-school enrichment, field trips, and activities, for classes, home schooled students, and youth groups such as scouts and Future Farmers of America. Interpretation needs to be engaging for student interest, to be keyed to the appropriate age group(s), and whenever possible tied to curriculum standards for specific classes or programs. Interpretive roles

can include both directly delivered youth interpretation, and train-the-trainer opportunities for teachers and youth leaders.

## Interpretation Objectives and Strategies



*Two women at the Pear Fair in Courtland explore a history display. (Holly Heyser/Delta Protection Commission)*

A planning effort that spans a large area, such as the Delta, will have many distinct opportunities and challenges. Government entities with jurisdiction over managing public lands and resources have diverse missions and management requirements. Private and nonprofit organizations providing interpretive services in the Delta also have diverse missions and areas of expertise. The Delta encompasses many cultures with different needs and stories to share. Interpretive providers surveyed during the management plan process discussed the need for additional staff and funding to develop, maintain, and carry out interpretive services. Many providers, like small historical societies and museums, are run solely by volunteers.

Such an environment requires a strong and skilled lead organization to bring these varied partners and community groups together to implement the interpretive plan. As it assumes this role, the DPC as local coordinating entity will:



- Direct the interpretive program.
- Lead a network of interpretive providers.
- Support interpretive providers by connecting them with resources and interpretation and volunteer management training.
- Provide funding and grant assistance for interpretive projects.
- Review and approve NHA-wide interpretive signs, exhibits, online content, and other interpretive messaging.
- Maintain a central repository and clearinghouse for NHA interpretive programs, resources, providers, special events, content, exhibits, and other relevant information.
- Lead Tribal consultation efforts for interpretive planning.
- Provide visitors with seamless and integrated trip planning and orientation tools to easily locate NHA sites, information, events, programs, and recreational opportunities (this effort is detailed in Chapter 3).

Public engagement is incorporated into every aspect of interpretation, particularly with cultural organizations, Native American Tribes, and underserved communities.

The Interpretive Planning Task Group collaborated with California State Parks to develop objectives and strategies. Since interpretation is related to other NHA goals, some interpretation objectives and strategies are incorporated into other chapters of this plan. This section, which corresponds with the Implementation The implementation plan for Goal 1 (see Appendix J), provides a narrative description of actions the DPC will take to bridge gaps and provide long-term guidance in developing and delivering interpretive services.

These objectives and strategies are a starting point. They reflect the challenges and opportunities present when the management plan was developed and will be revised or augmented as conditions change.

### Objective 1.1 A network of interpretive providers supported by the NHA serves as the foundation for interpretation.

The NHA brings the region's natural and cultural landscapes and sites under one umbrella, promoting them as an integrated experience and coordinating interpretation at individual sites through a thematic structure. Unique stories at each site are connected to the regional themes and to each other. NHA interpretation will build on existing programming offered through interpretive providers and will coordinate, enhance, and expand interpretive experiences over time.

The fundamental building block of this effort is the NHA's interpretive provider network. This network allows the region's interpretive providers to come together

and work with the DPC as a broad and unified partnership with opportunities for connection between different providers. The strategies below describe the process of building and strengthening this network through coordination, research, training, funding, and volunteer support.

To carry out the strategies below, the DPC will develop a position for an interpretive specialist as the primary staff contact on NHA-wide interpretation. The DPC will retain professional assistance either through employing permanent staff, hiring an independent contractor, or sharing staffing with a partner agency or organization. This and all other staffing needs are addressed in Goal 5 (see Chapter 5, Strategy 5.2.2).

### **STRATEGY 1.1.1 CONTINUE THE INTERPRETIVE PLANNING TASK GROUP TO SUPPORT NHA INTERPRETIVE PLANNING AND PROJECTS.**

The Interpretive Planning Task Group played a critical role in the formation of the interpretive thematic framework and the management plan's objectives and strategies. This group will continue to advise on interpretive planning and projects within the NHA. The task group's membership will be expanded to provide geographic representation, cultural diversity, and expertise in a wide range of fields. Professional interpreters from the region's cultural and natural heritage sites can support partners who are less experienced in preparing interpretive exhibits or content and/or have limited resources.

The task group will meet periodically, while DPC staff will manage day-to-day implementation with partner support. NHA interpretation efforts will engage the wide range of existing and potential interpretive sites, seeking to enhance, enrich, and expand coordinated interpretation under the thematic framework and oversee the implementation of the management plan's interpretive objectives and strategies. The task group and staff will provide guidance in focusing proposed exhibits on key themes, advising on the selection of sites and media, assisting with interpretive content, setting minimum language translations for all public-facing material including braille and American Sign Language, and providing overall quality control. Exhibits may be self-guided exhibits located in publicly accessible sites. New exhibits that are funded through the NHA must comply with the task group's recommended process and guidance.

### **STRATEGY 1.1.2 ENCOURAGE COLLABORATIVE OPPORTUNITIES AMONG NHA INTERPRETIVE PROVIDERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AND MEDIA.**

The NHA has a wealth of interpretive providers with similar interpretive emphases, including agricultural, Asian cultural, military, and technological history. NHA interpretive efforts will identify opportunities for visitors to tour existing

interpretive sites with similar themes through the VisitCADelta website and social media platforms, including driving and walking tours. Junior Ranger materials for young children can also highlight these sites.

The DPC's interpretive specialist and the Interpretive Task Group will collaborate with partners to develop plans for enhancing and expanding exhibits and programming both at existing sites and at potential new sites. New sites may emphasize self-guided exhibits and experiences, such as in parks or preserves, along trails, or in communities. NHA interpretation can be enhanced and expanded over time as resources and priorities permit.

Interpretation provides visitors with connections to NHA assets and stories. Interpretation may include:

- Programming (personal interpretation) where the interpreter is interacting directly with the audience. This includes programs such as talks, guided tours, presentations, living history, and demonstrations. Interpretation may be individually presented by staff or docent volunteers, based on an outline, concept or a script. In some cases, interpretation may be recorded for audio, video, or digital presentations.
- Physical media products (non-personal interpretation) generally offer a self-guided experience, including products such as exhibits, waysides, signs, and brochures.
- Digital/virtual media, including the VisitCADelta website and social media, interactive programs, webinars, livestreams, internet-based videos, or smart phone tours or apps offer interpretive experiences without in-person contact. These may be self-guided experiences, interpretive sites organized by theme, or may convey a program with interaction such as a live-streamed presentation or video-conference experience.
- Audio/video media using recorded or live programming also offers interpretation without in-person contact. This may be audio only, images, or video programming, either presented live or recorded. These may be incorporated into digital media, as a component of exhibits, or stand-alone such as audio driving tours.
- Interactive experiences include visitor participation in the interpretive activity. Examples include hands-on interactive museum exhibits, learning to make a cultural craft, or participating in an event such as a dance or cooking demonstration.

### **STRATEGY 1.1.3 BROADEN INTERPRETIVE CONTENT AND RESOURCES THROUGH SCHOLARLY RESEARCH INTO THE NHA'S INTERPRETIVE THEMES.**

As noted earlier in this chapter, efforts to bring Delta cultural institutions together to develop interpretive content owe a debt to the DPC-sponsored Delta Narratives project. The project, which concluded in 2015, documented the historical and cultural themes that tie the experience of the Delta to regional and national history. Through this project, a team of scholars and regional cultural institutions worked together to produce four scholarly essays on different topics in Delta history. These essays provide a foundation for the interpretive themes in this management plan. Throughout the intervening years, the DPC has sponsored the annual Delta Heritage Forum, a one-day conference focused on preserving and telling Delta stories, and providing opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and networking, and assisted with the initial research necessary for a recent 2022 book by Delta scholar Robert Benedetti titled *Imagining the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta: An Anthology of Voices Across Centuries*.

DPC, in coordination with the Interpretation Task Group and scholars at local and national universities, will continue these research efforts, guided by the management plan's interpretive themes. DPC staff and NHA partners will develop and share research, narratives, and bibliographies to be used to support interpretive products and programs. These efforts will be particularly important to provide more information on under-researched topics and topics that require a wider range of viewpoints. For example, a short-term project could include a contextual narrative on Native American history and culture, which would be developed in coordination with the Tribal advisory council described in Strategy 1.4.2 and experts in the field. This project would set an example for research on other under-represented topics.

### **STRATEGY 1.1.4 PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO NHA INTERPRETIVE PROVIDERS TO DEVELOP INTERPRETIVE PLANS AND PROJECTS.**

The NHA and Interpretive Planning Task Group will seek assistance and guidance from experienced NHA partners such as the National Park Service, California State Parks, East Bay Regional Park District, and larger regional institutions to assist partners in developing interpretive plans and projects. They will utilize best practices and interpretive planning guiding principles to identify unique aspects of the Delta and suggest how they might be presented and experienced. These interpretive guiding principles include:

- **Experience of Place:** Interpretive providers will use the natural and cultural landscape as the vehicle through which stories are told, relating stories to

real places and tangible features and evoking sense of place. They will use authentic physical features – landforms, plant communities, waterways, farmland, roads, buildings, and other resources – to tell the stories. Natural and cultural influences are inseparable within the Delta landscape. Ecosystems evolved and were in part shaped by the successive human cultures that depended upon them. This co-evolution of the landscape continues today.

- **Sense of Time:** The Delta is defined by some places that reflect previous eras and other places that are continually changing. Its ecosystems evolved over thousands of years of climatic change. Its successive human cultures share continuity in their relationships to the living landscape.
- **Sense of Scale:** The NHA is vast and comprised of large landscape areas that differ from each other yet are closely connected. The scale of the landscape and the gradual ways in which it changes are aspects to be communicated and experienced.
- **Adaptation and Resilience:** The ability of ecosystems and human cultures to adapt to evolving conditions is fundamental to the stories of the Delta.
- **Significance and Meaning:** Interpretation goes beyond conveying a story's facts by drawing connections, significance, and meaning to audiences. In developing interpretive content, each subject or story must be examined for its significance, for a key message to be conveyed by the story or exhibit. Providers will communicate this significance or message to audiences in ways that connect to people's life experiences.
- **Shared Human Experience:** Interpretation should help audiences relate storylines and resources to experiences in their own lives. Using the authentic stories of real people in their words in the actual places where events occurred is encouraged wherever possible. The expression of universal concepts such as love, loss, uncertainty, and success to which everyone can relate in their lives helps forge personal connections to a story.
- **Points of View:** Stories will be presented from multiple perspectives in their thematic and historical context to help audiences appreciate how different people from diverse cultures see things and communicate differently. Interpretation will encourage audiences to connect with stories from others' experiences and points of view.
- **Acknowledge the Unpleasant:** The stories associated with Delta history sometimes reflect difficult experiences that impacted various groups within the region. In particular, the challenges that Native Americans, Asian and Mexican immigrant groups, African Americans, and others had to face over the past two hundred years are not always pleasant or

uplifting. These difficulties and conflicts will be accurately represented in the storytelling.

- **Context:** While individual stories may be unique, they will all connect to the NHA themes. Stories will illustrate the themes and connect to the bigger picture in ways that make them immediate and understandable.
- **Connections:** Where applicable, local stories will connect to the stories of other communities and sites within the NHA as part of the communication of context, significance, and meaning. Providers will encourage visitors to visit multiple places to learn about other aspects of related themes and stories.
- **Accuracy:** Stories and content will be well researched and accurate. If the stories are based upon legend, lore, or oral tradition, that will be clearly stated.
- **Quality:** Each interpretive installation and media experience will meet the highest standards of quality in terms of location, design, orientation to resource, storytelling, physical installation, accessibility, and visitor experience. Guidelines, review processes, and technical assistance will be used to help maintain quality standards.
- **Experiential Learning:** People learn and remember things better when they physically do them. Providers will emphasize communication that is visual and tied to authentic places and features. Physical activities will provide visitors with various sensory experiences—the sights, the distances, and the sense of landscape and landforms associated with places and events. For example, the 1,200 square-foot interactive map of the Delta at Big Break Regional Shoreline allows visitors to see how water flows through the region.
- **Variety of Experiences:** Providers will offer a variety of interpretive approaches to satisfy the interests and capabilities of different age groups, temperaments, and orientations. Options will include varying levels of activity, timeframes, and levels of required concentration, as well as alternative ways to experience interpretation for individuals with physical limitations or disabilities. Providers will make use of cutting-edge technology when possible.
- **Opportunities to Explore:** Providers will present themes and stories in ways that encourage audiences to explore other places and sites by drawing interpretive connections, inserting tempting leads, and providing the information and tools needed to follow through on interests. This approach will encourage audiences to explore the landscape by inviting them to experience other aspects of the stories in other locations.
- **Depth of Information:** Primary interpretive content will be succinct and well written, emphasizing key messages, context, and connections. In addition,

providers will develop information and guidance for exploring subjects in greater detail to encourage people to explore subjects in more depth if they are interested.

- **Opportunities to Engage and Support:** Providers will make audiences aware of the mission, programs, and initiatives of the NHA's partnership organizations. Raising awareness of the broader NHA effort will encourage visitors to engage in programs and activities that support partnership initiatives and help address environmental and cultural challenges.

### **STRATEGY 1.1.5 PROVIDE VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON INTERPRETIVE TRAINING TO NHA PARTNERS TO ENHANCE INTERPRETATION SKILLS, INTERPRETIVE SITE MANAGEMENT, EXHIBIT DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED SKILLS.**

California State Parks and the East Bay Regional Park District offer their staff in-depth training for front-line interpreters and managers on volunteer management, planning, recreation, and on specific interpretive topics. Several nonprofit interpretive providers have existing volunteer and interpretive training programs, such as the Yolo Basin Foundation with volunteer naturalist training, and Project WET (Water Education Today) Foundation with water education training for teachers. The NHA will work with these government agencies and nonprofits to extend these training opportunities to NHA partners.

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) also provides interpretive training on various topics like interpretation skills, volunteer management, writing, planning, and graphic design techniques. NAI conducts at least two monthly webinars focused on front-line skills and individuals working in interpretive management, planning, media, and more. The DPC will secure membership and facilitate partner organizations in doing so in order to participate through the packages offered for individuals and organizations.

Finally, the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) provides multiple resources for museums and history organizations. Their professional development offerings, including the Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations, the History Leadership Institute, webinars, online courses, and workshops are designed for professionals, students, and volunteers.

### **STRATEGY 1.1.6 PROVIDE INTERPRETIVE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO RECREATION BUSINESS STAFF AND INTERPRETIVE MATERIALS FOR VISITORS WHO USE THEIR SERVICES.**

According to the DPC's 2020 Recreation and Tourism update to the *Economic Sustainability Plan*, recreation by residents and visitors generates a total of roughly 12 million visitor days of use annually and a direct economic impact of

more than \$200 million in spending per year. Supporting Theme 3 demonstrates that recreation is not just an important part of the Delta economy, but also the Delta culture. The NHA can capitalize on the importance of recreation by bringing interpretation to recreation visitors through recreational businesses. For example, the DPC will develop training for boating excursion companies for guided tours and develop self-guided boating tours highlighting NHA themes. The DPC has built strong relationships with regional recreational providers through their work on the NHA, the Great California Delta Trail, VisitCADelta, Delta Leadership Program, and other programs and projects. The DPC staff and Interpretive Planning Task Group will continue to grow these relationships with existing and other partners in the recreation industry.

### **STRATEGY 1.1.7 CONNECT PEOPLE WITH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT NHA SITES.**

Finding and retaining volunteers is an ongoing challenge for many interpretive providers. This problem is particularly difficult in the rural areas in the central and eastern portions of the NHA that lack significant local population. Getting more people involved is a challenge, and even in places with substantial involvement, the small population results in not having enough capacity to get the work accomplished. Many museums and public lands are relatively close to large urban areas, but residents of these areas are not aware of these resources and the volunteer opportunities available there.

As interpretive planning efforts expand throughout the Delta, DPC staff and Interpretive Planning Task Group will work with interpretive providers to identify opportunities for volunteers to be involved. Volunteer assistance within the NHA network will include:

- Supporting recruiting outreach, including mission-oriented groups such as civic service and environmental organizations. Wide exposure can highlight the needs of many organizations who continue to rely on local, word-of-mouth recruiting.
- Developing contacts for youth and college groups, such as scouts, Future Farmers of America, and service programs.
- Providing robust and practical volunteer management training and resources for NHA partners. Training includes assessing and developing volunteer programs, recruitment, training, management, retention, recognition, and evaluation. Training will be offered on a regular basis, to reinforce and keep information available as personnel change.
- Incentivizing volunteerism with recognition and other benefits that reduce overall cost to individual organizations for doing the same activities at a smaller scale.



As resources become available, DPC and Interpretive Planning Task Group can create a regional volunteer program to connect volunteers with opportunities and needs across heritage sectors, such as citizen science, museum docents, and event support. DPC can develop a volunteer program clearinghouse that collates volunteer position opportunities and the names and interests of people interested in volunteering. Program success will take active participation from partner sites to connect with their own volunteer needs, and dedication of time and effort to communicate, make the connections, manage the volunteers, and track results.

### **STRATEGY 1.1.8 EXPLORE GRANTS AND OTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERPRETIVE PLANNING AND PROJECTS.**

During the outreach for preparation of the interpretive plan, interpretive providers noted that they apply for many grants, but would like training in grant writing and grant administration. The DPC will work with other state agencies, larger interpretive providers in the region, and nonprofit organizations specializing in grant support to both offer this type of assistance to NHA partners and apply for grants for NHA-wide projects. The following are examples of federal and state grant opportunities for interpretive projects and museums:

- The federal Institute of Museum and Library Services gives grants for museum conservation, preservation, collections assessments, digital projects, training, and more.
- The National Endowment for the Humanities offers a variety of grant programs to individuals and organizations that promote the humanities, such as research, education development, exhibits, digital media, and more.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers Environmental Education Grants that provide financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques.
- California State Parks, Division of Boating and Waterways administers several grant and loan programs designed to improve and safeguard the user boating experience.
- California State Parks, Office of Grants and Local Services develops grant programs that provide funding for local, state, and nonprofit organization projects. Grant projects generally address park, recreation, and resource-related needs.

## Objective 1.2 Interpretation orients residents and visitors to the NHA through outreach programs, special events, and signs.

NHA-wide interpretive efforts will suggest itineraries for how residents and visitors may best explore the storylines (see Strategy 3.1.4 in Chapter 3 for more information about trip planning), but there is no predicting how they will visit and the order in which they may see interpretive sites. Residents and visitors will experience NHA interpretation in any order and over varying periods of time. Consequently, participating interpretive sites will be able to provide basic orientation information about the NHA and the relationship of that site to the overall NHA experience. A key part of these orientation efforts will be tied to regional tourism information through NHA media and social media as described in Objective 3.1 in Chapter 3. The strategies described below will refer to these NHA sources where possible.

### **STRATEGY 1.2.1 PROMOTE DELTA-WIDE THEMED SPECIAL EVENTS, SUCH AS "DELTA DAYS" OR "DELTA250" AT NHA SITES.**

Delta-wide themed special events that reflect the interpretive themes discussed earlier in this chapter are important for the NHA in several ways. First, they draw attention to the Delta as a distinct region. Portions of the Delta are typically divided into the neighboring San Francisco Bay, Sacramento, and Central Valley regions. Special events bring Vallejo, Martinez, Antioch, Walnut Grove, and Stockton together in the eyes of the public. Second, such events draw attention to the NHA. Finally, and perhaps most important, a diverse group of interpretive providers, community groups, and economic development organizations from throughout the Delta need to organize Delta-wide events. Such a common effort develops relationships and increases cooperation in the future, even outside of these events.

The Interpretive Planning Task Group will be important in developing themes for these events, getting the word out to different organizations, and assisting in managing the events along with DPC staff. The task group could decide to focus on a particular theme over a year to explore various facets of the theme, such as the Delta during World War II. The concept of a "Delta Days" regional event traces back to the 2015 Delta Narratives report, which recommended creating such an event to celebrate the region and encourage visitors to sample a variety of sites.

The upcoming America250 celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, which will culminate in 2026, also provides an opportunity for the Interpretive Planning Task Group and various Delta organizations to work together on a unified marketing strategy and incorporate

many participating organizations. For example, annual events such as the Courtland Pear Fair, Taste of Oakley, and Valley Waterfront Weekend before and during 2026 could place a Delta250 logo on their materials, include booths for the overall celebration, and reference other events that are tied to the celebration. The American Association for State and Local History has a program that provides guidance to museums and history organizations about how to develop programs in observance of the 250th anniversary at <https://aaslh.org/programs/250th/>.

### **STRATEGY 1.2.2 PREPARE AN INTERPRETIVE SIGN PLAN TO AID IN THE PLACEMENT, DESIGN, FUNDING, AND PLACEMENT OF INTERPRETIVE PANELS IN THE NHA.**

The DPC will lead the preparation of an interpretive sign plan, utilizing the Interpretive Planning Task Group and the Advisory Committee. As part of the preparation of the plan, the DPC staff will identify sites that would benefit from interpretive panels and could improve the presentation of the interpretive storylines described earlier in this chapter. Sites will include existing and potential recreation trails, historic resources that are pedestrian accessible and lack indoor interpretation, and urban areas and public lands that have high foot traffic. The plan will prioritize sites that are critically important to interpreting key NHA storylines, sites operated by willing partners, places that have traditionally lacked interpretation, and places that can reach a large audience. The plan should emphasize the importance of interpretive signs that connect to online information, videos, and other media related to NHA themes by utilizing QR codes or similar technology.

### **STRATEGY 1.2.3 FUND PLAQUES FOR NATIONAL AND CALIFORNIA REGISTER SITES IN THE NHA.**

The DPC will collaborate with the California Office of Historic Preservation, Interpretive Planning Task Group, other interpretive providers, and community groups to identify specific sites on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Places that are publicly accessible, are in areas where there is pedestrian traffic, could benefit from the placement of plaques, and where the property owner is willing to participate. The DPC will provide funding to develop and install plaques at the identified sites. These plaques should reference the overall NHA and interpretive storylines where possible. Organizations that place plaques on historic structures and in historic districts include E Clampus Vitus and Native Daughters of the Golden West/Native Sons of the Golden West fraternal organizations focused on the history of the region.

### **STRATEGY 1.2.4 DEVELOP THEMATIC TRAIL MESSAGING THAT CONNECTS INTERPRETIVE SITES THROUGHOUT THE NHA.**

Recreational users, such as hikers, bicyclists, boaters in motorized and non-motorized watercraft, and equestrians, are a particularly important Delta audience. They are more likely to travel to different parts of the NHA using trails, perhaps as part of a solo or group self-guided trip through the area. Such travel could be part of the trip planning efforts identified in Strategy 3.1.4 in Chapter 3. These trips provide an opportunity for the NHA to give connected interpretive tours of the area. This approach can be incorporated into the interpretive sign plan set forth in Strategy 1.2.2 and trail planning efforts, including those for the Great California Delta Trail.

**Objective 1.3 Interpretation connects people to the NHA's culture, economy, history, and natural environment, and inspires them to protect the region's precious natural resources.**

The NHA is woven together by a complex network of rivers, wetlands, and roads that connect people to farms, communities, historic sites, and natural areas. Interpretation connects people to the stories and natural landscapes that make the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta important to the state and the nation. Interpretive messaging and experiences will emphasize NHA stories with concepts meaningful to residents and visitors.

### **STRATEGY 1.3.1 DEVELOP INTERPRETIVE CONTENT, PROGRAMS, AND MATERIALS THAT PLACE THE NHA IN THE CONTEXT OF STATE AND NATIONAL HISTORY AND ECONOMY.**

The DPC's role is to convene partners and communicate a common narrative among partners and visitors. The common narrative is based not only on the themes and storylines, but also on the ongoing conversation among partners about the narratives, and the ways these stories are shared with diverse audiences. The Interpretive Planning Task Group will be an important forum for assessing what types of content, programs, and materials best communicate the stories of the Delta. The significance of the Delta as an agricultural, cultural, and natural resource has generated difficult questions about economic sustainability, ecosystem restoration, and water management. The DPC's role is not to provide answers to these questions; rather the DPC is committed to creating an open setting to discuss those viewpoints, to help move toward finding common ground and to encourage civil and responsible expression of viewpoints where partners disagree.

The NHA's Interpretive Planning Task Group will assess which topics are under-represented within the region, such as Native American life in the Delta and the region's significant contributions to land reclamation engineering and technology. Museums such as the Dutra Museum of Dredging and the San Joaquin Historical Society and Museum, which feature this latter story, noted they lack funding and staff to offer more interpretation and educational services. Collaboration and partnerships with pertinent government agencies, academic organizations, and businesses such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, local reclamation districts, University of the Pacific, and the Caterpillar Corporation (started in Stockton), can uncover historical documents and photographic archives. Staff from these agencies, businesses, and organizations could be engaged to assist with further theme development and educational programs.

### **STRATEGY 1.3.2 PROMOTE THE AREA'S AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH EXHIBITS, PROGRAMS, AND EVENTS, INCLUDING CULINARY EXPERIENCES.**

Many Californians and visitors to California are unaware of the importance of the state's agricultural bounty to consumers and the state and national economy. As described in Theme 4, the Delta is a critical part of the story of California's role in providing food to the nation. Food and where that food comes from is a story that resonates with people, making the storyline a valuable way to connect with residents and visitors.

There are long-standing and new efforts to promote Delta agriculture to a broader audience, including agritourism, events, and interpretation at local museums. As described further in Chapter 2, the Delta has a lively agritourism industry, exemplified by the more than 60-year-old Bachinni's Fruit Tree u-pick operation in Brentwood, the Delta Farmers Market between Isleton and Rio Vista, and the Old Sugar Mill wine-tasting venue in Clarksburg. The Courtland Pear Fair has been held annually, except during the pandemic, since 1972. Taste of the Delta, sponsored by the California Delta Chambers, and Taste of Oakley, organized by the City of Oakley, provide additional opportunities to sample Delta food and drink. Over the last decade, Sacramento has embraced its agricultural and culinary heritage by proclaiming the city America's Farm-to-Fork Capital and hosting the Farm-to-Fork Festival, which includes a well-known dinner on the historic Tower Bridge that lies within the NHA. The Dutra Museum of Dredging, Haggin Museum, San Joaquin County Historical Museum, and numerous community museums have exhibits interpreting different aspects of the Delta's agricultural history.

These varied places and events are a robust foundation for interpreting Delta agricultural heritage. The DPC and Interpretive Planning Task Group will convene potential partners in agritourism, the overall agriculture industry, local and state farm bureaus, agricultural nonprofit organizations, farm worker organizations, interpretive providers focused on agriculture and farm labor, and academic institutions about communicating an agricultural heritage narrative among partners and visitors. The DPC staff and NHA partners can help local museums work together on shared exhibits, programming, events (see Strategy 1.2.1 for description of Delta-wide events), and video production. Interpretation also will extend beyond museums to agritourism, agriculture and food-oriented events, the ports of Stockton and West Sacramento, recreation areas, and trails.

### **STRATEGY 1.3.3 HIGHLIGHT THE WORK OF PAST, PRESENT, AND UPCOMING ARTISTS AND WRITERS WHOSE WORK INCLUDES THE NHA THROUGH EXHIBITS, PRESENTATIONS, AND ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCY PROGRAMS.**

As described in Supporting Theme 2, there is a long history of artists and writers that have drawn inspiration from and lived in the Delta. Interpretation of this supporting theme within the NHA is currently limited. The two primary art museums in the region, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento and the Haggin Museum in Stockton, are outside of the NHA - in the case of the Crocker - less than an eighth of a mile away. Public art, such as murals and sculptures, is found in Antioch, Brentwood, Clarksburg, Hercules, Isleton, Martinez, Pittsburg, Rio Vista, Walnut Grove, and West Sacramento, some of which is accompanied by interpretation and guides. The cities of Benicia, Brentwood, and Vallejo have poet laureates. Acclaimed author Jack London's haunts are celebrated along the Carquinez Strait. Numerous art galleries, bookstores, and libraries are located throughout the region.

A more organized and comprehensive interpretive focus on art and writing is needed. There is precedent for Delta-wide projects, including several sponsored by the DPC. The 2015 Delta Narratives project included an essay on art and writing by Gregg Camfield of University of California, Merced. The DPC was involved with the Delta Forever art exhibit, featuring paintings by Ning Hou and Gregory Kondos, which debuted in Courtland and traveled to two locations in Sacramento during 2015 and 2016. Initial development of Robert Benedetti's *Imagining the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta: An Anthology of Voices Across Centuries* was supported by research assistance from the DPC. Another Delta-wide art project is photographer Rich Turner's Delta Grandeur exhibition, which toured throughout California in addition to Delta locations.

The DPC and Interpretive Planning Task Group will work with governmental art programs at the federal, state, and local level, art-oriented nonprofit organizations, local universities, and artist and writers to fund and promote projects that establish the Delta as a distinct region for the visual arts and writing, commemorate past artists and writers, celebrate the diversity of styles and viewpoints, support emerging artists and writers, and beautify Delta communities. Projects can include a revival of the Delta Forever art exhibition, permanent and traveling exhibits, artist-in-residency programs, a public art program, guides to public art in the region, interpretive panels that describe local art and writing, guided and self-guided tours, a Delta poet laureate, books and literary journals, and artist and writer directories.

**STRATEGY 1.3.4. SHARE NATURAL RESOURCE-THEMED INTERPRETIVE CONTENT, INCLUDING EXISTING WATER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND TRAINING, WITH NHA SITES AND ALONG ESTABLISHED LAND AND WATER TRAIL NETWORKS.**

The NHA has almost 40 sites and organizations that offer interpretive programs and education related to the Delta's natural resources, environmental protection efforts, and resource stewardship. Likely, many more exist in the immediate San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento metropolitan regions. Current interpretation from the Cosumnes River Preserve, East Bay Regional Park District, Sacramento County Regional Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Yolo Basin Foundation includes guided walks and programs about local wildlife, field trips, virtual classroom programs, and self-guided trails with interpretive signs. These organizations offer school programs tied to California's K-12 education curriculum, and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (also known as STEAM) approaches to education.

Project WET's program, led by the Water Education Foundation in California, promotes awareness, appreciation, knowledge, and stewardship of water resources through classroom-ready teaching aids. The local coordinator organizes workshops for K-12 educators across the state through the California Water Institute for Teachers. Project WET includes comprehensive online educational materials, tours of key watersheds, water news, water leadership training, and conferences.

During interviews with the California State Parks team, these organizations, along with the National Park Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, expressed interest in collaborating with other NHA partners to share resources, training, and education opportunities, but they needed locations and hosts for their programs. For example, Project WET needed site coordinators to host training for interpretive providers, teachers, volunteers, and other interested

parties. The DPC and Interpretive Planning Task Group will work with partners to identify locations for natural resource-themed programs.

Many government agencies are conducting scientific studies and restoration efforts within the Delta. Organizations such as Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy, and Sierra Club, also support and work on restoration projects. These agencies, along with academic institutions, are potential interpretive partners to develop the NHA's natural resource interpretive themes, education materials, and programs. Areas of focus include water quality, water reclamation, flood control measures, fish and waterfowl protection, integrating agriculture as a resource protection measure, salinity, sea level rise, and climate change.

### Objective 1.4 Interpretation inspires people to learn about the NHA's Native American and immigrant communities and to appreciate their contributions to the region's culture and history.

As the only NHA in California and one of three on the United States' continental Pacific coast, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA can provide important new stories for the National Heritage Area Program. One of the most distinctive aspects of the NHA is the tremendous diversity of Native American cultures in the region (described in Theme 3), as well as the number and type of immigrant communities that settled here (described in Theme 5). Thus, interpretation in the NHA will carefully research and continually develop associated themes and storylines and share these stories with a variety of audiences. The NHA will work in partnership with Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, cultural organizations representing immigrant groups, scholars, and other researchers in this effort.

#### **STRATEGY 1.4.1 ESTABLISH AN ADVISORY COUNCIL WITH TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES TO DEVELOP CULTURALLY SENSITIVE EDUCATIONAL CONTENT.**

Continued relationship-building and conversation with Tribes is required to refine the interpretive themes and storylines presented in this chapter and to develop Delta-wide and location-specific interpretive content based on those themes and storylines. Time is a critical part of these conversations, in part because some stories can only be told at certain times of the year due to Tribal traditions. Therefore, the DPC will form a Tribal advisory council to work with NHA staff and partners in preparing interpretation that is sensitive to Tribal values and needs over the long term.

The DPC and Tribal representatives will create a charter for the advisory council and convene initial meetings. Early meetings could adopt a workshop format



since participants might require more interaction to discuss different issues about interpreting Native American heritage, such as which stories to highlight and locations for interpretation. One potential issue for the council would be the preparation of a land acknowledgment statement that can be used for NHA-related events and places (see Strategy 2.4.1).

### **STRATEGY 1.4.2 COLLABORATE WITH NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES TO DEVELOP INTERPRETIVE CONTENT ABOUT TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERSPECTIVES.**

Native American heritage is currently the least interpreted theme in the NHA, but efforts to expand this are a top interpretive priority for the NHA. The Haggin Museum in Stockton and the San Joaquin Historical Society Museum in Lodi, which both lie outside the NHA, have exhibits and interpretive programs developed in partnership with Tribes. Within the NHA boundary, the Friends of the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse are partnering with local Tribes to incorporate Native American stories as they complete their work on the schoolhouse and surrounding grounds. Clearly, there is much more work to be done for the DPC and partner interpretive providers in collaboration with Tribes to share Tribal stories, world views, and contributions. A critical undertaking for the DPC and Interpretive Planning Task Group is to work with Tribes and partner interpretive providers to develop more interpretive content at locations throughout the NHA, perhaps at cultural centers dedicated to the preservation and teaching of Native American traditions and skills.

As the management plan was in development, there were significant challenges to creating interpretive themes with Tribal representatives. Even under ideal circumstances, an NHA requires years to establish strong relationships with Tribal governments and representatives. An additional challenge that contributes to the difficulty of this type of relationship-building is the number of requests for consultation that Tribal representatives regularly receive from federal and state agencies. Strategies 1.4.2 and 1.4.3 below seek to mitigate these challenges. Finally, there are 22 Tribes whose traditional homeland lies within the NHA, along with many Tribes that are located within the larger watershed. It is natural that there may be differences in their approaches to interpretation.

The DPC values and appreciates ongoing collaboration and partnership with Tribes when developing interpretive themes, storylines, exhibits, programs, and educational content. As noted in the Introduction, public agencies in California such as the DPC are subject to requirements regarding Tribal consultation that affects the NHA. The DPC must consult with Tribes on a variety of projects per Governor Executive Orders B-10-11 and N-15-19, and Assembly Bill 52, which

amended the California Environmental Quality Act. While not legally required, nonprofit organizations and private NHA partners should consult regularly when developing new interpretive content about Native Americans to ensure that information is appropriate, accurate, and relevant. They should also revisit existing interpretive content and consult with Tribes to update the information as new scholarship emerges.

**STRATEGY 1.4.3 ESTABLISH A FUNDING SOURCE FOR NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES AND OTHER CULTURAL GROUPS TO ASSIST WITH THEIR TIME AND EXPENSES RELATED TO DEVELOPING INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL CONTENT FOR THE NHA.**

The requirement that public agencies in California engage in consultation with Tribes regarding many projects means that Tribal representatives are frequently inundated with requests for consultation. Since the DPC and Interpretive Planning Task Group are seeking in-depth conversations with Tribal representatives over interpretation, the DPC will provide stipends and expense reimbursement for Tribal consultation. This effort could be organized in coordination with the Delta Stewardship Council and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, both of which have similar needs to consult with Tribal representatives.

**STRATEGY 1.4.4. DEVELOP INTERPRETIVE CONTENT AND PROGRAMS THAT DESCRIBE THE CONNECTIONS OF CULTURAL GROUPS TO THE NHA LANDSCAPE.**

The story of Native Americans in the Delta – the natural bounty that led to high population densities, the tending and harvesting of plants that resembled traditional agriculture (see Storyline 3.2), and the ability to easily evade the Spanish in the lush and wet landscape – was only possible here. Although many of the immigrant groups that settled in the Delta arrived in other parts of California and the American West, the relationship of these groups to the water, land, and communities in the Delta make the Delta' cultural landscape unique. The story of Chinese immigrants from the Pearl River Delta who transplanted their knowledge of levee-building to a Delta thousands of miles away and then diversified the types of crops grown, first in the water-rich Delta and later in California as a whole, is only possible here. The story of Italian immigrants who began the commercial fishing industry in the area pioneered the growing of Mediterranean crops like tomatoes and olives and served as an important customer base for the Bank of Italy before it became the banking industry titan Bank of America, is only possible here.

The DPC and the Interpretive Planning Task Group will develop exhibits, programming, education, and other interpretive content with NHA partners that celebrate the strong bond that many cultural groups have to the Delta's distinct landscape. While interpretive content can focus on specific stories, there are opportunities for NHA partners to broaden these efforts to include a wide range of stories for a particular cultural group, set of groups, or interactions between different cultural groups. These histories provide rich avenues for research as described in Strategy 1.1.3. An example of a collaborative opportunity within the NHA is an interpretive focus on Asian cultural history at numerous sites, which provides an opportunity to promote an interconnected, cohesive Asian cultural experience throughout the NHA. Asian cultural sites are located throughout the NHA, but there is a concentration in the small communities along the Sacramento River, including Locke, a National Historical Landmark, and National Register districts in Isleton and Walnut Grove. The Interpretive Planning Task Group and NHA partners can initially focus on interpreting resources in these communities, while working to expand and enhance interpretation both in these communities and at other sites in the region.

#### **STRATEGY 1.4.5 PROMOTE NHA-THEMED INTERPRETIVE MATERIALS AND PROGRAMS THROUGH CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS.**

The DPC staff, in collaboration with the Interpretive Planning Task Group, will partner with regional, state, and national cultural organizations to conduct scholarly research, develop content, and promote interpretive materials and programs. Partnerships with cultural organizations provide access to archives, including oral histories, mailing lists, facilities, and expertise, while the organizations can benefit from NHA funding, technical assistance, training, interpretive sign program, and promotion. Examples of organizations that the DPC has worked with include the Delta Education and Cultural Society, Filipino American National Historical Society, which has their national museum in Stockton, and Locke Foundation. State and national cultural organizations can promote virtual and in-person exploration of history in the NHA to their members, including potential excursion tours.

#### **Objective 1.5 Support regional educational programming and curriculum tied to NHA themes.**

Education provides people of all ages with insight into the issues that face the world and cultivates the ability to think critically about potential strategies to manage those issues. The DPC and Interpretive Planning Task Group will encourage opportunities for students and adult learners to discover and experience Delta history, culture, geography, biology, and environment in the context of the NHA themes and to learn about local connections to the broader

world. These opportunities may include traditional classroom activities, youth programs, out-of-class enrichment and field trips, and lifelong learning classes. The DPC and its partners will present messages in entertaining formats with scholarly accuracy, balanced presentation of differing viewpoints, and respect for the complexity of the issues.

### **STRATEGY 1.5.1 CONNECT SCHOOLS TO EXISTING NHA CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES.**

Although there are gaps in curriculum and educational programs related to the NHA's interpretive themes, there are existing programs that the NHA and partner organizations can support and promote. Strategy 1.3.4 includes descriptions of numerous natural resource educational programs in the NHA that are tied to California's K-12 education curriculum, and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) topics. The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom develops materials that increase awareness and understanding of agriculture for K-12 students and provides programs and training opportunities for educators. The California Historical Society, in partnership with the California History-Social Science Project, created Teaching California, which provides classroom-ready resources to help teach California's History-Social Science Framework. DPC previously funded a fourth-grade curriculum focused on Delta culture and history prepared by the Sacramento County Office of Education. The DPC will continue to work with local county offices of education, school districts, schools, and educators to promote these and other existing curriculum and educational programs, including trainings for teachers and funding for field trips as discussed in Strategy 1.5.4.

### **STRATEGY 1.5.2 PROVIDE FUNDING TO DEVELOP ADDITIONAL NHA INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS AND EDUCATIONAL CONTENT TIED TO CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION.**

While the DPC may take the lead on some educational programming, the DPC staff and Interpretive Planning Task Group will play an important role in encouraging and supporting other educational programs. Programs include age-appropriate, content-rich, engaging, and participatory educational opportunities for children that may be used in schools, for out-of-school enrichment, and by youth groups such as Future Farmers of America and scouts. Support will include grants and promoting educational opportunities to wider audiences. NHA partners will develop specific curricula and experiential opportunities for youth groups, including schools and enrichment programs that are connected to NHA themes, local resources, and stories. Partners also will help make these opportunities available for more students and youth groups.

Stewardship education, including environmental awareness, historic preservation, and cultural conservation, will be integral to NHA educational and interpretive programs, leading students to understand issues, raise awareness of stewardship needs, and to act in their own lives to care for the world around them.

### **STRATEGY 1.5.3 ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAMS.**

According to the National Park Service, "citizen science is when the public voluntarily helps conduct scientific research. Citizen scientists may design experiments, collect data, analyze results, and solve problems."<sup>39</sup> The Delta Science Program and the Delta Independent Science Board, both of which are part of the Delta Stewardship Council, engage community members in citizen science programs because, as the Delta Independent Science Board stated, they "offer opportunities for expanded [Delta] monitoring activities" and "increase public awareness of environmental issues."<sup>40</sup> The NHA will support the Delta Stewardship Council's efforts by working with NHA partners to create and fund citizen science programs and promoting them to potential volunteers. Topics can include monitoring of invasive species, plant and animal populations, water quality, and levee safety.

### **STRATEGY 1.5.4 SPONSOR HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES AND FIELD TRIPS FOR STUDENTS RELATED TO THE NHA'S INTERPRETIVE THEMES.**

While classroom learning is an important tool in learning about Delta heritage, getting students out to interpretive sites within the NHA is an invaluable way to ensure that the Delta becomes truly real for young Californians and strengthens their curiosity and appreciation for the region. Examples include:

- A Delta Discovery Voyage field trip, sponsored by the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, where fifth graders can experience a three-and-a-half-hour excursion aboard a research vessel where they learn about the source of their drinking water and the importance of pollution prevention.
- A field trip of the Dutch Slough tidal marsh restoration site in Oakley, where elementary school students can learn about wildlife in the area and observe science in action as a working tower of scientific instruments measures greenhouse gasses moving between the wetland and the atmosphere.

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<sup>39</sup> National Park Service, "What Is Citizen Science?" <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/citizenscience/citizen-science.htm>, Accessed December 5, 2023.

<sup>40</sup> Delta Independent Science Board, "Review of the Monitoring Enterprise in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta," March 2022, p. 106.

Fully staffed interpretive sites can support on-site education programs and educational outreach for schools and youth groups; sites with minimal or all-volunteer staffing have greater difficulty. The DPC can support a broad range of sites in ways that address their capabilities. The DPC is committed to enabling interpretive sites throughout the NHA to connect directly to schools to provide educational programs, including but not limited to school tours and service learning. Smaller interpretive sites can be supported through grants and additional assistance. These programs should offer opportunities for multi-disciplinary, place-based team learning for students and families that are prized by educators but difficult to present in classroom settings.



*Recreation is integral to waterfront communities in the Delta, as are the iconic bridges that help people crisscross the maze of waterways. (Stacy Hayden/Delta Protection Commission)*

## Chapter 2 – Stewarding the Delta’s Resources

### Introduction

Designating legislation directs the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area to increase public awareness of, and appreciation for, natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources, and to protect and restore historic places consistent with the NHA’s interpretive themes. To ensure these mandates are accomplished, the legislation further directs the management plan to include policies and strategies for resource management (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(ii), (iii), and (vi)), as well as actions that partners will take to protect resources (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(A)), (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(B)) and (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(D)).

Addressing this directive, the Advisory Committee adopted as the second goal for the NHA the following:

*Steward the heritage and culture of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, by identifying, preserving, conserving, and enhancing the unique identity, resources, and living traditions of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.*

Understanding the concept of cultural heritage and why it is important to communities is crucial for achieving this goal. This chapter begins with an exploration of cultural heritage and its importance, followed by a description of the resources that characterize the Delta. The majority of the chapter is dedicated to defining the objectives and strategies that will facilitate the protection and enhancement of those vital resources.

## The Importance of Heritage

Heritage refers to the physical and intangible manifestations of history, traditions, place, and identity that are passed down from one generation to another. It includes tangible elements like historic buildings, archival materials, artifacts, and landscapes, as well as intangible elements like language, foodways, oral traditions, social practices, rituals and customs, festive events, music, dance, and traditional knowledge. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) places significant value on conserving both tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage in the face of growing globalization, stating "From cherished historic monuments and museums to living heritage practices and contemporary art forms, culture enriches our lives in countless ways and helps build inclusive, innovative, and resilient communities".<sup>41</sup>

Heritage is essential for several reasons:

- Cultural heritage shapes the identity of communities and individuals, providing a sense of belonging and continuity with the past. It helps people understand their roots and provides a foundation for shaping their future.
- Shared heritage promotes cohesion and cooperation within communities. It fosters mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect among diverse groups.
- Tangible heritage, such as landscapes, historic sites, and artifacts, provides valuable insights into the past. Natural and historic places help

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<sup>41</sup> UNESCO, Culture, <https://www.unesco.org/en/culture>, accessed August 24, 2023.



people understand how communities have changed and the challenges they faced, fostering historical awareness and knowledge.

- Intangible heritage, such as traditional arts and craft, serves as a source of inspiration for contemporary artists and creators. It contributes to cultural diversity and creativity in the present, which in turn adds to community vibrancy.
- Heritage offers valuable educational opportunities, helping present and future generations learn about their past, traditions, and the significance of conserving and preserving these legacies.
- In a living landscape like the Delta, nature and culture are closely intertwined. Sustainable practices that help safeguard ecosystems contribute to overall environmental conservation efforts and quality of life.
- Heritage sites attract visitors, generating economic benefits for local communities. Sustainable tourism practices can help preserve these sites while providing income and employment opportunities.

To ensure the continued relevance and preservation of heritage, effective stewardship and management practices are essential. Integrated approaches that consider both ecological and cultural aspects are important for achieving a balance that conserves the unique heritage of living landscapes and sustains local economies while ensuring the long-term viability and health of the environment. Collaboration among governments, communities, nonprofit organizations, and businesses helps steward and enhance resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

## Description of Heritage Resources

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area is a vibrant living landscape defined by a unique inland delta and the way it has been modified over time, especially for agriculture. The themes detailed in the previous chapter are built around this landscape and the people who have lived in and adapted the Delta, the Suisun Marsh, and the Carquinez Strait. The following pages contain a description of the natural, cultural, historical, agricultural, and recreational resources that characterize the region.

### The Resource Inventory

The *John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management and Recreation Act*, the designating legislation for the NHA, requires that the management plan include an inventory of resources that are related to the interpretive themes and should be preserved, restored, managed, or maintained because of the significance of the resource (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(i)).

The resource inventory in Appendix F includes natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources that support the region's nationally important story and interpretive themes. These resources can be categorized in two ways. First, major landscape resources that span the region include waterways, levees, water management facilities, Mount Diablo (a resource that can be seen throughout the NHA, but is not located in the NHA), agricultural resources, and wildlife areas. Second, place-based cultural and historical resources that support the NHA include communities, built resources, museums, transportation resources, recreational facilities, and festivals. A narrative description of the NHA's resources follows.

### Waterways

The Delta, the Suisun Marsh, and the Carquinez Strait form one of the largest estuaries on the west coast of the Americas – a freshwater and saltwater corridor for fish and wildlife, as well as an important human corridor for commerce and recreation.

#### **THE SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA**

Over 1,000 miles of rivers and sloughs form the backbone of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's natural ecosystem, key to shaping the region's settlement patterns, vital to the development of the Delta and its role in the American story, and crucial to the continued sustainability of its communities and economy. Five major rivers converge in the Delta – the Sacramento, San Joaquin, Mokelumne, Cosumnes, and Calaveras – from which stem smaller rivers and sloughs. Half of the freshwater that falls in California falls into the Delta watershed, including the Delta's five rivers. Of these five, the Cosumnes River is the last completely free-flowing river in the region – all others have been managed in some way. In addition, some Delta waterways do not follow natural channels at all, but were constructed for water circulation, shipping, and irrigation and to obtain material for levee construction by dredging.

The Delta's system of channels, bays, and sloughs connects the upper watersheds of the Sacramento Valley, the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the great Central Valley to Suisun Marsh, Carquinez Strait, the San Francisco Bay, and marine environments of the Pacific Ocean. The ecosystems supported by the Delta and its watersheds are an integral component of the California Floristic Province, one of 25 biodiversity hotspots of global importance for conservation of species.

Due to its location at the confluence of California's two largest rivers – the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River – the Delta serves as a key migration corridor for many fish and wildlife species. The heart of the Delta,

largely free from urban development, is approximately 500,000 acres in size, and contains a diversity of ecosystems, including wetlands, waterways, riparian woodlands, grasslands, and floodplains. Delta farmlands also serve as valuable habitat for waterfowl, particularly when practices such as seasonal flooding are utilized. The Delta and its watershed provide a unique habitat resource for more than 200 species of marine and freshwater fish, as well as millions of migratory waterfowl and other migratory and resident birds. Delta waterways help support California's \$1.5 billion commercial and recreational fishing industries. Maintaining the Delta ecosystem is critical for supporting the 80 percent of commercial fishery species that migrate through or live in the Delta.

While the Delta will never be restored to historical conditions, a few examples remain of the historical Delta ecosystem:

- Riparian floodplain forest on the Cosumnes River has a canopy height of up to nearly 100 feet. The Cosumnes River Riparian Woodlands are a 254-acre parcel within the 50,000-acre Cosumnes River Preserve (not all of which is in the NHA). It is one of the few remaining areas that resembles the pre-European Central Valley riparian forests. Designated a National Natural Landmark (NNL) in 1976, it is the only NNL in the NHA.
- Tidal wetlands at Rush Ranch possess a largely intact prehistoric marsh form, habitat for rare and native plants, and a gradual transition between the marsh and undeveloped upland grasslands. The site, owned by the Solano Land Trust, provides habitat for several rare plant species including Suisun thistle, Suisun marsh aster, and Jepson's Delta tulle pea.
- Vernal pool grasslands at Jepson Prairie in the northwest Delta still have largely intact topography, hydrology, and soils. Numerous vernal pools, or seasonal pools, support a high diversity of native plant species, and provide habitat for unique, rare, and imperiled plant and wildlife species including Solano grass, Colusa grass, the Delta green ground beetle, and Conservancy fairy shrimp.

### **SUISUN MARSH**

The Suisun Marsh, immediately west of the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, is laced with miles of sloughs and channels that are important for the species that depend on the marsh, as well as recreational users. Suisun Marsh is one of the largest contiguous estuarine wetlands in North America; an important nursery for fish; a wintering and nesting area for waterfowl and waterbirds; and an essential habitat for plants, fish, and wildlife, including several scarce and sensitive species. The marsh encompasses more than 10 percent of California's remaining natural wetlands.

## CARQUINEZ STRAIT

Further westward is the Carquinez Strait, a narrow tidal strait that serves as a deepwater shipping channel. It is the only natural outlet for waters of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Sacramento Valley, and San Joaquin Valley to drain to the San Francisco Bay and then into the Pacific Ocean. The Carquinez Strait has drawn industry to its shores, including agricultural and fishing canneries, fossil fuel production, and manufacturing. The communities that line the waterway are largely built on those industries, and this area is the most populous in the NHA. Natural elements of the Carquinez Strait include open water, mudflats, marsh, grassland, woodland, and other habitats.

## Agriculture and Fisheries

Just as land and water define the region's landscape, agriculture and fisheries have played dominant roles in the culture and economy of the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and Carquinez Strait.

Much of the Delta landscape is dedicated to agriculture. Its origins in both family farms and large agricultural corporations, including historic irrigated agribusinesses that rival the biggest in California today, reflect the variety of agriculture in the state from the 1850s to the current era. Agriculture in the Suisun Marsh is limited, but portions of the upland areas are used for grazing, as well as some grain production. The Carquinez Strait historically played a key role in agricultural processing and storage, including grain warehouses, flour mills, and canning facilities. The history of agriculture and reclamation is intertwined with the multicultural history of the people who came to work the land, often in grueling conditions.

The California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program classifies much of the Delta as Prime Farmland, which is the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. The Delta's flat terrain, fertile soils, benevolent climate cooled by breezes from San Francisco Bay, abundant water resources, and waterborne access to San Francisco, Sacramento, and Stockton has provided extraordinary opportunities for agriculture. The region's culturally diverse farmers have also displayed inventiveness and ingenuity to adapt agricultural systems to local conditions. The farmlands provide the setting, too often unacknowledged in National Register nominations and other documentation, for the Delta's historic landmarks, districts, sites, and other properties.

Crops vary based on the soils deposited on riverbanks and marshes and the success of drainage and reclamation, as well as farming systems, markets, and farmers' preferences. Early products such as sugar beets and dairy products have declined, while other crops, such as almonds and wine grapes, have

grown in popularity. Since 1900, the specialty crops familiar to most Californians, including asparagus, pears, and tomatoes, have become intertwined with Delta agriculture. Today, agriculture occupies 415,000 farmed acres in the Delta, producing \$95 million in gross farm revenue in 2016. Considering the economic multiplier effect, agriculture supports 12,400 jobs and \$1.7 billion in economic output in the five Delta counties.<sup>42</sup>

In 1992, the California State Legislature safeguarded the Delta from suburban development through passage of the Delta Protection Act. Such legislative action is unique to the Delta and reflects the importance of Delta agriculture to the region and state. The legislation created the Delta Protection Commission and required the Commission to prepare and adopt a long-term resource management plan for land uses within a large rural area called the primary zone.

The Delta presents opportunities for connecting visitors to the region's rich agricultural resources through agritourism, which includes u-pick operations, farm stands, wine and spirits tasting, restaurants, farm stays, and event facilities. The Delta is home to one of the oldest, continuously operating u-pick and truck farm operation in the United States, Bacchini's Fruit Tree in Brentwood, in business for more than 60 years. Year-round agritourism resources in the NHA include the Old Sugar Mill, a restored sugar beet factory in Clarksburg with 14 wine tasting rooms, and nearby tasting rooms in Clarksburg, Freeport, and Walnut Grove. Bogle Family Wine Collection, one of the largest wineries in the United States, began in Clarksburg and has their headquarters, production facility, and tasting room there. Delta Farmer's Market is a year-round market and tasting room located at the intersection of State Routes 12 and 160 between Isleton and Rio Vista.

Canneries for packing and shipping the region's produce, especially vegetables like asparagus and tomatoes and fruits like pears and apricots, were once another common sight in the region, especially along the Carquinez Strait.

The produce canneries followed the rise of the commercial fishing industry, which flourished in the area in the latter half of the 19th century. The first salmon cannery on the West Coast was constructed off the West Sacramento riverfront in 1864. The Carquinez Strait was an ideal location for fishing canneries due to its proximity to productive fishing grounds and transportation routes. Canneries were initially located on ships, but eventually became common in the

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<sup>42</sup> Business Forecasting Center, Eberhardt School of Business, University of the Pacific; The Dangermond Group; Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.; Sapper West, Inc.; Garcia DeCredico Studio; Natural Resources Institute, University of the Pacific; and Peterson Brustad, Inc. (2012). Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: The Delta Protection Commission, <https://delta.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Ag-ESP-update-agricultural-trends-FINAL-508.pdf>, accessed September 21, 2023.

communities that line the Strait. Canneries were also located along the Sacramento River in Rio Vista and north.

Salmon was the main commercial fish, although the striped bass, first introduced near Martinez, also gained popularity. Much of the labor of harvesting the fish was carried out by Italian, Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish immigrants, among whom intense ethnic rivalries were common. Unlike the fishermen themselves, most of the cannery workers were Chinese laborers working under American or European supervisors. The Martinez birthplace of legendary baseball player Joe DiMaggio may be a place to tell stories of this industry, as the DiMaggio family were fishermen.

The history of canneries in the Carquinez Strait reflects the rise and fall of California's canned food industry, with its roots dating back to the 19th century and evolving over time to adapt to changing markets and conditions. Fishing canneries were gone by the 1920s, following the decline of commercial fishing due to overharvesting and environmental degradation from hydraulic mining. Produce canneries continued to flourish in the region until the mid-20th century. Few canneries for fish or produce are still standing and none are operational, but they are a type of historic resource that the NHA could help protect and interpret.

The decline of commercial fishing is an ongoing issue, with the possibility of completely losing the industry in the future. In addition to the overfishing and mining impacts of the previous century, climate change is a notable reason for the collapse of commercial fisheries. The commercial fishing industry indicates lack of freshwater flows and unbalanced beneficial uses as problems. Since the drought that began in 2012, commercial fishing has faced restrictions due to low river returns.<sup>43</sup>

## Historic Infrastructure

For well over a century, the Delta has been a highly managed landscape. The historic infrastructure that has made this management possible and that is ever-present in the region's viewsheds fits into the category of "major landscape resources," mentioned above. Interpreting these resources will help people understand the natural and cultural landscapes that comprise the NHA. Some of the resources described below will have the added tourism benefit of helping move visitors through the region. Many of the features are also worthy of state and national designations, documentation, and preservation.

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<sup>43</sup> Personal communication, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy to Delta Protection Commission, January 5, 2024.

## LEVEES

Construction of over 1,100 miles of levees throughout the Delta, which enclose 57 islands and tracts, is among the most significant land reclamation projects in American history. The pattern of levees, tracing the banks of rivers and sloughs, and the agricultural fields and drainage works they contain, are a character defining feature of the Delta. This levee system is crucial for protecting some of the world's most productive farmland, the state's water quality, urban population centers on the periphery of the Delta, smaller Delta communities, vital natural resources, and infrastructure. An additional 200 miles of levees are found in Suisun Marsh, vital to managing the Delta's salinity and protecting the natural wetlands. Since many Delta levees protect land that has subsided to elevations below sea level, they hold back water year-round, rather than only during floods, and so are acknowledged as "the hardest working levees in America" in *The Delta Plan* (2013).<sup>44</sup>

Levees are owned, maintained, and improved by a complex network of private landowners, reclamation districts, and public agencies. The Delta's aging levees are affected by sea level rise, subsidence of islands, increased winter runoff, and earthquakes. Levees require frequent maintenance and often expensive improvements to ensure their integrity since levee failure can destroy buildings, crops, roadways, statewide drinking water infrastructure, and sensitive ecosystems. To alleviate these threats, state and federal agencies regulate maintenance and improvements for certain levees.

## WATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Managing water has been essential to Delta life since the construction of its first levees, ditches, and tide gates in the late 19th century. The region's easy access to irrigation water protected reclaimed lands from droughts that left farms in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys parched. The Delta's location at the hub of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project has focused attention on balancing the region's resources and unique landscape with the water needs of the rest of the state. Debates about these projects from the 1940s to the contemporary era have often defined Californians' understanding of the Delta. The importance of Delta water for the state cannot be overstated, and the water infrastructure in the Delta has an extensive footprint. The Delta supplies drinking water for 27 million Californians and supports a \$50 billion agriculture industry throughout the state. Key resources of the NHA related to water management facilities include local irrigation systems, municipal systems, the Mokelumne Aqueduct, the Central Valley Project, and the State Water Project.

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<sup>44</sup> Delta Levees, Delta Stewardship Council, <https://viewperformance.deltacouncil.ca.gov/pm/delta-levees>, accessed January 26, 2024.

Each of these systems has its own separate infrastructure and complex history. The State Water Project, alone, includes the Jones Pumping Plant in Tracy, the Delta Cross Channel in Walnut Grove, and the Barker Slough Pumping Plant, among other elements.

### **SCENIC ROADWAYS**

The region's roads are the primary arteries for tourism and residential circulation. Many were built on levee tops in the early decades of the 20th century. State Route 160 through the NHA is designated as a State Scenic Highway. From Sacramento to Antioch, the road was part of the Victory Highway, a transcontinental route that memorialized American forces in World War I. River Road from Isleton Bridge to Courtland Bridge is an officially designated Sacramento County Scenic Highway.

### **BRIDGES**

More than two dozen bridges help people navigate the Delta, many of which date back at least a century. Of these, the Tower Bridge, the historic U.S. Route 40 crossing over the Sacramento River, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and 13 others are listed in the California Register of Historic Places. The bridges are a unique and defining feature of the Delta. The most iconic bridges of the rural Delta are the five of the remaining six Strauss-Truncheon Heel Bascule Bridges in California – Freeport Bridge, Isleton Bridge, Paintersville Bridge, Steamboat Slough Bridge, and Walnut Grove Bridge. The distinct bridge style, pioneered by Golden Gate Bridge designer Joseph Strauss, is featured on the NHA's logo. The Walnut Grove Bridge was the first of its kind west of the Mississippi River. Other historic bridges include the Middle River Swing Bridge, the Old River and Bacon Island Road bridges, the vertical lift Rio Vista and Three Mile Slough bridges, and the Alfred Zampa Memorial Bridge and Benicia-Martinez Railroad Bridge over the Carquinez Strait.

### **FERRIES**

Ferry service in the Delta traces its history to the need to link federal forts in the mid-19th century. Private ferries soon followed. Today, only a few ferries remain active, two of which are considered state highway assets managed by Caltrans (California Department of Transportation) and operate around the clock to serve the public. The Ryer Island Ferry, served by the free-moving Real McCoy II, crosses Cache Slough between Ryer Island and Rio Vista as part of State Route 84. The Howard Landing Ferry, served by the cable-drawn J-Mack, crosses Steamboat Slough as part of State Route 220. The private Victory II is a free-running ferry that takes vehicles from Jersey Island to both Webb Tract and



Bradford Island. While not all of the machinery is historic, the routes are. Ferries provide important transportation for residents and visitors in the Delta.

### **RAILROADS**

The Delta's railroads and roads were built in the early 20th century to transport crops to market. Many rail lines follow riverbanks or levee tops, capturing trade previously carried by the riverboats that served waterfront villages and farms. Several branch railroads also pushed into the Delta as harvests of more valuable farm products increased. The Sacramento Southern Railroad is no longer active, although California State Parks owns portions of the right-of-way north to the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. The Sacramento Northern Railway is also no longer active, but functioning track is associated with the Western Railway Museum, just outside the current boundary, near Rio Vista. Some freight trains still pass through the NHA regularly, especially near the Carquinez Strait. Amtrak passenger service for commuters and long-distance travel remains active today. Amtrak's Capitol Corridor connects the Bay Area and Sacramento and provides connections to other routes. Rail can help provide visitor access to the region from the densely populated Bay Area.

### **Public Lands**

The Delta and the Suisun Marsh contain 74,000 acres of public lands, and the Carquinez Strait has an additional 7,000 acres. These public lands include national, state, regional, and local parks; national and state wildlife areas; recreation facilities; and regional trail systems. They are important for conserving natural resources, preserving historic resources, and providing areas for recreation.

### **UNITS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

The NHA contains two national parks and segments of two National Historic Trails. John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez is comprised of the Muir family's Victorian mansion, carriage house, windmill, orchards and vineyard, family gravesite, and Mount Wanda, a natural open space. Muir, a celebrated naturalist and conservationist, was influential in establishing some of the earliest national parks. The Home Site unit of the park is within the NHA boundary, while the units south of State Highway 4 fall outside the boundary, including Mount Wanda and the Strentzel-Muir Gravesite. The parklands also include the historic 1849 Martinez Adobe, which houses the only permanent Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail exhibit. The Adobe has been closed due to the need for structural repairs and is currently expected to remain closed through 2026.

Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial preserves the site of the deadliest home front disaster of World War II. The national memorial honors the sailors and civilians who died when the ship they were loading with munitions exploded in 1944. Most of the casualties were African Americans, and the disaster illuminated the issues of segregation and racial inequality in the military. Today the site provides a place to reflect on and explore social justice in American society. The national memorial is a five-acre area within the Military Ocean Terminal Concord. The land is owned by the U.S. Army, with which NPS collaborates to maintain the memorial, coordinate historic preservation efforts, and provide access for visitors to the secure area during times of year when military operations are not occurring.

Two national historic trails traverse the region – the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historical Trail and the Pony Express National Historic Trail. The former commemorates the eponymous Spanish commander's path from Mexico to San Francisco Bay in the late 18th century, and the latter follows the Pony Express Route traveled between 1860 and 1861. NPS promotes the trails, provides maps, and historic information, and works with local agencies to maintain segments of the trails.

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is not within the boundary of the NHA, but it interprets Delta history and has significant artifacts that hold a direct relationship to the Delta. The national park is home to the National Historic Landmark scow schooner *Alma*, an 1891 vessel that transported goods and passengers on Delta waterways. San Francisco Maritime has previously featured Delta-related programming, including sailing historic vessels up into the Delta. In addition, the national park hosts a Sea Scouts program for youth that includes an annual summer cruise, a two-week sailing trip through the Delta on historic wooden sailboats with stops at many of the region's marinas, islands, and communities.

### **UNITS OF CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

The NHA includes nine state parks within its boundaries – two historic sites, one museum located within a historic property, three recreational areas, one wildlife area, and portions of land within other public properties.

The historic parks interpret several distinct aspects and time periods within California history. The restored Benicia Capitol State Park is the site of California's third seat of government (1853-54). The park also includes the mid-19th century Fischer-Hanlon House. Marsh Creek State Historic Park, the newest park in the system, established in 2012, and not yet open to the public, encompasses more than 3,600 acres of natural habitat that was once a large cattle ranch, Rancho Los Meganos. The park is currently engaged in joint planning with the City of

Brentwood. The park's historic John Marsh House currently lies beyond the NHA boundary. The Locke Boarding House Museum, operated in partnership with the Locke Foundation, was built in 1909 to cater to the Chinese immigrants who constructed the Southern Pacific Railroad. For much of its commercial life, the boarding house was run by a Japanese family whose members were later sent to internment camps during World War II. The building is a primary contributing structure in the Locke National Historic Landmark District, and the museum includes exhibits to orient visitors who come to tour the historic district.

Three state recreation areas feature diverse wildlife habitats and offer opportunities for birding, camping, cycling, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and water-based recreation. Benicia State Recreation Area lies along the narrowest part of the Carquinez Strait. Brannan Island State Recreation Area is comprised of the islands and marshes surrounding its namesake island. Frank's Tract State Recreation Area near Bethel Island, popular among anglers and waterfowl hunters, is an open water site known for its waterfowl, water-loving mammals, and fish. Formerly farmland, Frank's Tract is flooded due to a breach that was never repaired.

California State Parks is beginning a park classification and general plan project for Delta Meadows, a property east of Locke that is significant for the riparian woodlands that were prevalent in the Delta prior to reclamation.

## **NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES**

The NHA has two refuges managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Hood consists of approximately 18,000 acres along the Pacific Flyway. The refuge's marshes, vernal pools, and grasslands are remnants of the landscape that sustained the Native American population and greeted early settlers. A portion of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Vallejo lies within the NHA, encompassing diverse habitats in its open bay, tidal marshes, mud flats, and wetlands.

## **STATE AND LOCAL WILDLIFE AREAS**

In addition to the two national wildlife refuges and California State Parks units, the NHA boasts 15 state and local wildlife areas that protect a wide range of ecosystems. Diverse habitats are home to birds, fish, mammals, and reptiles, as well as many different plant communities. Some of the wildlife areas offer recreational access, while others are maintained primarily as conservation areas. Eight of the refuges are managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Others are owned and managed by land trusts or through public-private partnerships. For example, the Cosumnes River Preserve, which includes the NNL Cosumnes River Riparian Woodlands, is owned by a coalition of seven

partners: federal, state, and local governmental agencies, Ducks Unlimited, and the Nature Conservancy.

### **REGIONAL SHORELINES**

The NHA is home to four parks within the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), which maintains and operates a system of regional parks in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. EBRPD is the largest urban regional park district in the United States. All of the shorelines have amenities such as trails and fishing access. The Antioch/Oakley Regional Shoreline has a fishing pier built on old bridge pillars, as well as a plaque that marks a campsite along the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Big Break Regional Shoreline in Oakley is named for 1928 levee break that formed the estuary at the edge of the San Joaquin River where saltwater meets freshwater. Big Break has a staffed visitor center with displays about the Delta, as well as the Delta Discovery Experience, an outdoor educational area with a 1,200 square foot interactive map that allows visitors to see how water flows through the Delta. Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline in Crockett and Martinez includes both bluffs and shoreline that provide a gateway to the Delta. Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline includes recreation and picnic facilities operated by the City of Martinez in addition to trails and open space managed by EBRPD.

### **REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS**

Planned and existing trail systems throughout the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and the Carquinez Strait form important recreational arteries on both land and water. They help link the region's natural, cultural, and recreational resource sites to one another and connect the region to outside communities. Some trail systems are planned, built, and managed by a single agency; however, most include multiple agencies in their planning and implementation.

The Great California Delta Trail is the system most closely associated with the themes and goals of the NHA. State legislation charged the DPC with planning the Great California Delta Trail that, when complete, will connect the San Francisco Bay Trail to Sacramento River Trails, crossing through portions of all five Delta counties. Trail segments are conceived, developed, built, and managed locally. The DPC approved the *Great California Delta Trail Master Plan* in 2022; the plan provides a framework for the DPC to work in partnership with local trail planners, facilitating coordinated planning and implementation across jurisdictional boundaries. The Great California Delta Trail will include cycling and hiking routes, with interconnections to other land and water trail systems, recreational facilities, and public transportation. The DPC has designated segments of the Delta Trail in Contra Costa, Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo counties.

As mentioned above, two national historic trails, designated by Congress, pass through the region – the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historical Trail and the Pony Express National Historic Trail. Both routes connect to existing state and local trails and roads.

Other regional trail systems include:

- American Discovery Trail (a portion of a cross-continental trail network)
- Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail (includes sections of the Bay Area Ridge Trail)
- Delta de Anza Regional Trail (regional designation of the national historic trail)
- Iron Horse Trail
- Mokelumne Coast to Crest Trail
- San Francisco Bay Trail
- San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail



*A modern tap room occupies an 1870s former opium den in Isleton. (Stacy Hayden/Delta Protection Commission)*

## The Built Environment

The NHA is home to many historic structures that are the tangible expressions of the region's history and built environment cultures. The region encompasses:

- Three National Historic Landmarks, including two districts
- Nine California Historical Landmarks
- 39 listings in the National Register of Historic Places, including ten districts and one statewide nomination
- 77 properties listed in the California Register of Historic Places, including 12 districts
- 11 California Points of Historical Interest

Among the many resources included in the resource inventory in Appendix F are individual historic properties and districts. The inventory features the relationship between resources and the NHA's interpretive themes. The interpretive plan found in Chapter 2 also demonstrates the linkages between themes and some of the key historic resources.

## **NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS**

The highest level of designation within the national historic preservation program, National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation is bestowed by the Secretary of the Interior on properties that are nationally significant and possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the nation. The National Historic Landmark Program was created in 1960. Today there are over 2,600 NHLs in the country. The NHA has two NHLs within the boundary and another with Delta origins in San Francisco:

- The John Muir House in Martinez, the centerpiece of the John Muir National Historic Site, was designated in 1962. It is owned, operated, and interpreted by NPS.
- The Locke Historic District, built in 1915 and designated in 1990, is the largest remaining example of a historic rural Chinese American community in the country.
- The Alma, a flat-bottomed scow schooner built in 1891 to ply the Delta and San Francisco Bay, is part of San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

## **PROPERTIES LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to maintain the National Register of Historic Places composed of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and supports the efforts of public agencies, private organizations, and individuals to identify, evaluate, and protect significant historic and archaeological resources.

There are 38 National Register listed properties within the NHA boundaries, including 12 individual properties and two districts in Contra Costa County, six individual properties and five districts in Sacramento County, eight individual properties and three districts in Solano County, and one individual property each in San Joaquin and Yolo counties. Nine resources each are in Benicia (Solano County) and Martinez (Contra Costa County) and seven in Walnut Grove (Sacramento County).

The statewide multiple property nomination for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1970, prominently features the Delta.

Seven ships were also listed in the National Register. The Delta King Steamboat, formerly of Rio Vista, now serves as a hotel and restaurant on the Old Sacramento Waterfront. Six others were part of the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet for national defense but have been relocated.

## **CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL LANDMARKS**

The highest designation for a resource on the state level in California is a California Historical Landmark. California Historical Landmarks are buildings, sites, features, or events that are of statewide significance and have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, experimental, or other historical value. The NHA includes eight California Historical Landmarks:

- Benicia Arsenal District, Benicia, Solano County
- Benicia Capitol, Benicia, Solano County
- Fischer-Hanlon House, Benicia, Solano County
- John Muir Home, Martinez, Contra Costa County
- The Old Homestead, Crockett, Contra Costa County
- Site of the Murder of Dr. John Marsh, Martinez, Contra Costa County
- Turner/Robertson Shipyard Site, Benicia, Solano County
- Vicente Martinez Adobe, Martinez, Contra Costa County

## **PROPERTIES LISTED IN THE CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

The California Register of Historic Places, established by the State Historical Resources Commission, is the authoritative guide to the state's significant historical and archeological resources. The program encourages public recognition and protection of resources of architectural, historical, archeological, and cultural significance, identifies historical resources for state and local planning purposes, and determines eligibility for state historic preservation grant funding.

Seventy-seven resources in the California Register are in the NHA, including 24 individual properties and three districts in Contra Costa County, 13 individual properties and five districts in Sacramento County, 17 individual properties and four districts in Solano County, six individual properties in San Joaquin County, and five individual properties in Yolo County. Martinez leads communities with 15 listings, followed by eleven in Benicia (Solano County), eight in Vallejo (Solano County), and seven in Walnut Grove (Sacramento County).

## **CALIFORNIA POINTS OF HISTORICAL INTEREST**

California Points of Historical Interest are sites, buildings, features, or events that are of local (city or county) significance and have anthropological, cultural, military, political, architectural, economic, scientific or technical, religious, experimental, or other historical value. Many are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Points of Historical Interest designated after December 1997 and recommended by the State Historical Resources Commission are also listed in the California Register. No historical resource may be designated as both a



Landmark and a Point. Seventeen California Points of Historical Interest are in the NHA – four in Benicia, one in Rio Vista, and six each in both Contra Costa and Sacramento counties. All are included in the resource inventory in Appendix F along with their connection to the NHA's themes.

## Museums

The region has 16 museums that align with NHA's mission, vision, and themes – all are listed in the resource inventory in Appendix F. The museums are critical resources, as most of them share the region's stories from within the context of historic properties. Many are managed by local historical societies with volunteer or limited paid staffing.

Antioch, Benicia, Crockett, Isleton, Martinez, Pittsburg, Rio Vista, and West Sacramento are home to collections and interpretation of community history by area historical societies. In all but West Sacramento, the museums are located within historic structures.

The community of Locke is home to several museums focused on the Chinese experience – the Dai Loy Gambling House Museum, the Jan Ying Chinese Association Museum, the Joe Shoong Chinese School Museum, and the Locke Boarding House (a unit of the California State Park system) – all are housed in contributing historic structures in the Locke National Historic Landmark District.

Many of the museums have archives that preserve and provide access to document collections, including the Contra Costa County Historical Society History Center, the East Contra Costa Historical Society, the Locke Boarding House, and the museums in Crockett, Isleton, Martinez, and Pittsburg.

Two museums feature specific aspects of the region's history. The private collection in the Dutra Museum of Dredging, located in a historic craftsman-style mansion in Rio Vista, shares the history of sidedraft clamshell dredging and the Dutra family's legacy. The Sacramento Regional Fire Museum highlights the establishment of fire service in the region in 1850, the year California attained statehood, providing a window into aspects of immigration and building community, as well as offering fire safety education to the public.

Two museums are currently in the planning phase. The 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse will serve as a local history museum and a community event venue. The Discover the Delta Foundation Education Center is in planning as a gateway landmark to the Delta. Both are committed to helping orient NHA visitors.

## Community Festivals, Sports, and the Arts

Thirty-five annual festivals add vibrancy to the Delta each year, helping to share and conserve living traditions (see Chapter 3). Across the Delta, communities celebrate history, cultures, foodways, music, agriculture, the natural environment, and water recreation. From Asian heritage to agriculture, and from waterfronts to waterfowl, there are festivals and special events throughout the calendar year. Festivals involve significant community collaboration and result in increased community pride and revenue generation through tourism.

Facilities that accommodate sports and the arts can be important economic drivers in communities and often rely on a combination of public and private funding. Some communities have adaptively reused historic theatres and offer a mix of events. Preserved and operated by the El Campanil Theatre Preservation Foundation, the El Campanil Theatre in Antioch was recognized by the Art Deco Society of California with their 2018 Eclectic Architecture Award and hosts a long list of live performances. The California Theatre in Pittsburg, preserved and managed by the City of Pittsburg, hosts live performances of popular plays and musicals. The CineLux Delta Cinema in downtown Brentwood, originally built in the 1930s, is currently being renovated. The preserved theaters contribute to the sense of place and exemplify the intersection of historic preservation, the arts, and economic development.

Minor league baseball or municipal stadiums are found in West Sacramento, Pittsburg, and Martinez, with the latter community being the home of the three pro DiMaggio brothers, including Hall of Famer Joe DiMaggio. Although not all the stadiums are historic, the Pacific Coast League has had a presence in the region since its establishment in 1903, and team names such as the River Cats harken back to region's history. Famous players such as the DiMaggios, who worked in the fishing industry, bridge baseball history with the region's cultural and economic history. Not only do these major destinations in the NHA offer gateway interpretive opportunities, but through the development of NHA-related merchandise (see Strategy 3.1.6, Chapter 3), revenue generation could benefit other historic resources in those communities.

## Water Recreation and Hunting

Marinas are a common Delta access point for water recreation. Over the past two decades, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has supported approximately 100 marinas. Many offer both motorized and non-motorized boating, as well as paddle sports. Most marinas in the Delta are privately owned and operated; public marinas are limited to the more urban areas along the Carquinez Strait. Private marinas provide many services to Delta boaters, including boat slips, launch ramps, parking, restrooms, restaurants, convenience stores, picnic

facilities, camping sites, pump outs, used oil collection centers, recycling centers, and fuel stations. There are several locations in the NHA where marinas are concentrated, including the 10-mile scenic Delta Loop along the Mokelumne and San Joaquin Rivers southeast of Isleton, Bethel Island, the south end of the Antioch Bridge, and Walnut Grove. Nearly half of both public and private docks and marinas currently include paddle sport launch points and often rentals.

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail has many existing trailheads within the NHA boundary, and the Great Delta Trail Master Plan identifies recommended launch locations for a future Delta Water Trail. Water recreation activities include kayaking, paddle boarding, water skiing, wake boarding, tubing, and sailing. In addition, Sherman Island is an extremely popular windsurfing spot. The Sacramento River between Rio Vista and the tip of Sherman Island remains one of the best windsurfing areas in the world. The Rio Vista Windsurfing Association and Sherman Island Kiteboarding Organization work to promote the sport and preserve water access. Windsurfing is a seasonal sport, primarily from April through September, when the weather is warm and the Delta winds blow.

The Delta is also home to 20 private yacht clubs. Some of these social organizations centered on boating have been in existence since the late 1920s. Fishing is a popular activity, and access is available at many of the shorelines, wildlife areas, and recreation areas described above.

The Delta lies within the Pacific Flyway, an annual migratory route for waterfowl such as green-winged teal, American wigeon, Canada goose, northern pintail, snow goose, and mallard. Much of the land in Suisun Marsh is owned by private duck clubs, though public waterfowl hunting areas are found there as well. The region contains many private hunting clubs on agricultural lands. Twelve public facilities are listed on the VisitCADelta.com website.

### Key Resources Located Beyond the NHA

The NHA boundary is based in large part on elevation, as that criterion was used in earlier state legislation related to the Delta. The boundary did not take into consideration factors that often contribute to the establishment of an NHA boundary, including historical and cultural features, political boundaries, and topographical features such as major roads. Instead, the boundary follows water, embracing a largely rural region. As such, the boundary set forth in the designating legislation bisects many of the small cities in the region, excluding historic districts and museums that tie to the NHA's themes and goals.

Numerous resources near the NHA boundary can be considered as potential assets and affiliate sites for the NHA and could be included in a future boundary

amendment. Two such resources are the Western Railway Museum near Rio Vista and the Delta King, listed in the National Register, is in Old Sacramento. In addition, the 51-acre site of the future California Indian Heritage Center is located at the confluence of the American and Sacramento rivers, near but beyond the boundary.

The NHA also excludes the three largest cities in the region – Sacramento, Stockton, and Vallejo – which are either just outside of the NHA or only partially within the NHA. While all three cities contain many historic and cultural resources that connect to the NHA's themes and goals, as well as greater tourism infrastructure, the City of Stockton is most intimately connected with the Delta. The Filipino National Historical Society and the Haggin Museum can both play a role in sharing the history and culture of the Delta. The University of the Pacific, California's oldest university, founded in 1851, is both an educational partner and a historic resource.

As the state capital, Sacramento has many museums and historic resources tied to the history of the Delta. Old Sacramento, which lies across the Sacramento River from the NHA, includes historic buildings, structures, and the Delta King paddlewheel riverboat that represent the importance of the Delta as a water highway during the 19th and early 20th century. The nearby Crocker Museum, the oldest art museum in the West, boasts paintings of the Delta by Gregory Kondos and Wayne Thiebaud in its collection and has featured larger exhibitions of both Kondos' and Thiebaud's Delta art. The SMUD Museum of Science of Curiosity has an exhibit that examines the Delta as part of California's water challenges. The State Indian Museum and Sutter's Fort, which is in the eastern portion of Sacramento's original grid street system, reflect the story of the Delta's Native American culture and early European and American settlement of the region.

The boundary also excludes a decommissioned U.S. Army base in Rio Vista and other nearby public lands. In 2022 and again in 2023, Congressmen Mike Thompson (District 4) and John Garamendi (District 8) introduced legislation to expand the NHA boundary to include 62 acres of public land in Solano County, enhancing opportunities for redevelopment. The proposed expansion encompasses the decommissioned United States Army Reserve Center (Rio Vista), U.S. Coast Guard Station Rio Vista, Beach Drive Wastewater Treatment Plant (City of Rio Vista), and Sandy Beach County Park (Solano County).

Described previously, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park sits well beyond the boundary, but has critical resources, interpretation, and programming related to Delta history.

Finally, Mount Diablo, a 3,849-foot peak that lies outside the boundary, is visible throughout the NHA as well as much of Northern California. The dominant landscape feature in the region, the mountain is sacred to the Indigenous community and an essential part of their traditions. Newer immigrants to the area developed a strong bond with the mountain. Authors such as Bret Harte, John Muir, and Eugene O'Neill described the peak in their work. Mount Diablo State Park became one of the first parks in the state and was expanded through the efforts of California State Parks and the grassroots organization Save Mount Diablo.

## Resource Stewardship and Enhancement

Through management planning activities such as public meetings, the annual Delta Heritage Forum, stakeholder interviews, and the online survey, the Advisory Committee's Resource Stewardship and Enhancement Task Group led the development of a series of objectives and strategies that will result in protection, improved access, and/or added value to resources in the NHA. The first step in developing these objectives and strategies was identifying key challenges and opportunities facing the region's natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources.

### Challenges for Resource Stewardship and Enhancement

#### FRAGILITY OF RESOURCES

The rural Delta is a highly engineered landscape characterized over the last century by changes to the natural environment primarily for the benefit of agricultural production. As such, the region's cultural and natural resources have a long track-record of co-existence. Today, climate change and aging infrastructure are clear threats to the Delta's natural and cultural resources. As land has subsided, leaving much of the primary zone below sea level, weather extremes and sea level rise wrought by climate change could be devastating. Comprised of peat soils, subsidence will continue regardless of climate change impacts. Results of the 2023 *Delta Residents Survey* underscored this concern, as residents identified "aging infrastructure" as the biggest challenge to quality of life.<sup>45</sup> The Delta's small population, discussed below, is an important factor contributing to aging infrastructure, as there is greater pressure and economic incentive to address public and private infrastructure in more populated areas. The potential impacts of the Delta Conveyance Project, a proposed tunnel that

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<sup>45</sup> Rudnick, J., Tomari, K., Dobbin, K., Lubell, M., and K. Bidenwig. 2023 *Delta Residents Survey Summary Report*. Report developed for the Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Science Program. Sacramento, CA, pg. 36.

would transport water from the Sacramento River in the north Delta to Clifton Court Forebay in the south Delta, on resources is currently the subject of federal and state environmental review documents. As noted in the *Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin National Heritage Area Management Plan*, the NHA does not take a position on the Delta Conveyance Project.

### **SMALL POPULATION**

The rural Delta has a small population, with less than 10,000 people inhabiting the "primary zone," an area defined by state statute as the rural, agricultural core of the Delta. Approximately 573,500 residents live in the secondary zone, although not all of them live within the NHA boundary.<sup>46</sup> The primary zone's tiny population lies within an hour of the San Francisco Bay Area, with its population of nearly 8 million, in a state that has almost 40 million residents. These population comparisons highlight how few potential advocates and volunteers there are who can be actively engaged in resource stewardship and enhancement. While both the primary and secondary zones have resources that illustrate the history of the Delta, resources in the primary zone are more vulnerable to decay due to the depopulation that occurred as the mechanization of agriculture led to a decrease in the need for farm laborers.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION LIMITATIONS**

Preserving the historic downtowns contributes to a sense of place and helps draw visitors. In the Delta, many of the historic rural communities are virtually intact but need preservation support and expertise. Historic preservation, while evident in some communities, is less frequent in others due to a constellation of inhibiting factors. The Delta's small population correlates with a lack of potential investors and funding to restore and reuse historic properties. In some locations, despite the presence of levees, flood regulations require new or renovated buildings to be raised ten feet, making many preservation projects economically infeasible. In other locations, adaptively reusing historic buildings could drive economic development and help alleviate housing shortages. Currently, there is no regional nonprofit organization to provide support or advocate for historic preservation.

### **LACK OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Just as there is no regional organization for historic preservation, no organizations with a regional footprint exist to help coordinate, advocate for, or support the

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<sup>46</sup> Visser, M.A.; Brinkley, C.; Zlotnicki, J. (2018) Socioeconomic Indicators Report: The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Sacramento, CA: The Delta Protection Commission. [Socioeconomic Indicators Report](#), accessed September 21, 2023.

historical societies and cultural organizations found across the Delta. Historical societies and cultural organizations are often run by volunteers or with limited staffing. Many of the historical societies have repositories of historic artifacts and archives, but do not have the capacity to conserve and exhibit collections. The NHA can help build capacity by connecting organizations and providing direct support, grants, and access to outside funding opportunities, technical assistance, and training.

## **LACK OF WATER ACCESS**

Although recreation, in particular water recreation, is a primary economic driver in the Delta, partners and the public repeatedly identified improved facilities for water access as a critical need. Access is defined as more public boat landings, connection to Delta communities, and access to other opportunities for people to get out on the water. There are about 100 boat launches and marinas, but many of these are private. Although a number of businesses offer kayak and paddle board rentals, there is room for additional businesses, and people in public meetings perceived access to the smaller waterways best suited to paddle sports as limited. Furthermore, people find it difficult to visit many of the towns by boat. Connections between the water and the Great Delta Trail will also be important as more segments of the trail are implemented. Grant funding from multiple sources may assist with water access and the development of waterfront parks.

In addition, water quality can be a barrier to water access. Many of the marinas and restaurants in the southern portion of the Delta have closed due to reduction in water recreation caused by harmful algal blooms, invasive weeds choking waterways, and other water quality issues. Particularly during times when harmful algae is present, any contact with water can cause health problems.

## **DELTA ROADWAYS AND TRAFFIC**

Excessive traffic on the Delta's levee roads was a frequently raised concern during public meetings. The small, rural roads were not built to carry the large numbers of commuters that use routes through the Delta to avoid backups on the larger roads just beyond the region. Furthermore, agricultural traffic is not compatible with this unwanted commuter traffic.

Residents made a clear distinction between the unwanted commuter cut-through traffic and visitor traffic. While residents generally voiced strong support of tourism, they expressed concerns that increased visitation and recreational activity such as cycling on the narrow roads could be dangerous. These

concerns are directly related to the sustainable tourism goals of the NHA, discussed in the subsequent chapter.

## **LACK OF FUNDING AND AWARENESS**

A few notable challenges emerged in the survey data collected from 94 respondents. The survey included the question “What are the main challenges facing the National Heritage Area related to preserving historic places, cultural traditions, and natural resources? (Respondents could check all that applied.) The top two responses were:

- Lack of awareness about the importance of the area's history – 79 percent
- Funding needed to preserve resources – 69 percent

The lack of awareness is an issue that the DPC and the Delta Stewardship Council have been working on for many years. The 2009 *Delta Reform Act* included reference to the "Delta as a Place," with a task group overseeing the development of a five-year marketing plan to raise awareness. The Visit Ca Delta initiative and the signage program both grew out of the endeavor to increase awareness of the Delta as a special natural and cultural place and a destination.<sup>47</sup>

Another survey question asked respondents how they would like to see the NHA engaged in interpretation, cultural and natural resource stewardship, recreation, tourism, and education. The top-ranked response was that the NHA should provide leadership and management in historic preservation, as well as larger regional projects like trail development, signage, the development of visitor centers, and community revitalization.

## **Opportunities for Resource Stewardship and Enhancement**

### **SIGNIFICANT STATE PRESENCE**

There are many agencies, including state government and nonprofit organizations, whose primary mission is conservation of natural resources. The DPC is an established conservation leader and currently the local coordinating entity for the NHA. The DPC's leadership, existing network of conservation partners, and understanding of the complex web of state agencies in the Delta provides an opportunity to grow partnerships between the local coordinating entity and other organizations.

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<sup>47</sup> Presentation to the Delta Stewardship Council, Richard Norgaard, Delta ISB Member, July 27, 2017, <https://mavensnotebook.com/2017/08/17/delta-stewardship-council-defining-delta-as-a-place/>, accessed January 22, 2024.



State programs, through state agencies and nonprofits, offer both technical assistance and funding for historic preservation. The California Historic Tax Credit, created in 2019 as an incentive for rehabilitating historic properties, is one example of programs that could benefit the Delta. Moreover, grant programs for conservation and preservation projects are available through state agencies, including the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy and the California Office of Historic Preservation.

Several state agencies operate as land managers in the Delta. This includes California State Parks, Department of Water Resources, State Lands Commission, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. These agencies all have the capacity to connect people to the landscape as they develop and implement plans, fund projects, and support visitor services. The DPC has existing relationships with all of these entities and can help implement plans, partner on projects, and leverage skills and funding.

## **STRONG TRACK RECORD OF NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND AGRICULTURE**

As noted above, the presence of multiple state agencies and nonprofit organizations dedicated to conservation in the region has resulted in a strong track record of natural resource conservation success. Similarly, the region's agricultural heritage and the continuing presence of farms in the Delta, many that have been passed down through multiple generations, demonstrates important economic continuity. State agencies and organizations like the county Farm Bureaus, the Nature Conservancy, and Ducks Unlimited provide recognition and support for conservation and agriculture, underscoring the importance of both activities, as well as the integrated approach that will continue to be critical to the successful protection of cultural and natural resources in the complex environment.

## **EXISTING PLANS AND INITIATIVES**

Under California legislation, the DPC has the legislated responsibility to prepare and adopt a long-term resource management plan for land use in the primary zone of the Delta; the *Land Use and Resource Management Plan* was adopted in 1995 and updated in 2010 to guide local land use decisions on projects regarding agriculture, flood protection, natural resources, recreation, and utilities and infrastructure. The legislative intent behind this plan was to protect the existing land uses in the primary zone.

With the 2009 Delta Reform Act, the California Legislature became more expansive in its approach to the Delta. One of the key state agencies active in the region, the Delta Stewardship Council, was created by the Act to develop a

"comprehensive, long-term, legally enforceable plan to guide how multiple federal, state, and local agencies manage the Delta's water and environmental resources."<sup>48</sup> *The Delta Plan* includes 15 California state agencies, including the DPC, as well as five federal agencies. Its coequal goals address ecosystem restoration and water supply and quality, which are to be accomplished in a manner that protects and enhances the cultural, recreational, natural, and agricultural values of the Delta as a place that continues to evolve. *The Delta Plan's* comprehensive breadth and its integration of multiple state and residential interests make it a powerful tool for resource stewardship and enhancement. The plan also addresses how the Delta relates to the state, reflecting different mandates among the state agencies active in the Delta.

Several other planning efforts related to resources have either resulted from *The Delta Plan* or complement its intent. The DPC's *Vision 2030 (Strategic Plan)*, adopted in 2021, includes strategic themes focused on water, agriculture, flood protection, natural resources, recreation, and utilities and infrastructure. Other plans include the *Great California Delta Trail Master Plan (2022)*, the *Feasibility Study for the Sacramento-San Joaquin NHA (2012)*, and the *Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (2012)*. In addition, The DPC has worked with seven legacy communities – Clarksburg, Courtland, Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Locke, and Walnut Grove – in developing community plans. These plans highlight the communities' needs and desires, such as bicycle and pedestrian improvements, community design, historic preservation, and broadband infrastructure.

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) updates California's *Statewide Historic Preservation Plan* every five years, with the last plan completed in 2019. The stated purpose of that plan is to guide the activities and priorities of agencies, organizations, and the public involved in preservation. In addition, nominations for the National Register of Historic Places are a source for historical context for sites and districts.

## **LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN CULTURAL HERITAGE**

The NHA has many local organizations dedicated to the Delta's history and cultures. Eighteen of these are represented on the Advisory Committee. Many organizations are annual participants in the Delta Heritage Forum, where they connect with other organizations in the NHA and share their activities with a public audience. Organizations are also engaged in documenting and protecting resources associated with their cultural history in the Delta. This

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<sup>48</sup> "About the Delta Plan," Delta Stewardship Council, a California State Agency, [www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-plan/](http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-plan/) (accessed August 10, 2023).

includes the built environment, such as the Japanese Gakuens in Clarksburg and Walnut Grove, the National Historic Landmark District in the Chinese district of Locke, and the 1883 Schoolhouse in Clarksburg. It also includes opportunities for co-stewardship of natural resources with Native American Tribes and Tribal groups using Traditional Ecological Knowledge concerning ecosystems and resource management.

The partnership network is described in Chapter 4, and partners are found in Appendix G.

## Determining the NHA's Role in Resource Stewardship and Enhancement

To determine an appropriate role for the NHA, the Resource Stewardship and Enhancement Task Group considered public input and examined the identified challenges and opportunities. They confirmed that while the Delta Stewardship Council has taken a leadership role in ecosystem restoration and water quality and supply, there is no corresponding organization with a focus on preservation. Emerging from task group meetings was consensus that the NHA can fill that role and should focus its resources on preservation of the built environment and support of cultural and historical projects and programs. Because of the many agencies and organizations focused on natural resource conservation, task group members recommended that the NHA should have a supporting partner role rather than a leadership role in conservation issues and programs.

## Resource Stewardship and Enhancement Objectives and Strategies

The major objectives and specific strategies for caring for and building on the unique resources in the NHA were developed through the process detailed in the *Outreach and Engagement* section of the *Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin National Heritage Area Management Plan*. The public and partners provided input through a variety of methods, including public meetings, the annual Delta Heritage Forum, stakeholder interviews, and online surveys. The Resource Stewardship and Enhancement Task Group and the Tribal Working Group provided additional input on the role of the NHA and existing and potential partners, and also helped refine the ideas generated in the engagement process into a series of potential strategies. With recommendations from the Resource Stewardship and Enhancement Task Group, the Advisory Committee adopted four primary objectives and strategies, including partners and the potential role(s) for the local coordinating entity. The Tribes were provided a draft of relevant sections of the management plan so

that their input could be incorporated in the final draft plan. Furthermore, during review, additional outreach was done to solicit specific commitments from partners.

This section, which corresponds with the implementation plan for Goal 2 (see Appendix J), provides a narrative description of the actions the local coordinating entity and partnership network will take to preserve, conserve, and build upon the region's heritage resources in the 15 years following designation. Examples of partner participation are given in these pages, while additional commitments may be found in the appendices that contain the partnership network (G), the implementation plan (J), and letters of commitment (L).

### Objective 2.1 Through National Heritage Area support and projects, leaders and residents are more aware of the importance of preserving historic resources that contribute to the area's unique sense of place.

The historic structures, historic and prehistoric archaeological sites, archival documents, and objects of the NHA are the focus of this objective. The Advisory Committee recognized that preservation of the built environment is a critical need which the local coordinating entity can facilitate by providing leadership and funding. The majority of strategies below involve various aspects of historic preservation – documenting resources, education and training, and funding.

As noted previously, there is no organization dedicated to historic preservation on a regional scale in the Delta, so the DPC, as the coordinating entity for the NHA, will fill that role. Preservation entities with a statewide reach, the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and the California Preservation Foundation, are key partners for all historic preservation strategies. Local governments – especially planning departments, historic landmarks advisory commissions, and preservation review commissions – are essential partners in carrying out the preservation strategies. In the communities where they exist, Certified Local Governments (CLGs), Main Street programs, and historical societies are also important partners, especially for individual projects. While most communities have historical societies, there are three communities with CLGs (Benicia, Elk Grove, and Vallejo) and four with Main Street programs (Benicia, Brentwood, Martinez, and Vallejo).

To carry out the strategies below, the local coordinating entity will retain professional assistance either through employing permanent staff, hiring an independent contractor, or sharing staffing with a partner agency or organization. This and other staffing needs are addressed in Chapter 5, Goal 5.

### **STRATEGY 2.1.1 DOCUMENT HISTORIC RESOURCES AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN THE DELTA.**

Preservation begins with understanding the resources, so the first strategy involves the documentation of historic structures and cultural landscapes. The resource inventory is a valuable tool for this, as it contains a listing of all historic resources related to the NHA's themes (see Goal 4.3.3 and Appendix F). In addition, historical research and architectural documentation help in understanding sites and landscapes. The NHA may pursue documentation through the National Park Service's Historic American Buildings Survey, Historic American Engineering Record, and Historic American Landscapes Survey (HABS/HAER/HALS) or with university partners whose students can produce documentation to HABS/HAER/HALS standards. Such documentation is the basis for listing properties in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Places. It also informs decision-making in preservation projects. Copies are retained in the collection at the U.S. Library of Congress where they can be accessed digitally.

Built resource inventories are fundamental historic preservation tools that are essential in providing the knowledge base that informs community planning and historic preservation initiatives. In addition to maintaining the resource inventory developed during the management planning process, the local coordinating entity can play a critical role in supporting new inventory projects in communities and thereby providing a foundation for historic preservation of buildings and structures within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Suisun Marsh, and Carquinez Strait. Partners at all levels will help with resource documentation. At the community level, the Freeport Citizens Community were the first to offer their assistance in documenting local resources. At the state and regional level, OHP will provide technical assistance and EBRPD will align resource preservation in EBRPD's units with this strategy.

### **STRATEGY 2.1.2 SECURE ASSISTANCE FROM THE CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION TO DEVELOP A HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT FOR THE NHA REGION.**

The DPC will lead the development of a historic context statement for the NHA in partnership with OHP. This could be accomplished with staff or through a contract or interagency agreement. The historic context statement will be another crucial documentation tool for the NHA. Historic context statements establish an analytical framework for recognizing and assessing resources. They achieve this by identifying and describing the elements of geography, history, and culture that influenced the evolution of a region's land use patterns and built environment.

### **STRATEGY 2.1.3 SUPPORT DESIGNATIONS OF HISTORIC RESOURCES, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BEST PRACTICES.**

Designations are another important preservation tool that not only recognize properties worthy of preservation, but also include other benefits. NPS's National Register of Historic Places, authorized by the National Preservation Act of 1966, is part of a national program aimed at organizing and assisting public and private endeavors to recognize, assess, and conserve the nation's historic and archaeological assets. Similarly, the State Historical Resources Commission's California Register of Historical Resources encourages recognition and protection of resources, provides information for planning, determines state grant funding eligibility, and provides certain protections under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). County and community programs can be steppingstones to the state and national programs, and also serve to raise awareness locally. In addition, expanding the number of CLGs and Main Street programs in the region will contribute to historic preservation and community revitalization.

During the planning process, several properties were mentioned specifically that could benefit from designation at the state or national level. These include but are not limited to:

- The Old Sugar Mill in Clarksburg, designed by architect William Raymond Yelland, was constructed in 1934 and is an example of adaptive reuse.
- The 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse is currently undergoing rehabilitation as an interpretive facility and community center.
- The Delta's bridges, including the five Strauss-Truncheon Heel Bascule Bridges and the eight other bridges already listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.
- Several properties and districts are identified in the NPS' NHL theme study entitled *Finding a Path Forward, Asian American and Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*.<sup>49</sup> Some are already listed in the National Register of Historic Places but could have their level of significance raised, and others remain to be listed. Properties in the study are:
  - Holland Union Gakuen, a Japanese culture and language school in Clarksburg
  - Walnut-Grove Chinese-American Historic District
  - Walnut-Grove Japanese American Historic District

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<sup>49</sup> Odo, Franklin, ed. *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*, National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2017.

- Walnut Grove Gakuen Hall
- Sikh Gurdwara Sahib in Stockton (outside the NHA, but with strong cultural ties)
- Little Manila in Stockton (outside the NHA, but with strong cultural ties)
- Isleton Chinese and Japanese Commercial Historic Districts

Many more properties eligible for state and national designations will be identified as a result of strategy 2.1.1, documenting the historic resources and cultural landscapes in the NHA. For example, the more densely populated areas in Antioch, Brentwood, and Oakley have numerous properties that may be eligible. Suburbanization of these communities is a relatively recent phenomenon, and there is less recognition of the older buildings in these communities than in other towns in the NHA.

The NHA will coordinate funding through grants and direct support, and offer technical assistance to assist with local, state, and national designations of historic resources. Part of this strategy includes articulating and sharing best practices appropriate to the region, which may be accomplished with guidance from NPS, OHP, the California Preservation Foundation, and local organizations such as the Contra Costa County Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission. The NHA can provide information that could be used to establish objective standards or best practices for local governments to adopt.

### **STRATEGY 2.1.4 PROVIDE INFORMATION AND COORDINATE TRAINING TO EDUCATE RESIDENTS AND LEADERS, INCLUDING ELECTED OFFICIALS, ABOUT PRESERVATION AND ITS BENEFITS.**

DPC staff will function as the historic preservation leader in the NHA, offering support and convening partners to learn about and carry out preservation of the region's resources. The DPC will disseminate information and coordinate training that helps people understand the benefits of historic preservation. Benefits include fostering community identity and connection, educating future generations about the past, revitalizing neighborhoods, attracting tourism and business investment, and contributing to economically and environmentally sustainable development. Educating residents and elected officials will cultivate a coalition of leaders and practitioners that will protect the Delta's built environment.

The DPC will work to support and convene, sharing information with partners on best practices, funding opportunities, tax incentives, and upcoming training provided at the state and local levels. In addition, the DPC will collaborate with organizations that have developed preservation training to offer local in-person workshop and web-based training modules on a range of topics such as Section 106 compliance, preservation benefits, preservation of historical objects and

archival collections, and preservation-related topics concerning the work of local planning and preservation governmental agencies. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, NPS, OHP, the California Preservation Foundation, the National Preservation Institute, and EBRPD offer the information and training on best practices that the DPC will share.

**STRATEGY 2.1.5 SUPPORT THE EXISTING GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROMOTE HISTORIC PRESERVATION THROUGH GRANTS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP.**

Nearly every community in the NHA has organizations dedicated to protecting historic resources and sense of place. These are the entities that are promoting historic preservation and implementing preservation projects within their communities. The variety of organizations ranges from local historical societies, organizations committed to specific projects, CLGs, Main Street programs, historic preservation commissions, and the EBRPD. The NHA will build a supportive network of these organizations by convening and coordinating, providing information and technical assistance, and offering grants so that they can steward the region's special places.

**STRATEGY 2.1.6 PROMOTE AND EDUCATE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, PROPERTY OWNERS, AND DEVELOPERS ABOUT THE MILLS ACT AND OTHER TAX PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR PRESERVATION.**

Navigating myriad tax benefits and other economic incentives for preservation is a complex process that often deters people who are unfamiliar with these programs. By educating owners of historic properties about preservation tax credits, the NHA can increase the success rate of preservation in the region. NPS, OHP, and the California Preservation Foundation are critical sources of information. The NHA will share information and coordinate programs to connect individuals, organizations, and developers to the information they need.

**STRATEGY 2.1.7 CREATE A FUND TO PRESERVE HISTORIC PLACES AND LANDSCAPES.**

The NHA will create a pool of capital reserved to facilitate the preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties. The NHA will develop guidelines for the distribution and administration of the fund, which will be different from grant funding (see Goal 4.2.1). The revolving fund could be set up as a loan program with the restriction that the borrowed monies are returned to the fund to be reused for similar preservation activities. Activities could include preservation



and repair loans for historic properties, as well as technical assistance through consultation and construction management. Partners who could help set up and potentially sponsor this longer-term strategy include the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy and possibly the State Coastal Conservancy, OHP, and the California Preservation Foundation.

### **STRATEGY 2.1.8 PROVIDE INFORMATION AND COORDINATE TRAINING TO EDUCATE RESIDENTS AND PARTNERS ON HOW TO SAVE HISTORICAL RECORDS, DOCUMENTS, AND ARTIFACTS.**

Many organizations and individuals in the NHA have historical records, documents, and artifacts. Such items are found in local museums, archival depositories including libraries, churches, and governmental offices, historical societies, and homes. Just as there is no regional historic preservation organization currently in existence, there is no regional organization for the conservation of historic objects and articles. Such items offer insights into the past, providing tangible connections to the past. Safeguarding these materials helps ensure that future generations can learn from and appreciate the knowledge, experiences, and achievements of people who came before us.

The NHA will disseminate information and coordinate training to develop conservation best practices, bringing in the professional expertise found in the California Preservation Program and California State Archives and programs at nearby educational institutions, such as University of the Pacific, University of California at Davis, and California State University, Sacramento.

The NHA does not anticipate developing a regional repository, but rather will support the existing repositories with funding, capacity building, technical training, publicity, and sharing information. The 2015 Delta Narratives project carried out by the DPC in collaboration with area scholars and museum professionals included development of a list of museums and historical societies. The list contains a brief description of organizations' holdings, topical interests, and contact information. As part of the NHA's information clearinghouse role, the DPC will continue to update the list.

### **STRATEGY 2.1.9 STUDY AND SUPPORT EXPANSION OF THE NHA BOUNDARY.**

Many historical, cultural, and natural resources that potentially contribute to the NHA's themes lie outside its current legislated boundary. Described above in *Key Resources Beyond the NHA*, communities, historic districts, historic and natural sites, and museums merit future consideration for their connection to the NHA's themes and their potential contributions to achieving the NHA's goals. The DPC will undertake a boundary analysis to determine what additional communities

and sites to include in the NHA, giving consideration to their potential economic and conservation impacts. Such an analysis is strongly supported by partners, as observed in Advisory Committee meetings throughout the planning process and noted in the letter of commitment from EBRPD.

With or without a boundary analysis, Congress may decide to expand the boundary based on the original purposes of the legislation, such as the proposed 62-acre expansion in Rio Vista, Solano County. When such expansions occur, the NHA will incorporate new areas into goals and strategies set forth in the management plan.

## Objective 2.2 The region's leaders and residents embrace a conservation stewardship ethic centered on the integrity of the rivers and estuary, habitat protection, and native biological diversity and productivity.

Protecting and restoring a vibrant and healthy Delta ecosystem is one of the coequal goals set forth in *The Delta Plan*, the comprehensive, long-term management plan for the Delta and the Suisun Marsh developed by the Delta Stewardship Council.<sup>50</sup> Because water supply and ecosystem restoration are paramount in the plan, the majority of the 20 state and federal agencies that have a primary or supporting role in implementing the plan's recommendations have expertise with environmental concerns. In addition, there are many local public, private, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to environmental conservation. As described above, the Advisory Committee determined that the most appropriate role for the NHA regarding natural resources would be to support the myriad environmental initiatives by raising awareness of the public through outreach, education, and facilitation. The NHA can also provide grants, direct financial support, and staff assistance to the agencies and organizations in the partnership network that are carrying out conservation projects and programs (see Goal 4). With nine units in the NHA, EBRPD is a committed partner in all of the strategies under this objective, including dedicating staff time, incorporating the NHA into existing programming, and sharing information with the public.

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<sup>50</sup> *The Delta Plan*, Delta Stewardship Council (2013), <https://viewperformance.deltacouncil.ca.gov/the-delta-plan>, accessed August 10, 2023.

### **STRATEGY 2.2.1 SHARE EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION DEVELOPED BY PARTNERS ABOUT CONSERVATION STRATEGIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.**

From multiple state agencies to nonprofit organizations with different geographic or topical interests, many entities are generating information on conservation strategies, issues, and activities in the NHA. One such agency is the Delta Conservancy, which is deeply involved in conservation and environmental issues and is committed to working with the NHA in this arena. An appropriate and much needed role for the NHA local coordinating entity to fill is to serve as the organization that gathers, synthesizes, and distributes educational information about conservation strategies and environmental issues. Serving as a clearinghouse for information will advance ongoing natural resource conservation efforts in the NHA, and providing educational information will complement the work of EcoAtlas, a program under the San Francisco Estuary Institute that provides general information about ecosystem restoration projects.

### **STRATEGY 2.2.2 RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS AND COORDINATE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS TO CLEAN UP THE REGION'S LANDSCAPES AND WATERWAYS AND COMBAT INVASIVE SPECIES.**

Each year local, state, and national organizations plan and carry out seasonal and annual events that engage volunteers in natural resource conservation. For example, Coastal Cleanup Day, organized each September by the California Coastal Commission, focuses on coastal and waterway cleanup, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife organizes California Invasive Species Action Week annually in June. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy coordinates Delta Cleanup Days each year and is committed to working with the DPC to continue this annual program. Although the DPC will not lead any of these conservation programs, through promotion, volunteer recruitment, staff participation in planning and implementation, and funding, the NHA can assist with these established events and others carried out by nonprofit organizations, communities, and public agencies.

### **STRATEGY 2.2.3 SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL "COLLABORATORY," A HUB FOR A NETWORK OF AGENCIES, ACADEMIA, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, COMMUNITIES, AND INDUSTRY TO BETTER ADDRESS MAJOR MODELING, DATA, AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES.**

The Delta Science Program, under the Delta Stewardship Council, upholds *The Delta Plan's* objectives by advocating adaptive management based on scientific knowledge. The Delta Science Program is considering development of

a virtual, and eventually physical, network hub to promote collaboration of public agencies at all levels, educational institutions, nonprofits, communities, and private industry to advance scientific understanding and adaptive management based upon it. Under the direction of the Delta Science Program, the local coordinating entity will help fund and convene partners in this endeavor, employing the NHA partnership network to bring local communities, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations to the table. EBRPD is prepared to commit staff time and expertise to participation in this endeavor.

### Objective 2.3 The National Heritage Area supports projects and programs to foster understanding and appreciation of the region's cultures and living traditions among residents, leaders, and visitors.

Throughout history, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta has been home to many diverse cultures. Native Americans from more than two dozen Tribes lived in the region or came here to harvest resources for their food and to support their cultural traditions. Although the region was part of Spain's colonial empire, Spanish movement into the Delta was limited due to Native American resistance and difficult terrain. The Mexican government provided land grants that would shape development of the region through the establishment of large *ranchos*. Westward-bound American settlers reshaped the land for agriculture, forging new lives. Successive waves of immigrants, initially from Asia and Europe and later Latin America, came to work in agriculture, fishing, and other resource-intensive industries that dominated the landscape, past and present. They also labored in the canneries that grew up in the Delta and along the Carquinez Strait in the late 19th and early 20th century. Each group that settled here adapted to the region while preserving their distinct identities through language, foodways, and other customs, enriching the Delta's cultural tapestry. As a result, the region today remains a testament to the resilience and cultural vibrancy of these groups.

By stewarding cultural heritage, especially the knowledge and traditions that are honored, celebrated, and passed down through generations, the NHA will help strengthen sense of place, foster community pride and intergenerational connections, help maintain cultural diversity, and contribute to socio-economic wellbeing. Partners that will assist in carrying out this objective are the many cultural organizations, historical societies, museums, and Tribes that are the Delta's culture-keepers. EBRPD specifically called out these strategies in a letter of commitment, engaging in cultural conservation by dedicating staff time,

participating on the cultural committee, incorporating the NHA into existing programming, and sharing information with the public.

Many NHAs have benefitted by committing resources to professional ethnographic or folkloric positions. The NHA will explore the best way to do this, either by contracting with professionals or scholars, or supporting staffing within partner organizations. This potential position is addressed in Chapter 5, Goal 5.

### **STRATEGY 2.3.1 DEVELOP A COMMITTEE TO ADVISE ON CULTURAL PROJECTS.**

Using the Delta Independent Science Board as a model, the NHA will create a specialized advisory body to address cultural conservation and promotion in the region. The committee could be comprised of representatives with expertise in various aspects of cultural heritage, including historians, cultural anthropologists, folklorists, community leaders, representatives from Tribes and other cultural groups, and experts in heritage preservation. The activities of the committee could include advising on policies related to cultural heritage preservation, tracking and compiling research and documentation on the region's cultures, developing strategies to engage communities and cultural groups, recommending initiatives for education and outreach, and collaborating with partners to implement cultural heritage projects. The committee could develop and update a priority list of needs and projects, which could recommend funding and technical assistance. The ethnographic or folklore coordinator position mentioned above would help support and administer the committee.

### **STRATEGY 2.3.2 SUPPORT INITIATIVES TO DO ETHNOGRAPHY AND SPOKEN HISTORY, AND TO DOCUMENT CULTURE AND LIVING TRADITIONS.**

Just as documenting historic structures is an important tool in preserving the built environment, documenting culture and living traditions, including through oral histories, is critical for conserving and sharing traditions. Information and interviews can be used in educational programs that facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge. Such information can also be used to develop programs, exhibits, tours, and events (see the interpretive plan, Chapter 1). Three areas of focus for documentation arose during planning:

- Traditions of the diverse cultural groups connected to the Delta through time,
- Traditions related to water and its role in connecting the area.
- Traditions concerning agriculture and foodways.

By means of grants, direct financial support, technical assistance and training, and active staff involvement, the NHA will back projects and programs led by partners focused on documenting culture and conserving and sharing living traditions.

## Objective 2.4 Support California Native American Tribes and descendants of Native peoples to reconnect with, experience, and celebrate the significant and ancient cultural and natural resources in the region.

For thousands of years, the Delta's resources were integral to the lives and cultures of Native Americans. This vital connection between culture and nature is integral in cultural revitalization and natural resource protection. Tribes hold traditional knowledge that can contribute to solving ecological challenges, while respecting and enhancing cultural values and properties.

To maintain important biodiversity within the natural landscape, Native American cultures place great value on managing plants and wildlife. As noted in the interpretive plan, Chapter 1, many species play important roles in traditional stories, the understanding of place, and the practical use in everyday life. Contemporary research has demonstrated how burning was used as an effective tool in landscape management. In addition, Tribes harvested and sometimes managed species of plants, fish, fowl, and mammals, many of which retain Tribal importance. Ethnographic evidence suggests there were at least 20 native villages in the Delta, all of which participated in extensive modification and tending of the landscape and its rich resources. Tribal modification and tending of the Delta likely were extensive and profound.

While no Tribal governments are located in the region today, some Tribal members live in the Delta and 22 California Native American Tribes retain connections to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The NHA has a responsibility, a legislative mandate, and the opportunity to work with the Tribes to strengthen and enhance the special connections between Tribes and the Delta, and to rebuild connections where time and the consequences of colonialism have diminished them. The Advisory Committee created a Tribal Engagement Working Group to engage Tribal representatives in considering how the NHA could benefit their cultures and communities. The Tribal Engagement Working Group included representatives of Tribes with ties to the Delta, as well as staff from California State Parks tribal liaison office and members of the Advisory Committee and California State Parks and PointHDC planning team. The following strategies, which lay a foundation for ongoing and evolving Tribal involvement, were developed by that working group.

The Tribes are the primary partners for all the strategies below. The strategies below will be guided by the Tribal advisory council (see Chapter 1, Strategy 1.4.1). Other partners include the California Native American Heritage Commission, Native American Studies programs at area universities, and museums, including the Maidu Museum outside the NHA, and the California Indian Heritage Center under development by California State Parks. EBRPD has is committed to participating in all of the strategies in this objective with staff time, committee participation, meeting resources and facilitation, access to natural resources, and assistance with collaborative projects and programming. Finally, all state agencies active in the Delta have designated Tribal liaisons; the liaison for the DPC, the local coordinating entity, is currently the Project Manager for the NHA.

### **STRATEGY 2.4.1 CONSIDER THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TRIBAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

The NHA will work directly with the 22 California Native American Tribes who once lived in and whose lives were enriched by the bountiful flora, fauna, and water in Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to determine whether they feel a land acknowledgement is appropriate. If the Tribes would like the initiative to move forward, the local coordinating entity will work with them to develop a land acknowledgement. This act of recognition, respect, and education would honor the people who stewarded the land for generations and acknowledge their historical and ongoing connection. A land acknowledgement by the NHA would demonstrate a commitment to equity, justice, and ethical responsibility, and help promote cultural awareness, inclusivity, and reconciliation.

### **STRATEGY 2.4.2 CONTINUE TO ENGAGE CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NHA PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.**

As a state agency, the DPC has existing relationships with California Native American Tribes with ties to the Delta. The NHA management planning process built on those relationships through planning activities focused on Tribal engagement and the development of a Tribal Engagement Working Group. This is a foundation for what will be continued and ever-deepening involvement of Tribes with state or federal recognition, as well as organizations and state agencies supporting Tribal interests. The DPC staff will actively work to engage Tribes through the leadership of the Tribal Engagement Working Group and will consider the most appropriate ways in which to convene and connect with the 22 Tribes with ancestral and contemporary ties to the NHA and its resources.

### **STRATEGY 2.4.3 FACILITATE DOCUMENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND RIGHT OF ACCESS TO PLACES WITH MEANING FOR OR TRADITIONAL USE BY NATIVE PEOPLE.**

National Heritage Areas are significant for the connection, past and present, between people and place. There are many Tribes whose prehistory and history is tied to sacred places and places of traditional use in the Delta – often these places are the same. The effects of centuries of policies and actions rooted in colonialism and westward expansion of the United States damaged or completely severed the connection between Tribes and such places. Through grants, direct funding, staff involvement, and technical assistance, the NHA will assist Tribes in documenting places with meaning or traditional use and facilitating Tribal access to those places. The names, locations, and uses of places will not be made public without the consent of the Tribes. Where appropriate, interpretation to build public understanding and appreciation for places and their meaning will be developed at the request of, and in conjunction with, the Tribes.

### **STRATEGY 2.4.4 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO DOCUMENT, INTERPRET, AND PRACTICE TRADITIONAL LIFEWAYS BASED ON THE REGION'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

In addition to assisting with places of meaning and traditional use, the NHA will assist Tribes in documenting, conserving, and sharing living traditions. This strategy ties to programs supporting the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge and customs (below, 2.4.4). It also goes beyond such programs, emphasizing projects and programs that help build and curate understanding of traditional knowledge and customs, facilitating opportunities for Tribes to practice customs, and providing educational opportunities within Tribes. If appropriate, traditional knowledge and customs may be interpreted more broadly so that the public can understand and appreciate traditional lifeways, and environmental stewards can incorporate traditional knowledge into planning for the long-term sustainability of Delta natural resources. The NHA can assist with this through grants, direct funding support, staff involvement, and coordinating technical assistance and training. Any sharing of knowledge beyond the Tribes would be developed at the request of, and in conjunction with, the Tribes.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) – practices and understanding concerning ecosystems, resource management, and environmental interrelationships – contributes valuable perspectives to sustainable approaches



to natural resource management.<sup>51</sup> This strategy also includes providing opportunities for Tribes to practice TEK in the NHA, encouraging them to actively collaborate in environmental stewardship through the application of TEK.

The NHA will provide grants, direct funding support, staff involvement, connections to projects and programs that can incorporate Tribal involvement, and technical assistance and training focused on TEK.

### **STRATEGY 2.4.5 SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO FACILITATE INTERGENERATIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF TRIBAL HISTORIES, CULTURAL TRADITIONS, AND TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE.**

The previous strategy emphasized documenting, interpreting, and practicing traditional lifeways. This strategy builds upon that foundation, providing Tribes the support they need to maintain and transfer that knowledge to future generations. UNESCO recognizes an urgent need to enhance the intergenerational transition of Indigenous knowledge, complementing mainstream formal education.<sup>52</sup> Recognizing elders as holders of knowledge and authority and purposefully bringing together different generations to share experiences and knowledge can enrich participants' lives, provide cultural continuity, and help address social, community, and Tribal issues. Such programs leverage the strengths and positive contributions that the young and the elderly bring to one another and their communities. Programs would include the methods by which history and customs are passed down, such as storytelling, singing, and apprenticeship, knowledge of traditional arts, and traditional ecological knowledge.

The NHA will identify programmatic models and support Tribes with funding, technical assistance, and relationship-building with other partners in the network on projects and programs. These projects and programs will help sustain and pass on traditional knowledge within the Tribes, to educate partners, and to integrate TEK into current or future natural resource management initiatives. Primary partners are the Tribes and the California Native American Heritage Commission, in addition to the many partners focused on resource conservation in the NHA. Other partners could include the Maidu Museum, located outside the NHA in Roseville, and the California Indian Heritage Center, currently in planning for a location in West Sacramento.

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<sup>51</sup> [Overview - Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Ecological Knowledge \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/learn/teach/indigenous-knowledge-and-traditional-ecological-knowledge), accessed August 24, 2023.

<sup>52</sup> [Indigenous Knowledge and Knowledge Transmission \(unesco.org\)](https://www.unesco.org/en/indigenous-knowledge-and-knowledge-transmission), accessed August 10, 2023.





*Revelers dance at the Crawdad Festival, a popular annual attraction in Isleton. (Holly Heyser/Delta Protection Commission).*

## Chapter 3 – Supporting Tourism and Economic Development

### Introduction

Throughout the process to develop the NHA's management plan, the Advisory Committee, task groups, staff, and stakeholders identified the current resources supporting tourism and recognized opportunities to further develop heritage resources and to enhance tourism marketing. This work aligns with the Congressional mandate requiring the NHA to "carry out programs and projects that recognize, protect and enhance important resource values" and to "increase public awareness of, and appreciation for, natural, historical, scenic,

and cultural resources."<sup>53</sup> Specifically, it aligns with designating legislation requirements for an integrated and cooperative approach to the enhancement of resources (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(A)).

Goal 3 was adopted to reflect this intention:

*Support sustainable tourism and economic development by encouraging responsible use of, and visitation to, the Delta's unique resources and communities.*

To achieve this goal and its accompanying objectives and strategies, the DPC will engage a person dedicated to heritage development and tourism with substantive experience in this area. This may be accomplished by retaining professional assistance either through employing permanent staff, hiring an independent contractor, or sharing staffing with a partner agency or organization. This intention is further discussed in Chapter 5, Goal 5.

The incentive for the NHA to undertake sustainable tourism development as a key activity is supported by the work of many other NHAs that have successfully developed, interpreted, and promoted their cultural, historic, natural, and recreational resources through strong partnerships. An earlier study of the economic impact of six NHAs noted that tourism is "a primary source of economic benefit" and recognized the importance of partnerships: "NHA partnerships are encouraged through initiatives that increase educational and recreational opportunities for both residents and tourists. Increased visitation by tourists and the increased economic activity are important objectives of heritage areas."<sup>54</sup>

## **Sustainable Tourism: The Intersection of Heritage Tourism and Ecotourism**

Travel and tourism are two of the most dynamic economic sectors in the world, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The Council's research shows that tourism accounts for 7.6% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and 18.4% of the GDP in North America.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Title VI – National Heritage Areas, Section 6001, *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act*, Public Law 116-9, <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ9/PLAW-116publ9.pdf>, accessed July 15, 2023.

<sup>54</sup> *The Economic Impact of National Heritage Areas*, Tripp Umbach for the Heritage Development Partnership, 2015

<sup>55</sup> World Travel and Tourism Council Report (2023), featuring 2022 data, accessed August 10, 2023, <https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact>.

Although people have been traveling for vacations in the U.S. since the 19th century, the advent of defining travel industry segments began in the late 20th century. In the ensuing decades, the desire to promote cultural, historic, and natural resources and outdoor recreation moved to the forefront for many tourism agencies who recognized the opportunity to generate economic revenue and to support a high quality of life for residents.

Among the most prominent travel industry segments are ecotourism, also referred to as geotourism, and heritage tourism, also referred to as cultural heritage tourism. While this segmentation is helpful to tourism planners and promoters to understand and address the specific interests of tourists, the intertwining of these terms is clear in the definitions for each:

- **Ecotourism:** The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education."<sup>56</sup>
- **Heritage tourism:** The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic, and natural resources."<sup>57</sup>

Taken together, these definitions encapsulate Goal 3 – **support sustainable tourism** – which sustains the community or region while generating beneficial economic impact.

Sustainable Tourism is defined as:

Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.<sup>58</sup>

Sustainable tourism is particularly attractive for communities interested in maintaining or enhancing their community's character and sense of place. In addition to economic impact and job creation, sustainable tourism increases the area's attractiveness to outside industries and people seeking to relocate to locales rich in historic, cultural, and natural amenities, which results in more civic pride, and offers residents more shops, activities, and entertainment offerings the local market alone might not be able to support.

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<sup>56</sup> International Ecotourism Society, accessed August 14, 2023, <https://ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/>.

<sup>57</sup> International Ecotourism Society, accessed August 14, 2023, <https://ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/>.

<sup>58</sup> United Nations World Travel Organization, accessed August 15, 2023, <https://media.visitcalifornia.com/researchandfacts/california-tourism-sustainability-resource-center/overview-and-guiding-principles>.

Sustainable tourism can be a positive outcome of **creative placemaking**. The American Planning Association notes: "Successful creative placemaking highlights unique community characteristics. Projects can focus on connecting local history with the present, bringing cultural influences into the spotlight, and creating new traditions. It builds connections between people and places by encouraging collaboration."

Many planning organizations have developed guidelines and how-to manuals for creative placemaking. Four primary attributes of placemaking for tourism are:

1. **Context and conservation** – An aesthetically appealing visual appearance can contribute to a sense of place and a meaningful experience for tourists. The beauty and authenticity of destinations should be preserved, protected, and maintained.
4. **Site interpretation** – Sites hold the stories and history for a place to engage tourists and residents. Interpretation should be clear, memorable, and accurate to encourage interaction with a place.
5. **Comfort and image** – Destinations should reflect a sense of place and be visually pleasing. They should feel safe, comfortable, and clean.
6. **Access and linkage** – Visitors should be able to easily reach a destination on streets, bike lanes, and pedestrian paths.<sup>59</sup>

Actions to support sustainable tourism for the NHA will:

- Support cultural, historic, and natural resource asset-based development.
- Share the stories of the region's unique identity in a variety of venues.
- Preserve natural resources to share with current and future generations.
- Support local businesses and organizations that reflect the area's sense of place.
- Offer activities for outdoor recreation that also sustain the environment.

Cultural heritage travel has clear implications for positive economic impact and enhanced quality of life for a community's residents. Over the past three decades, studies have consistently shown that people who want to experience culture and heritage are frequent travelers who spend more than general leisure travelers. They are more likely to stay in a hotel, motel, or bed and breakfast, and almost half of their expenditures are spent on activities, dining, and shopping. A national study determined that cultural heritage travelers want:<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Adapted from: "Placemaking as an Approach to Foster Cultural Tourism in Heritage Sites," Haitham Samir, Salwa Samargandi and Mohammed F. M. Mohammed, Department of Architecture, Effat University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> The Cultural and Heritage Traveler, 2013 Edition, Mandala Research, LLC

- travel experiences where the destination, its buildings and surroundings, have retained their historic character;
- travel to be educational; they want to explore and learn about local arts, cultural, environment, and history;
- to participate in experiences rather than be a spectator;
- to engage with locals; and
- to stay in accommodations that relate to the culture or heritage of the destination.

The growing interest in outdoor activities and experiences also creates new opportunities for the tourism industry. To experience nature, most Americans must leave home. A 2020 report estimated that 83 percent of the U.S. population lives in urban areas, up from 64 percent in 1950. This number is projected to reach 89 percent by 2050.<sup>61</sup> For ecotourism, the implications are clear. Areas that conserve and share their traditional heritage (nature, culture, history) and provide outdoor experiences for visitors can benefit economically.

### Post-Pandemic Travel

Although the purpose of this chapter is to consider tourism development and promotional opportunities, it is important to acknowledge that the tourism industry is likely to be in recovery for several years due to the COVID-19 pandemic which put pressure on staffing, fuel prices, and other aspects of the industry. Prior to the pandemic, the U.S. travel industry experienced 10 years of growth in domestic leisure travel, domestic business travel, and international inbound travel segments. In 2021, domestic leisure travel was still recovering with total expenditures of \$751 billion (104 percent over 2019), but domestic business travel spending was 56 percent below and international travel was 78 percent below 2019 levels.<sup>62</sup>

## Tourism in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

Tourism has been the subject of numerous studies for the region over the past two decades. Of particular importance, both to tourism and partnerships, is the *Delta Plan*. The plan is a product of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009 that established the Delta Stewardship Council as one of three state agencies whose work is centered in the Delta. The act required development of a comprehensive, legally enforceable plan to guide how federal, state, and

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<sup>61</sup> "U.S. Cities Fact Sheet." Pub. No. CSS09-06, Center for Sustainable Systems, University of Michigan, 2020.

<sup>62</sup> "U.S. Travel Answer Sheet," U.S. Travel Association, May 2022.

local agencies manage the Delta's water and environmental resources. While much of the plan adopted in 2013 and periodically amended is dedicated to conserving the Delta's ecosystems and water supply, one chapter focuses on the protection and enhancement of cultural, recreational, agricultural, and natural resources. This chapter includes the goal of designation as a National Heritage Area and recognizes the importance of tourism to the region's economy.

Other plans include *Recreation and Tourism in the Delta* (2019) and *The Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta's Recreation and Tourism Chapter Update* (2020).<sup>63</sup> These studies provide data and analysis on visitation and emerging trends. The studies also identified numerous resources that can appeal to visitors including historic and cultural sites, agritourism opportunities, wineries, and others. A survey conducted for the *Recreation and Tourism in the Delta* report found that visitors enjoy attending festivals, historical sightseeing, boating, dining, hiking/walking, wine tasting, and driving for pleasure.

The *Great California Delta Trail Master Plan* (2022) was the result of legislation passed by the California State Legislature in 2006. The trail's purpose is to link resources throughout the Delta to provide public access to natural resources and to support opportunities for outdoor recreation. Studies and reports for individual resources also provide valuable insights, such as the *1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse Feasibility Study* (2018), the *Artist-in-Residence Project, Walnut Grove* (2018), and the *Asian American Heritage Park Feasibility Study* (2018).<sup>64</sup>

### Determining the NHA's Role in Heritage Development and Tourism

The management planning process referenced and built on these studies in a variety of activities including public meetings, site visits, an online survey, and stakeholder interviews. The Heritage Development and Tourism Task Group reviewed findings during this process and held multiple meetings to craft objectives and strategies to guide sustainable tourism development. To determine an appropriate role for the NHA, the Heritage Development and Tourism Task Group considered issues and opportunities in five areas:

#### ADMINISTRATION

- Should the NHA management plan include objectives and action steps for heritage development and tourism?

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<sup>63</sup> Plans were prepared by the Delta Protection Commission.

<sup>64</sup> Studies were prepared by the Delta Protection Commission.



- What is the role of the local coordinating entity in heritage development and tourism?
- What is the organizational structure to support the NHA's role?

## **BUILDING SUPPORT**

- How can support for tourism be built among elected officials and residents?
- How can the local coordinating entity and its partners encourage California's elected officials to develop the infrastructure to support increased tourism?
- How can the local coordinating entity partner with Native people to ensure stewardship of resources and continuation of traditions?

## **PROMOTION**

- How can the NHA position the Delta and Carquinez Strait as a unique brand and destination in California?
- How can the NHA attract target audiences both in-state and out-of-state?
- What types of promotions will communicate the opportunity for unique visitor experiences?

## **EDUCATION**

- What materials and activities are needed to educate visitors and residents about the area and its history and culture?
- How does heritage development and tourism intersect with interpretation and resource stewardship and enhancement in the management plan?

## **DIRECT ACTION**

- What visitor services are needed and how can the NHA support development of these services?
- How can the NHA help sites to become visitor ready?
- What new tourism products can be developed based on the area's history and culture?

The resulting objectives and strategies illuminate the leadership role that emerged as the NHA recruits an experienced sustainable tourism professional for its staff, continues to build a strong partnership network, and implements and tracks the success of this chapter's activities.

## Heritage Development and Tourism Resources

There are multiple agencies and attractions currently promoting the California Delta with various messages, as well as multiple plans that focus on attracting visitors. The DPC has taken a leadership role in coordinating some of these activities and is seeking to build strong tourism-based partnerships at the state and local level as the coordinating entity for the NHA. The following is a summary of tourism-related activities in the state and in the region.

### **VISIT CALIFORNIA: THE STATE'S OFFICIAL TOURISM AGENCY**

Tourism is a major industry in California, drawing visitors from throughout the U.S. and from international markets. In 2022, travelers spent \$134.4 billion, directly supporting more than 1.1 million jobs and generating \$11.9 billion in state and local tax revenues (nearing pre-pandemic levels). According to the U.S. Travel Association, California ranks number one as the state with the highest visitor spending (followed by Florida, Texas, and New York).

Visit California, the state's official tourism agency, is a nonprofit organization that works in partnership with the state's tourism industry to develop marketing programs designed to attract visitors. The California Office of Tourism, a state agency, collects assessment fees to fund Visit California's activities. The California Tourism Act of 1995 enabled the tourism industry to collect assessment fees to support marketing, resulting in a Tourism Assessment Program created in 1998. The program includes five travel and tourism industry categories: attractions and recreation; restaurants and retail; transportation and travel services; and passenger rental cars. Exemptions include businesses with revenues of less than \$1 million or with less than one percent of gross receipts as tourism revenues. The office also manages 21 official state welcome centers. The nearest such facility for the NHA is the Fairfield Welcome Center off Highway 12 in Solano County (in the Jelly Belly Candy Company factory building).

Visit California manages a wide array of programs to promote the state through partnerships with the tourism industry. These include in-depth travel industry research, travel media campaigns, visitor publications, and cooperative advertising programs. Opportunities for engagement by the local coordinating entity and partnership network are discussed in Objective 3.1.

### **CALIFORNIA TOURISM REGIONS**

Visit California divides the state into 12 thematic tourism regions. Each region is promoted on the agency's tourism website with featured itineraries. The NHA's geographic area is divided into three of these thematic regions, with two counties divided further into two regions, complicating the NHA's branding and messaging as a tourism destination. Although places such as restaurants or

recreational outfitters in some of the NHA's communities can be located on the website, [visitcalifornia.com](https://www.visitcalifornia.com), there is no presence for the Delta as a unique region or a National Heritage Area. Following are the three regions with the NHA county listed first, followed by other counties in the region that are outside of the NHA:

- **Central Valley** – Contra Costa (part), San Joaquin, Solano (part), Yolo – outside: Colusa, Fresno (part), Glenn, Kern (part), Kings, Madera (part), Merced, Placer (part), Stanislaus, Sutter, Tulare (part), Tuolumne (part), Yuba
- **Gold Country** – Sacramento – outside: parts of Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer
- **San Francisco Bay Area** – Contra Costa (part), Solano (part) – outside: Alameda, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sonoma

## DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL PLAN

A new program created by Visit California to assist destinations in sustainable tourism development and stewardship strategies dovetails with the NHA's goal of sustainable tourism development. Through this program, Visit California provides a Responsible Travel Toolkit and a Sustainable Resource Center website. Guiding principles for the program which can be adopted by the NHA require that strategies must:<sup>65</sup>

1. Enhance and enrich the visitor's experience of California.
2. Contribute to a quality of life for Californians that cannot be sustained by local populations alone.
3. Respect the history and unique culture of every community.
4. Contribute to California's economy in ways that are equitably distributed and support stable employment.
5. Influence the appropriate and effective dispersal of visitors across geographies and need periods.
6. Ensure that natural resources are used responsibly and cared for by locals and visitors alike.
7. Honor and preserve the natural beauty of California.

## TRACKING ECONOMIC IMPACT

Annual studies commissioned by Visit California track economic impact throughout the state with detailed data for each county. Data includes direct spending (lodging, food, transportation, and other expenditures), jobs and

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<sup>65</sup> Sustainable Tourism and Destination Stewardship, accessed August 30, 2023, <https://industry.visitcalifornia.com/partner-opportunities/programs/destination-stewardship>.

earnings attributed to the tourism industry, and tax revenue collected by local and state governments.

The top five counties in California for visitor-generated taxable sales in 2022 are Los Angeles, including the city of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills; Orange, which includes Disneyland and many major attractions; San Diego, which includes the San Diego Zoo and other major attractions; Riverside, which includes Joshua Tree National Park and other major attractions; and San Francisco (city and county).

A comparison of travel data from the pre-pandemic year of 2019 and the post-pandemic year of 2022 showed that the five counties in the NHA are recovering their tourism markets, although only San Joaquin County exceeded its pre-pandemic visitor spending and tourism industry employment. Following is a summary of county tourism data:<sup>66</sup>

County	2019 Visitor Spending (Millions)	2022 Visitor Spending (Millions)	2019 Tax Receipts: Local and State (Millions)	2022 Tax Receipts: Local and State (Millions)	2019 Employment	2022 Employment
Contra Costa	1,739	1,446	133	103	18,230	15,700
Sacramento	3,481	2,988	257	208	33,430	32,000
San Joaquin	847.5	1,081.7	74	82	9,540	10,090
Solano	735	717.3	53.8	47.9	4,700	4,620
Yolo	411.7	384.7	30.8	27.6	2,810	2,750

## VISIT CA DELTA

Although there is no official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the Delta, a coalition of agencies and organizations formed to create the Delta Marketing Task Force in 2016. The DPC and the Delta Conservancy provided leadership, and partners included chambers of commerce, visitor bureaus, tour operators, and tourism businesses. With grant funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, the task force created

<sup>66</sup> "The Economic Impact of Travel in California," Dean Runyan and Associates for Visit California, 2022.

a five-year marketing plan (2017-2022) and a website to encourage travelers to "Visit CA Delta; The Heart of California."<sup>67</sup>

The task force set as its mission "The Delta will be recognized as a world-class tourism destination and as a place for people, homes, and businesses, filled with human history, cultural richness, and diversity."

The website, [visitcadelta.com](http://visitcadelta.com), provides information on places to visit, stay, dine, and shop. Additionally, the website provides suggestions for a variety of activities such as attending a festival, birdwatching, water recreation, cycling, or exploring the area's historic sites. Following NHA designation, a section was added to provide information about the NHA. The task force also created the popular "Best of the Delta" promotion to recognize excellence in restaurants, towns, recreational outfitters, museums, RV camping, and other attractions.

The five-year marketing plan concluded in 2022 as plans were underway for the NHA management plan. The Heritage Development and Tourism Task Force identified the need for a new marketing plan, which is discussed in Strategy 3.1.2.

## **TOURISM PROMOTIONS IN THE DELTA**

Several agencies and businesses in the region promote the California Delta to tourists. The California Delta Chambers and Visitor's Bureau ([californiadelta.org](http://californiadelta.org)) is a coalition of chambers of commerce, visitor bureaus, businesses, and others who work together to promote the region. The agency focuses promotions on recreation including boating, fishing, and other water activities. The chamber also produces maps and hosts the popular annual event, Taste of the Delta. The Isleton Chamber of Commerce produces the annual magazine *Delta Life*, which is distributed to hotels, convention centers, welcome centers, attractions, RV parks, car rental agencies, and restaurants in the surrounding region. The magazine includes directories for visitor services such as dining and lodging, profiles on Delta communities, and feature stories on special places in the area (<https://isletonchamber.com/delta-life-magazine/>). RioVision Promotions and Communications publishes *Discover Rio Vista* three times each year. The magazine is distributed throughout the Delta and features information shopping, attractions, events, and other activities for visitors. (<https://discoverriovista.com>)

Other agencies engaged in promotion include:

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<sup>67</sup> [Visitcadelta.com](http://visitcadelta.com)

County	Community	Promotional Organization	Websites
Contra Costa	Brentwood	City of Brentwood	<a href="https://www.betterinbrentwood.com/">https://www.betterinbrentwood.com/</a>
Contra Costa	Martinez	Downtown Martinez and Co.	<a href="https://downtownmartinez.org/">https://downtownmartinez.org/</a>
Contra Costa	Pittsburg	City of Pittsburg	<a href="https://www.pittsburgca.gov/our-city/visiting">https://www.pittsburgca.gov/our-city/visiting</a>
Sacramento	Isleton	Isleton Chamber of Commerce	<a href="https://isletonchamber.com/delta-life-magazine/">https://isletonchamber.com/delta-life-magazine/</a>
Solano	Benicia	City of Benicia	<a href="https://www.visitbenicia.org/">https://www.visitbenicia.org/</a>
Solano	Rio Vista	Discover Rio Vista	<a href="https://discoverriovista.com/">https://discoverriovista.com/</a>
Solano	Vallejo	Visit Vallejo	<a href="https://www.visitvallejo.com/">https://www.visitvallejo.com/</a>
Yolo	West Sacramento	Visit Sacramento	<a href="https://www.visitsacramento.com/plan/neighborhoods/west-sacramento/">https://www.visitsacramento.com/plan/neighborhoods/west-sacramento/</a>
Yolo	Davis, Winters, Woodland, West Sacramento, Yolo County countryside	Yolo County Visitors Bureau	<a href="https://visityolo.com/">https://visityolo.com/</a>

## LEGACY COMMUNITIES

California's 2009 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act listed eleven Delta "legacy communities" as having a rich and distinct natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage: Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland, Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove.

These small communities located within the boundaries of the NHA each reflect the area's history and culture, from settlement to the development of agriculture and commerce to modern-day popular recreational activities on land and water. Collectively named Legacy Communities, these places provide unique opportunities for visitors to learn about the area's history through tours, attractions, and special events. Some also provide places for visitors to dine, shop, and stay.

The Act required the Delta Conservancy and the DPC to support and promote these communities. As part of this effort, the DPC, with support from the Delta Conservancy, worked with six legacy communities – Clarksburg, Courtland, Hood, Isleton, Locke, and Walnut Grove – to develop Community Action Plans. These plans highlight the communities' needs and desires, such as bicycle and pedestrian improvements, broadband infrastructure, community design, and historic preservation. Subsequent projects focused on broadband infrastructure and community design in these and other legacy communities.

Opportunities for heritage development and tourism for Legacy Communities – Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland, Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove – are discussed in Objective 3.2.

## **CARQUINEZ STRAIT/EASTERN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY COMMUNITIES**

Communities in the Carquinez Strait/Eastern Contra Costa Region include Antioch, Benicia, Brentwood, Crockett, Discovery Bay, Hercules, Martinez, Oakley, Pittsburg, Rodeo, and Vallejo. These communities have larger populations than the Legacy Communities and as such can provide visitor services including lodging and dining. These communities also offer a variety of attractions including museums, historic sites, parks, trails, and other recreational experiences.

## **ATTRACTIONS AND EXPERIENCES**

The NHA region offers a wide variety of attractions and experiences to engage, entertain, and educate visitors. Chapter 2, Stewarding the Delta's Resources, includes descriptions of these resources including National Park Service sites, California state-owned parks, hiking/biking trails, museums, recreational resources, and cultural events. The resource inventory (Appendix F) includes details about these places.

## **FESTIVALS AND EVENTS**

Festivals and events in the NHA celebrate agriculture, ethnic traditions, and the water, including fisheries, waterfowl, boating, and yachting. Many of the festivals attract hundreds, sometimes thousands, of visitors from outside of the

region. Cook-offs and culinary events focus on farming and often feature trademark crops such as asparagus, pears, and wine grapes. Many local restaurants highlight fresh local produce or cuisines of various ethnic traditions. Sporting events also draw many participants for events such as Ironman California, the Delta Century bicycle ride, and various 5Ks, 10Ks, half-marathons, and other races that traverse the Delta.

The following chart lists major annual events as of 2023. Events that are aligned with the NHA's mission offer opportunities for support from the NHA, and all events offer opportunities to create a presence for the NHA through distribution of materials, setting up an information booth, and sharing information on things to see and do in the NHA region.

<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Festival</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>February 19</b>	Isleton Spam Festival	Isleton
<b>February</b>	Chinese New Year Festival	Locke
<b>March 4</b>	Delta Blues Festival	Antioch
<b>April 29</b>	California Duck Days	Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (Davis)
<b>April 22</b>	John Muir Birthday-Earth Day Celebration	Martinez
<b>May 6-7</b>	The Great Vallejo Race	Vallejo/San Francisco Bay
<b>May 13</b>	Taste of Oakley	Oakley
<b>May 13</b>	Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival	Locke
<b>June 16-18</b>	King of the County BBQ Challenge and Music Festival	Martinez
<b>July 16</b>	Flor do Oakley Holy Ghost Festival	Oakley
<b>July 1</b>	Oakley Summer Fest	Oakley
<b>July 3</b>	Barron Hilton Fireworks Display at Mandeville Island	Mandeville Tip County Park
<b>July 23</b>	Benicia Holy Ghost Festa	Benicia
<b>July 29-30</b>	Benicia Waterfront Festival	Benicia
<b>July 30</b>	Courtland Pear Fair	Courtland
<b>August 5</b>	Taste of the Delta	Stockton



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<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Festival</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>August 6</b>	Rio Vista and Isleton Holy Ghost Festa	Rio Vista
<b>August 12</b>	Oakley Kids Fishing Derby	Oakley
<b>August 19</b>	Pittsburg Jazz, Blues, and Funk Festival	Pittsburg
<b>August 26</b>	Hog August Bites	Rio Vista
<b>September 17</b>	Wines of Clarksburg and Art Auction	Clarksburg
<b>September 23</b>	Heart of Oakley Festival	Oakley
<b>October 7-8</b>	Vallejo Waterfront Weekend	Vallejo
<b>October 13-15</b>	Rio Vista Bass Derby and Festival	Rio Vista
<b>October 14</b>	Downtown Brentwood Coalition's Annual Oktoberfest	Brentwood
<b>October 7</b>	Oakley Harvest Festival	Oakley
<b>November 4-5</b>	Pittsburg Fishing Derby	Pittsburg
<b>December 2-3</b>	Holiday Home Tour; Museum Christmas Faire; Lighting of Tree and caroling on main; lighted boat parade	Rio Vista
<b>December TBD</b>	Bridge Marina Yacht Club Lighted Boat Parade	Antioch
<b>December TBD</b>	Pittsburg Yacht Club Lighted Boat Parade	Pittsburg
<b>December TBD</b>	Sacramento Capital City Yacht Club Lighted Boat Parade	West Sacramento
<b>December 2</b>	Stockton Delta Reflections Lighted Boat Parade	Stockton
<b>December 2</b>	Vallejo Lighted Yacht Parade	Vallejo
<b>December 9</b>	Discovery Bay Lighted Boat Parade	Discovery Bay
<b>December 2</b>	Marina West Yacht Club/Oxbow Marina Lighted Boat Parade	Isleton

Date(s)	Festival	Location
December TBD	San Joaquin Yacht Club Lighted Boat Parade	Bethel Island

## Challenges for Heritage Development and Tourism

Although the NHA has great potential for heritage development and tourism, planners also identified several challenges. This chapter's objectives and strategies address these challenges and provide partnership-based actions to transition challenges into opportunities.

### NO REPRESENTATION IN STATE TOURISM MARKETING

Visit California, the state's official tourism agency, does not currently promote the Delta as a region or the area's designation as an NHA. The state is promoted through 12 thematic regions discussed previously. None of the regions reference the Delta, which is divided into three of the thematic regions. Although places such as restaurants or recreational outfitters in some of the NHA's communities can be located on the website, [visitcalifornia.com](http://visitcalifornia.com), there is no presence for the Delta as a unique region or a National Heritage Area.

### NO DMO IN THE DELTA

There is currently no official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the Delta. Visit CA Delta is a partnership of the Delta Protection Commission, Delta Conservancy, Delta businesses, Chambers of Commerce, Visitor Bureaus, tour operators and others who promote the Delta through a website, [visitcadelta.com](http://visitcadelta.com), managed by the Delta Protection Commission, as well as social media accounts.

### MINIMAL ACCOMMODATIONS

The lack of accommodations in the heart of the Delta minimizes the opportunity to generate economic impact from tourism as visitation is generally limited to day trips. Lodging is primarily located in larger cities such as West Sacramento, Martinez, and Benecia.

### DANGEROUS ROADS AND TRAFFIC

Traffic and transportation were identified in all meetings – Advisory Committee, task groups, and public meetings – as a significant issue. The two-lane roads which traverse the Delta are challenging for cyclists to use and at times have heavy automobile traffic from commuter traffic that uses the Delta as a pass-through route.

## **CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ATTRACTIONS NOT WELL RECOGNIZED**

The Delta is recognized and promoted as a recreational destination for water-based activities. Previous studies and plans focused on development and maintenance of recreational resources but addressed cultural and heritage resources minimally. As a result, the importance of the area's cultural and heritage attractions and communities are not recognized at the same level as the recreational resources.

## **Opportunities for Heritage Development and Tourism**

In addition to challenges, there are also significant opportunities for heritage development and tourism. Opportunities include:

### **FIVE YEAR MARKETING PLAN**

A new five-year marketing plan has been funded (2023) and will be developed with leadership from the local coordinating entity, the Delta Protection Commission. (Strategy 3.1.2)

### **VISIT CALIFORNIA MEMBERSHIP**

Visit California, the state's tourism agency, does not require a membership fee to participate. The agency offers many promotional programs at no cost or low cost for tourism destinations to participate (Strategy 3.1.1).

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH STOCKTON**

Representatives from Stockton, which is adjacent to the NHA boundary, participated in the management planning process and have expressed a strong interest in partnering with the NHA. Stockton offers additional attractions connected to the NHA's themes, and the city has more than 2,000 hotel rooms, providing much-needed lodging options for the NHA. Visit Stockton, the city's convention and visitors bureau, promotes the city to groups and conventions in addition to individual and family travelers, [www.visitstockton.org](http://www.visitstockton.org).

### **PARTNERSHIPS WITH NEW ATTRACTIONS**

- The Pacific Flyway Center is a massive \$35 million project slated for development in Fairfield, within the NHA boundary. As one of North America's four bird migration routes, the flyway provides habitat for more than 200 bird species and other animals. The proposed center will be an open space land preserve and include an interpretive center and educational facilities as well as outdoor education and viewing programs. Funds have been secured for Phase One, development of a "Marsh Walk" to include trails, visitor parking, and interpretive signage. The timeline for

completion of the center is not stated on the website, <https://pacificflywaycenter.org/>, but the DPC will keep apprised of progress and begin establishing a partnership.

- Plans for the California Indian Heritage Center are in development for a facility located in West Sacramento, adjacent to the NHA boundary. The center will include a library, outdoor plaza, public art area, interpretive and educational facilities. As with the flyway center, a timeline is uncertain, but the DPC will maintain contact with California State Parks and other partners as the project progresses, [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=22628](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22628).
- Plans for the Great California Delta Trail call for a regional trail system that will connect the San Francisco Bay Trail to Sacramento River Trails, crossing through portions of all five Delta Counties. Trail segments will be conceived, developed, built, and managed locally. The Delta Trail Master Plan, completed in 2022, provides a framework to develop a network of partners including the DPC to facilitate coordinated planning and implementation across jurisdictional boundaries. The Great California Delta Trail will include routes for bicycling and hiking, with interconnections to other land and water trail systems, recreational facilities, and public transportation. Water trails will provide continuity in places where land trails are not feasible, <https://delta.ca.gov/recreation-and-tourism/>.

## RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND INTERPRETATION

Implementation of the objectives and strategies discussed in this management plan's interpretive plan and resource stewardship and enhancement chapters (chapters 2 and 3) will develop new attractions, programs, events, and experiences to share the NHA's culture and heritage with visitors. These activities will connect to the product development objectives and strategies in this chapter and will provide new opportunities to promote the area and to attract new tourist markets. The intention to create local coordinating entity staff positions focused on resource stewardship and enhancement and heritage tourism development and promotion is discussed in Chapter 5, *Establishing Sustainable Governance*.

## GRANT PROGRAM

NHA leaders plan to develop a grant program (Chapter 4, Strategy 4.2.1) to support programs and projects connected to the management plan. Funding opportunities for heritage development and tourism projects will help enhance existing cultural and heritage attractions, develop new attractions, and support promotions to attract visitors.

## Heritage Development and Tourism Objectives and Strategies

The objectives and strategies for heritage development and tourism resulted from the task group's in-depth examination of the existing tourism industry in the NHA area as well as promotions through the state's tourism agency. Actions to implement these plans will place the local coordinating entity as the leader of a strong coalition committed to developing a sustainable tourism program. The program will engage visitors to experience the culture and heritage of the Delta resulting in a beneficial economic impact for those who live here. Some partner commitments are given as examples while additional participating partners may be found in the appendices that contain the partnership network (G), the implementation plan (J), and letters of commitment (L).

**Objective 3.1** Tourism promotions by National Heritage Area leaders and partners attract visitors who appreciate the area's history, culture, recreational, and outdoor opportunities and contribute to the region's economy.

By working together, with leadership from the local coordinating entity, partners will build on previous achievements, address challenges, and succeed in attracting visitors. The following strategies will be implemented to build partnerships, identify target markets, and to develop plans for tourism promotion and marketing.

### **STRATEGY 3.1.1 CONVENE TOURISM PARTNERS TO CREATE A REGIONAL NETWORK TO DEVELOP A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROGRAM.**

As previously discussed, the local coordinating entity will be positioned as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) with staff dedicated to developing a regional network of tourism partners. A critical step in this strategy is the formation of a strong relationship with the state's tourism agency, Visit California. As the management plan was in development (2023), Visit California began a two-year planning project to develop actionable recommendations and implementation strategies for each of the tourism agency's twelve designated tourism regions. Plans called for examining destination brand perceptions, environmental challenges, workforce development, and marketing. The process included establishing committees for each region to participate in a series of meetings, as well as conducting surveys and stakeholder interviews. As previously discussed, the California Delta is not recognized as a unique region but is included in three of the twelve tourism regions. In the summer of 2023, the DPC staff began participating in the planning process and began discussions

with Visit California about the NHA and the Delta as a unique place. Although the outcome of Visit California's planning process was unknown at the time the NHA management plan was completed, the local coordinating entity committed to continuing to build a partnership with the agency and to participate in opportunities for promotion and marketing. The foundation of the network's planning will be adoption of the principles stated in Visit California's Sustainable Tourism and Destination Stewardship Program (discussed previously). Other partners for the NHA's tourism network include the area's chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus, the East Bay Regional Park District, California State Parks, communities, attractions, historical societies, museum associations, and tourism-oriented businesses. The National Park Service's planners representing John Muir National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail will participate in the tourism network and attend meetings as available and necessary to support mutual goals. Planners would also liaise with the NPS Tourism Program to provide resources as needed. In addition, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has committed to participating in the network. A wide range of local governments, organizations, attractions, and businesses will participate in the network, including the Delta Legacy Communities, Hood Community Council, RioVision (Rio Vista's DMO), the City of Oakley, the Oakley and Rio Vista Chambers of Commerce, the Rio Vista Museum, and the Willow Ballroom Event Center in Hood. The local coordinating entity will establish and convene a regular schedule of meetings to build the network and to support implementation of the management plan's strategies.



A railbike is one of the attractions on the West Sacramento River Road Railway (Tiffany Dozier/Yolo County Visitor's Bureau).

### **STRATEGY 3.1.2 CONDUCT MARKET RESEARCH TO GATHER MORE INFORMATION ON CURRENT VISITORS AND TO IDENTIFY NEW TARGET AUDIENCES.**

*The Delta Tourism Awareness 5-Year Marketing Plan: 2017-2022* (discussed previously) included visitor data gathered as part of a market research report for the Delta Protection Commission. The report provided insights into visitors' interests, citing outdoor activities as primary activities with growing interest in cultural and heritage experiences. Another report, *Recreation and Tourism in Delta (2019)*, also provides data on visitation. Detailed information offered insights into activity preferences, length of stay, expenditures, lodging, and sources of information for trip planning.<sup>68</sup>

Although these studies provided solid data, both were completed before the pandemic that began in early 2020 and decimated the travel market worldwide for several years. Two factors reflected in Visit California's travel

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<sup>68</sup> *Recreation and Tourism in the Delta, 2019*, California State University, Sacramento, for the Delta Protection Commission

research and marketing point to the importance of having post-pandemic data with which to plan tourism development and promotions:

- The tourism industry is still in a recovery mode while travel increases each year.
- It is essential to understand the current tourist and to respond to changes they may have made in travel planning, choice of destination, and expectations for the travel experience.

To plan an effective marketing campaign for the NHA with judicious use of funds, the local coordinating entity will retain a travel research agency to conduct market research. The local coordinating entity will build into its work calendar plans to update the research at appropriate intervals. The data gathered from visitor research will inform the NHA tourism partners network about current visitation – who is coming to the region, what activities they enjoy, what experiences they would be interested in, expenditures, and other information. Additionally, research will identify new target markets that would be worthy of investing additional staff time and resources. These markets may include diverse audiences who have not previously visited the Delta but whose travel interests align with the experiences offered in the region. The local coordinating entity and its contracted travel research agency will work closely with Visit California to craft a survey that coordinates with the state's visitor research. This will allow comparison to other regions of the state and to identify opportunities for promotional partnerships with destinations outside of the NHA boundaries, particularly in the three tourism regions created by Visit California that include parts of the NHA. Some partners that collect visitor data, such as the East Bay Regional Park District, are also willing to assist with this strategy.

### **STRATEGY 3.1.3 WORK WITH PARTNERS TO DEVELOP A THREE TO FIVE-YEAR MARKETING PLAN TO BRAND AND PROMOTE THE STATE'S FIRST NHA.**

Developing a successful heritage tourism destination requires marketing that reaches desired audiences, sparks interest and results in a visit. “Great marketing helps destinations and sites distinguish themselves from the competition through dynamic images, targeted messages, and engaging content.”<sup>69</sup>

Development of the *Delta Tourism Awareness 5-Year Marketing Plan: 2017-2022* predated designation of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area but sets a precedent for a collaborative marketing plan. The plan's mission, vision, and objectives established a foundation from which the NHA and its

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<sup>69</sup> Cultural Heritage Tourism: Five Steps for Success and Sustainability, Cheryl M. Hargrove, 2017.



partners can build (see chart). A significant outcome of the marketing plan was the creation of a website, [visitcadelta.com](http://visitcadelta.com), to promote the region. Because the plan was created prior to NHA designation, not all of the communities within the NHA boundaries were included. Following designation, a section was added to the website for the NHA, and the logo was revised to identify the National Heritage Area.

With this foundation of experience, the local coordinating entity and its partnership network will collaborate to develop a new five-year marketing plan to brand and promote the state's first National Heritage Area. The marketing plan will be designed to create brand recognition based on the interpretive themes of the NHA (see Chapter 1) through a slate of communications tools to create a compelling, unified look and message. The Visit CA Delta partnership developed several of these tools that can be adapted and expanded, including a logo, website, newsletter, collateral materials, and social media. The marketing plan will include strategies for the development of toolkits and tip sheets to encourage the use of key messaging and the NHA brand. These

## Delta Tourism Awareness 5-Year Marketing Plan: 2017-2022

The marketing plan's mission, vision and objectives provide a foundation for the NHA's marketing plan as summarized:

### **MISSION**

Recognized as a world-class destination filled with human history, cultural richness, and diversity.

### **VISION**

Economy based on agriculture, recreation, tourism, and historic preservation.

### **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

- Increase awareness: place of ecological and cultural importance;
- Establish tracking metrics; and
- Economic impact.

### **PLAN OBJECTIVES**

- Strategic blueprint for development and marketing;
- Respond to consumer needs;
- Support existing and support new resources; and
- Initiate promotions, products, partnerships.

resources will include design guidelines for the appropriate use of branding materials.

The marketing plan will include strategies that have various levels of cost requirements, including no-cost activities, to provide opportunities for destinations and attractions at all levels to participate. All promotions will be based upon findings in the market research to ensure they are reaching target markets. A variety of promotions may include advertising, media campaigns, attendance at travel-trade shows, and other activities. Emphasis will be placed on opportunities to participate in the promotional activities of Visit California including providing story ideas, listings in travel guides and on the state's website. The marketing plan will also include specific strategies to track results from all promotions. The plan will be reviewed each year to evaluate successes and places where campaigns fell short of expectations. Based upon this review, the plan will be revised and updated as needed to ensure it continues to respond to current market trends. (As the NHA management plan was in development, the DPC secured funding for development of the marketing plan.) Participants in the regional tourism network (Strategy 3.1.1), DMOs, and chambers of commerce are partners in developing the marketing plan.

### **STRATEGY 3.1.4 CREATE AND CONSOLIDATE REGIONAL TOURISM INFORMATION FOR TRIP PLANNING.**

Today's travelers have high expectations for accessing information and assistance when planning and taking a trip. Travelers expect to find information in many places – through social media, mobile applications (apps), websites, printed guides and brochures, exhibits, and direct assistance from knowledgeable visitor center hosts. Among the actions the local coordinating entity will take are:

- Establish an easy-to-use system for partners to regularly submit information about events, programs, tours, or other activities that can attract and engage visitors. Regularly update Visit CA Delta's website with current information on destinations, attractions, and activities.
- Create an online map of the NHA that identifies key sites and links visitors to more information. The coordinating entity will evaluate the existing map on Visit CA Delta's website to determine if it can be adapted or if a new map should be created.
- Create and regularly update an app that provides trip planning information.
- Create printed guides and brochures and distribute materials throughout the region.

- Provide training for visitor center hosts to learn about all the region has to offer to visitors.
- Submit road trip itineraries to Visit California for inclusion in Road Trip Republic promotions. Itineraries could be based on those created by the Delta Chambers or could be new tours based on the NHA's themes.

The NPS's planner representing John Muir National Historic Site and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial will facilitate connections between NPS Regional and National NHA Program staff and Delta NHA staff for coordination with the Regional and National NPS web and app teams and advocate for increased presence for the Delta NHA in NPS-branded digital products, including the NPS app. Some local entities, such as the Oakley Chamber of Commerce, are also committed to helping develop these tools.

### **STRATEGY 3.1.5 USE MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA TO GENERATE AWARENESS AND VISITATION.**

Studies show that although use of specific media formats varies by generation, all age groups of travelers use online resources to plan their trips. One study in 2023 found that while Baby Boomers (born mid-1940s-early 1960s) primarily use websites found via a search engine (43 percent) as does Gen X (born mid-1960s to early 1980s) (36 percent). Millennials (born early 1980s to mid-1990s) primarily use Facebook (40 percent). Gen Z (born around 1997 to early 2000s) primarily uses Tik Tok (42 percent) and Instagram (39 percent). Approximately one-quarter of all generations use online content such as news articles and blogs. A smaller number, between 15 and 20 percent, use streaming services such as YouTube, and only 10-14 percent use review websites such as TripAdvisor.<sup>70</sup>

Understanding the wide variety of media and social media outlets and how they can be effectively used for travel promotion will be an ongoing task for the local coordinating entity and its partners. Strategies will be included in the marketing plan to track trends in the use of media and social media and to reach potential visitors through these channels. To support partners in implementing the marketing plan's strategies, the local coordinating entity will create a variety of "how to" toolkits such as a media toolkit that provides templates, examples, and instructions on how to develop messaging and content to attract visitors with broader media and social media coverage.

DMOs, chambers of commerce, and the EBRPD are already regularly using traditional and social media for outreach and have committed to incorporate NHA projects and programs in their messaging.

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<sup>70</sup> State of the American Traveler Survey, Destination Analysts, August 2023.

### **STRATEGY 3.1.6 CREATE BRANDING MERCHANDISE WITH THE NHA LOGO.**

Merchandise featuring the NHA logo will serve two purposes – raising awareness about the NHA and generating revenue to support NHA programs. The local coordinating entity will consult with other NHAs to determine the types of merchandise that are most often purchased by tourists and residents. Based upon this research, the local coordinating entity will create a line of merchandise, using non-federal funds, which could include clothing and various types of souvenirs for sale through its website, at welcome centers, and locations throughout the NHA.

### **STRATEGY 3.1.7 CONSIDER DEVELOPING RECEPTIVE TOUR SERVICES FOR GROUPS.**

As a long-term strategy, the local coordinating entity will consider developing a receptive tour service to facilitate group travel to the region and to provide earned income for the NHA. Receptive tour operators are locally based and have in-depth knowledge of the region's destinations. A receptive tour program can include creating special tour packages for groups and offering the opportunity to go "behind the scenes" to enjoy experiences not otherwise available such as special tours, entertainment, and programs. Partner attractions in the area, such as EBRPD, are interested in exploring this strategy.

### **Objective 3.2 Tourism products based on the NHA's history, culture, and natural resources are easily accessible for visitors to learn about and experience.**

Heritage development is the process of preserving historic, cultural and natural resources, planning for their long-term protection and interpretation, and preparing to receive visitors. Once preservation and protection are addressed, a destination can plan and prepare for visitors. Preservation and conservation of historic, cultural, and natural resources can strengthen a community's sense of place and is essential for developing a successful cultural heritage tourism program.

The places and experiences that visitors seek – known in the tourism industry as "products" – must live up to the branding, messaging, and marketing discussed in Objective 3.1. Product development is described as follows:

"At the heart of cultural heritage tourism is experience engagement – developing authentic and appropriate experiences to enhance the overall appeal for visitors. For cultural heritage tourism, the focus on asset-based or place-based development must ensure authenticity, compatibility, and

sustainability. Placemaking centers on what already exists, and expansion complements the essence – the character – of a community or city. Important to remember in developing any kind of tourism are the key components of a visitor experience: a place to eat, a place to shop, a place to tour, and a place to sleep. These activities, when combined, provide the economic drivers for tourism."<sup>71</sup>

The following strategies, when combined with the objectives and strategies for resource development and enhancement (Chapter 2) and interpretation (Chapter 1) will achieve the goal of tourism product development/heritage development to offer memorable visitor experiences and to generate economic impact for the NHA region.

### **STRATEGY 3.2.1 ADAPT THE DELTA WAYFINDING PLAN TO INCLUDE THE NHA AND INSTALL SIGNAGE, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO PROMOTE THE NHA.**

Consistently placed, branded wayfinding signs in the NHA can guide visitors to NHA sites and interpretive opportunities while traveling in the Delta. In 2018, the Delta Marketing Task Force, Delta Conservancy, Delta Protection Commission and Delta Stewardship Council issued a signage plan. The plan included an assessment of current signage locations and conditions. Plans were developed for a variety of sign types including welcome, wayfinding, place marker, and interpretive panels. Detailed design guidelines and guidance to select contractors was also included. Because the signage plan was developed prior to NHA designation, signage designs do not include the NHA. However, the plan can be adapted to include the NHA prior to implementation. Wayfinding signage design will be coordinated with designs for interpretive signage discussed in Chapter 1. This strategy will fulfill the Congressional mandate to “Ensure that clear, consistent, and appropriate signs identifying points of public access and sites of interest are posted throughout the NHA.” The NPS’s planner representing John Muir National Historic Site and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial and EBRPD staff will provide advice, examples, and informational resources on development of a sign inventory and sign plan.

### **STRATEGY 3.2.2 CREATE ½-DAY, 1-DAY AND MULTI-DAY TOURS AND THEMATIC TOURS.**

Connecting historic sites, recreational and nature-based offerings, and cultural resources to create multi-day and multi-faceted visitor experiences is an important benefit for NHA partners. Attractions may be grouped to reflect the

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<sup>71</sup> *Cultural Heritage Tourism: Five Steps for Success and Sustainability*, Cheryl M. Hargrove, American Association for State and Local History, Rowan & Littlefield Publishing, 2017.

NHA's themes and to appeal to a variety of interests, such as historical topics, traditional arts or music, natural landmarks, and agriculture, and to enjoy local foods and restaurants.

There are many supporting plans to develop tours among many existing and planned regional trail systems throughout the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and Carquinez Strait. These trail systems help link the region's recreational, cultural, historical, and natural resource sites to one another, and help connect the region to outside communities. (See resource inventory, Appendix F, for details on trails.)

Additionally, during the NHA management planning process, the DPC staff drafted a set of tour concepts that identify places of interest and would help to organize travel through the Delta. Tour themes include agriculture; art and literature; Asian and Pacific Islander; gearhead; Indigenous; natural resources; Prohibition; railroad; recreation; river; Southern European; sports; and World War II.

The many trails in the region and the draft set of tour concepts will provide a foundation for further development of tour experiences that can fit a traveler's schedule, whether for ½-day, 1-day, or a multi-day tour. Tours can include options for driving and cycling to travel from site to site as well as by boat through the Delta's water routes.

As part of the NHA tour development process, partners will explore opportunities in two areas – the first opportunity addresses a new plan, and the second considers reviving a previously successful tour route.

1. Coordinate with the Great Delta Trail to develop visitor experiences. In 2006, the DPC was directed by the California State Legislature to develop the Great California Delta Trail System to increase access to the Delta's natural resources for outdoor recreation. The *Great California Delta Trail Master Plan (2022)* provides a framework for local and state agencies as they develop trails that will eventually link the San Francisco Bay Trail system and the planned Sacramento River trails in Yolo and Sacramento counties. The Delta Trail will also link to existing park and recreational facilities on land and water trail systems throughout the Delta. The directive for the Great California Delta Trail is to include routes for bicycling and hiking, with interconnections to other land and water trail systems, recreational facilities, and public transportation. Water trails will provide continuity in places where land trails are not feasible. Connecting plans for the Great California Delta Trail with the development of tours through the NHA will enhance both efforts and engage numerous

partners throughout the Delta. The management of both programs through the DPC further enables effective partnering of these programs.

2. Reactivate the Delta Farm and Winery Trail to support agritourism.

The Delta presents opportunities for connecting visitors to the rich agricultural resources through agritourism, which includes u-pick operations, farm stands, wine and spirits tasting, restaurants, farm stays, and event facilities. Agritourism can be mutually beneficial with trail network development. The *Economic Sustainability Plan 2020 Recreation and Tourism* update found that the number of farms with direct sales operations have increased throughout the Delta since 2002, including farm stands and u-pick sites. The local coordinating entity will work with partners to reactivate the Delta Farm and Winery Trail with updates to inform visitors of sites that can be toured as well as the availability of nearby visitor services.

### Visitor Readiness

- Open at least 3 days a week - including one weekend day
- Staffed or committed volunteers
- Programs and guided tours offered
- Professionally designed exhibits, interpretive signs
- Wayfinding signage
- ADA compliant
- Public parking
- Restrooms
- Website or social media information for visitors

### **STRATEGY 3.2.3 DEVELOP HISTORY-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES AND CONNECT EXPERIENCES TO RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.**

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, planning for sustainable tourism encompasses heritage tourism and geotourism. Travelers may often arrive at a destination with a primary purpose, such as water recreation, hiking, or birdwatching, and also have interests in learning more about an area's history by visiting historic sites and museums or attending a cultural event. Research has shown that the Delta is primarily recognized as a recreational destination for water-based activities. The area's cultural and heritage attractions and communities are not as well recognized. The local coordinating entity will work with partners to further develop the stories and interpretation of these places

through exhibits, tours, and programs and to market these activities to visitors who are coming for recreational purposes. The local coordinating entity will also support existing history-focused activities through grants, promotions, and technical assistance. The local coordinating entity will work with outfitters and outdoor attractions to place information including brochures, kiosks, interpretive panels, and other information at a variety of local businesses to inform visitors of the cultural and heritage focused activities that can be enjoyed in the region. The development of the Pacific Flyway Center offers an example of this opportunity. As the center opens in phases and attracts area residents and visitors, the local coordinating entity can work with Center staff to place information about the NHA at the site by providing brochures or an information kiosk. Another partner with significant capacity in this area is EBRPD, who has committed to working with DPC staff and NHA partners, and to incorporating the NHA into existing interpretive and recreational programming.

### **STRATEGY 3.2.4 WORK WITH HISTORIC AND CULTURAL SITES TO INCREASE ACCESS.**

Many of the historic and cultural sites in the NHA are operated by small organizations with limited staff or are managed by volunteers. As such, many are open on a limited basis or require an appointment. A 2023 survey of Delta residents found only 2.8% were involved with a historical society or arts-based organization.<sup>72</sup> The local coordinating entity will investigate the reasons for lack of volunteerism and identify steps to attract more volunteers to historic and cultural sites. The local coordinating entity will work with these sites, such as the Clarksburg Schoolhouse, Locke Historic District, Isleton Museum, Dutra Museum of Dredging, and the Antioch Historical Museum, providing technical assistance and potentially grant funding to assist them in becoming visitor ready (see chart for description of visitor readiness). Special focus will be on assisting sites to be open to welcome visitors who are in the Delta for recreational activities (Strategy 3.2.3). As water-based and other recreational activities occur during the day, a special effort will be made to open historic and cultural sites on selected evenings when there is an event (such as the Courtland Pear Fair or Rio Vista Bass Derby) that attracts large numbers of visitors to attract these visitors. The NPS's Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail staff will collaborate with NHA and partner staff to jointly look for opportunities to build partnerships and

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<sup>72</sup> *Delta Residents Survey Summary Report*, October 2023, Prepared by a research team from the Delta Stewardship Council, University of California Davis, University of California Berkeley, and Oregon State University. An Advisory Committee included representatives from Sacramento State University (Environmental Studies), San Francisco Estuary Partnership, Tufts University, Delta Conservancy, Rural Community Assistance Partnership, Delta Protection Commission, River Delta Consulting, Valley Vision, UC Merced (Agriculture Economics), NOAA Fisheries Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Restore the Delta, and Public Health Advocates.



encourage volunteerism. Establishing a passport program, especially one linked to the NPS passport program, will provide publicity and incentive to visit sites. A number of local organizations, businesses, and attractions are also interested in helping increase access.

### **STRATEGY 3.2.5 CREATE ORIENTATION EXHIBITS FOR WELCOME CENTERS AND OTHER LOCATIONS.**

Because tourists often travel without a clearly defined schedule, there is a great opportunity to generate visitation throughout the NHA by making sure they know what the area offers. The placement of exhibits and displays can attract attention and encourage visitors to explore the area. A uniform design using the NHA logo will create brand awareness. Options for orientation materials can include:

- **Front desk or lobby displays** – These small exhibits can include pictures, QR codes, and pockets to place brochures.
- **Table tents** – These small, stand-up pieces can be printed in mass quantities and placed on tables in hotels which offer a continental breakfast for their guests. The table tents would include a QR code to scan for more information.
- **Posters and banners** – These can be created for use at selected locations, such as visitor centers, to publicize attractions or special events, including festivals or tours.

As the management plan was nearing completion, the Downtown Brentwood Coalition announced the purchase of a historic building for its offices. Additionally, the building may serve as a visitor center, creating an opportunity for the local coordinating entity to build a partnership to share information about the entire region at this location. Locations with similar opportunities include the Isleton Museum, Clarksburg Schoolhouse, Benecia Visitor Center, Locke Boarding House Museum managed by California State Parks, and Fairfield Welcome Center, an official state welcome center located off Highway 12 in Solano County (in the Jelly Belly Candy Company factory building). Finally, DMOs and chambers of commerce have also expressed interest in helping orient visitors.

### **Objective 3.3 The NHA and partners will support recreational resources and educate residents and visitors to enjoy recreational activities safely and responsibly.**

As the local coordinating entity informs visitors and residents about recreational opportunities, the coordinating entity and its partners will also encourage safe and responsible enjoyment of the Delta's water and land-based resources. The

*Economic and Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: Recreation and Tourism Chapter Update, 2020 (ESP: 2020)* will provide guidance to implement the strategies discussed below as well as other relevant activities. The report notes that although Delta-specific studies on recreation use have not been conducted, using available data from other sources provides some insights into the Delta's recreation market (numbers are approximate per year using pre-pandemic data):

- Eight million resource-related uses (boating, fishing)
- Two million urban parks-related (golf, picnic, turf sports)
- Two million right-of-way-related (bicycling, driving)

A 2023 survey also found that 65.7% of Delta residents engage in land-based recreational activities, 39.1% participate in water-based recreation, 35.5% participate in wildlife viewing/birding, and 28.1% participate in fishing or hunting.<sup>73</sup>

The Delta Protection Commission's *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan* includes objectives and strategies for recreation and tourism. As the coordinating entity for the NHA, the DPC will incorporate these *Vision 2030* strategies into its work for the NHA. Following are the strategies from that plan, revised to reflect the format of NHA strategies in this management plan.

### **STRATEGY 3.3.1 PARTNER WITH PUBLIC AGENCIES AND PRIVATE ENTITIES TO INCREASE AND EXPAND RECREATION AND TOURISM IN THE DELTA.**

The NHA resource inventory includes information on recreation resources and will be regularly updated to ensure accuracy and usefulness. In addition to maintaining a resource inventory, the local coordinating entity and its partners will respond to needs outlined in the ESP 2020 to develop and maintain recreation resources by providing technical assistance and, as appropriate, grant funding. This work will also include addressing strategies included in the *Great California Delta Trail Master Plan* by supporting collaborative efforts. The NPS's John Muir National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail planners will collaborate with NHA and partner staff to promote and support development of recreational trail routes/paths which overlap with NPS-led or connected trails.

An important outcome of this strategy will be directing visitors and residents to enjoy recreational opportunities on public lands and at private recreation facilities that will protect private lands from unauthorized recreational uses. As

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<sup>73</sup> Delta Residents Survey Summary Report, October 2023.

with increasing access to historic and cultural sites, establishment of a passport program will provide publicity and incentive for visiting natural and recreational sites.

Two opportunities for partnership with the National Park Service are:

- **NPS Junior Ranger “Let’s Go Fishing!” program and badge** - [Junior Ranger Let's Go Fishing! - Fish & Fishing \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#) (See Chapter 1, Strategy 1.1.2)
- **Fish & Feathers Internship Program** - As an NPS-partner and NHA Coordinating Entity, the DPC may explore eligibility for the Environment for the Americas, Fish & Feathers internship program: [Fish & Feathers Internship Landing Page - Environment for the Americas \(environmentamericas.org\)](#)

### **STRATEGY 3.3.2 PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE DELTA-WIDE COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION ON BOATING, BOATING SAFETY, AND RELATED PROGRAMS.**

There are many agencies and organizations that prepare materials and offer training on boating safety including the Coast Guard, marine insurance companies, local boating providers, and the California State Parks' Division of Boating and Waterways. In recognition of these existing resources, the NHA's Heritage Development and Tourism Task Force determined that the local coordinating entity should not create an additional program and instead will work with these partners to distribute materials and to promote educational resources. With water access at many of the park and shoreline units in the NHA, EBRPD will collaborate with the NHA on promoting boating safety.

### **STRATEGY 3.3.3 COORDINATE WITH THE GREAT DELTA TRAIL TO DEVELOP AND DISTRIBUTE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON BICYCLE SAFETY.**

Although the Delta is a scenic, primarily rural area, cycling is difficult and often dangerous due to the roadways on levees that lack wide shoulders or bike lanes. The local coordinating entity will work with partners through the Great Delta Trail to identify safe routes and to develop and distribute educational materials and tour apps for cyclists. Information will be posted on partner websites, and printed materials will be available at welcome centers as well as restaurants, campgrounds, bike shops, libraries, and other tourism attractions. As with boating safety, above, the EBRPD's recreational focus makes it an Ideal partner to help promote bicycle safety.

Objective 3.4 A network of tourism partners will support development of appropriate tourism infrastructure and facilitate the engagement of residents, cultural groups, and businesses toward the development of a tourism industry that remains sensitive to the region's rural communities, traditional economies, and natural resources.

Actions to support sustainable tourism for the NHA will support asset-based cultural and heritage development, offer recreational activities that preserve resources, convey the region's unique identity, and support local businesses.

To achieve this goal, the local coordinating entity and its tourism partners will also support actions to develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure to make the region visitor ready. A challenge to this objective is the recognition that the NHA and its partners do not control all aspects of the visitor experience; therefore, it will be essential to build credibility as an organization that acts as a catalyst to influence decision makers at the local, state, and federal levels.

#### **STRATEGY 3.4.1 COMMUNICATE THE NHA'S GOAL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND FACILITATE PARTNER ADOPTION OF STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED OUTCOMES.**

The local coordinating entity will serve in a leadership role to research issues related to the management plan and its annual workplan to develop coordinated messages for sustainable tourism development. The local coordinating entity will work with partners to use this messaging to regularly update local, state, and federal elected officials and their staff. The local coordinating entity will track measurable results from this strategy by gathering information from partners on the use of messaging. Tracking results will allow the local coordinating entity to analyze the success of outreach and the effectiveness of messaging. NHA leaders will also participate in activities such as the Alliance of National Heritage Area's annual day on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. meeting with federal elected officials and will schedule regular meetings with staff members of federally elected officials in their California offices.

#### **STRATEGY 3.4.2 COMMUNICATE IDENTIFIED NEEDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE (COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORTATION, LODGING, ETC.) TO THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE.**

The California State Legislature is a bicameral body including the lower house – the California State Assembly – and the upper house – the California State

Senate. The Assembly has 80 members, and the Senate has 40 members. The Legislature is a full-time institution, one of only ten in the country. The Legislature has met in the state capital of Sacramento since 1854. The Legislature is responsible for creating the state's budget, which includes allocating funds for infrastructure needs that are important to the Delta.

The local coordinating entity and its partners will establish effective working relationships with members of the California Legislature, most importantly with those representing communities in the NHA. Currently there are two ex officio members of the Delta Protection Commission representing the Senate and the Assembly. NHA leaders and partners will attend legislative committee meetings when legislation relevant to infrastructure funding or resource policies is being discussed. A wide range of issues may be monitored such as transportation plans affecting visitor traffic, commuter, and agricultural routes; communications infrastructure plans; financial incentives for business development such as lodging or restaurants; and funding for historic preservation, conservation, or cultural preservation.

The local coordinating entity will educate and inform partners throughout the region of relevant legislation and encourage partners to work with their legislators to support sustainable tourism development. Other partners whose missions align have also committed to help carry messaging.

### **STRATEGY 3.4.3 CONSIDER ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ZONE STATUS.**

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 established California Opportunity Zones as a mechanism to provide tax incentives for investment in designated census tracts. Investments made by individuals through special funds in these zones would be allowed to defer or eliminate federal taxes on capital gains.

The goal of place-based development is explained by the California and Community and Place-Based Solutions state agency managing the program:

Place-based economic development strategies are initiatives to encourage economic and community development activity in defined geographic areas. Many communities have started emphasizing place-based strategies to strengthen hyperlocal activities around physical places, economic conditions, and social infrastructure. Place-based economic development strategies include a variety of approaches to incentivize investment in disadvantaged communities, including funding for infrastructure and public facilities, job creation and workforce development, affordable and workforce housing, and more.

Within the NHA, an area from Antioch up to Rio Vista and Isleton is already an opportunity zone. The local coordinating entity will work with partners to explore

additional opportunities to expand the program to more communities within the region.



*Clarksburg's school was integrated at a time when it was not the norm - 1921. Friends of the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse - a local NHA partner - are renovating the schoolhouse and highlighting its history. (Friends of the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse).*

## Chapter 4 – Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network

### Introduction

All successful NHAs demonstrate a strong network of partners. Generally, the NHA local coordinating entity is positioned at the hub of this network, facilitating collaboration among organizations under a wide umbrella that encompasses various interests and missions. A healthy partnership network comprised of public and private entities enables a region to carry out the vision established through the management planning process, including the NHA's legislated mandates. With this in mind, the Advisory Committee adopted Goal 4:

*Connect and support collaboration among governmental and non-governmental partners, businesses, and residents to establish a brand that readily identifies the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA and increases public awareness.*

Collaboration is mandated by the NHA's designating legislation. The partnership network objectives and strategies described in this chapter address legislative sections 6001 (c)(2)(A), (B), (C)(vi), and (D).

## Analysis of Partnership Opportunities

Even before management planning began, the Delta Leadership Program, a partnership between the DPC and the Delta Regional Foundation, began to explore what makes NHA partnerships successful. Participants in the 2020 program conducted stakeholder interviews about existing NHA partnerships and prepared a report on best practices and recommendations. Interviews with representatives from Muscle Shoals (Alabama), Silos and Smokestacks (Iowa), Abraham Lincoln (Illinois), and Northern Rio Grande (New Mexico) gathered information on identifying partners, incentivizing their engagement with the NHA, communications strategies, challenges, and partner contributions to the NHA. The PointHDC consultant team built on the outcomes of that project and shared a variety of NHA best practices in planning meetings with the Advisory Committee, task groups, the DPC staff, and the public.

## The Partnership Network

The DPC, a state agency formed in 1992, worked with a wide range of partners before NHA designation in 2019. Prior to designation, the DPC staff was not focused on establishing a partnership network with NHA interests in mind, although the existing membership of the DPC provided a strong starting point, with representation from counties, water agencies, state agencies, and state legislators. The development of a broader NHA partnership network was further slowed by the pandemic, with its strict limitations on in-person meetings. The DPC created the Advisory Committee in early 2020. This broadly representative group never had the opportunity to work together before the pandemic limited in-person collaboration. Over the course of management planning, the network began to coalesce through staff outreach as well as meetings with the public, task groups, and the Advisory Committee; consultant site visits; and stakeholder interviews. In 2023, the network included governmental entities, businesses, and organizations related to heritage tourism and marketing, historic preservation, land use and conservation, recreation, interpretation, education, cultural traditions and the arts, and economic development. A brief description of the



network follows, and it is expected that the network will continue to grow and evolve. Partnerships are appended to this report (see Appendix G).

## The Coordinating Entity

Designating legislation names the DPC as the local coordinating entity for the NHA. The DPC has three separate elements responsible for the NHA – the 15-member Delta Protection Commission, the commission staff, and the Advisory Committee. The NHA is one of several programs within the state agency. The local coordinating entity's composition and responsibilities are described in more detail in the *Key Planning Partners* section in the *Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan* and in Chapter 5, the business plan.

## National Partners

Several public and private partners that operate on a national scale are currently engaged with the NHA.

Although many federal agencies are involved in the use and stewardship of the Delta, presenting possible partnership opportunities for the future, only agencies under the Department of the Interior and the Department of the Army are identified as current partners.

### **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

As noted in the description of planning partners in the *Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan*, the National Park Service, under the Department of the Interior, is the lead federal agency associated with NHAs. As the management plan was developed, NHA worked with the Washington DC NHA office and two regional offices, the NPS Intermountain Regional Office for regions 6, 7, and 8, and the NPS Pacific–West Regional Office for regions 8, 9, 10, and 12. Heritage Partnership Program funding appropriated by Congress for NHAs is distributed through a cooperative agreement by the NPS regional offices, which also provide technical assistance.

Two NPS units are within the NHA's boundary – Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial and John Muir National Historic Site. Administration for both units and two others in Contra Costa County is managed by one Superintendent and their staff, with headquarters currently in Richmond, California. With its historic ships and interpretive and recreational focus on water, nearby San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is also a potential NHA partner. In addition, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and the Pony Express National Historic Trail pass through the NHA. Individual park units and trails offer on-the-ground engagement through technical assistance, staff engagement on

the Advisory Committee, and opportunities for joint interpretation, programming, tourism, and promotion.

As noted previously, the planner representing John Muir National Historic Site and Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial sat on the Advisory Committee as an ex officio member and participated in multiple management planning task groups. NPS representatives from the local national park units will continue to participate during implementation of the management plan as staff are available and according to their expertise. John Muir National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail have stated their intention to partnering on a range of strategies, as detailed in the letters of commitment from the national park units (see Appendix L). Planned participation includes:

- Interpretive planning and projects
- Engagement with California Native American Tribes
- Heritage tourism activities including wayfinding, site access, recreation, and promotion
- Technical assistance with interpretation, grants, resource stewardship, heritage tourism, community development, and organizational development

## **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

The NHA includes two units of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and a portion of the San Pablo National Wildlife Bay. Like NPS, USFWS is a federal agency under the Department of the Interior. Partnership opportunities may include technical assistance, citizen-science projects, interpretation, and promotion.

## **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), under the Department of the Army, plays a role in managing the Delta's levees along with the Department of Water Resources and the Reclamation Districts. The USACE's Bay Model Visitor Center in Sausalito, outside the NHA boundary, is built around a working hydraulic model of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta System built at a 1:1000 scale. This one-of-a-kind model presents important interpretive partnership opportunities for the NHA.

## **ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS**

The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) is a 501(c)(6) membership organization that includes National Heritage Areas designated by Congress, as well as affiliated partner organizations such as heritage areas pursuing Congressional designation. ANHA promotes interests related to all NHAs,

educates constituencies about the NHA program, facilitates links across NHAs, and provides a platform for sharing best practices. Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA has been a member organization since 2019.

## Tribal Partners

Twenty-two Tribes were identified as having ancestral ties to the region. As mentioned previously, many California Tribes and communities continue their millennia-old relationship with the Delta through living traditions, stewardship opportunities, and a variety of other cultural and conservation initiatives. Tribal engagement efforts are described in the *Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan* and detailed in Appendix D. Affiliated Tribes are important partners in education and conservation programs focused on cultural traditions and natural resources, as described in Chapter 2, Objective 2.4.

## State Partners

The Delta has long been an important water and agricultural resource in California, resulting in the involvement of many state agencies in planning for and managing the region. The Delta Stewardship Council, the Delta Conservancy, and the DPC are focused solely on the Delta. The programmatic and jurisdictional directives of multiple state agencies have produced an unusual number of regional planning documents, causing a certain amount of confusion for the public, but also providing many implementation and partnership opportunities.

## THE DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The Delta Stewardship Council is tasked with creating, updating, and overseeing implementation of *The Delta Plan*, a comprehensive plan to guide how multiple federal, state, and local agencies manage the Delta's water and environmental resources. The Delta Stewardship Council houses the Delta Science Program that provides and synthesizes information to facilitate water and environmental decision-making in the Delta.

Although there is some overlap in focal areas for the Delta Stewardship Council, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, and the DPC, the Delta Stewardship Council's oversight role encourages cooperation and avoids duplication of efforts through an organizational structure that keeps leadership of the three agencies in regular communication. Specific opportunities for NHA partnership with the Delta Science Program include the development of the collaboratory described in Chapter 2 (Strategy 2.2.4) and the longitudinal implementation of the *Delta Residents Survey* (Strategy 4.2.5).

## **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) owns and manages eight wildlife areas in the NHA. Each of these properties offers the public opportunities to fish, hunt, experience nature, and watch wildlife. As a state agency and public land manager, CDFW has the potential to partner on recreation and conservation projects and programs.

## **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION, CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

Nine park units located across the region conserve and interpret natural and historical resources that provide support to the NHA's significance. In addition, California State Parks oversees boater safety education for the entire state. As a sister state agency that manages publicly accessible properties for visitor recreation and education, California State Parks is a key partner. Like NPS, the agency can provide expert technical assistance to organizations in the NHA network. The DPC can partner with or contract with California State Parks to help carry out a wide range of projects and programs.

## **OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION (OHP)**

Under California State Parks, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) manages federally and state-mandated historic preservation programs that help to identify, evaluate, and protect historic properties and districts in California. With the wide range of activities the organization manages, OHP is a key NHA partner, especially since historic preservation was identified during planning as one of the areas in which the NHA can make a substantial impact. OHP is an important source for information and training and recognizes best practices and outstanding achievements through the Governor's Historic Preservation Awards. In addition, OHP supports local governments and communities through programs like Main Street America, Certified Local Governments, and by providing resources for local preservation commissions. Compliance and architectural review are OHP responsibilities that will be important for NHA-funded grant projects. OHP also manages tax incentive programs for preservation projects, contributing to community revitalization and economic development. Finally, OHP oversees nominations to the California Register of Historical Resources, California Historical Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and the National Register of Historic Places and provides electronic access to these databases.

## **DIVISION OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS**

Also under California State Parks, the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) is the expert in recreational boating-related matters. This includes public access, safety and education, marine law enforcement, licensing, and consumer and environmental protection. DBW offers boater education opportunities and grants to support boater education to nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, and local agencies. Many of the activities in which DWB is engaged align with the NHA's goals and proposed activities. DWB is involved in the fight against several aquatic invasive species through education, cleanups, and inspections. Infrastructurally, DWB assists with boat launches and erosion control. The agency has also identified recreational resources and potential boating trail routes, along with guides for baters to explore several of the state's rivers.

## **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, CALTRANS**

As the state agency with responsibility for much of the transportation infrastructure in the NHA, Caltrans is an important partner. Signage, traffic, road conditions and maintenance, ferries, safe routes for the addition of bike trails on existing roadways, and visitor circulation are all issues in the NHA that fall within the state transportation department's expertise. Similar to the way in which Visit California does not view the NHA as a single region, the NHA falls within three separate Caltrans regions – 3, 4, and 10 – each of which has a separate regional transportation plan. Caltrans has grant programs that address a number of areas, including sustainable transportation planning, cleanup and beautification grants, and access to federal transportation funding sources.

## **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

The Delta, Suisun Marsh, and Carquinez Strait form a landscape oriented around water. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR's) programs include infrastructure and engineering, water quality and supply, climate change and environmental science, and recreation. As with other state agencies, there are many areas in which the local coordinating entity and DWR can collaborate. One potential area for collaboration is the development of additional points of water access, as lack of access is an issue raised during public meetings.

## **SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA CONSERVANCY**

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Delta Conservancy) is focused on ecosystem restoration in the Delta and cooperates with local communities, organizations, and governmental entities to care for the region's natural resources, economy, and agriculture. From invasive species symposiums to waterway cleanups, the Delta Conservancy is leading many programs that

the NHA local coordinating entity can support and promote and invite NHA partners to participate. Critically, the Delta Conservancy manages several grant programs that align with the NHA's overarching goals. The DPC's grant program may be designed in part to complement and amplify the impact of the Delta Conservancy's grants, which primarily support capital projects. Existing Delta Conservancy grant programs, funded through a variety of state initiatives, are:

- **Ecosystem Restoration and Water Quality** – focuses on ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects.
- **Climate, Access, and Resources** – one-time allocation for projects that support climate resilience, community access, and natural resource protection.
- **Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration** – supporting restoration, conservation, and climate resilience for wetlands.
- **Community Enhancement Grant Program** – offers funding for projects in recreation and tourism, historic and cultural preservation, and environmental education.



Big Break Regional Shoreline Park is the largest interpretive facility in the NHA (Holly Heyser/Delta Protection Commission).

## VISIT CALIFORNIA, THE CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF TOURISM

This state agency, described in detail in Chapter 3, *Supporting Tourism and Economic Development*, is a crucial partner for success in achieving Goal 3, focused on supporting sustainable tourism. As discussed in Chapter 3, this partnership is critical to the success of the NHA. There should be continued efforts to work with Visit California to raise the level of importance of marketing and promotion of the NHA to the benefit of the Delta and the state.

## Regional Partners

In addition to state and national partners, several other partners have a regional footprint in the NHA. Some are public entities; others are nonprofit organizations.

### EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is the largest urban regional park district in the nation in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. There are nine EBRPD units within the NHA boundary:

- Antioch/Oakley Shoreline
- Bay Point Regional Shoreline

- Big Break Regional Shoreline
- Browns Island
- Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline
- Crockett Hills Regional Park
- Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline
- San Pablo Bay Shoreline
- Waterbird Regional Preserve

All parks offer recreational and interpretive programmatic partnership opportunities. Moreover, Big Break is the largest interpretive facility in the NHA, and its exhibits highlight the environment, history, and culture in the Delta and along the Carquinez Strait. The facility contains extensive interpretation concerning the past, present, and future of California's water (theme 1), and the Delta's natural ecosystem (theme 2), as well as touching upon the remaining themes about Native Americans, agriculture, and the region's cultural history. The Delta Discovery Experience, an outdoor interactive map of the Delta, is an excellent interpretive resource for understanding the NHA and the way in which water defines the landscape.

As noted in the letter of commitment provided by EBRPD, the mission of the NHA aligns closely with its own (see Appendix L). A representative of EBRPD served as an ex officio member of the Advisory Committee and participated in multiple management planning task groups. During implementation, EBRPD will be a major partner in interpretation, resource conservation, tourism, recreation, and capacity building within the larger partnership network. EBRPD has committed to:

- Maintain representation on pertinent committees.
- Provide meeting facilities and resources (Big Break Visitor Center at the Delta, virtual capabilities).
- Provide District staff and resources to assist in developing and implementing pertinent aspects of the SSDNHA management plans, including field staff for public, school and agency training and programming.
- Include NHA branding and information on appropriate informational and interpretive material (signage, brochures, website).
- Incorporate NHA into existing District interpretive and recreational programming, including program collaboration with NHA staff and partners. Provide letters of support and other for appropriate NHA initiatives (grants, proposals, collaborations, funding, legislation).

These commitments touch upon all goals and nearly every objective in the management plan. Specific actions are included in the EBRPD letter of commitment.



## HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERS

Several colleges and universities are located within a short distance of the NHA, including California State University (CSU) in Sacramento and Stanislaus, the University of California (UC) in Davis and Merced, and the University of the Pacific in Stockton. CSU Sacramento is home to the Center for California Studies, and many of the institutions have contributed to environmental and historical knowledge of the Delta.

The project that resulted in the report *Delta Narratives: Saving the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*<sup>74</sup> provides an instructive example of the intersection of the NHA and educational initiatives. The project was led by the Center for California Studies (CSU Sacramento), and included scholars from CSU Stanislaus, UC Merced, and University of the Pacific, as well as the Center for Sacramento History, Haggin Museum, San Joaquin County Historical Society, and other historical societies and museums. Among the key recommendations in the report that are incorporated into the NHA management plan are the development of a central clearinghouse of Delta-related information (see 4.3.2), interpretive signage (see 1.2.2), and integrating Delta stories into primary, secondary, and college curricula (see 4.2.4). (A Delta Narrative Curriculum for fourth grade grew out of the Delta Narratives project.)

## OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Many other state and regional agencies and organizations were identified in the planning process as having the opportunity to play important roles in the implementation of projects and programs in the NHA. These include the California State Archives, the California State Library, the California Arts Council, and the California Preservation Foundation. As the NHA partnership network continues to grow, these and other organizations present a range of partnership opportunities.

### Local Partners

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES

As noted in Chapter 2, *Stewarding the Delta's Resources*, the NHA includes five counties, 12 incorporated cities, and 19 unincorporated communities. Local government, communities, historic downtowns, and the businesses that keep them vital, are essential to the NHA network.

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<sup>74</sup> Delta Protection Commission, *Delta Narratives: Saving the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta*, prepared by the Center for California Studies, California State University, Sacramento (West Sacramento: Delta Protection Commission, 2015).

Local governmental entities generally have organizational and economic capacity, and many have comprehensive plans that include elements of heritage development. The composition of the DPC, which includes city representatives and supervisors from all counties in the NHA, provides a strong connection between the NHA and many of the region's local governments. Preservation commissions, parks and recreation, and economic development are among the local governmental divisions that have the potential to collaborate on projects and programs in the NHA. In addition, the school districts in and near the NHA are potential partners for field trips to explore the Delta's natural and historical resources.

In the NHA, many towns currently have synergy and established track records in community development. The historic downtowns in the Delta have both a sense of place and historic resources to build on, and there are many examples of this being done successfully – the Mei Wah Beer Room in a rehabilitated Chinese tong building in Isleton is one such example, and the Walnut Grove Iron Works located in the historic Imperial Theater is another. The Community Action Plans created by several of the Delta legacy communities in cooperation with the DPC and the Delta Conservancy to address a range of activities to improve the economy and quality of life are also successful community development initiatives.

Three communities in the NHA are part of larger programs that emphasize place-based economic development tied to historic preservation, the arts, and heritage tourism. Benicia and Oakley are Main Street communities, and Benicia and Vallejo are designated Certified Local Governments (CLGs). Main Street communities and CLGs are part of national programs that are managed through state coordinators and provide access to technical assistance and grants. Building on these programs and expanding them to other communities will help the NHA to have a significant impact throughout the region.

### **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS – CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, RECREATIONAL, ENVIRONMENTAL**

Local nonprofit organizations that support cultural and natural resources help give NHAs their vibrancy and regional identity. There are many such organizations active in the NHA, and their increasing knowledge of and interaction with one another over the course of management planning is evidence that the network is beginning to coalesce. These include museums, interpretive centers, and historical societies, many of which are described in chapters 1 and 2. In addition, there are a variety of other nonprofit, civic, and special interest organizations focused on culture, arts, recreation, and the environment. For example, the Friends of the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse are

active in historic preservation and interpretation. The Delta Legacy Communities works to protect and promote the Delta's unique qualities in 11 legacy communities. Several organizations celebrate and conserve cultural traditions, including the Delta Education Cultural Society and Little Manila Rising. Restore the Delta is actively engaged in environmental issues. Appendix F provides additional information on these organizations.

## **BUSINESSES AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS**

Local businesses tied to a region's heritage or its recreation and tourism industry reflect the NHA's authenticity and contribute to its economic impact. In the Delta, there are several types of businesses that will make strong partners as the NHA continues to develop, including agriculture and agritourism businesses, local restaurants, and marinas. Each of the communities have chambers of commerce which are instrumental in promoting tourism and serving as a vehicle to help connect and communicate with local businesses. In addition, county farm bureaus work to promote the economic, social, and political interests of farmers and ranchers, and also to provide educational opportunities. The participation of the chambers and farm bureaus will compound the collaborative impact of the NHA, as they have long experience in effectively engaging their constituencies.

## **Partnership Objectives**

The objectives and accompanying strategies below outline a range of ways in which DPC, the local coordinating entity, will collaborate with the network of heritage partners. Participation anticipated by some partners is described in these pages, while additional commitments may be found in the appendices that contain the partnership network (G), the implementation plan (J), and letters of commitment (L).

### **4.1 Establish and expand the partnership network through proactive leadership and effective collaboration.**

The strength and engagement of the partnership network is critical to the success of the NHA. NHA staff and the Advisory Committee can play a critical role in identifying and engaging partners, supporting the growth of capacity of partner organizations, and facilitating collaboration at the local, state, and national levels.

Through the goals and strategies in this plan, the partnership network will continue to evolve, growing from a relatively loose network of organizations in a variety of heritage-related fields to a unified coalition that will carry out the

mission and achieve the regional vision that guides the NHA. The network will provide a platform for communication and collaborative action, thereby increasing overall effectiveness and offering strength in numbers, especially for smaller organizations.

#### **4.1.1 CONDUCT PARTNER GATHERINGS, ENABLING ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND FOSTERING PARTICIPATION IN NETWORKING AND COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES.**

The local coordinating entity will build on the role of convener that was established during the management planning process to bring together partners with related interests to implement projects and programs across the NHA network. Convening and connecting partners through interest group meetings, sharing information, and catalyzing collaborative projects and programs will not only help accomplish the goals set forth in the management plan, but will help strengthen and grow the partnership network, resulting in the NHA's long-term sustainability. The local coordinating entity will play a leadership role in this area, as the premier organization with a regional reach in historic preservation, cultural conservation, tourism, and community revitalization.

During the planning process, much of which was conducted virtually due to the pandemic, partners expressed the importance of in-person gatherings for networking and building relationships. The local coordinating entity can organize and convene in-person meetings, informational sessions, and training workshops. EBRPD has not only committed to participation on multiple committees, but also to providing meeting facilities and resources. The EBRPD's Big Break Visitor Center has accessible meeting space with virtual capabilities.

Significant advances in software and online web platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic have made virtual communication an accepted tool for doing business. While virtual interactions may not replicate all the advantages of in-person meetings, they offer the benefit of increasing participation by reducing the need for extensive travel. Virtual communication will remain a valuable tool for convening partners.

#### **4.1.2 USE THE DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION'S POSITION AS A GOVERNMENT AGENCY TO FACILITATE ORGANIZATIONAL CONNECTION AT VARIOUS LEVELS.**

As a state agency, the DPC is well-positioned to help connect organizations across community, state, and federal levels. There is a wide array of state and federal agencies invested in the Delta. However, for smaller, community-based organizations, understanding the roles and accessing the opportunities state and federal agencies provide can be confusing at best and challenging at

worst. The DPC's detailed understanding of state government, well-established connections at all levels, and successful track-record working in the Delta make the local coordinating entity an effective facilitator. By convening meetings, disseminating information, and coordinating training and technical assistance, the DPC can help smaller organizations understand and navigate often difficult bureaucratic systems, and can help governmental agencies make direct connections to the communities and constituents they aim to serve. The Delta Conservancy and the Delta Stewardship Council have committed to work with the NHA on this strategy. Two examples in which the DPC's status as a state agency will facilitate communities working with large state agencies are Visit California and Caltrans. For both agencies, the NHA is divided into several different regions with distinct regional plans. The DPC has a critical role to play in advocating for unified tourism promotion for the NHA and transportation enhancements across that benefit all communities.

#### **4.1.3 PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, COORDINATE AND PROMOTE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN INTERPRETATION, GRANTS, RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP, HERITAGE TOURISM, PROMOTION, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

An important service that the local coordinating entity can provide is offering technical assistance and training for heritage-related fields. In some instances, the DPC staff can work in-house to develop and offer training and technical assistance. Writing and managing grants is one such area. They can also work with state and federal agencies to host existing training or technical assistance opportunities. For example, California State Parks and the National Park Service have interpretive training that may be available to smaller organizations. Technical assistance that focuses on the development of interpretive exhibits and materials may also be available. The Office of Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation offer training on Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and other activities to help preserve the built environment. Furthermore, the DPC staff can promote upcoming training offered by partners. As discussed above, the DPC's existing connections to organizations and agencies at all levels situate the local coordinating entity to facilitate training and technical assistance in a variety of ways. Staff representing John Muir National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, and the East Bay Regional Park District have committed to help with technical assistance and training in areas appropriate to their skill sets.

#### **4.1.4 PARTICIPATE IN THE ALLIANCE OF NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS AND WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHER NHAS ON JOINT INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS.**

From joint initiatives with other NHAs to travel and training available at ANHA meetings, the local coordinating entity will have the opportunity to learn and share best practices in the field and stay apprised of important issues that impact NHAs. For example, NHA is developing a program with Mountains to Sound NHA and Maritime Washington NHA to coordinate sharing stories of Filipinos on the West Coast, building on the NHA's partnership with the Filipino American National Historical Society Museum in Stockton. In addition, the DPC staff and the NHA partnership network will participate in ANHA's *Operation Pollination* program to combat the decline of bees and other pollinators through education and habitat restoration activities. Local organizations in the community of Hood have expressed interest in ANHA initiatives and best practices such as this. In addition, Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail is actively collaborating with Santa Cruz Valley NHA in southern Arizona; staff anticipates extending some of the collaborative activities to Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA. By participating in ANHA and collaborating with other heritage areas around the country, the local coordinating entity will not only enhance its own capacity, but also will help strengthen the program at a national level.

#### **4.1.5 CONTINUE THE DELTA LEADERSHIP PROGRAM.**

The DPC, in partnership with the Delta Leadership Foundation, established the Delta Leadership Program to build and support sustained leadership development within the Delta community. The program's website states, "With the challenges facing the Delta today, it is clearly in the Delta's interest to cultivate the best in our existing leadership and to assist in creating a pipeline of informed and energetic leaders for the Delta's future."<sup>75</sup>

The Delta Leadership Program's goals are:

- Identify and promote regional leaders in the Delta community.
- Develop skills and awareness to increase the pool of effective Delta leaders.
- Expand leaders' knowledge regarding the key issues, opportunities and challenges that face the Delta region.
- Identify emerging leaders and deliver skills and tools to enhance their contributions to the Delta community.

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<sup>75</sup> <https://delta.ca.gov/delta-leadership-program/>

- Build relationships of trust and cooperation between businesses, government, nonprofit, civic, religious, and cultural groups.
- Foster a shared sense of community throughout the Delta region.

The program consists of a five-day course carried out over four months, with an additional day-long Delta water tour. The program addresses issues such as water, agriculture, public safety, and economic development, and each leadership class produces a special project. In 2019, the project was focused on NHA partnership best practices. In 2023, the program was awarded the Government Innovation Award from the American Society of Public Administration's Sacramento Chapter.

The Delta Leadership Foundation will continue to lead this essential program. The local coordinating entity will provide funding for the program, assist with selection of participants and course planning, and convene and facilitate classes. The EBRPD will continue to provide meeting space and resources, as well as programmatic assistance.

## 4.2 Provide direct support for partners through financial and technical assistance.

Providing direct support through staff time and funding is one of the most important actions that an local coordinating entity can take. Technical assistance is important to helping partners with limited capacity to manage their organizations, and to providing professional support for specific activities. By distributing NHA funding to communities via a grant program (see below and Chapter 5, Strategy 5.1.2), the DPC will help accomplish the goals of the NHA, raise awareness of the NHA's existence, and build capacity among smaller organizations.

### **4.2.1 ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS THAT ALIGN WITH THE NHA'S GOALS.**

Like numerous community organizations nationwide, NHA partners need financial assistance to propel their initiatives forward. One of the most important strategies the DPC will undertake is developing a grant program to fund activities that help carry out the intent of the management plan. The program will include funding opportunities in interpretation, education, historic preservation, cultural conservation, arts, recreation, natural resource conservation, tourism, and community revitalization. The DPC will develop funding guidelines that follow state and federal regulations, as well as a competitive grant review process that includes representation from diverse areas of expertise. The Delta Conservancy will be a strong partner in building and supporting a grant program that complements its own. The Delta

Conservancy funds projects in ecosystem restoration and water quality, climate resilience and community access, and community enhancements. The NHA and Delta Conservancy grant programs will provide significant leveraging opportunities for partners, as well as the ability to phase projects with funding from each source supporting different project elements. The NHA grant program will be designed with these opportunities in mind.

#### **4.2.2 PROVIDE STAFF SUPPORT TO SEEK OUTSIDE GRANTS AND FUNDING.**

The NHA designation presents opportunities to secure grants both inside and outside the region, including larger and more competitive regional and national funding that can be challenging for local partners to attain independently. This creates a platform for utilizing NPS Heritage Partnership Program funding to incentivize collaboration among partners, fostering a more cohesive network and scaling up initiatives to assist partners in achieving their objectives. This will make partners and collaborative endeavors more effective and attractive to regional and national funders while concurrently building capacity in smaller organizations.

The local coordinating entity can pursue grants for projects and programs in the region and provide information and technical assistance for partners seeking outside funding. For example, the Save America's Treasures program can be used for preservation of the NHA's significant historic structures. The California Community Foundation for Cultural Conservation may provide opportunities to support organizations that carry out cultural programs in the NHA. California Humanities may support arts and historical organizations. Other potential sources are listed in Appendix I.

By playing an active role in this area, the local coordinating entity will help overcome the barrier that many smaller organizations face – a lack of experienced fundraisers who can identify sources and develop funding applications. In addition, by orchestrating coordination between funders and prospective project grantees and by combining projects to develop larger proposals, the DPC can ensure that projects provide the necessary relevance and interest for potential funders. Partners will assist through grant writing and providing letters of support.

#### **4.2.3 PROVIDE STAFF TIME AND DIRECT FUNDING TO CARRY OUT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS THAT ALIGN WITH THE MANAGEMENT PLANNING GOALS.**

Many opportunities exist for the local coordinating entity to participate in and directly fund projects and programs due to the number of cooperating local,



state, and federal agencies and existing plans for the region. This includes but is not limited to activities such as staff or contracted support for historic preservation, tourism marketing and promotion, cultural conservation, and specific projects called out in this or other partners' plans. This strategy differs from the previous two strategies in that it does not rely on grant funding, either from the NHA grant program or from an outside source. Instead, the DPC staff and Advisory Committee will identify projects and programs that align with NHA goals for non-competitive funding and staff assistance. By incorporating the NHA goals into existing interpretive and recreational programming and continuing to collaborate with heritage partners, EBRPD and Delta Conservancy staff time and resources will amplify the impact of direct support.

#### **4.2.4 SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES, INCLUDING RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS AND SERVICE-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO K-12 AND COLLEGE STUDENTS AND CITIZEN SCIENCE OPPORTUNITIES.**

The local coordinating entity will support educational initiatives in heritage-related fields. Providing funding for educational outreach, field trip financial support, research scholarships, internships, service-learning, and citizen science opportunities to scholars and students at all academic levels will expose the next generation of stewards to the region's history and the cultural and natural resources associated with it. This is critical for sparking intellectual curiosity and for building a long-term stewardship ethic.

The local coordinating entity will support educational initiatives through efforts such as funding and staff collaboration with K-12 administrators and educators in the districts in the five NHA counties. The local coordinating entity also will provide funding for partners that offer service-learning and citizen science programs. In addition, the local coordinating entity will provide funding for research and internships for scholars and students from higher educational institutions that serve the region. The DPC will also contract with scholars to pursue research and carry out studies related to planning initiatives recommended in the management plan. The NHA's involvement in educational endeavors is also discussed in the interpretive plan (see Chapter 1, Objective 5).

#### **4.2.5 SUPPORT THE LONGITUDINAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DELTA RESIDENTS SURVEY.**

In 2023, the Delta Stewardship Council, California Sea Grant, and CSUS collaborated on a household survey to understand Delta residents' livelihoods, well-being, priorities, and concerns for the region. The survey is the first of its kind in the Delta and is intended to fill a gap in knowledge regarding the region's human communities. The four primary aims of the survey are:

1. Characterize residents' sense of place;
2. Assess well-being of a diverse and evolving population living in the region;
3. Understand residents' experiences and perceptions of environmental and climate changes across the estuary; and
4. Evaluate residents' civic engagement and perceptions of governance in the region.<sup>76</sup>

The *Delta Residents Survey* measures key indicators that align with the NHA's mission, vision, and goals. If instituted longitudinally, the survey will lend rigorous social scientific method to measuring the success of the NHA in achieving the long-term vision and also provide a foundation for future planning. The Delta Stewardship Council plans to administer a survey every three to four years, based on the interval used in social health monitoring programs in other large social-ecological systems around the U.S.<sup>77</sup> The intent to carry out the longitudinal study and to include the local coordinating entity as a key partner is acknowledged in a letter of commitment from the Delta Stewardship Council. The local coordinating entity will provide input into content, staff time, and funding to ensure that the survey can provide longitudinal data. From attractions to local government to EBRPD, many partners have noted the value of the survey and committed to future participation.

### 4.3 Build awareness and stewardship of the National Heritage Area through outreach to public and private sector partners.

Outreach within the NHA network, aimed at reaching and engaging stakeholders and partners, differs from the marketing efforts discussed in Chapter 3, which target visitors. Internal communication with existing and potential partners and stakeholders is paramount for nurturing and fortifying the NHA partnership network and boosting stakeholder and community involvement. While some promotional tools overlap between internal engagement and tourism marketing – especially digital tools like websites and social media – the target audience and messaging often diverge.

The NHA will work with rural and underrepresented communities to develop a strategy that prioritizes diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion to improve outreach and give voice to those communities. In addition, flexibility in communication methods is crucial to inclusivity. Communication preferences vary by generation, experience, location, language, and demographics. It is

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<sup>76</sup> Rudnick, J., Tomari, K., Dobbin, K., Lubell, M., and K. Bidenwig. 2023 *Delta Residents Survey Summary Report*. Report developed for the Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Science Program. Sacramento, CA, pg. 7.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 65.

imperative not to exclude any audience, especially in an increasingly digital world. Efforts must be made to reach those in communities without secure internet access, as well as those whose primary language is not English.

local coordinating entity staff, Advisory Committee members, and NHA partners will regularly engage with people and organizations across the NHA through in-person meetings, attending events, and speaking to community organizations. Their one-on-one interaction will be critical in raising awareness and building the NHA brand.

Expanding digital communications, leveraging social media and online platforms, and maintaining a professional, current, and comprehensive website are essential for conveying messages and increasing engagement both internally and for visitors.

Traditional media, including broadcast and print, remain crucial, particularly in rural areas where many people rely on newspapers and radio. Being featured in newspapers or quoted on TV news can be vital for connecting with community leaders, establishing credibility, and securing official recognition.

In-person and word-of-mouth outreach remains indispensable, especially in the Delta's smaller, more rural communities. While reading about an organization or activity is a starting point, personal recommendations from friends often motivate people to take action and become stewards. The activities outlined under this objective, whether encouraging site visits, volunteering, or attending community meetings, all offer opportunities to enhance personal engagement, stewardship, and expand the NHA partnership network.

#### **4.3.1 CONTINUE TO HOLD THE ANNUAL DELTA HERITAGE FORUM.**

The Delta Heritage Forum, first held in 2018, is a free, day-long event focused on efforts to preserve and tell Delta stories, including opportunities for partnership collaboration and networking. Residents and partner organizations are invited to participate in the annual Forum, which is important not only for sharing best practices and innovative ideas, but also for strengthening and expanding the relationships that are critical for the NHA's success. The scope includes all aspects of heritage conservation – interpretation and education, preservation of historic resources, natural resource conservation, recreation, sustainable tourism, and economic development. Past sessions at the Forum have included updates from partner organizations, input sessions on emerging projects, sessions focused on elements of the management plan, and presentations on best practices from NHA practitioners beyond the NHA. Previously, the Delta Heritage Forum served as an important public engagement opportunity for the Great Delta Trail, preliminary development of travel itineraries, and the interpretive plan for this management plan. The DPC staff organizes and funds all aspects of

the annual event. Large and small partners across the region are committed to assisting with and participating in the annual Delta Heritage Forum.

#### **4.3.2 ACT AS A CLEARINGHOUSE OF INFORMATION TO SUPPORT NHA PARTNERS.**

Stakeholders have expressed the need for improved accessibility to information on partners, activities, and resources within the NHA network. To address this request the local coordinating entity will establish an information system that serves as a central repository, or clearinghouse, to gather and disseminate information for network use. This clearinghouse may comprise various specialized databases and calendars. The local coordinating entity will collect, organize, and provide access to information. Partners will not only look to access information, but also contribute to gathering it. In certain instances, the clearinghouse will serve as a starting point, directing users to information compiled and curated by partner organizations. The scope of information that stakeholders have requested includes:

- **Resource Inventory** – The local coordinating entity compiled an inventory of historic, cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational assets during the management planning process (see Appendix F). The local coordinating entity will maintain and update this inventory, which may include additional information such as location, contact information, visitor information, and resource descriptions. (As appropriate, some location and contact information may be kept confidential.)
- **Grants and Funding Opportunities** – The DPC already shares information on grant opportunities in its regular e-newsletters. As the local coordinating entity, the DPC will continue to coordinate and disseminate information about grants and other funding opportunities. This will include information on sources, applications, deadlines, and best practices.
- **Partner Database** – The local coordinating entity serves as a hub for the partnership network. The network is extensive both geographically and in the number of heritage-related fields it includes. There is no other entity in the region that maintains a comprehensive database of partner organizations. By maintaining such a database, the DPC will facilitate connections and provide information across the NHA partnership network, helping organizations find and share services, skills, and expertise. Existing and potential partners are in Appendix G.
- **Interpretive Providers** – Interpretive planning for the management plan resulted in development of a database of interpretive providers in the NHA (see the interpretive plan, Chapter 1). The DPC will continue to use, update, and provide access to this information, which serves as a subset of the partner database described above.

- **Regional Planning Efforts** – Given the Delta's importance within the state for ecological, water, and agricultural resources, many local, state, and federal organizations have developed plans that intersect with the goals of the NHA management plan. Maintaining a record of and providing access to these plans will help partners find information, bridge a gap between governmental agencies and their constituents, and reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts.
- **Online Calendar** – A calendar will provide information on major events and activities in the region, including networking and training opportunities, community festivals, partner events, and informational meetings.

### **4.3.3 CONDUCT IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL VISITS AND MEETINGS WITH STATE AGENCIES THAT SERVICE THE NHA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NHA.**

As the local coordinating entity, the DPC has an important leadership role to play in bridging communication among state agencies and local communities, governments, and organizations. As a state agency, the DPC has an inside understanding of how other state agencies function and what initiatives they are leading. The DPC is building on almost three decades of working in Delta communities and has been informally known as "the people agency" due to its on-the-ground relationships with residents and partner organizations. The status, economic sustainability, and bureaucratic understanding that comes with being a state agency is an advantage that most NHAs do not have. Leveraging the DPC's solid reputation and existing relationships will be crucial in successfully implementing the management plan.

### **4.3.4 ENLIST NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO ACT AS INFORMATION AMBASSADORS.**

The Advisory Committee, which was initially formed to facilitate the development of the management plan, will continue to serve following the plan's completion (see Chapter 5, Strategy 5.2.3). As implementation moves ahead, members of the committee will continue their role as ambassadors for the NHA. The organization has geographic, generational, cultural, and organizational diversity, providing members the opportunity to offer information to and gather input from communities and partners across the region. Moreover, the Advisory Committee's leadership in developing the management plan gives members an in-depth understanding of the purpose of NHAs, as well as the goals and strategies of the NHA. Members of the Advisory Committee are at the center of the web that connects the entire NHA region. From attending meetings and conveying information back to their communities to speaking

engagements for civic and nonprofit organizations to casual discussions with their friends and neighbors, they will continue to play an important role in expanding and strengthening the NHA partnership network.

#### **4.3.5 DEVELOP AN INITIATIVE FOR LEADERSHIP CAPACITY-BUILDING TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT IN RURAL AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES.**

The NHA will invest in enhancing the capabilities of rural and underserved communities by developing an initiative focused on growing leadership and creating transformative opportunities. The purpose is to empower local leaders to assist them in fostering the long-term success of the region's cultural and heritage assets. This initiative may encompass a diverse set of strategies, including promotional and professional development efforts, technical assistance, and financial support. This strategic investment aims to enable rural and underserved communities to achieve their local objectives and realize their unique growth potential. Ultimately, the initiative seeks to conserve heritage while generating equitable collective economic and community growth.

This strategy is grounded in the goals of the Delta Leadership Program (see Strategy 4.1.5) in its intention to identify emerging leaders and develop skills and tools that can enhance their contributions to their communities. The initiative will build upon the confidence that area residents have in the local coordinating entity, which was documented as the most-trusted state agency in the Delta in the recent *Delta Residents Survey*, further enhancing relationships of trust and cooperation between businesses, government, nonprofit, civic, religious, and cultural groups as they work collaboratively to conserve the Delta's heritage.

#### **4.3.6 CONTINUE DISTRIBUTION OF DELTA HAPPENINGS AND DELTA HERITAGE COURIER E-NEWSLETTERS.**

The DPC currently distributes two e-newsletters. The *Delta Happenings* newsletter, first published in 2016, covers the DPC and other agency activities and community events and goes to a list of about 1,600. The *Delta Heritage Courier*, initially published in 2017, focuses on general NHA topics, events and updates from NHA partner organizations, and funding opportunities and goes to a list of 545. Both are important tools for communicating with stakeholders about the DPC's activities, including the NHA program. Both newsletters are developed by the DPC staff.

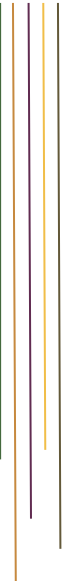
#### **4.3.7 CONTINUE TO MANAGE AND EXPAND THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA'S WEB PRESENCE.**

The DPC website has several pages for the NHA program, which can be accessed at <https://delta.ca.gov/NHA/>. At this time, the purpose of this page is

to provide general information about the administrative backbone of the NHA. The Visit CA Delta website, <https://visitcadelta.com/>, which currently features visitor information for much of the region, will eventually also become the primary website for information about the NHA's resources and projects. The DPC staff, in coordination with NHA partners, will continue to manage both websites, following strategies recommended in the upcoming marketing plan described in Chapter 3 (Strategy 3.1.3) to manage the NHA's web identity and presence. The DPC or a nonprofit partner may secure alternate domain names that can allow for public-friendly web addresses to alleviate branding confusion and redirect users to the preferred landing page.

### **4.3.8 IMPLEMENT THE MARKETING PLAN TO INFORM AND ENGAGE PARTNERS.**

The development of a marketing plan is currently underway (Strategy 3.1.3). The plan will include communication and marketing strategies for various audiences, including visitors, partners, and residents. The plan will also address the naming and branding discrepancy between the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area, the California Delta, The Great California Delta, and Visit CA Delta. To continue to build internal and external awareness of the NHA, the local coordinating entity will fund and provide staff to carry out the recommended strategies that target residents and public and private sector partners, as well as targeting visitors to the region.







*A Delta Protection Commission meeting (Stacy Hayden/Delta Protection Commission).*

## Chapter 5 – Establishing Sustainable Governance

### Introduction

Managing an NHA is a multifaceted and intricate endeavor that involves the preservation, promotion, and sustainable stewardship of a region rich in cultural, historical, and natural significance. These areas, often spanning diverse landscapes and communities, serve as living testaments to our shared national heritage. The process for managing an NHA is collaborative and dynamic, necessitating the cooperation and working partnership of federal, state, and local entities, as well as the engagement of stakeholders, businesses, residents, and visitors. This chapter details the complex characteristics of the NHA,

including outreach, coordination, objectives, and fundamental steps that will be necessary for the management of this cherished landscape. When brought together, this working partnership, coordinated daily by the DPC, will advance the goals of the NHA by balancing conservation, preservation, education, recreation, heritage tourism, and economic development to ensure the continued vitality and relevance of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta of California. Understanding that all of the other goals and objectives in the management plan fold into the administrative and management tasks of the NHA, the strategy for Goal 5 is to:

*Seek, establish, and maintain collaborative partnerships, effective governance principles, and sustainable business practices to manage the coordinating entity and the NHA.*

## **Managing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area**

In Section 6001 of Public Law 116-9, the U.S. Congress designated the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) as the coordinating entity for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area. This decision was informed by a feasibility study prepared by the DPC, which highlighted various key factors supporting its role as the coordinating body. Additionally, as described in the *Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan*, California law provides specific responsibilities to, and authorities of, the DPC to "...protect, enhance, and sustain the unique cultural, historical, recreational, agricultural, and economic values of the Delta..." Given this responsibility, Congress determined the DPC is best positioned to coordinate the NHA partnership network. The decision can only be changed by Congress by amending the original Public Law.

The DPC is a state agency governed by a board of commissioners tasked with overseeing and coordinating efforts to protect and preserve the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Delta is a crucial ecological and agricultural region in California, serving as a habitat for various wildlife species and supplying water to millions of Californians for drinking, irrigation, and other purposes. The DPC began its role as the coordinating entity in guiding the development of the management plan by establishing an NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee and task groups and dedicating staff to the NHA. Through the management plan process, the DPC has worked to build a strong partnership network in the NHA and implement the recommendations contained within this management plan.

The PointHDC consulting team, working with the DPC and the Advisory Committee, identified various factors that could constrain or benefit management of the NHA, particularly as they relate to the ability of NHAs to be nimble and respond to certain matters that may arise as the organization matures and advances. A government agency as a coordinating entity for an NHA is not unique. Some established NHAs were designed with state agencies as the coordinating entity, while others were established with federal commissions, county or city governments, or local authorities. Government agencies as a coordinating entity can bring considerable benefits to an NHA, including access to other professional services within their departments or other departments, immediate availability of administrative staffing, and match funding, along with the physical presence of a headquarters for the NHA. However, government agencies are subject to many uncertainties, including political influence or changes, budgetary matters, and a bureaucratic structure that can vary between state agencies. These matters were all considered as part of the management planning process.

The information and recommendations presented in this chapter meet the requirement of the designating legislation to establish a business plan for the NHA. Specifically, this business plan includes comprehensive policies, strategies, and recommendations for funding and management of the NHA (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(ii)), sources of funding (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(v)), and coordination of the partnership network (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(vi)).

### Benefits of Delta Protection Commission as the Coordinating Entity of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

The Delta Protection Commission, operating as the coordinating entity for the NHA, can offer several benefits, detailed below.

#### **LOCAL EXPERTISE**

The DPC has a deep understanding of the local culture, history, and natural resources within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region. This local expertise can be invaluable in managing and preserving the NHA.

#### **REGIONAL COORDINATION**

As part of its legislative duties, the DPC facilitates coordination among various stakeholders, including other state departments and agencies, local and federal government, nonprofits, community groups, and businesses. As described in Chapter 4, *Connecting and Supporting the Partnership Network* (see Strategy 4.1.6), the DPC can continue to serve as a central point of contact

to bring these stakeholders together for collaborative efforts that benefit the NHA.

## **RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

The DPC can help secure and allocate funding and resources for projects in the NHA. The DPC, as a state agency, may be able to access other state funding sources and leverage financial partnerships to help secure additional public funds. Furthermore, through the Delta Investment Fund and other nonprofit organizations there exist financial resources aimed at supporting initiatives and projects that contribute to the conservation, enhancement, and sustainable development of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. With these entities, the DPC or its heritage partners may be able to seek grants and contributions to support initiatives within the NHA.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT**

As a state agency, the DPC can ensure that activities within the NHA adhere to relevant state laws and regulations. The DPC may also be able to assist in navigating other matters, including permitting and compliance that sometimes create barriers to a project's advancement.

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

The DPC is able to develop and implement educational and interpretive programs with state and local organizations to raise awareness about the significance of the NHA. This education outreach includes formal curriculum development for students at all levels, as well as working with other organizations to create visitor centers or kiosks, develop and conduct guided tours, and develop educational materials for the public.

## **PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

The DPC can be an instrumental partner as a state agency in the development of plans and strategies as the NHA matures. With its highly specialized and professional staff, its relationship and influence with other state agencies and local governments, and the capacity of the California government, the NHA could realize opportunities vastly different from other NHAs that lack such gravitas. Additionally, the DPC is one of several governmental agencies that have taken an active role in regional planning within the Delta. Many of those plans contain recommendations on cultural conservation, economic development, heritage preservation, recreational trails, and environmental stewardship, similar to the overarching goals of the NHA. If the DPC did nothing else but work as a partner to assist with the implementation of those plans, the NHA would experience successful advancement of heritage development.

## **ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT**

The DPC can advocate for the NHA at the state level, working to garner support from state legislators and agencies many of which are represented on the Commission. It can also provide technical assistance and support to local stakeholders by assisting those partners to gain access to government officials that might otherwise be difficult to reach for a local group or organization.

## **LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY**

While one of the biggest challenges for many NHAs is raising operational funds that are the bedrock for budgetary sustainability, this is not the case for the DPC as the coordinating entity for the NHA. As an established California state agency, the DPC ensures the long-term sustainability of the NHA because the operational funding needed for staff and other administrative support is already provided through funding from the state's budget.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING**

As a state agency, the DPC provides transparency and accountability by reporting on the progress and impact of the NHA's initiatives. This can be important for demonstrating the effectiveness of the NHA's programs and projects to partners, stakeholders, state of California officials, NPS, the U.S. Congress, funders, and the public at large. With an in-house communications staff, the DPC can ensure information is shared on programs and projects as they advance.

## **FINANCIAL AND GRANT ADMINISTRATION**

The DPC, which already receives grants for various programs and oversees the agency's overall budget, has the capacity to manage NHA grants and funding programs. This includes financial reporting and managing grants to local NHA partners. The DPC's finance team has extensive budgeting and accounting experience and provides transparent reporting on all financial matters.

## **Potential Challenges with a State Agency**

While there are multiple benefits to having a state agency serve as the coordinating entity for an NHA, there are also potential challenges and challenges associated with this arrangement. These challenges can vary depending on the specific circumstances and the effectiveness of the state agency in question. Below are some potential challenges for the NHA to be housed as a program within a state agency.

## **BUREAUCRACY**

While the DPC is small, flexible, and a responsive state agency, other agencies of California state government can sometimes be bureaucratic and slow-moving. The ability to be agile and responsive is often necessary for the effective management and coordination of NHAs. The NHA could experience problems if an uncooperative or intractable system of state government outside of the DPC creates hurdles that hamstring the NHA's operations or flexibility.

## **RESOURCE AND TIME ALLOCATION CHALLENGES**

While the DPC has an established operational budget that supports staffing for the NHA, competing priorities, limited resources, and other projects within the DPC that require staff time could arise in future years, which could result in inadequate funding and support to carry out the NHA's programs and projects outlined in this management plan.

## **POLITICAL INFLUENCE**

Legislatures or governors have imposed influence on other NHAs by exerting authority over staff management and agency decisions or by influencing the participation or philosophy of citizen involvement in quasi-governing bodies of the NHA. The direction and funding of any agency can be swayed by changes in political leadership and priorities at the legislative and/or executive levels of state government. This could lead to fluctuations in support for the NHA.

## **FUNDING UNCERTAINTY**

Relying too much on state funding as the only other source of funds could result in problems. The availability of state funds can be subject to economic downturns, budget constraints, or politics (as stated above), leading to uncertainty in financial support.

## **LACK OF SPECIALIZATION IN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA MANAGEMENT**

State agencies often have narrow responsibilities and the positions within those agencies may lack the broad knowledge and expertise required to manage the multitude of issues with the cultural, historical, and natural resources within an NHA. The complexity of the needs of the communities within the NHA will require other professional specializations and support outside of the DPC's current staffing structure. The DPC may be able to create new positions within the agency that are geared more specifically to NHA functions. If not, there are other organizations and state agencies within the broader heritage partnership

of the NHA that the DPC can utilize where specialized professions may be engaged.

### **INCONSISTENT FOCUS**

A state agency may have to oversee multiple programs, which can lead to inconsistent attention and focus by the agency's staff on the specific needs of an NHA. As it implements the recommendations of this management plan, the DPC must always keep the NHA as a priority, along with its other programs' responsibilities.

### **COORDINATION CHALLENGES**

While state agencies can facilitate coordination, they may face challenges in bringing together diverse stakeholders with differing interests and objectives. These challenges were evident at the outset of the management planning process as the DPC had to restart public participation due to the length of time between the completion of the feasibility study and the passage of the designating legislation limited community outreach or involvement. Nevertheless, during the management planning process, the DPC developed and maintained a robust community outreach despite the impact of the pandemic on established public engagement methods. Continued partner coordination will be critical for the successful implementation of the management plan.

### **RESISTANCE TO REGULATION**

Local communities and businesses may grow weary of bureaucracy and resist state agency oversight and regulation, particularly if they perceive it as burdensome, restrictive, or ineffective. The DPC should always, to the best of its ability, work to create clear pathways to advance the NHA's programs and projects.

### **MITIGATING POTENTIAL CHALLENGES**

To mitigate these disadvantages, it is important for the DPC to continue to work closely with local stakeholders, engage in transparent decision-making processes, seek public input, and adapt to the specific needs and challenges of the NHA. The established collaborative effort and partnership between the DPC, NPS, other state agencies, counties, local communities, stakeholders, partners, businesses, and nonprofit organizations have already produced a strong foundation of trust, cooperation, partnership, and cross-organizational support. The DPC can continue to foster and grow this relationship by advancing the recommendations within this chapter, thereby ensuring the effective management and success of the NHA.

## The Mission and Vision of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

As highlighted in the *Introduction to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan*, the mission and vision statements work in concert to serve as the compass that steers the long-term trajectory and objectives guiding the daily functions of an NHA. These statements are two of the foundational elements upon which the NHA's programs, services, communications, organizational structure, and culture are built. Both mission and vision statements are indispensable for NHAs and their coordinating entities and collaborators.

The Organization Task Group of the Advisory Committee was charged with developing the mission and vision statements for the NHA. The Organization Task Group worked over several meetings to develop each statement separately, maintaining the individuality of each statement while also forging a meaningful connection between the two.

### The Mission of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

A mission statement acts as a litmus test to ensure the organization stays on course and provides guidance in times when it must adapt to evolving demands. An effective mission statement is succinct, pragmatic, actionable, inspiring, motivating, informative, and sometimes even evokes emotional resonance. The statement avoids excessive abstraction and instead reflects the organization's values while articulating its purpose with clarity.

The original mission statement contained in the feasibility study was considered by the Organization Task Group and determined to be adequate, but the task group desired a new statement reflecting the purpose of the NHA now designated by the U.S. Congress.

The Organization Task Group's strategy was to carry out three crucial goals for the mission statement. The goals were to:

1. Offer direction for the NHA's day-to-day activities;
5. Delineate the purpose of the NHA; and,
6. Establish a reference for evaluating its achievements and initiatives.

The mission statement drafted by the Organization Task Group and adopted by the Advisory Committee, is as follows:

*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area is a partnership coalition working together to recognize, enhance, and*



*promote the National Heritage Area as an ecological, agricultural, recreational, historical, and cultural treasure.*

## The Vision for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

The Organization Task Group expressed a desire for a vision statement that would spotlight the enduring impact of the NHA and what the DPC and its stakeholders and partners aspire to achieve for the region. As with the crafting of the mission statement, the Organization Task Group believed that a vision statement should inspire and spur action in areas like strategic planning, program and project implementation, fundraising, marketing, governance, cooperation, partnership, and overall management. The Organization Task Group held several discussions and ultimately developed a statement to serve as a catalyst for setting objectives and propelling the NHA toward the successful implementation of the recommendations contained within this management plan.

The vision statement developed by the Organization Task Group and adopted by the Advisory Committee is:

*The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area supports living links among the past, present, and future and among farmed, developed, and wild lands in the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and the Carquinez Strait. This globally significant estuary sustains a remarkable and diverse blend of natural and human communities that have emerged over millennia. Through partnerships, the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta NHA affirms and protects this living landscape – the appreciation of Delta cultures, relationships with water and landscapes, rewards of labor and commerce, and the revitalizing benefits of recreation – and shares it with Californians and visitors from around the world.*

## Management and Governance Structure of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

As stipulated by the U.S. Congress under Public Law 116-9, the DPC holds the official role of the coordinating entity for the NHA. According to legislative mandates, the DPC is provided with specific authorities and duties and may use the funding appropriated by Congress.

The authorities conveyed in the designating legislation include:

- Making grants to the State of California or a political subdivision of the state, Indian Tribes, nonprofit organizations, and other persons;
- Entering into cooperative agreements with, or providing technical assistance to, the State or a political subdivision of the State, Indian Tribes, nonprofit organizations, and other interested parties;
- Hiring and compensating staff, which shall include individuals with expertise in natural, cultural, and historical resources protection and heritage programming;
- Obtaining money or services from any source, including any money or services that are provided under any other Federal law or program;
- Contracting for goods or services; and,
- Becoming a catalyst for any other activity that furthers the National Heritage Area and is consistent with the approved management plan.

These authorities, when married to California state law, position the DPC as the significant primary partner to implement recommendations from other state plans that will assist and advance heritage development opportunities in the NHA.

In addition, the legislation provides specific duties to the DPC "to assist Federal agencies, the State or a political subdivision of the State, Indian Tribes, regional planning organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other interested parties in carrying out the approved management plan." These duties include:

- Carrying out programs and projects that recognize, protect, and enhance important resource values in the National Heritage Area;
- Establishing and maintaining interpretive exhibits and programs in the National Heritage Area;
- Developing recreational and educational opportunities in the National Heritage Area;
- Increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, natural, historical, scenic, and cultural resources of the National Heritage Area;
- Protecting and restoring historic sites and buildings in the National Heritage Area that are consistent with National Heritage Area themes;
- Ensuring that clear, consistent, and appropriate signs identifying points of public access and sites of interest are posted throughout the National Heritage Area; and,
- Promoting a wide range of partnerships among the Federal Government, State, Tribal, and local governments, organizations, and individuals to further the National Heritage Area;
- Developing a comprehensive management strategy to guide the execution of the NHA's initiatives.

Unlike most other NHAs, developing a successful management structure for the NHA entails harmonizing the laws and regulatory requirements set forth by the State of California for the DPC with the federal requirements contained within P. Law 116-9.

The following recommendations for the NHA organizational structure aim to align the DPC with the enacting legislation while providing the NHA with a versatile and adaptable operational framework that effectively accommodates the evolving requirements of the NHA.

### Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Governance

#### **DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION – NHA GOVERNING BODY**

When it was established in 1992 by the California State Legislature, the DPC was charged with the responsibility of the conservation of the Delta's agricultural, natural, and recreational resources and infrastructure. The DPC is currently comprised of 15 members from the Delta region, including five county supervisors, three city council members, three reclamation district trustees, and four state agency representatives. In addition to the DPC's work in agriculture, culture, economic development, land use, levees, recreation and tourism, and water, the DPC also advises the Delta Stewardship Council on protecting and enhancing the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta. The staff of the DPC supports the DPC commissioners and their work.

In establishing the NHA, Congress recognized the DPC's existing responsibility as an asset and entrusted the long-term coordination and management of the NHA with the DPC. As the local coordinating entity, the DPC provides strategic guidance, approves significant decisions, and ensures alignment with the NHA's goals, federal legislation, state laws, the DPC's plans, and other existing plans. The DPC has expertise and resources to support the NHA's initiatives and connections with other state and local government agencies and partners within the NHA. To ensure community and partner participation in the coordination of the NHA's management plan, the DPC created and appointed members to the NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee. In addition, the DPC is the NHA liaison with the National Park Service for administering the Heritage Partnership Program funding appropriated by Congress to the NHA.

## **STAFFING THE SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA**

The work of the DPC is currently managed through established professional positions. Staff time is proportionally allocated to staffing the NHA. These existing positions are further described in this chapter under Strategy 5.2.1.

Although staff members exist to support the mission and responsibilities of the DPC, as stated earlier, under state and federal law, the DPC and its staff are primarily responsible for the daily work of the NHA. In the future, there could be a need to provide additional labor to effectively implement the NHA management plan. Staff could be existing the DPC personnel not currently assigned to the NHA, or new hires by the DPC, including full-time, part-time, or interns, "shared staff" through other state agencies, or through operational support grants to partners with a scope of work specific to the NHA. Other possible NHA staff are identified, and their roles are described further in this chapter under Strategy 5.2.2.

## **SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA NHA MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TASK GROUPS**

The Advisory Committee and its task groups were created at the outset of the management planning process. The Advisory Committee served the essential role of furnishing recommendations to the DPC and the DPC staff regarding the formulation of the management plan. It also actively solicited feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders, which encompasses government entities at all levels, businesses, landowners, agricultural enterprises, community representatives, cultural and natural resource advocates, recreational organizations, and the general public.

### **NHA MANAGEMENT PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TRANSITION TO THE NHA ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

To facilitate a transition from developing the management plan to implementation of the plan, the NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee will continue its involvement as the NHA Advisory Committee. Doing so, it can continue to provide advice and guidance in the implementation of the management plan while maintaining the critical involvement of the Delta community representatives from business, cultural organizations, citizens' groups, historical societies and museums, environmental organizations, and other partners. The recommended role for the Advisory Committee is detailed further in this chapter under Strategy 5.2.3

In addition to the Advisory Committee, smaller task groups, acting as subcommittees, will be continued or established and will meet as necessary to

carry out work with the DPC staff within the NHA. Some of the task groups described below were created during the management planning process. Others could be established as needed to implement the recommendations in the management plan. During the management planning process, most task group members were also members of the Advisory Committee. As a way to build capacity within the task groups, membership could include others from the NHA not serving on the Advisory Committee. The suggested task groups are described in this chapter under Strategy 5.2.4.

## Partnership Collaboration as a Part of Managing the National Heritage Area – Establishing Guiding Principles for Collaboration

Guiding principles for collaboration for the NHA are important to enact to foster effective, inclusive, and sustainable partnerships among diverse stakeholders. The guiding principles should serve as a foundation for the partnership between the partners of the NHA and its various stakeholders, fostering a collaborative environment that ensures the protection and promotion of the NHA's cultural and natural heritage.

A draft of guiding principles is contained in Appendix H. One of first orders of business of the Advisory Committee and the DPC will be the adoption of these guiding principles.

Guiding principles for collaboration are important for NHAs for the reasons set forth below.

- **Complexity of the NHA** – As with almost all NHAs, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a large, diverse region that encompasses cultural, historical, and natural resources. Managing and preserving this area will involve multiple stakeholders, including federal agencies, state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, local community groups, and individuals. Guiding principles provide a framework for collaboration among these diverse constituencies.
- **Shared Vision** – NHAs are designated to protect and promote the nationally significant heritage and resources of a region. Establishing guiding principles for the NHA's stakeholders solidifies the shared vision for the NHA's future, ensuring that everyone involved is working toward common goals and objectives.
- **Resource Management** – NHAs include important historic, natural, and cultural resources that require careful management and preservation. Guiding principles for collaboration help to shape responsible stewardship of these resources among partners, ensuring their protection for future generations.

- **Community Involvement** – Local communities play a vital role in the NHA, as their heritage and traditions are central to the region's identity. Guiding principles can emphasize the importance of engaging and involving local communities in decision-making processes, respecting their knowledge and perspectives.
- **Coordination** – Effective collaboration is crucial for the success of NHAs. Guiding principles can help coordinate activities, resources, and efforts among different stakeholders, reducing duplication of efforts and promoting efficient use of resources.
- **Sustainability** – NHAs aim to sustain the region's heritage and resources over the long term. Guiding principles can include values that guide decision-making to ensure the area's vitality and integrity for future generations.
- **Conflict Resolution** – Disagreements and conflicts can arise in collaborative efforts. Having guiding principles in place can provide a framework for resolving conflicts and disputes in a fair and constructive manner.
- **Accountability** – Guiding principles will establish accountability mechanisms, ensuring that all stakeholders fulfill their commitments and responsibilities. This accountability helps maintain trust among collaborators and partners.
- **Adaptability** – As circumstances change, the NHA may need to adapt its strategies and priorities. Guiding principles can include provisions for periodic review and adjustment to the management plan, allowing the collaboration to remain responsive to evolving challenges and opportunities.
- **Funding and Support** – Collaboration often requires financial and logistical support. Clear guiding principles can enhance the NHA's credibility and attractiveness to potential funders and supporters, facilitating the acquisition of resources needed for successful preservation and promotion efforts.

Once the NHA management plan is approved, and with the establishment of the Advisory Committee, one of its organizing priorities will be to finalize and adopt the guiding principles for collaboration that will guide the NHA partnership in working with the DPC.

## Providing Professional/Technical Assistance to Partners to Advance the NHA

Professional and technical assistance will be of significant benefit to the communities and partners of the NHA as the region faces various complex challenges that require specialized knowledge and resources. Throughout the

management planning process, many partners and meeting participants expressed the need for professional expertise and technical advice because their organizations are mostly volunteers who lack specialized knowledge and/or skills that are needed in their organizations or communities. As discussed in Chapter 4, one of the strategies to support partners is to provide technical assistance and training (Strategy 4.2.3). A technical assistance program within the NHA will be established and provide the benefits described below.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

Many communities and partners within the NHA may lack the necessary expertise and resources to address the region's multifaceted challenges effectively. A professional technical assistance program will provide the training and guidance required to build local capacity. This empowers communities to take a proactive role in preserving their heritage and managing their cultural, historic, and natural resources.

## **PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION EXPERTISE**

The region is home to significant historical sites, cultural landmarks, and a fragile ecological ecosystem. A technical assistance program will connect communities and partners with experts in heritage preservation and environmental conservation. This ensures that the cultural heritage and natural resources are protected, preserved, and managed sustainably for future generations.

## **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The region faces economic challenges due to shifts in industries like agriculture. Professional technical assistance will offer guidance on sustainable economic development strategies. This might include promoting heritage-based tourism, revitalizing local commercial districts and main streets, and encouraging small business development, thereby stimulating economic growth within the area.

## **GRANT AND FUNDING SUPPORT**

Technical assistance programs will help communities and partners navigate the complex world of grants and funding opportunities. The program will provide guidance on preparing competitive grant applications and managing grant-funded projects effectively, ensuring that the region secures the financial resources necessary for its various initiatives.

## **EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES**

Technical assistance will aid in the development of educational programs including outreach campaigns, youth programs, and interpretive materials that convey the significance of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Suisun Marsh, and Carquinez Strait to the broader public. This educational outreach raises awareness about the NHA and could help attract visitors and investments that benefit the local economy.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION PRACTICES**

As the Delta's ecological health is of paramount importance, technical assistance programs will provide educational guidance on environmentally responsible practices. This includes assistance with habitat restoration, water management, and strategies to mitigate the impact of climate change.

## **COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

The technical assistance program will facilitate collaboration among various partners, including community groups, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. This helps foster a sense of shared responsibility for preservation and conservation in the NHA and encourages the development of coordinated strategies.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

This program will provide tools and support to engage the local community actively in heritage preservation and economic development initiatives. Empowering community members to take ownership of their heritage and future contributes to long-term sustainability.

## **Possible Future Coordinating Entities**

Although the DPC is the congressionally designated coordinating entity for the NHA, the management planning process revealed some issues of concern, appropriateness, or abilities for the DPC to meet adequately the future staffing needs of the NHA. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there are significant benefits for an NHA – especially one that is in its early stages of existence – to be housed within a governmental agency. Conversely, there are challenges.

Several existing NHAs began within units of government – state agencies, county or city governments, or governmental authorities. Almost all have become independent of those administrative houses, having used their periods of existence to grow the NHA both programmatically and administratively.



The DPC is a well-respected, highly regarded partner within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region, and the issues expressed by both partners and within the agency were not negative of the personnel or the professionalism of the DPC. Instead, the issues raised concerned the complex structure of California state government and that those laws and regulations that the DPC must operate within could constrain the ability of the NHA to respond to situations or opportunities when they may arise. Well-intentioned state laws, like the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, sometimes created roadblocks to Advisory Committee meetings, thereby postponing important work and decisions of the Advisory Committee and slowing the management planning process. The Advisory Committee members will need to meet the law's requirements of establishing a quorum in one location so that future meetings will be able to occur.

Similarly, the DPC operates within a system of state budgetary processes where all budget increases must be requested and approved, including staff additions. The DPC must use the state-approved job classifications when hiring staff. There are currently no exams or job classifications that target heritage; however, job classifications for historic preservation, conservation, and tourism can be investigated. In addition, the DPC cannot add new positions to its payroll without multiple approvals in a 1.5-year budget request process which involves approval by the California State Legislature. If future requests to add more staff for the NHA are not approved, those decisions may result in an NHA that stagnates due to the inability to provide the necessary labor capacity to meet the growing programmatic and project demands and needs of the NHA.

Lastly, the DPC was created by the California State Legislature with a prescribed legislative purpose and intent, and the NHA comfortably fits into the DPC structure. However, the business models of some other NHAs evolved and changed over time as outside factors or opportunities arose. There could come a day when the needs of the NHA no longer fit into the legislatively mandated structure of the DPC, and the solution could be to look to other partners to take on parts of the NHA's day-to-day work or to have another organization become the coordinating entity for NHA.

All of these factors were considered and discussed during the management planning process, with the decision to keep the NHA housed within the DPC at this stage of its development. As with any NHA's governing body, it will be important for the DPC and the future Advisory Committee to continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and progress of the NHA to ensure that it remains capable of meeting the growing and evolving needs within the communities and heritage partnerships.

Should a change in governance structure become expedient or necessary, considerations were also given to future coordinating entity options, some of which are described below.

## California Joint Powers Authority to Manage the NHA

A California Joint Powers Authority (JPA) could play a significant role in benefiting an NHA in the state by enhancing coordination, resources, and governance for the preservation and promotion of cultural and historical assets. A California Joint Powers Authority is a legal entity created under California state law that allows two or more public agencies, either state or local entities, to jointly exercise common powers and responsibilities for a specific purpose or project. JPA agreements are commonly used for collaboration, resource-sharing, and improved efficiency among public entities in the state. The specific powers and purposes of a JPA can vary, but they typically involve areas such as public infrastructure, public services, resource management, and governance.

As described below, there are several ways a JPA could benefit the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA.

### **INCREASED COLLABORATION**

A JPA brings together multiple local governments, agencies, and organizations to work collectively on a shared goal. In the case of an NHA, this means that various stakeholders, such as counties, cities, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations, could collaborate more effectively to manage and protect heritage resources.

### **POOLING RESOURCES**

By pooling financial and personnel resources, a JPA could provide the NHA with more funding and staff. This additional support could be used to fund heritage preservation projects, public education and outreach, and improvements to infrastructure within the NHA.

### **STREAMLINED DECISION-MAKING**

A JPA typically has its own governing board or council made up of representatives from member entities. Such a board could streamline decision-making, as it is dedicated solely to the NHA's objectives, rather than juggling multiple priorities, which can be the case when various agencies are involved.

### **UNIFORM REGULATIONS AND POLICIES**

A JPA could help address conflicts between public agencies with regulations and policies related to implementing heritage conservation within the NHA. A

JPA could ensure consistency in how historical sites and cultural assets are managed, preserved, and made accessible to the public.

### **INCREASED ADVOCACY**

A JPA could engage in advocacy efforts at the state and federal levels to secure additional resources and support for the NHA. This could lead to more funding opportunities and the ability to influence legislation beneficial to the NHA. Adhering to federal law, the DPC and the JPA would not use any Heritage Partnership Funds or any other funding prohibiting direct lobbying and advocacy. Nevertheless, as a state agency, the DPC would need to advocate to the California State Legislature and the Governor for its annual state budget that supports the NHA.

### **ECONOMIES OF SCALE**

The future management of the NHA could benefit from a JPA, and there are economies of scale that could be realized. Purchasing equipment, securing insurance, or implementing marketing campaigns could be more cost-effective when done collectively.

### **ENHANCED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The collaborative nature of a JPA could help increase public engagement and involvement in the NHA. By working together, the JPA and its members could organize events, educational programs, and outreach efforts to raise awareness and appreciation of the NHA.

### **LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY**

A JPA could provide the NHA with a more sustainable governance structure. It could help ensure that there is continued support and commitment to heritage preservation over the long term, even as individual member entities may change leadership or priorities.

### **IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY**

The governing board of the JPA could hold member entities accountable for their contributions and responsibilities within the NHA. This accountability ensures that everyone involved is actively working toward the shared goals of the NHA.

While a California Joint Powers Authority could benefit the NHA, a JPA can also have some disadvantages. These disadvantages can include:

## **COMPLEXITY**

Creating and managing a JPA can be a complex and time-consuming process, involving legal agreements, governance structures, and administrative tasks. This complexity can be a disadvantage, particularly for smaller agencies with limited resources.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE OVERHEAD**

JPAs often require administrative overhead to manage day-to-day operations, which can increase costs staffing and operational costs of the NHA and divert resources from the core functions.

## **FUNDING AND BUDGET ISSUES**

Allocating and managing funds within a JPA can be challenging, as member agencies may have different priorities and financial constraints. Disagreements over funding can lead to disputes and hinder project implementation.

## **LIMITED SCOPE**

JPAs are typically formed for specific purposes, and their scope is limited to the purposes defined in their agreements. This limitation can make it challenging to address broader issues of the NHA or adapt to changing circumstances.

## **POTENTIAL FOR CONFLICTS**

Differences in priorities and objectives among member agencies can lead to conflicts within the JPA, which could cause decision-making and cooperation to become challenging.

## **LONG-TERM COMMITMENT**

Joining a JPA often involves a long-term commitment, and it may be difficult for agencies to withdraw from the partnership if it no longer serves their interests.

## **LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

JPAs must comply with various legal and regulatory requirements, which can be burdensome and require legal expertise.

## **RISK OF DISSOLUTION**

JPAs can be dissolved if member agencies decide to terminate the partnership. Dissolution can be a disruptive process, especially if there are disagreements among the members.

Therefore, if future consideration is given to the formation of a JPA, the DPC and its partners should carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages and conduct thorough planning to mitigate potential issues.

## Contracting with Partners to Manage Specific Elements/Programs of the NHA

Throughout the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region, many organizations already exist that conduct work that advances the goals of the NHA, like historical organizations, trail groups, community development organizations, arts organizations, tourism groups, and other organizations whose missions align with the goals of the NHA. The DPC can benefit from contracting with other organizations to manage programs and projects in the NHA when it cannot hire staff by leveraging the specialized expertise and resources of these partners. Established properly, this collaboration would allow for the efficient allocation of funds and personnel, ensuring that the NHA's initiatives are effectively implemented. In addition, contracting with other organizations to conduct work also fosters community engagement and advances shared responsibility, creating a broader network of support for conserving, protecting, promoting, and enhancing the NHA's heritage resources. This practice is commonplace in

some other NHAs where staffing is limited, or the particular staff expertise is missing.

## Management and Organization Objectives



*The Sacramento River between West Sacramento and Sacramento (Karen Higgins/UC Davis)*

Objective 5.1 Manage the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA to Provide Direct Service Programs and Leadership for Partner Initiatives

### **STRATEGY 5.1.1 THE DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION SUPPORTS THE NHA PARTNERSHIP NETWORK**

The NHA partnership network will be supported by the DPC staff in a number of ways.

#### **CONTINUE TO ACT AS A CONVENER**

Throughout the management planning process, the DPC's work coordinating partners, governments, and other state agencies proved to be beneficial to both the planning process and the heritage network overall. The DPC acts as a

convener by planning and hosting the annual Delta Heritage Forum, an event that brings together potential partners to share stories about the history and culture of the NHA. The continuation of convening partners is important to the NHA in the heritage partnership's ongoing responsibilities to advance the NHA.

### **DEVELOP AN INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE**

Developing an online information clearinghouse is essential for a national heritage area coordinating entity because it allows for the centralized collection and dissemination of critical data, resources, and best practices, facilitating effective collaboration among diverse stakeholders involved in heritage preservation and development initiatives within the designated region. This role enables streamlined communication and informed decision-making, ultimately enhancing the efficiency and impact of heritage conservation efforts.

### **PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING**

The DPC as coordinating entity can ensure that heritage preservation projects are carried out effectively and in alignment with best practices and regulatory requirements. By offering guidance and expertise, the DPC can help partners navigate complex issues related to heritage conservation, grant applications, and sustainable management, enhancing the overall quality and success of heritage initiatives within the region. This support also fosters a sense of empowerment among partners, encouraging their active engagement and long-term commitment to the preservation and promotion of the NHA's cultural, natural, and historical assets.

### **COORDINATE COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH**

Coordinating communications and outreach to NHA partners is essential because it ensures a unified and consistent message, fostering clarity and alignment among stakeholders, which is vital for the success of heritage preservation and promotion initiatives.

### **ESTABLISH A VOLUNTEER CORPS**

Establishing a volunteer corps could be of great benefit to NHA partners because it streamlines the identification of potential recruits. Furthermore, the DPC could also provide training and deployment of volunteers, making it easier for partners to access the necessary workforce for heritage conservation and promotion efforts. This role enhances the capacity of partners to leverage community engagement and local support, ultimately contributing to the sustainability and success of heritage initiatives within the designated region.

### **STRATEGY 5.1.2 THE DPC WILL OPERATE A GRANT PROGRAM TO ADVANCE PROJECTS IN THE SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA NHA.**

Throughout the management planning process, the communities of the NHA reiterated the importance and need for an NHA grant program. Implementing a grant program is a strategic and essential step toward preserving and celebrating this unique and culturally significant region. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a complex natural ecosystem with historical and cultural resources (as described in Chapter 2 and in the resource inventory in Appendix F). Preserving the region's invaluable cultural assets is crucial to maintaining a sense of identity and heritage for local communities. This grant program is likely to be the primary role of the DPC in managing the NHA, with all projects and programs emanating from those grant applications received each grant round.

Many communities within the Delta have faced economic challenges, often due to shifts in agriculture and other industries. The grant program can support initiatives that encourage economic sustainability and growth, such as heritage-based tourism, agritourism, and small business development. By funding projects that enhance the economic vitality of the area, the grant program can contribute to job creation and economic resilience for the local population.

Education and awareness are crucial to ensure that the stories and significance of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta are not forgotten. The grant program can support projects that engage schools, museums, and community organizations to create educational programs, interpretive exhibits, and events. By fostering awareness, these initiatives can attract visitors and investment, further supporting the region's economic stability, cultural relevance, and natural vitality.

Engaging local communities in the conservation and promotion of their own heritage is key to the sustainability of the NHA. A grant program can enable communities to take a more active role in protecting and celebrating their heritage. These grants can enable community-driven projects, such as cultural festivals, historical lectures, and environmental cleanup efforts, which not only preserve the heritage but also instill a sense of pride and ownership among residents.

The Delta's unique ecosystem faces numerous environmental challenges, including habitat loss, invasive species, and the impacts of climate change. A grant program can provide funding for conservation and restoration projects aimed at safeguarding the area's natural resources. Conservation efforts can help maintain the Delta's ecological health, ensuring it continues to be a place of natural wonder that supports agriculture along with a habitat for wildlife.



Another significant benefit of an NHA grant program is that the funds can often attract other grants further benefiting the NHA by leveraging funding.

Implementing a grant program is necessary to address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities this region presents. It provides a structured mechanism to allocate resources and support projects that promote historic preservation, cultural conservation, tourism, recreation, economic growth, interpretation and education, community engagement, and environmental conservation. This need, and support for partner projects, is also articulated in Chapter 4, Strategy 4.2.1. This grant program not only safeguards the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's heritage but also allows it to flourish and thrive. By preserving its cultural and natural treasures, boosting its economic sustainability, and actively engaging the community, the NHA will ensure that this remarkable region continues to be a source of pride and inspiration for generations to come.

Specifically, a grant program will consist of a structured process for allocating funds to support heritage-related projects, tourism, and community development. The elements of such a program would include application guidelines and eligibility criteria; workshops to train partners in how to apply for a grant; a process for review of and evaluation of the applications received; determining grant funding thresholds; monitoring and reporting of previously approved grants; grant close-out requirements; and, final reports and evaluation of the grant to determine if the applicant met the goals of the grants and the NHA as a whole. A role of the Advisory Committee, as described previously, would be to review, score, and recommend to the DPC those grant applications that should be funded, with final determination made by the DPC.

Objective 5.2 Maintain the Delta Protection Commission as the coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area by upholding its commitment to conservation, heritage preservation, sustainable development, and community engagement, while implementing the management plan and increasing the visibility and impact of the NHA.

**STRATEGY 5.2.1 THE DPC SERVES AS THE COORDINATING ENTITY FOR THE SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA NHA, SUPPORTING THE NHA WITH ESTABLISHED ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS.**

Based on public opinion, as demonstrated in the recent *Delta Residents Survey*, the DPC is the most trusted state agency working in the Delta.<sup>78</sup> The current staffing of the DPC with responsibilities for the coordination and management of the NHA are provided, below. It should be noted that the percentage of time to be allocated could change with the evolving needs of the NHA.

**DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The Executive Director (California job classification CEA B) plans, organizes, and directs the activities of the Commission staff as directed by the Legislature and the Governor, and holds the top responsibility as the chief executive of the NHA to advance the NHA's mission, vision, policies, strategies, and its operations, including staff management, budgeting, and program execution. The Executive Director represents the organization to stakeholders, partners, and the public, and chairs the NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee. The Executive Director reports to the DPC. The executive director chairs the Advisory Committee.

**NHA Program and Project Team**

The NHA program and project team are responsible for implementing specific goals and recommendations of the management plan within the NHA. The staff will work directly with the Advisory Committee, task groups, and the communities to carry out programs and projects that advance the NHA's goals, strategies, and desired outcomes.

**NHA PROGRAM MANAGER**

The NHA Program Manager (California job classification Program Manager I) currently exists within the DPC and is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the NHA's management plan and its programs and projects.

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<sup>78</sup> Rudnick, J., Tomari, K., Dobbin, K., Lubell, M., and K. Bidenwig. *2023 Delta Residents Survey Summary Report*. Report developed for the Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Science Program. Sacramento, CA, pg. 56.

The Program Manager internal to the DPC oversees all NHA program staff, including those contracted working on specific NHA goals, such as conservation, education, community engagement, tourism, and economic development. The Program Manager will work to implement the management plan and its goals, objectives, and strategies. The Program Manager will manage and measure NHA program and project outcomes; collaborate with partners, stakeholders, and community members to achieve program and project goals; and identify opportunities for other public or private funding to support the NHA and to meet the federal match requirements. The Program Manager will also oversee the grant programs, working with the Advisory Committee on review and scoring of applications, and other the DPC administrative and financial staff on contracts and grant reporting.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNER/SPECIALIST**

The Environmental Planner/Specialist (California job classification Senior Environmental Planner) for the NHA holds a crucial role in working with other partners and organizations that have primary responsibility for preserving and managing the ecological and cultural resources within the NHA. Their responsibilities involve supporting the partner groups' work within the NHA as the recommendations of the management plan are advanced. This role will require a strong blend of environmental knowledge, planning and management expertise, and community engagement skills. The Environmental Planner/Specialist will work with heritage partners to help develop projects and programs that could be eligible for NHA grant funding.

### **RECREATION SPECIALIST**

The Recreation Specialist (California job classification Program Manager I) in the NHA develops and manages recreational programs and activities that promote outdoor exploration, enjoyment of natural resources, and an appreciation for the area's historical and cultural heritage. The Recreation Specialist works closely with the NHA Program Manager and Environmental Planner/Specialists on projects and programs that enhance visitors' and residents' experiences while preserving the integrity of the NHA's environment. The Recreation Specialist will work with heritage partners to help develop projects and programs that could be eligible for NHA grant funding.

### **MARKETING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH SPECIALIST**

The Marketing and Community Outreach Specialist (California job classification Information Officer I) is instrumental in creating a positive public image, fostering community engagement, developing partnerships, and driving growth for the organization through effective marketing and outreach efforts of all projects

and programs of the NHA. The position is often pivotal in promoting the NHA, building strong community relationships, and expanding its reach. The Marketing and Community Outreach Specialist is responsible for creating and implementing marketing strategies, managing public relations, and engaging with the local community to enhance brand visibility and reputation. The Marketing and Community Outreach Specialist will work with heritage partners to help develop projects and programs that could be eligible for NHA grant funding.

The DPC Administration, Finance, and Information Technology Team Within the DPC exist other positions that are necessary for all organizations, including NHAs. The benefit of these positions existing within the DPC is significant to the ability of the NHA staff to be able to focus on advancing the recommendations of the management plan without being burdened by other important, but time-consuming work. Moreover, the budget allocated by the DPC for these positions can be proportionally applied to the direct financial support of the NHA, thereby counting toward the match requirement for receipt of federal funding from the National Park Service through the Heritage Partnership Program.

### **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

The finance and administration staff (California job classification Staff Services Manager) is integral to the NHA's financial stability and compliance with regulations, ensuring that resources are managed effectively to support the organization's mission and growth. Responsibilities include managing the NHA's operations, procurement, purchasing, contracting, and human resources, and ensuring fiscal responsibility including maintaining accurate accounting records, developing financial documents including monthly financial reports, annual reports, grant monitoring and reporting including those grants awarded by the DPC to heritage partners, and required audits. This role is critical for sound management of financial resources and maintaining the financial health of the heritage area.

### **GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Administrative personnel contribute to the efficient operation of the NHA by providing essential support and helping to maintain a well-organized and functioning NHA operation. Sometimes as the frontline of personnel first contacted, the administrative staff will assume the daily work of communication (emails, phone calls, etc.) and other office administrative duties. This position is vitally important as it helps relieve the NHA Program Manager and the various specialists of in-house office tasks, allowing them to be more efficient with their program and project work with heritage partners.

## **CONSULTING SERVICES**

Information Technology Consulting Staff – The information technology consulting staff for the NHA are responsible for managing and maintaining the organization's information technology systems, ensuring that digital infrastructure and technology resources are efficient, secure, and aligned with the organization's mission. This is a contracted service and plays a critical part in supporting the NHA's operations, data management, and online presence.

## **STRATEGY 5.2.2 THE DPC WILL ADD STAFF AS THE NHA'S NEEDS EVOLVE AND CHANGE.**

The staffing needs listed below are those positions that may be necessary to accomplish the recommendations, goals, and strategies included in this management plan. Some positions might be filled as staff of the DCP. Other positions might be able to be housed within another state agency or partner organization. It should be noted that the State of California has established job titles within which all future NHA positions must fit. Therefore, the job titles listed below may not correspond directly to those positions identified by the State of California for the DPC. In addition, all newly created positions must be approved by the State of California before they can be advertised. The staffing positions listed below could include the following:

### **TOURISM COORDINATOR/SPECIALIST**

A Tourism Coordinator (California job classification Information Officer I) will be a dynamic role that combines marketing, cultural preservation, and community engagement to promote the rich heritage of the region and create memorable experiences for visitors. This position is responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing tourism initiatives to attract visitors, educating them about the area's heritage, and ensuring their overall satisfaction. As described in Chapter 3, the Tourism Coordinator will play an important role in connecting the region's destinations and attractions, the destination marketing organizations, and the state's official visitors bureau, Visit California. This position will also be responsible for implementing the marketing plan discussed in Chapter 3.

### **INTERPRETIVE SPECIALIST**

As an indicated need described in Chapter 1, the Interpretive Specialist (California job classification State Park Interpreter I) will play a critical role in conveying the NHA's unique story and heritage to visitors, fostering a deeper appreciation for its cultural and historical significance. The Interpretive Specialist will be responsible for developing and implementing interpretive programs and exhibits that help visitors and residents connect with and gain a deeper understanding of the NHA's cultural and historical significance. The Interpretive

Specialist plays a vital part in fostering an appreciation for the region's heritage, promoting education, and enriching the knowledge and understanding of the region.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION SPECIALIST**

A historic preservation specialist (California job classification State Historian I) will play a pivotal role in identifying, documenting, assessing, and conserving historic structures, landmarks, and artifacts. They will work to ensure the preservation of architectural, archival, and cultural heritage, promoting a sense of place and history that enriches the NHA's unique character and educates visitors and residents.

### **ETHNOGRAPHER**

An ethnographer (California job classification Assistant State Archeologist) will serve as a cultural researcher and documenter, conducting fieldwork to study and record the traditions, customs, and practices of the local communities within the heritage area. Their role is to preserve and share the rich cultural tapestry of the region, providing valuable insights to support heritage conservation, community engagement, and educational initiatives.

### **GRANT WRITING SPECIALIST**

The Fundraising and Development Specialist (California job classification Associate Government Program Analyst) will be instrumental in securing the financial resources necessary to preserve and promote the NHA's cultural and historical heritage, ensuring its continued growth and impact, including donor and foundation cultivation and support, grant writing, fundraising events, and an overarching fundraising strategy for the NHA.

### **STRATEGY 5.2.3 THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN IN A RESTRUCTURED ROLE, PROVIDE COUNSEL ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY, PROCESS, AND GOVERNANCE, AND ACT AS AMBASSADORS TO THE PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES IN THE NHA.**

The Advisory Committee, described earlier in this chapter, was established at the beginning of the management planning process. It holds a crucial role in providing recommendations to the DPC. Throughout the planning process, the Advisory Committee actively sought input from and represented a wide array of stakeholders, including government entities, businesses, landowners, community representatives, cultural and natural resource advocates, recreational organizations, and the public.

The DPC will restructure the Advisory Committee with an expanded role as well as ensuring it continues to have representation from each of the counties within the NHA. When Delta residents were asked about their confidence in governmental agencies in the Delta Residents Survey, respondents said they placed significant trust in community advisory groups.<sup>79</sup> As such, the Advisory Committee, working in collaboration with the DPC, will be an effective entity to foster and maintain community engagement for the NHA.

The role of the Advisory Committee will be to:

- Continue the role of the community partners with membership representation from the fields of cultural heritage, natural resources, education, tourism, recreation, and community engagement within the NHA counties, with a balanced representation of the counties of the NHA.
- Provide insights, recommendations, and feedback to enhance the effectiveness of the organization's programs.
- Act as a bridge between the organization and the broader community.
- Review, evaluate, and make recommendations on grant applications to the NHA.
- Establish systems to measure the impact of the NHA's initiatives and gather feedback from stakeholders.
- Analyze data to make informed decisions and improve program effectiveness.
- Report regularly (yearly at least) to the DPC on the work of the NHA measured against the management plan and the enacting legislation.
- Members of the Advisory Committee may be appointed to serve a single three (3) year term, with the ability to be re-nominated for another two terms before rotating off the Advisory Committee.

**STRATEGY 5.2.4 THE DPC STAFF AND THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE WILL ESTABLISH TASK GROUPS, AS NECESSARY, IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT SPECIFIC GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

*The task groups listed below are suggested – not mandated – and, therefore, should only be created if the Advisory Committee and the DPC staff deem them to be necessary.*

Each task group shall focus on a specific responsibility, outreach to local communities, convening partners, and ensuring active participation in decision-making processes. In addition, task group members shall have specific knowledge and experience in the task group field, could include professionals

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, pg. 55.

from specific heritage partner groups, government employees or officials, or members of the general public. Task group members should help develop possible projects and programs that could receive grant funding, or help to organize community events, workshops, and forums within the task group focus areas to gather input and address concerns, and act as an ambassador to the NHA and advocate for its work.

#### **HERITAGE RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND ENHANCEMENT TASK GROUP (EXISTING)**

- Conducts and oversees research to deepen understanding of the heritage area's history, culture, and environment.
- Assists with the preservation of the built environment and conservation of cultural heritage.
- Coordinates partners and convenes meetings with historic preservation interests,
- Supports organizations working to conserve living traditions and curate historical archives.
- Contributes to educational and interpretation materials.

#### **INTERPRETIVE PLANNING TASK GROUP (EXISTING)**

- Works with the DPC staff to advise and recommend the development of educational materials, workshops, tours, and other resources to engage the public and promote awareness of the NHA's significance.
- Works with schools, universities, and community groups to help to develop educational programs.

#### **HERITAGE TOURISM TASK GROUP (EXISTING)**

- Works with the DPC staff to advise and recommend responsible tourism initiatives that contribute to the local economy while preserving the NHA's integrity.
- Collaborates with partners and convenes meetings with local businesses, tourism boards, and marketing professionals to attract visitors.
- Supports existing interpretive providers.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING TASK GROUP (NEW)**

- Advises on the organization's communication efforts, including social media, website, public relations, and marketing campaigns.
- Shares success stories, updates, and relevant information to engage stakeholders and the public.



### CONSERVATION RESOURCES TASK GROUP (NEW)

- Responsible for advancing those goals, objectives, and strategies of the NHA that address the natural resources within the NHA.
- Collaborates with other Delta state agencies, environmental organizations, and local communities on natural resource conservation efforts that contribute to the NHA's programs and projects.

## Financial Needs of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area

As the NHA is housed within the DPC, portions of the DPC's operating budget are assigned to the annual operating cost of managing the NHA along with the proposed programs, projects, grants, and overhead. These costs are estimates based on actual operational costs provided by the DPC.

In addition, *Vision 2030*, the strategic plan for the DPC, laid out a strategy of leveraging sufficient funding for the DPC to accomplish its mission, including financially supporting and growing the NHA. On funding matters specifically, *Vision 2030* stated:

"To accomplish its initiatives to the fullest degree, the Delta Protection Commission seeks to maximize available funding sources to protect and enhance the unique community and cultural values, recreation and tourism, natural resources, and agriculture of the Delta.

Objectives:

- F.1 Continuously research, identify, and develop funding sources to support Commission operations and worthy and compatible activities in the Delta.
  - 1.1 Partner with a Delta-based organization on programs that support the Delta region.
  - 1.2 Identify and secure funding for Commission priorities by pursuing grants, partnerships, and federal or state appropriations, including the Delta Investment Fund.
  - 1.3 Use federal appropriations granted to the Delta National Heritage Area to leverage additional funding."

Along with this commitment, the DPC can utilize the Delta Investment Fund which, as established, can accept private donations from individuals or grants from philanthropic foundations. This tool is significant for both the DPC and the NHA, as accepting donations by a governmental body has been problematic for other NHAs with governmental coordinating entities.

**FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PROJECTION**

Based on the staffing, programs, and projects articulated within this management plan, the Delta Protection Commission is projecting the financial calculations for coordinating, managing, and administering the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area found on the following page. The calculations contained in the table are estimates at the time of publication of this management plan, and the amounts could change.

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area - Five-Year Projection – Annual Operating Revenues & Expenses

Revenues	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	5-Year Totals
<b>Contributions/Donations</b>	\$0	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$8,500
<b>NHA Federal Grant</b>	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$2,500,000
<b>DPC Funding</b>	\$765,300	\$1,398,459	\$1,750,413	\$1,802,925	\$1,857,013	\$7,574,110
<b>Other Federal Grants</b>	\$0	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$110,000
<b>State Grants</b>	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$80,000
<b>Local Government Grants</b>	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
<b>Foundations</b>	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$200,000
<b>Other Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$1,310,300	\$1,969,959	\$2,352,413	\$2,415,425	\$2,474,513	\$10,522,610

Expenses	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	5-Year Totals
<b>DPC Admin., Ops., Overhead</b>	\$765,300	\$1,398,459	\$1,750,413	\$1,802,925	\$1,857,013	\$7,574,110
<b>Consultant/Partner Support</b>	\$100,000	\$200,000	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$825,000
<b>Grants to NHA Partners</b>	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$250,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$1,200,000

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Management Plan

Expenses	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	5-Year Totals
<b>Printing, Copying, Postage</b>	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$67,500
<b>Prof. Expenses (Commission/Staff )</b>	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$15,000	\$17,500	\$20,000	\$75,000
<b>Program Expenses</b>	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$95,000
<b>Prof. Org. &amp; Membership Fees</b>	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$32,500
<b>IT Consultant</b>	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$15,200	\$76,000
<b>Misc. &amp; Other</b>	\$6,500	\$7,900	\$8,400	\$9,100	\$9,900	\$41,800
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$1,072,000	\$1,866,559	\$2,256,513	\$2,367,225	\$2,424,613	\$9,986,910
<b>Profit/Loss</b>	\$238,300	\$103,400	\$95,900	\$48,200	\$49,900	.
<b>Reserve Funds/Carry-Forward</b>	.	\$253,500	\$347,100	\$433,200	\$466,600	.
<b>Total of Cash After Expenses</b>	\$238,300	\$356,900	\$443,000	\$481,400	\$516,500	.
<b>In-Kind Support</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	.
<b>Grand Total</b>	\$238,300	\$356,900	\$443,000	\$481,400	\$516,500	.
<b>Contributions/Donations</b>	\$0	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$8,500
<b>NHA Federal Grant</b>	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$2,500,000
<b>EXPENSES</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	5-Year Totals
<b>DPC Admin., Ops., Overhead</b>	\$765,300	\$1,398,459	\$1,750,413	\$1,802,925	\$1,857,013	\$7,574,110

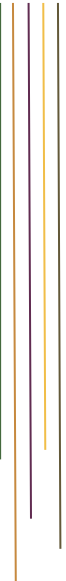
*The DPC calculates administration, operations, and overhead to include costs for staff salaries, employee benefits, office overhead, and travel.*

*In Years 1, 2, and 3, expenses for the DPC administration include new positions.*

*Expenses for the DPC administration are calculated with three percent COLA increases starting in Year 2.*

## **Conclusion**

The recommendations contained within this chapter were developed in consideration of the long-term sustainability of the NHA, the expressed needs of the NHA communities and partners, and in consideration of the recommendations contained within this management plan. The NHA is in a strong management position as the DPC and the network of heritage partners work together to implement this management plan.





*Supporters and local dignitaries celebrate the enactment of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area in April 2019. (Stacy Hayden/Delta Protection Commission)*

## Chapter 6 – Implementation, Evaluation, and Conclusion

### Introduction

The *Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area Management Plan* outlines the core mission of the NHA and its goals for the initial 15 years and shares a vision for the future created by the residents of the region. The hallmarks of the NHA are its unique natural and engineered landscape of water and farmland, the historic communities and the diverse cultures that built them, and the extensive partnership network that has already begun to work collaboratively. This management plan will be used as a guide and a catalyst for the DPC and the NHA partnership network, leveraging the existing synergy within this network and emphasizing that the strategic collaboration outlined within this plan is critical for attaining success.

With the DPC's strong fiscal and organizational capacity as a state agency, as well as its long-standing history of planning and project implementation in the region, the local coordinating entity is well-positioned as a regional leader. The organization's leadership role encompasses the continuation of successful programs, the development of new projects and programs identified during the planning process, and the support of partners' efforts to further the NHA's mission. The DPC and the NHA network of partners are prepared to carry out the strategies recommended in this plan and to adapt as new opportunities arise that are consistent with the NHA's mission, vision, and goals.

## **Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan and Priorities**

Designating legislation requires the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA develop an implementation plan (Sec. 6001(c)(2)(C)(iv)). The management planning process that the DPC, partners, and residents carried out resulted in the development of an implementation plan built around overarching goals comprised of measurable objectives, and a set of strategies to achieve those objectives. The strategies are projected activities that the DPC and partners will implement during the initial 15 years after designation.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Implementation Plan, presented in Appendix J, is organized by the NHA's five primary goals. Under each goal, the key objectives and strategies are listed along with the anticipated role of the coordinating entity. Where known, primary partner roles and opportunities are described, as well as the funding commitment that strategies entail. Each strategy also has a suggested timeframe during which programs and projects will begin. The DPC and its partners have already begun many activities that are likely to be continued, expanded, and enhanced in the future.

The anticipated starting timeline for new programs and projects is delineated as follows: short-term, denoting strategies that will commence in years one through three, beginning in the calendar year this plan is finalized; mid-term for strategies that will commence in years four and five; and long-term for the aspirational strategies that are projected for years six through ten. While a few projects may have distinct, relatively short timeframes for completion, many programs and projects will be ongoing. The timeframe is designed to be adaptable, enabling the coordinating entity to establish priorities for both new and ongoing activities, and to provide guidance to the NHA partnership network in determining a realistic pace for executing the plan's strategies.

Designating legislation also calls for strategies that will be undertaken in the first five years to be identified in the management plan. These are the short- and mid-term strategies listed in the implementation plan. Where possible, the implementation plan includes estimated project costs for specific expenditures but does not include the DPC or partner staff time or operations except in the business plan (Chapter 5). Additional potential sources for funding are noted where they are known.

All strategies are grounded in the interpretive themes for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA found in the interpretive plan (Chapter 1). Strategies contribute to stewarding and building on the natural, scenic, recreational, historic, and cultural assets of the region, developing interpretation that connects residents and visitors to those assets, and strengthening the partnership network and building capacity for communities and organizations. Strategies will be undertaken according to the best practices in each applicable field.

The DPC will develop an annual work plan of programs and projects "ready to go" based on the goals, objectives, strategies, and timeline set forth in the management plan and as developed with the Advisory Committee and the broader heritage partnership network. As part of the federal financial assistance agreement award process, the work plan based on management plan priorities is submitted to NPS each year.

Proposed programs or projects to be included in the annual work plan may include the following information:

- Project overview
- Measurable objective(s) and performance metrics
- Alignment with management plan goals and activities
- Detailed tasks and their timeframes for completion (including phased approaches if necessary)
- Responsible task group(s) for coordination or leadership
- Partners and their respective roles
- Cost estimations
- Staff allocations

### Preliminary Work Plan for Year 1

The first year following the completion of the management plan will focus on organizational capacity, including setting up the recommended committee and staffing structure that will facilitate the NHA's future success. A critical accomplishment in the first year will be establishing the NHA grant program, to provide a vehicle for accomplishing many of the strategies in this management plan. The following table includes a summary of the strategies to be addressed



in the first year. Additional information is found in the implementation and the five-year action plans (appendices J and K).

Strategies	Description
1.2.1	Organizing America 250 activities
1.1.2	Preparing Junior Ranger program
1.1.1, 1.4.1, 2.3.1, 3.1.1, 4.1.1, 5.2.3, 5.2.4	Reorganizing and setting up advisory bodies, including the interpretive providers network, the Tribal advisory council, a committee on cultural projects, the tourism partners network, the NHA Advisory Committee and task groups. In addition, the local coordinating entity will continue to play a role as a convener.
3.1.3	Updating marketing plan to include NHA activities
3.2.1	Developing and installing welcome, wayfinding, and interpretive signs
3.2.4 3.3.1	Creating a Passport program that includes historic, cultural, natural, and recreational sites
4.1.4	Partnering with Operation Pollination and engaging in ANHA
4.1.5	Working with the Delta Leadership Foundation on hosting the Delta Leadership Program
4.2.1 5.1.2	Establishing the NHA grant program
4.3.1	Holding the one-day Delta Heritage Forum conference
4.3.6	Publishing the Delta Happenings and Delta Heritage Courier newsletters
5.1.1, 5.2.1	Working to augment staffing

### Priorities for Years 1-3

A summary of the NHA's priorities in Years 1-3 is outlined below. Appendices I and J contain additional details related to implementation, including strategies to be carried out in the next five years. *The Five-Year Projection – Annual Operating Revenues and Expenses* table in Chapter 5 provides a financial picture for the local coordinating entity, including the primary sources of funding.

In Years 1-3, the NHA's priorities will be:

- Continuing existing programs and projects such as the *Delta Heritage Forum*, *Delta Heritage Courier*, *Delta Happenings*, *Delta Leadership Program*, and sign development and installation.
- Developing and implementing the NHA program.
- Exploring additional funding sources.
- Producing interpretive content, programs, and materials that align with NHA goals.
- Supporting educational programs.
- Working with partners on NHA-wide events such as America250.
- Supporting the conservation of historical, cultural, and environmental resources.
- Creating a sustainable tourism program.
- Developing an online presence, trip planning tools, and marketing materials.
- Establishing locations to provide NHA information.
- Expanding and supporting the heritage partnership network.
- Working with existing and new advisory bodies on interpretation, resource stewardship, heritage tourism, and communication and marketing.
- Implementing projects that have a high benefit-cost ratio such as a passport program, Junior Ranger program, joining Operation Pollination, and posting plaques on historic buildings.

### Roles for the National Heritage Area

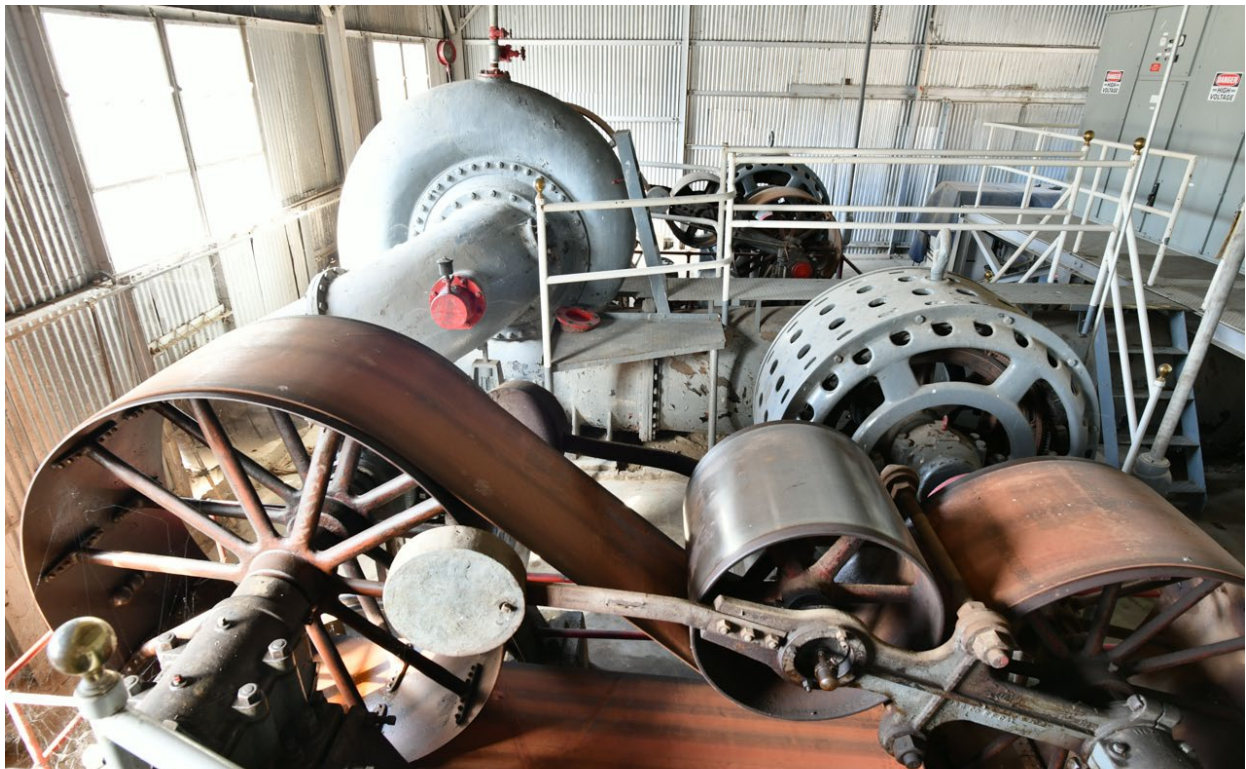
Broadly, there are seven fundamental roles that the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA may assume. These various roles that other NHAs have played across the nation are described below. The specific role the local coordinating entity will play in each of the strategies outlined in the management plan is integrated into the strategy descriptions set forth in the preceding chapters and identified in Appendix J.

- **Leader:** Actively advancing the efforts of partners in the implementation of programs and projects that hold local, community, regional, or heritage area-wide benefits, providing direction in fostering collective endeavors.
- **Convener:** Acting as an organizer and facilitator for regional dialogues among partners and stakeholders, fostering discussions on specific topics to coordinate their independent initiatives and collaborative efforts.
- **Project Implementer:** Undertaking an independent project of benefit to partners and/or the NHA.

- **Collaborator:** Engaging in partnerships with various stakeholders to implement joint programs, projects, or initiatives that align with the overarching goals of the National Heritage Area.
- **Funder:** Providing NHA funding through grants or direct support for specific projects or programs.
- **Promoter:** Taking on the responsibility of raising public awareness regarding the independent initiatives and work carried out by partners within the NHA.
- **Provider of Technical Assistance:** Organizing or facilitating the sharing of skills, training, and information that assist in implementing projects and programs and building capacity within the partnership network.

## Implementation Summary

As implementation advances, the DPC will be proactive in assessing regional needs and opportunities and evaluating potential alignment with the mission and goals of the NHA. The DPC and the partnership network will learn and grow, expanding their understanding of the shifting priorities in preservation, conservation, tourism, interpretation, and economic development. The management plan leaves flexibility for the DPC and the partnership network to add or eliminate strategies that will help the NHA to continue to achieve the



*Supporters and local dignitaries celebrate the enactment of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area in April 2019. (Stacy Hayden/Delta Protection Commission).*

long-term vision established through the collaborative management planning process.

## Performance Outcomes and Evaluation

Performance assessment and evaluation constitute a critical, continuous process for every organization. There are two fundamental categories of evaluation. The first is the regular, yearly programmatic assessment integrated into an organization's administrative procedures. This practice serves as a compass for determining and executing programs and projects on an ongoing basis. The second is the comprehensive, long-term evaluation that examines the overall programmatic performance over an extended period.

The DPC carries out the first type of evaluation, programmatic assessments integrated into administrative procedures, through several regularly occurring activities:

- First, as an independent state agency, the DPC responds directly to the California State Legislature through annual reports.
- The DPC board, which is comprised primarily of local officials, is engaged in the work of the DPC staff and regularly evaluates the performance of the Executive Director.
- The DPC also prepared and regularly updates the Vision 2030 strategic plan, which identifies objectives for cultural heritage and other theme areas.
- The DPC's financial and administrative staff and the agency's longevity mean there is a long-standing established protocol for reporting on financial and performance outcomes. This has involved rigorous reporting, documentation of activities and outcomes, and evaluation of programs and impact, demonstrating accountability, results, progress, and paths to improvement for these programs.
- The DPC established objectives and key results (OKRs) with the California Natural Resources Agency that are reported annually.
- The State Leadership Accountability Report, developed every two years, confirms internal controls, including assessment of accomplishments, for the whole organization.

The current system of evaluation and performance review entails attention to collecting data, understanding outcomes, and evaluating the success of the DPC's activities and programs. These practices will be applied to the annual NHA evaluation.

Going forward, responsibility for evaluation of the NHA falls in part to the Advisory Committee, as recommended in Chapter 5 (Strategy 5.2.3). The Advisory Committee will review NHA projects and programs on an annual basis, measuring accomplishments against the annual work plan and the goals, objectives, and strategies in the management plan. In addition, the DPC will continue to develop plans, including strategic planning, that will provide the opportunity to adjust NHA objectives and priorities for the long-term success of the partnership network and the region's resources.

Congress began including an evaluation requirement in designating legislation starting in 2008, aligning with the second type of evaluation mentioned above. As outlined in designating legislation for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA, the evaluation must:

- Assess the progress of the local coordinating entity in accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation and the goals and objectives of the management plan;
- Analyze the investments of the federal government; state, Tribal, and local governments; and private entities in the National Heritage Area to determine the impacts of the investments; and
- Review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the National Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the National Heritage Area.

Public Law 117-339, the National Heritage Area Act signed into law in 2023, states that the Secretary of the Interior, "at reasonable and appropriate intervals, may conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the National Heritage Area," (Section 120104 (a)(1)).<sup>80</sup> The law states that evaluation will assess the NHA's accomplishments of its purposes and achievement of the goals and objectives in the management plan, and will consider the leverage and impact of investments in the NHA. The 2023 legislation differs from the Dingell Act of 2019, which contained the designating legislation for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA. In the earlier legislation, the Secretary was directed to conduct an evaluation three years prior to the end of the initial authorization.<sup>81</sup> The National Park Service will develop guidance for how the new legislative mandate will be carried out.

The legislated purposes and the goals of this management plan comprise the guiding intent for the NHA in its initial 15 years. Near the end of that period, the

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<sup>80</sup> *National Heritage Area Act*, Public Law 117-339, Section 120104 Evaluation, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1942/text>, accessed November 21, 2023.

<sup>81</sup> *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act*, Public Law 116-9, Section 6001 (f) Evaluation and Report, <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ9/PLAW-116publ9.pdf>, accessed July 15, 2023.

DPC will compile information needed for plan evaluation – including but not limited to historical budgets, program and project accomplishments, and administrative, management, and governance procedures.

The National Park Service defined an evaluation process over the course of evaluation of several NHAs that had reached the end of their authorization. The process, documented in the 2016 publication *National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide*, may be conducted by an independent entity. The National Park Service, acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior, will review the results to determine if the DPC and the NHA have met the congressional mandate as established in designating legislation and the goals and objectives of the management plan. Based on the results of the NHA evaluation, the Secretary will compile a report for Congress that systematically details the achievements, the outstanding objectives, and the underlying reasons for non-fulfillment (if needed), as well as any remaining tasks. The evaluation also considers opportunities that were unanticipated during management planning and that were undertaken or could potentially evolve into NHA projects or programs.

Finally, the *Delta Residents Survey* presents an opportunity for a rigorous social scientific approach to evaluation not available to most NHAs. Carried out by the Delta Science Program for the first time in 2023, the survey measured perceptions of sense of place, community engagement, confidence in government, and response to climate change. In implementing the management plan, the NHA hopes to have a positive impact on all of these perceptions. By collaborating with the Delta Science Program to repeat the survey every three to five years, the DPC will gain valuable longitudinal insight into the overall success of the NHA.

## Financial Projections for Implementation

Financial projections for five years following management planning are presented in Chapter 5. As a state agency, DPC has the capacity to match NPS Heritage Partnership Program funds through the portion of the administrative budget associated with the NHA. Additional income from private and state grants and donations, as well as project matching funds leveraged by the NHA grant program and participation in partnership projects will enable the DPC to not only meet, but exceed, the federal match requirement. The table shows expected expenditures to carry out the management plan activities, including personnel, operations, subgrant program, and some specific project and program expenditures. Project costs and staffing levels suggested in the implementation plan, plus estimated inflation increases, are included in these projections.

## Commitment and Support

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA enjoys significant support from a broad network of partners. This management plan includes a wide range of partners, many of which have provided letters of commitment and support. In the letters of commitment, found in Appendix L, partners affirm their dedication to collaborating with the DPC to carry out the approved management plan, with a specific focus on how their organizational missions and interests align with the goals of the NHA. Partners define their commitment, which may include allocation of staff time, financial resources, or other essential resources to support the implementation of the plan's strategies. Also, partners express their willingness to participate in committees, engage in additional planning, advocate for the NHA, and collaborate with the DPC to carry out the mission and work to achieve the vision established in the management plan. Many of these commitments are described in the narrative of the plan and in the letters of commitment (see Appendix L). Detailed partnerships are in Appendix G.

Time, resources, needs, and challenges can determine partners' participation in implementing any plan. The partnership network identified in this management plan could be different than the network that will exist during the period of evaluation fifteen years after the NHA's designation.

## Conclusion

The congressional designation of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA and the implementation of the *Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA Management Plan* represent an extraordinary opportunity for the region. The NHA has the potential to be a transformative force in uniting and supporting partners to achieve the outcomes of the management plan. This will be achieved by sharing the region's nationally significant story and implementing projects and programs in historic, cultural, and environmental conservation, heritage tourism, and community development.

The NHA has many strengths that can be improved as efforts move from planning to implementation. The DPC has a long-established state mandate, a record of support across many communities, and an experienced staff with demonstrated success in developing and carrying out regional projects and programs. The federal mandate to the DPC and the partnership network that comes with the designation of the NHA amplifies the opportunities in heritage conservation and development.

Furthermore, as an established state agency, the DPC's financial stability and relationships with local, state, and federal governmental entities give the NHA

considerable capacity that is unusual for NHAs in their initial years after designation. This capacity enables the DPC and the partners to avoid the often-lengthy start-up process experienced by many NHAs and move quickly with the federal mandate to begin implementing the recommendations in this management plan.

With the signing of a National Heritage Area program bill in 2023, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA is reassured of its authorization without the need to manage programs and projects with a sunset date approaching, as experienced previously by NHAs. The legislation provides permanence to the DPC and the partners as they work together to execute the goals and objectives within this plan. This permanent authorization and the consistent annual federal appropriation of funding for NHAs provide a basis of assurance to other funding partners knowing that their investment into NHA projects comes with a certainty of organizational and operational sustainability.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta NHA boasts a wide-reaching network of regional partners with the DPC at its core. The organization can bridge the gap between larger federal and state agencies, local governments, and the region's diverse stakeholders, including nonprofit organizations, businesses, communities, and educational institutions. The management planning process has coalesced partnerships and shaped a comprehensive regional vision that acts as a unifying platform, accommodating a diverse array of interests and capacities. The NHA partners and the DPC are unwavering in their commitment to implement this management plan and to engage a continually increasing number of stakeholders in the pursuit of this collective vision.