



PUBLIC NOTICE AND MEETING AGENDA

Delta Protection Advisory Committee

Tuesday, December 3, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Al's Place 13943 Main Street
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

Agenda

1. Call to Order/Flag Salute – Anna Swenson, DPAC Chair
2. Welcome and Roll Call
3. Public Comment – An opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee regarding items not on the agenda
4. Approval of October 1, 2024, Meeting Minutes ([Page 3](#))
5. Approval of 2025 Meeting Schedule ([Page 10](#))
6. Presentation on Striped Bass Slot Limit Proposal – Dr. David Ostrak
7. Review of DPIIC Meeting Levee Discussions – Emily Pappalardo
8. Quiet Waters – The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta – Rich Turner
9. Update on Delta Protection Commission activities – Bruce Blodgett
10. Delta Waterways Cleanup – The Committee
11. Member Announcements and Next Meeting
12. Adjourn

The agenda items listed above may be considered in a different order at the Committee meeting, subject to the discretion of the Chair. At the discretion of the Committee, all items appearing on this agenda, whether or not expressly listed for action, may be deliberated upon and may be subject to action. The Committee welcomes and encourages participation in its meetings. The Committee limits testimony to not more than three minutes per person, or more time at the discretion of the Chair.

Questions, Comments, and Requests

If you have any questions or have a request for reasonable modification or accommodation due to a disability, please contact the Delta Protection Commission at dpc@delta.ca.gov or (916) 375-4800.

Comments submitted to submit@delta.ca.gov by noon on December 2, 2024, will be shared with Commissioners prior to the meeting to the extent possible. Public comments on each agenda item will follow the order of: 1) emailed comments, 2) those verbally requesting to make comments after notice offered by Chair during meeting.

Delta Protection Advisory Committee Members

Chair Anna Swenson (Delta General Public) and **Katherine Wiley** (Delta General Public Gerry Goodie Memorial Seat) | **Vice Chair Russ Ryan** (Delta Water Exporter) | **Emily Pappalardo** and **Arron Pellarin** (Delta Business) | **Craig Watanabe** and **Gary Mello** (Delta Agriculture) | **Todd Bruce** and **Morris Lum** (Delta Recreation) | **Edward Hard** and **Erin Chappell** (State Agency) | **Chris Elias** (Delta Flood Entity) | **Mariah Looney** (Delta Organization) | **Jim Cox** (Delta Conservation/Habitat Non-governmental Organization) | **Sam Garcia** (Delta Utility/Infrastructure) | **Douglas Hsia** (Delta Cultural Preservation) | **Steven Hutchason** (Delta Tribe).

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Representatives of the California Department of Water Resources, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Delta Stewardship Council, and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy.

Meeting Minutes (Draft)
Delta Protection Advisory Committee

Tuesday, October 1, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
Wimpy's Marina
14001 West Walnut Grove Road
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

1. Call to Order/Flag Salute – Anna Swenson, DPAC Chair

Vice Chair Ryan called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. Welcome and Roll Call

A quorum was present with members Russ Ryan, Jim Cox, Arron Pellarin, Steven Hutchason, Mariah Looney, Emily Pappalardo, Douglas Hsia, Craig Watanabe, Gary Mello, Todd Bruce, Edward Hard, and Ex Officio Heather Swinney (USFWS).

Guests present were Todd Plain and Matt Conover.

DPC staff present were Executive Director Bruce Blodgett, Virginia Gardiner, Blake Roberts, Holly Heyser, Mike Aviña, and Heather McClure.

Member Chris Elias arrived at 5:37 p.m. during Item 5. Member Erin Chappell arrived at 5:45 p.m., and Chair Anna Swenson at 5:50 p.m., both during Item 6.

3. Public Comment – An opportunity for members of the public to address the Committee regarding items not on the agenda

Vice Chair Ryan asked for comments from members of the public and there were none.

4. Approve August 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Member Looney moved, and Member Pellarin seconded a motion to approve the August 6, 2024, minutes. The motion passed unanimously, with one abstention from Member Hsia.

5. Update on Delta Protection Commission activities – Bruce Blodgett

Executive Director Blodgett announced that applications for the Delta Leadership Program are open and due by November 22. Positions for a new Senior Environmental Planner and an Information Officer for the NHA have been posted. The NHA Advisory Committee will meet on October 31 in Oakley, and the Delta Protection Commission meeting will be held at the Sacramento Yacht Club on November 21. At the September meeting, the Commission approved both the DPAC Delta Cleanup Day for 2025 and the Gerry Goodie Memorial Seat. Blodgett touched on work being done by staff for the Rio

Vista and Contra Costa County General Plans. He discussed a road closure affecting the Empire Tract in San Joaquin County, which may be appealed to the DPC. Lastly, he gave an update on the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, during which Program Manager Virginia Gardiner confirmed that a consultant had been retained and the meeting to kick off the program was to be held the following day.

Vice Chair Ryan asked for public comments and there were none.

6. Presentation on the Delta Meadows Plan – Megan Harrison

Megan Harrison and David Block, accompanied by Gina Benigno from California State Parks, gave a presentation on the Delta Meadows Plan, covering the background, current planning efforts, and steps ahead for the Delta Meadows property. Originally acquired as separate parcels beginning in the 1980s, the property now comprises approximately 500 acres between Walnut Grove and Locke of primarily wetland with some levee roads throughout. The park property will undergo a formal classification, naming, and general planning process, which includes exploring potential recreational uses and addressing the community's needs and desires. The classification phase will determine whether Delta Meadows will be a state park, state recreation area, state natural reserve, etc. As part of this, there are considerations for whether to keep the Locke Boarding House included in the park property or separate it as its own park unit.

This multi-year project is in its early stages, with a focus on public engagement, stakeholder input, and tribal consultation. State Parks launched a website—PlanDeltaMeadows.com, on July 1, 2024, and an initial public meeting is tentatively scheduled for November to gather feedback. Over the next three to five years, the general plan will establish overarching objectives for resource management, preservation, and recreation at Delta Meadows. From there, specific management plans will be identified for the park.

Member Pellarin asked if the plan is approved by the Governor. Harrison responded it is the State Parks and Recreation Commission that will review and approve the final plan.

Vice Chair Ryan asked the approximate date to get to the final classification. She responded the website has some potential dates listed, but it's all dependent on how much input is received and how varied that input is. Block commented it should take three to five years if things go smoothly. Ryan then asked who is paying for it. Harrison answered that through the Waterway Connections Initiative they did receive grants, part of which will go to the general plan. There is not yet funding for implementation of the final plan.

Executive Director Blodgett asked about the current recreational use. Harrison responded that people fishing, bird watching, and taking walks on the levees is primarily what they see there.

Vice Chair Ryan asked about Reclamation Districts pertaining to the levees within the park property. Harrison answered there are two: RD 369 and RD 554. It was brought to her attention that a third, RD 1002, lies in the northeast corner. Block also mentioned that a levee on the north side that abuts the park is RD 551.

Vice Chair Ryan asked for public comments. Matt Conover commented regarding a side slough on the east side, requesting that boat parking not be allowed there as it could lead to people climbing up the levee and potentially engaging in illicit activities. Harrison asked him to submit his comment to the State Parks email to ensure that it is recorded and they can respond.

Vice Chair Ryan then turned the meeting over to Chair Swenson.

7. Operations Plan for the Delta Conveyance Project overview

Carrie Buckman, Environmental Program Manager with the Department of Water Resources (DWR), provided a presentation on the Operations Plan for Delta Conveyance Project (DCP). She was joined by DWR colleagues Janet Barbieri and Gardner Jones. Buckman began by explaining the role of operations in managing the State Water Project (SWP), which involves coordinating with other agencies to ensure the timing, quantity, and location of water movement meet legal and environmental requirements for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Delta Conveyance Project, as part of the SWP, must align with a range of regulations including Decision 1641 issued by the State Water Resources Control Board. She stated the Plan looks to enhance awareness and understanding by documenting in one place the operational commitments such as in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Incidental Take Permit (ITP) Application submitted to California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Operations Plan is focused on how the DCP will be operated once it is constructed and the criteria that will guide processes such as scheduling diversions.

A key aspect of the Operations Plan includes integrating two new intakes on the Sacramento River with existing SWP facilities while adhering to water rights permits, regulatory requirements, and other operational parameters. Buckman emphasized that the DCP will not alter upstream operations, such as those at Lake Oroville, but will instead operate opportunistically during high winter and spring flows, with limited diversions in summer and fall for water quality management. Fish protection measures

include bypass flow requirements, pulse protection events, and state-of-the-art fish screens on the intakes.

Buckman highlighted the plan as a living document, intended to be updated consistent with any additional permit conditions or applicable laws and regulations. The Operations Plan also addresses Maintenance Flow Diversions during low-flow periods, emergency situations allowing DWR to operate outside of the parameters, and the coordination needed with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Additionally, she spoke on the Community Benefits Program, for which they will be seeking public feedback through early 2025.

Member Pappalardo asked if maintenance will still happen during drought conditions or while curtailments are in place for Delta users, and also asked about the time requirements for maintenance. Buckman responded they cannot divert if they are not meeting the minimum 5,000 CFS. Jones added that drought could potentially further limit use, but if the pumps are not run every couple of months, then most likely during the third month each pump would be run for a day to make sure they are functional.

Member Hsia inquired about the locations of the north and south Delta intakes. Buckman responded the north intakes are both near Hood and the south intakes are those already existing at Clifton Court Bay and Banks Pumping Plant.

Senior Environmental Planner Mike Aviña asked for clarification on what actions they planned to take to meet the fully mitigated standards of their ITP. Buckman stated the EIR includes analysis of land use impacts, including restoration efforts that are part of the project which help to mitigate impacts particularly to wetlands, and aquatic and terrestrial species. Aviña inquired whether additional actions would be required to achieve full mitigation, referencing a Notice of Preparation (NOP) from the SWP that mentioned further conservation efforts under a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Buckman could not confirm what the NOP was referring to but reiterated that restoration actions to both mitigate impacts and to reach fully mitigated status are included in the EIR.

Vice Chair Ryan asked what a monitoring plan for fisheries might look like. Buckman stated they have the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) which is a CEQA requirement that looks at how they monitor compliance of all mitigation measures. The Operations Adapted Management and Monitoring plan was her second example, which she described as more science based.

Member Looney made a comment regarding the addition of the diversion criteria concepts to the plan which she appreciated, but expressed her difficulty in trusting that the DWR will have follow through, particularly after their decision to cancel protections

for the Delta Smelt this fall, which she stated are on the brink of extinction. In response, Buckman mentioned the fact that they are subject to oversight from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State Board, so it's not just her word on things.

Member Cox remarked that the presentation given today was significantly different from the one delivered three years ago at the Stakeholder Engagement Committee (SEC) meeting, where the project had been promoted as a solution to fish-related issues in the Delta. Buckman explained that the SEC took place earlier in the planning process. However, she emphasized that she had consistently communicated that this is not a fisheries benefit project but a water supply project, and they are working as much as possible to understand, minimize, and mitigate those impacts.

Chair Swenson spoke on her concerns about the plan's designation as a "living document," which allows for changes at will. She cautioned that this will lead to increased water demands as climate change progresses and possibly other adjustments, such as relaxing the Delta's salinity requirements. She also addressed a misrepresentation of the maintenance needs for the pumps, pointing out that the stated requirement of 300 CFS every few months is inaccurate. Based on information from a Banks Pumping Plant worker, she clarified that maintenance is a weekly process, and the pumps cannot be offline for more than seven days.

Buckman pointed out the main purpose for the Delta Conveyance was as a climate adaptation project designed to capture high flows when they are available, noting that as storms become flashier and more extreme and as rainfall replaces snow it will be even more necessary. She explained that with the declining baseline of the south Delta, the ability to divert from the North Delta is crucial for reducing shortages and maintaining the functionality of the State Water Project. She addressed the concept of the plan as a living document, explaining it allows for layering in more restrictions as they arise from the permitting process and other regulatory changes.

There was additional commenting that continued from various Committee members for several minutes. Chair Swenson asked if there were any additional questions from the Committee and Member Hsia asked where the captured water will be stored. Buckman replied that it will first go to San Luis Reservoir if available, and if not, it will go to local agencies for storage.

Executive Director Blodgett inquired about the timing of a consistency determination from the Delta Stewardship Council. Buckman said they are looking at submitting the certification of consistency mid-2025.

Chair Swenson asked for public comments and there were none.

8. Levee Funding – Emily Pappalardo

Mike Kynett and Kirsten Pringle of MBK Engineers presented an overview of the McCormack-Williamson Tract Levee Modification and Restoration Project. MBK serves as the district engineer for Reclamation District 2110 (RD 2110), which oversees the McCormack-Williamson Tract. This historically agricultural area, now owned by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), is being transformed into a combined flood management and ecosystem restoration project. Initial planning for the project began in the 1990s when the Nature Conservancy acquired the property before transferring ownership to DWR. The project aims to improve flood conveyance and restore approximately 1,200 acres of habitat, including riparian, tidal, and shaded riverine ecosystems.

The project addresses the tract's long history of levee breaches and flooding, with major failures occurring in 1986, 1997, 2017, and most recently in January 2023. To manage these challenges, the project was divided into two phases in 2017. Phase A included constructing a ring levee in 2018 and re-sloping to protect the levee and reduce interior erosion during future flooding. These initial measures were designed to stabilize the island and prepare for the next phase.

Phase B focuses on reducing flood risk in the region and enhancing the ecosystem. Key project features under Phase B include the construction a 900-foot-long east weir, designed to overtop at an 11-foot elevation during high flows, and the Southwest Levee Degrade, which allows daily tidal inflow and outflow at a 2.5-foot elevation. Hardened rock is used to ensure stability and durability. The overall goal is to balance flood control with habitat restoration while minimizing future repair and maintenance needs. Phase B construction is currently ongoing.

Member Pappalardo asked how the district planned maintenance for the exterior levee. Kynett answered that DWR is currently working through and figuring out long-term management of levee repairs and the entire island which does include a fairly large program to keep the remnant levee in its existing condition, with dedicated funding for much of it.

Vice Chair Ryan asked the cost per mile. Kynett responded that for in-water excavation it is about \$22 a yard and for dry it is closer to \$10, noting that operation is a huge challenge on a narrow poorly maintained levee as the only access route. Ryan then inquired about the use of geotextiles and Kynett said that geotextile is only in the crest of the weir as a stable subgrade for the articulating concrete mat.

Member Hutchason asked if the soils were staying on the property and inquired about logging protocols. Kynett replied that the soils were going back to the area of the ring

levee or back to on-site areas. Tribal monitors handled all observation, logs, etc. for excavation activities. He stated the requirement is if anything is found they would notify and go from there. Pringle drew attention to marked locations on a site map with annotations to indicate the specific locations for soil placement. Hutchason asked if the surface was something he could walk on to survey. Kynett responded yes, the area is accessible and should be dry even during the winter.

Chair Swenson asked for public comment and there was one: Matt Conover asked if the North Levee would be permanent. Kynett stated the long-term management plan is still being developed by DWR, but the North Levee will most likely be permanent because it's the primary access to the ring levee area.

9. Delta Waterways Cleanup standing agenda item – Anna Swenson

Chair Swenson mentioned the significant amount of litter currently seen near the waterways. This DPAC activity is planned to coincide with the 2025 Coastal Cleanup Day in September. She recommended that members begin considering what they would like the Committee to do for this event.

Chair Swenson asked for public comments and there were none.

10. Member Announcements and Next Meeting

A number of upcoming events were highlighted. Member Looney announced a new podcast put out by Restore the Delta called Delta Flows hosted by Tony Gladney. Vice Chair Ryan spoke on his involvement with the Great Valley Farm Water Partnership, which is a collaboration of farmers from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley regions that looks at solving water-related issues. He suggested giving an overview of this group's activities at an early 2025 DPAC meeting.

Chair Swenson announced the next DPAC meeting will be December 3, location to be determined.

11. Adjourn

Chair Swenson adjourned the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Delta Protection Advisory Committee Meeting

December 3, 2024

AGENDA ITEM 05: 2025 DPAC Meeting Dates

Prepared by: Heather McClure

Presented by: Bruce Blodgett

Recommended Action: Approve DPAC's 2025 meeting calendar

Type of Action: Vote

Based on the 2025 Delta Protection Advisory Committee meeting calendar (meetings on the first Tuesday of even-numbered months), the 2025 meeting schedule is proposed as follows:

- February 4, 2025
- April 1, 2025
- June 3, 2025
- August 5, 2025
- October 7, 2025 *
- December 2, 2025

Recommended Action

Commission staff recommends the Committee approve the 2025 annual meeting calendar.