



PUBLIC NOTICE AND MEETING AGENDA

Delta Protection Commission

Thursday, January 16, 2025, 5-7 p.m. (end time is approximate)
Sacramento Yacht Club,
3365 Chicory Loop, West Sacramento, CA

Agenda

1. Call to order and Flag Salute
2. Welcome & Roll Call
3. Public Comment – an opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission regarding items not on the agenda

Closed Session Agenda

4. The Delta Protection Commission will meet in closed session to consider the evaluation of performance of one or more of its employees. This closed session is authorized by Government Code section 11126, subdivision (a)(1).

Consent Agenda

5. Approval of Draft December 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes ([page 3](#))

Regular Agenda

6. Report on Delta Stewardship Council Activities – Chair Diane Burgis
7. Report on Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC) Activities – Anna Swenson (DPAC Chair)
8. Executive Director’s Report – Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director ([page 9](#))
9. Consider Approval of the 2024 Annual Report – Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director ([page 13](#))
10. Presentation on Striped Bass Slot Limit Proposal – Dr. David Ostrak

11. Delta as Place Presentation, Invasive Species update – Martha Volkoff, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

12. Commissioner Comments/Announcements

13. Adjourn

The agenda items listed above may be considered in a different order at the Commission meeting, subject to the discretion of the Chair. At the discretion of the Commission, all items appearing on this agenda, whether or not expressly listed for action, may be deliberated upon and may be subject to action. The Commission welcomes and encourages participation in its meetings. The Commission 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. Attachments and additional information can be found on the Delta Protection Commission website: delta.ca.gov.

Comments submitted to submit@delta.ca.gov by noon on January 15, 2025, 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 Commission Members

Diane Burgis, Chair, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors | **John Vasquez, Vice Chair**, Solano County Board of Supervisors | **Oscar Villegas**, Yolo County Board of Supervisors | **Patrick Hume**, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors | **TBD**, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors | **Anissa Williams**, Cities of Contra Costa and Solano counties | **TBD**, Cities of Sacramento and Yolo Counties | **Alan Nakanishi**, Cities of San Joaquin County | **Jim Paroli**, Central Delta Reclamation Districts | **Tom Slater**, North Delta Reclamation Districts | **TBD**, South Delta Reclamation Districts | **Toks Omishakin**, CA State Transportation Agency | **Karen Ross**, CA Department of Food and Agriculture | **Wade Crowfoot**, CA Natural Resources Agency | **Jennifer Lucchesi**, CA State Lands Commission

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: TBD, California State Assembly | **TBD**, California State Senate

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Delta Protection Commission

Thursday, December 12, 2024, 5 p.m.
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Conference Room
1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6, West Sacramento

Agenda

1. Call to Order and Flag Salute

Chair Diane Burgis called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Welcome and Roll Call

Commission Clerk Heather McClure called the roll. Present at roll call: Chair Burgis, Vice Chair John Vasquez, Commissioners Oscar Villegas, Patrick Hume, Tom Slater, Dean Ruiz (for South Delta Reclamation District), Gloria Sandoval (for Wade Crowfoot), and Brian Bugsch (for State Lands Commission). Commissioners Tom Patti, Paul Steele, Alan Nakanishi, Toks Omishakin, and Karen Ross; and ex officio members Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman, and Assemblymember Carlos Villapudua were absent with no alternate present. At this time, a quorum was present.

Commissioner Anissa Williams arrived at 5:06 p.m. during the public comment period.

It was noted that Commissioner Jim Paroli joined the meeting remotely at 5:43 p.m., just before the vote on Item 10.

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

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was one:

Cheryl Bly-Chester, an environmental engineer representing a Stockton area marina, spoke on an issue regarding Empire Tract in the Delta's Primary Zone. She stated the road was closed initially to deal with the sunken ship *Aurora* and has been closed for about six months. She asserted the City of Stockton used this opportunity to close a mile stretch of the road while lacking proper permits for the extended closure and despite CEQA mitigation requirements ensuring continued fishing access. She commented this was a vital public access point for fishing, particularly for accessible fishing, and this raises concerns about public access to the scenic route and the San Joaquin River. The speaker seeks to connect with a Commission staff member to discuss the matter further and explore solutions.

Consent Agenda

4. Approval of Draft September 19, 2024, Meeting Minutes

5. Approval of 2025 Meeting Schedule

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

Motion: It was moved by Vice Chair Vasquez and seconded by Commissioner Bugsch to approve the Consent Agenda; in a roll call vote, the motion passed 9-0-0, all Commissioners present voting aye.

Executive Director Blodgett noted that November meeting date may need to be moved to the first week of November to avoid conflicting with League of California Cities meeting.

Regular Agenda

6. Report on Delta Stewardship Council Activities – Chair Diane Burgis

Chair Burgis reported that the Delta Stewardship Council met last month, followed by the DPIIC meeting, which focused on levees. The discussion emphasized the challenges and importance of investing in levees. The Delta Stewardship Council will meet again next week to review appeals of consistency certification for 2024-2026 Delta Conveyance Project geotechnical activities. She announced that she would leave tonight's meeting at the appropriate time to avoid participating in that discussion.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

7. Report on Delta Protection Advisory Committee (DPAC) Activities – Anna Swenson (DPAC Chair)

DPAC Chair Swenson had not yet arrived, so this Item was moved to follow Item 9.

Swensen reported on the presentation given by Dr. David Ostrak on the striped bass slot limit proposal, which considered a scientific-based rationale as to how this would create a healthier ecosystem and improve the overall health of the Delta. Rich Turner also presented on his new tabletop book about the Delta, *Quiet Waters*.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was one:

Russ Ryan, speaking for Reclamation Districts, extended appreciation to the Commission regarding the focus on levees, stating how important it is for water supply, water quality, and many other reasons.

8. Consider Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2025 – The Commission

Vice Chair Vasquez stated he would like to extend the Chair's term for another two years given the Chair's extensive knowledge of the Stewardship Council's activities, he felt it was critical to maintain continuity by keeping her in that role for now.

Counsel Carlos Mejia stated the following: For the Commission's clarity, Public Resources Code Section 29739 sets forth requirements for the appointment of chair: One, that it be one of the members appointed by one of the five Delta counties; and two, that the term lasts for two years. In the past, chairs who sit by virtue of being chair on the Delta Stewardship Council have, with the Commission's consent, elected to extend their time in office so they can conclude activities that may be happening before the Delta Stewardship Council. The statute does require the Commission to make the selection of the chair for two years; however, it is at anyone's discretion how long they stay. There are no statutory requirements for the vice chair. However, he noted that if it is the Commission's intent that perhaps the vice chair succeeds the chair, then, obviously, the vice chair should also be a member from one of the five Delta counties.

Commissioner Bugsch sought input from the other counties to ensure agreement on this decision, and the consensus was unanimous.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Slater and seconded by Commissioner Villegas to approve the reelection of Commissioner Burgis and Commissioner Vasquez for Chair and Vice Chair; in a voice vote, the motion passed 9-0-0, all Commissioners present voting aye.

9. Executive Director's Report – Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director

Executive Director Blodgett drew attention to pages 11 through 73, which encompassed the entirety of his report, including numerous comment letters completed throughout the year. He reviewed activities regarding the National Heritage Area Management Plan, National Heritage Area Advisory Committee, the Delta Heritage Forum, DPAC, the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail extension, the Delta Leadership Program, and Commission communications. Additionally, he discussed work done in collaboration with Delta counties on the Programmatic Agreement under the National Historic Preservation Act, noted progress with Caltrans District 10 moving forward on the Welcome to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area sign installation in San Joaquin County, and reported that interviews are underway with two firms for the update on the marketing plan for the NHA.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

10. Consider Proposed Ex Officio Appointments to the National Heritage Area Advisory Committee (NHAAC) – Blake Roberts, Program Manager

Program Manager Roberts presented on the five additional ex officio members he recommended be appointed to the Advisory Committee: Julie Lee or Jeff Henderson from the Delta Stewardship Council, Mike Moran from East Bay Regional Park District, Trevor Rice from National Park Service, Karen Buhr from Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, and John Takekawa from Suisun Resource Conservation District. He noted these five appointments would bring the total to seven non-voting ex officio members on the Committee.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Villegas and seconded by Commissioner Bugsch to approve the ex officio appointments to the NHAAC; in a voice vote, the motion passed 10-0-0, all Commissioners present voting aye.

11. Consider Approval of the Final NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes and Committee Closeout – Blake Roberts, Program Manager

Roberts stated that the National Heritage Area Advisory Committee is now up and running, so this item is to approve the final minutes of the NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee meeting held on June 18, 2024, and then formally dissolve the Management Plan committee.

Chair Burgis asked for public comment and there was none.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Bugsch and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve the Final NHA Management Plan meeting minutes and Committee closeout; in a voice vote, the motion passed 10-0-0, all Commissioners present voting aye.

12. Consider Comments to the Department of Water Resources on its Geotechnical Activities for the Delta Conveyance Project – Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director

Chair Burgis and Commissioner Sandoval recused themselves and departed the meeting at this time. Vice Chair Vasquez chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Executive Director Blodgett spoke on the challenges with timing and requirements for responding to the extensive documentation of the consistency certification for

geotechnical activities filed by DWR with the Delta Stewardship Council on October 8, 2024. He stated there was not enough time to have staff review the material, draft comments, and then hold a Commission meeting in compliance with Bagley-Keene noticing requirements to allow the Commission to review those comments in time for the submission deadline.

To address this, staff submitted initial comments on November 5, followed by updated comments on November 27 that clarified these were the views of the Delta Protection Commission staff and not yet approved by the Commission, as advised by counsel. Both letters were included in the packet for the Commission's review.

Blodgett pointed out that with the tight deadlines on the Notice of Hearing from the Delta Stewardship Council – issued on November 14 with comments from the DPC due November 27, staff had acted to ensure that input was provided rather than allowing the opportunity to lapse. He stated it was up to the Commission tonight to decide whether to amend or to approve the submitted comments as they are, which will then be presented at the Stewardship Council hearing on December 19.

Commissioner Hume expressed appreciation for the effort to provide a timely response and acknowledged counsel's guidance on ensuring the source of comments is clearly identified. He asked if, aside from clarifying the source, the comments in both letters were substantially the same. Senior Environmental Planner Mike Aviña confirmed that they are exactly the same.

Commissioner Hume stated he supported the comments in full and both Commissioner Slater and Commissioner Villegas concurred.

Vice Chair Vasquez asked for public comment and there was one:

Anna Swensen spoke on her experience with geotechnical borings and the substantial property damage surrounding it and encouraged the fight of the geotechnical activities.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Hume and seconded by Commissioner Williams to approve both comment letters as submitted; in a voice vote, the motion passed 7-0-1, all Commissioners present voting aye with one abstention from Commissioner Bugsch.

13. Consider Participation in the Delta Stewardship Council's Appeal of the Department of Water Resources' Certification of Consistency for its Geotechnical Activities for the Delta Conveyance Project – Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director

Executive Director Blodgett reiterated that the Stewardship Council hearing is December 19, 9:30 a.m. at the Natural Resources building. He recommended two

actions to address the timing challenges associated with responding to comments on the geotechnical activities ahead of the hearing. First, delegate authority to the Executive Director to prepare an interim comment letter. Second, designate a representative to offer public comments at the December 19 hearing.

The Commissioners determined that the Executive Director would serve as the representative at the hearing.

Vice Chair Vasquez asked for public comment and there was none.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Hume and seconded by Commissioner Villegas to approve Executive Director Blodgett as the DPC representative at the Council hearing on December 19, 2024, and the authorization to prepare an interim comment letter for this hearing; in a voice vote, the motion passed 7-0-1, all Commissioners present voting aye with one abstention from Commissioner Bugsch.

14. Commissioner Comments/Announcements

Executive Director Blodgett sought input on the possibility of holding more meetings at the Conservancy to allow remote participation and better ensure a quorum. Commissioners generally agreed that this location would be suitable for future meetings, with the understanding that meetings would alternate with other locations as well.

15. Adjourn

Vice Chair Vasquez adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Delta Protection Commission Meeting

January 16, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 8: Executive Director’s Report

Prepared by: Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director

Presented by: Bruce Blodgett, Executive Director

Recommended Action: Receive the Executive Director’s Report

Type of Action: Receive

Commission Budget Update

Budget and Spending for Delta Protection Commission - FY 24/25
Projected Budget

FY 24/25 Categories	Budget Amount	Total Expenses and Projections	Difference
Salaries and Wages	\$1,515,000	\$1,389,335	\$125,665
Operating Expenses	\$821,000	\$747,854	\$73,146
Total	\$2,336,000	\$2,137,189	\$198,811

The Department of Finance approved the Delta Protection Commission’s exclusion from budget reductions. The Delta Protection Commission’s budget will remain whole with no reductions for FY24-25 and 25-26.

National Heritage Area Management Plan

National Park Service and Department of the Interior staff are reviewing the management plan submitted March 12. The plan requires Secretary of the Interior approval. National Park Service officials will provide their recommendation on Management Plan approval to the Secretary of the Interior. Staff contacted Congressional offices to alert them that the management plan has not been approved yet and urged them to contact the Park Service asking them to complete the process. Commission staff are continuing to conduct outreach to Tribes as part of our tribal consultation process for the Management Plan.

National Heritage Area Advisory Committee

The National Heritage Area (NHA) Advisory Committee had its second meeting on Friday, December 6, 2024, at the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse. The agenda included approval of the 2025 meeting calendar, discussion of match funding, updates on the passport program, a summary of the Delta Heritage Forum, and a presentation on the Clarksburg

schoolhouse. The next NHA Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26, from 1 to 3 p.m. at a location to be determined.

Delta Conveyance

The Delta Conveyance (Tunnel) Project is engaged with multiple permitting agencies currently, as reported by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) widely at various public meetings. Permits and upcoming regulatory procedures anticipated in late 2024 and in 2025 include California and federal Endangered Species Act permits and Biological Opinions. The Petitions for Change of Water Rights (Change in Point of Diversion) hearing before the State Water Resources Control Board Administrative Hearings Office is anticipated to begin in January 2025.

Four coalitions of various parties filed four appeals to DWR's Certification of Consistency with the Delta Plan to the Delta Stewardship Council for 2024-2026 Proposed Geotechnical Investigations on November 7, 2024. The four appeals each represent a coalition of interests, including but not limited to Central Delta Water Agency, South Delta Water Agency, Sacramento County, San Joaquin County, San Francisco Baykeeper, and Native American tribes. The non-state agency members of the Commission endorsed presentation of comments pursuant to Public Resource Code 29773 to the Council appeal hearing set for December 19, 2024, and designated the Executive Director to present. Staff will report on the outcome of the appeal hearing to the extent it is known by the date of this Commission meeting.

A Certification of Consistency with the Delta Plan for the Delta Conveyance Project itself is anticipated to be filed by DWR in mid-2025.

Staff supported the Commission and Executive Director by preparing comments for the Executive Director to present at the hearing on appeals on December 19, 2024. The Commission previously delegated the Executive Director to speak on their behalf at the hearing.

Great California Delta Trail – Clarksburg Branch Line Trail Extension

Project outreach for the Clarksburg Branch Line Trail extension, a proposed 6.4-mile, Class I multi-use trail with buried fiber optic conduit along the former Short Line Rail in West Sacramento, unincorporated Yolo County and the Clarksburg community, is expected to kick off in early 2025. Outreach will be conducted at several venues in Clarksburg and the West Sacramento area engaging key project partners, including agricultural and adjacent property owners, tribal representatives, local businesses, community organizations, and residents through one-on-one interviews, workshops and other outreach. As the project description is developed and refined during this process, staff will provide further updates.

Commission Land Use Comments

Commission staff conducted routine reviews of land use decisions by reviewing agendas for local governments and other public entities across the Delta as further described below. This review process includes all local governments and local agencies that make land use decisions in the Delta Primary and Secondary zones. This weekly review process also includes public notices for permits for selected regulatory agencies such as the US Army Corps of Engineers. This review process also includes documents and notices posted as required under the California Environmental Quality Act on the Office of Planning and Research website. The total weekly review of agendas and updates includes approximately 65 different agencies or local government departments.

Other Planning Activities

Delta Leadership Program

The DLP opened its application process Sept. 13. The DPC selected 19 participants for the program in 2025.

Commission Communications

Content

In addition to regular newsletters and meeting notices:

- We [celebrated the arrival of broadband internet in Isleton](#), which came about as a result of a public-private partnership, with some facilitation by the DPC and Valley Vision.
- An NHA Advisory Committee meeting in Clarksburg on a pretty December morning provided opportunity for a photo gallery on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), highlighting residents' yard décor.

Engagement

Data consistently show strong community engagement with anything that concerns the National Heritage Area. In the past two months as of this writing:

- *Delta Heritage Courier* had the highest email-open and link-click rates of DPC newsletters.
- The NHA Advisory Committee meeting notice for Dec. 6 had the most reach, reactions, and clicks of all Facebook posts, and the most reach and likes of Instagram posts.

- The Clarksburg photo gallery, which included photos from the NHA meeting, had the second-most reach on Instagram.

It is worth noting that signups for the Delta Heritage Forum (September-October) and applications for the new NHA Advisory Committee (July-August) came in steadily from the time they were announced. The NHAAC received more than enough applications, and Forum registration had to be closed to avoid exceeding capacity.

Among *Delta Happenings* newsletters: The Nov. 19 issue ([Isleton Bridge Closure](#), [Prospect Island Project](#), [Small Craft Operator Job](#)) had the highest email-open rate and the Oct. 22 issue ([Pioneering Isleton](#), [Flood Week](#), [DPC Jobs](#), [Rio Vista Fall Festival](#)) had the highest link-click rate. Analytics are not yet available for the Dec. 17 newsletter promoting the Isleton broadband story.

Upcoming Delta Events

For the most current event listings, subscribe to *Delta Happenings* at delta.ca.gov/get-connected. For access to recent newsletters, go to delta.ca.gov/newsletters.

Delta Protection Commission Meeting

Jan. 16, 2025

AGENDA ITEM 09: Approve 2024 Annual Report

Prepared by: Commission Staff

Presented by: Bruce Blodgett

Recommended Action: Approve the 2024 Annual Report

Type of Action: Vote

Background

Public Resources Code section 29780 requires the Commission to report to the Governor and Legislature annually on the progress made in achieving the statutory objectives of the Delta Protection Commission. Once the content is approved, the report will be published and forwarded to the Governor and Legislature.

Recommended Action

Approve the 2024 Annual Report.

Relationship to Vision 2030 (Commission strategic plan)

Education and Outreach (Strategic Theme)

O.1 Ensure consistent, proactive communication between and among Delta interests and decision makers.

1.3 Foster two-way communication throughout the Delta.

1.3.3 Foster communication between Delta interests for improved, coordinated action.



ACTION 2024

Delta Protection Commission

Annual Report



Letter from the Chair



January 16, 2025

Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California
Honorable Members, California State Legislature
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: 2024 Annual Report of the Delta Protection
Commission

Dear Governor Newsom,

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Resources Code
Section 29780, I am proud to submit the 2024 Delta
Protection Commission Annual Report for your review.

It is our mission to support agriculture, recreation, cultural
heritage, and natural resources in the Delta. We advance
that mission by implementing our Strategic Plan (Vision
2030) while adapting to challenges and opportunities.

The Commission made great strides in 2024: It submitted
for federal approval the management plan for the
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area,
emphasizing protection and promotion of the Delta's
vibrant culture and history; partnered with City of West
Sacramento, Yolo County, and the Yolo Transportation
District to obtain a \$1.9 million grant to extend a segment
of the Great California Delta Trail from West Sacramento to
Clarksburg; reviewed hundreds of land-use projects,
ensuring growth does not come at the expense of
agriculture and historic communities; and worked to
expand digital equity in the Delta by helping Isleton secure
broadband internet access and grant funding.

With the support of all the Commission members, it is an
honor to offer you the Delta Protection Commission 2024
Annual Report.

Sincerely,

Diane Burgis
Chair

Background

The [Delta Protection Act](#) was adopted by the Legislature in 1992 and last amended in 2009. The Delta Protection Act declares that the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is “a natural resource of statewide, national, and international significance, containing irreplaceable resources, and that it is the policy of the State to recognize, preserve, and protect those resources of the Delta for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations.”

The Delta Protection Commission was created under the 1992 Act to recognize and protect the unique cultural, recreational, natural, and agricultural resources of the Delta, and the 2009 amendments to the Act further defined it as “the appropriate agency to identify and provide recommendations to the Delta Stewardship Council on methods of preserving the Delta as an evolving place.” With this mandate, the Commission focuses on the oversight of Delta land use and resource management; levees and emergency response; the support of Delta agriculture, recreation, tourism, and local economic development; and the protection of Delta historic, cultural, and natural resources.

The 15 members of the Commission include a member of the County Board of Supervisors from each of the five primary Delta counties (Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo); three elected city council members representing cities throughout the Delta; representatives from North, Central, and South Delta reclamation districts; and representatives from the California State Transportation Agency, California Natural Resources Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and California State Lands Commission. Two ex officio members represent the California State Senate and the California State Assembly.

As required by Public Resources Code Section 29780, each year the Commission submits to the Governor and the state Legislature this Annual Report, describing the progress Commission actions have made toward fulfilling the requirements of the Delta Protection Act.

2024 Actions

Land & Water

Commission staff reviewed local government and other agency agendas and public notices to identify projects that fall under the Commission’s purview, then reviewed those projects for consistency with the [Land Use and Resource Management Plan \(LURMP\)](#) and the Delta Protection Act.

As needed, Commission staff submitted comment letters to various entities on land use projects, detailed later in this report in the [Land Use Project Comment Letters section](#).

General Plans. Staff also reviewed the consistency of local general plan amendments with the Delta Protection Act, including:

- **The Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan.** Through collaboration with the Commission, the County incorporated additional policies to protect agricultural and natural resource values, levees, and resources relevant to flood protection.
- **The Rio Vista 2045 General Plan.** In the small portion of the city that lies in the Primary Zone, land uses are industrial warehouses, a municipal wastewater treatment plant, and agricultural uses such as grazing. Staff worked with the city’s planning consultant to incorporate a policy allowing continued grazing to the extent it is compatible with the other land uses.

Delta Conveyance Project. Commission staff continue to participate in activities related to the Department of Water Resources’ Delta Conveyance Project (DCP), including:

- **National Historic Preservation Act.** Continuing to consult on a draft Programmatic Agreement under Section 106 of the National Heritage Preservation Act in the DCP’s capacity as a consulting party to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Programmatic Agreements provide a structured process to identify and resolve adverse effects on historic and cultural resources from complex multi-phased projects. Commission staff is working with Delta counties to ensure that the Programmatic Agreement meaningfully includes local governments and tribes at each step described in the agreement.
- **Geotechnical activities.** Preparing Commission [staff comments](#) on the consistency certification for 2024-2026 DCP geotechnical activities. The document certifies that geotechnical activities for the DCP are consistent with the Delta Plan adopted by the Delta Stewardship Council; the comments contend the geotechnical work will permanently disrupt agricultural processes through the

placement of permanent survey monuments. The comments also argue that the consistency certification fails to include the full scope of the covered action as required in the consistency certification process.

Delta Communities

Commission staff engaged in the following to support Delta communities:

Broadband. Worked with the City of Isleton and the Connected Capital Area Broadband Consortium manager Valley Vision to obtain a [\\$20,000 Local Government Best Practices grant](#) from the California Emerging Technologies Fund to expand digital equity in the community. Also supported the city’s [effort to bring in a new provider’s wireless tower and technology](#) that has expanded broadband service coverage, speed and quality in the area.

Post-disaster housing. Collaborated with the Delta Stewardship Council, Sacramento Coalition to End Homelessness, Department of Water Resources, University of California, Davis, and Stanford University, to produce the [“Planning for Post-Disaster Housing in Legacy Communities” Story Map](#) presented at the Science for Communities Workshop in July.

Representation. Commission staff participate on multiple task forces and committees to represent the interest of Delta communities.

The Executive Director presents regular updates on Commission activities at the Delta Stewardship Council, is a Liaison Advisor to the Delta Conservancy, and regularly attends and participates in meetings of the North, Central and South Delta water agencies.

Additional task forces and committees that Commission staff participate in include: Bay-Delta Tribal Engagement Working Group, Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Committee, Central Valley Flood Protection Board, Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee, Delta Interagency Invasive Species Committee, the Delta Levees and Habitat Advisory Committee.

Regional Economy

Socioeconomic Indicators Report. In collaboration with the Delta Stewardship Council, staff continued work updating the Commission’s [Socioeconomic Indicators Report](#), covering the period 2016 to 2023. The report will provide a quantitative snapshot for benchmarking policy progress in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region. Key findings will include the need to monitor increased housing pressure on agricultural lands in the

Secondary Zone; the deterioration of state highway road conditions; and the potential to develop a Delta agricultural productivity report.

Data gathered for the report also supplied data needed to update Delta Plan Performance Measure 5.9 relating to Delta Plan Chapter 5, “Protect and Enhance the Unique Cultural, Recreational, Natural Resource, and Agricultural Values of the California Delta as an Evolving Place.” Publication of the report is expected in 2025.

Recreation & Tourism

Clarksburg Branch Line Trail extension. The Commission partnered with City of West Sacramento, Yolo County, and the Yolo Transportation District to obtain a [\\$1.9 million Carbon Reduction Program grant](#) to extend a segment of the Great California Delta Trail from West Sacramento to Clarksburg.

The [Great California Delta Trail](#) is a network of trail segments built and managed by local governments, with the Delta Protection Commission acting in a coordinating role. The trail will form 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 Clarksburg Branch Line Trail extension is proposed as a 6.4-mile, Class I multi-use trail with buried fiber optic conduit along the former Sierra Northern Short Line Rail alignment. The project is intended to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions and potentially connect the Clarksburg community to West Sacramento and beyond.

Project outreach, reviews, engineering, and design will occur beginning in 2025, with construction, if the project is approved, beginning in 2028.

Event promotion. Commission staff continued to promote Delta community events in the *Delta Happenings* and *Delta Heritage Courier* newsletters.

Heritage

The Commission is the local coordinating entity for the [Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area \(NHA\)](#), which was established by Congress in 2019.

National Heritage Area Management Plan. Commission staff completed its first major task on development of the NHA in March with submission of a [management plan](#) for review by the Secretary of Interior. The plan was developed over several years with the NHA Management Plan Advisory Committee in consultation with Delta communities; heritage professionals; and federal, tribal, state, and local governments. Outreach in 2024 included

private meetings with tribal representatives, three public meetings, and presentations to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and community organizations.

The plan received letters of commitment and support from:

- **U.S. representatives:** Ami Bera, Mark DeSaulnier, John Garamendi, Josh Harder, Doris Matsui, and Mike Thompson
- **National Park Service units:** John Muir National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial
- **California state agencies:** Delta Stewardship Council; Department of Fish and Wildlife; Natural Resources Agency; Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation; Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy; State Lands Commission; and State Water Resources Control Board, Office of the Delta Watermaster
- **Counties:** Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Yolo; Delta Counties Coalition
- **Cities:** Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley, and Pittsburg
- **Special Districts:** East Bay Municipal Utility District, East Bay Regional Park District, Suisun Resource Conservation District
- **Government advisory bodies:** Contra Costa County Historic Landmarks Advisory Committee
- **Universities:** California State University, Sacramento, Department of History; University of California, Davis, Center for Regional Change
- **Chambers of commerce and tourism organizations:** California Delta Chambers and Visitor's Bureau, Isleton Chamber of Commerce, Oakley Chamber of Commerce, Visit California
- **Private businesses:** American Cruise Line, Willow Ballroom
- **Cultural and historical organizations:** Antioch Historical Society; California Preservation Foundation; Delta Education Cultural Society; East Contra Costa Historical Society; Friends of the 1883 Clarksburg Schoolhouse; Locke Foundation; Locke Prior Residents, Descendants and Ascendants Association; Pittsburg Historical Society; Sierra Nevada Mountain Chautauqua
- **Community organizations:** Delta Legacy Communities, Inc; Freeport Citizens Community; Hood Community Council; RioVision; South Pocket Homeowners Association
- **Other organizations:** Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs, Delta Chapter; California Striped Bass Association, West Delta Chapter; Farm Bureau Delta Caucus; Marine Recreation Association; Society for California Archeology
- **Also:** Cristina Lewis

National Park Service officials reviewed the management plan, including engaging in tribal consultation, and have provided their recommendation of approval to the Secretary of the Interior.

Delta Heritage Forum. Commission staff organized the sixth annual [Delta Heritage Forum](#) for more than 80 Delta heritage professionals and aficionados on Nov. 15 at the Antioch Historical Museum. The free, full-day event included panel discussions designed to help heritage professionals, Delta storytellers, talks on Delta history topics, and a museum scavenger hunt.

Welcome to the Delta National Heritage Area Signs. Signs to mark representative Delta boundary locations as identified by the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy’s Delta Sign Plan have been installed by Caltrans District 10 in San Joaquin County. The DPC developed the welcome signs in collaboration with the Conservancy and the Delta marketing task force, which have also been installed in Sacramento and Yolo counties.

Science Support

Commission staff activities supporting new research projects benefiting Delta resources included:

- Letters supporting research grants:
 - Evaluating “alternate wetting and drying” rice cultivation for its potential to reduce consumptive water use and methane emissions, thereby further improving the environmental benefits of rice cultivation in the Delta.
 - Identifying links between Harmful Algal Blooms and human health, a pressing issue facing residents and communities that depend on Delta waterways.
- Participation in the Just Transitions in the Delta advisory committee considering various adaptation strategies in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta under conditions of drought, salinity and sea-level rise.

Communications

Commission staff expanded or improved communications with:

Feature articles. Commission staff began publishing [feature articles](#) on the website and sharing them through newsletters and social media to increase public understanding of the Delta as a place with a distinct history and a culture worth preserving. News outlets including Maven’s Notebook and the Rio Vista Beacon have republished articles, furthering the Commission’s stakeholder engagement and reach into rural communities.

Homepage redesign. The Commission’s updated homepage offers:

- *Clarity* – a concise [description of the DPC’s major areas of responsibility](#).

- *Context* – an explanation of [the Delta’s geography, governance, culture, and natural resources](#).
- *Transparency* – the [meeting calendar and materials, as soon as they are available, for the entire year](#) for the Commission and its committees.

Web-based forms. Commission staff converted to web-based forms for all applications, registrations, and feedback, increasing accessibility to DPC programs. Unlike digital documents, these forms are easily completed on mobile devices, the dominant form of internet access for many Delta residents.

Leadership & Development

Organizational assessment. Commission staff engaged an organizational assessment consultant to identify opportunities for improvement and program expansion. The assessment made 17 recommendations, of which seven are in process, including a guide to help members of the Commission’s public bodies understand their roles and responsibilities. The remaining items will be prioritized and assigned to Commission staff for completion in the coming years.

NHA Advisory Committee. The Commission replaced the National Heritage Area Management Plan Advisory Committee, which oversaw development of the NHA Management Plan, with a new [NHA Advisory Committee](#), which will oversee implementation of the plan. The committee, which now includes two members of the Commission, began meeting in October.

Delta Protection Advisory Committee. The Commission filled two new seats on the Delta Protection Advisory Committee: one [tribal seat](#) and one [additional general public seat](#). In addition, the Commission named the first general public seat the [Gerry Goodie Memorial Seat](#), to commemorate a committee member who passed away in early 2024.

Delta Leadership Program. In cooperation with the Delta Leadership Foundation, Commission staff operated the [Delta Leadership Program](#) for the ninth year. Fourteen people completed the program, which is designed to identify and cultivate regional leaders. Subsequently, one 2024 graduate was appointed to both the Delta Protection Advisory Committee and the NHA Advisory Committee, and another was a moderator in the 2024 Delta Heritage Forum. The 2025 class of 19 participants was selected in December, and the program was scheduled to begin Jan. 10.

Land Use Project Comment Letters

Multiple Counties

Long-Term Operation of the State Water Project and the State Water Project Operations and Maintenance Habitat Conservation Plan

Commission staff submitted comments July 19 on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Long-Term Operations of the State Water Project and the Notice of Preparation for the Habitat Conservation Plan for Maintenance of the State Water Project, prepared by California Department of Water Resources.

Zone: Primary Zone and Secondary Zone

Comments: The [letter](#) noted that better substantiation may be required to support the conclusion that impacts on aquatic species would be less than significant. This is in light of federal listing of longfin smelt as endangered and the state listing of white sturgeon as a candidate for threatened status.

The comments also noted that the State Water Project operations and habitat conservation plans to support mitigation for maintenance activities appear so intertwined that they may better be analyzed as a single project.

Project Size: Indeterminate – the projects will unfold over many years. Longterm operations of the State Water Project will be largely limited to the footprint of existing facilities. The acreage of the Habitat Conservation Plan will depend on the number and scope of future conservation actions.

Farmland Conversion: Indeterminate – conservation actions under the Habitat Conservation Plan may convert farmland, but the total quantities are unknown at this time.

Contra Costa County

Contra Costa General Plan Update with the Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan

Commission staff submitted a [comment letter](#) April 8 regarding both the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the General Plan policies themselves. Through collaboration with the County, additional policies were incorporated into the final General Plan to protect agricultural and natural resource values, levees, and resources relevant to flood protection.

Zone: Primary Zone and Secondary Zone

Comments: Initial comments focused on inconsistencies in the analysis in the EIR and the potential for agricultural land conversion.

Project Size: Contra Costa County (approximately 800 square miles)

Farmland Conversion: Farmland conversion in the Primary Zone that could occur as a direct result of the General Plan was minimized by minor policy changes and clarifications.

Ironhouse Sanitary District, Giant Garter Snake Mitigation Bank

Ironhouse Sanitary District is a municipal agency within Contra Costa County that manages land on Jersey Island in the Delta Primary Zone. The District prepared an initial study pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) considering an application to create a giant garter snake mitigation bank on Jersey Island. The bank would consist of a landscape of sinuous channels that create aquatic habitat for giant garter snake, a special-status species. Upland basking habitat would also be created by retaining upland berms. The banking agency, Mitigation Investment Holdings, would then sell credit to entities needing mitigation to offset regulated impacts to the species. The existing landscape currently contains grazing land.

Zone: Primary Zone

Comments: Commission staff submitted a [comment letter](#) Nov. 13 flagging the issue of agricultural land loss. The letter explained that even though the land may not be a category of farmland identified in the Appendix G checklist of thresholds for CEQA analysis, conversion of that land may nonetheless contribute to a cumulatively significant problem of agricultural land loss. The letter closed by encouraging the District to adopt mitigation committing to ongoing grazing in the upland areas if the bank is created.

Project size: 189 acres

Farmland conversion: Potentially 189 acres of grazing land (potential conversion to habitat with no grazing).

Sacramento County

Twin Cities Greenwaste Composting Facility

The project consists of an application to Sacramento County for entitlements for a processing facility for municipal green waste, which must be diverted from urban sources under a new law. The proposed facility, which would convert green waste into compost, would be inside the boundary of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge.

Zone: Primary Zone

Comments: Commission staff submitted comment letters on [March 4](#) and [June 7](#).

Because the facility is not oriented toward agriculture and would convert farmland in the Primary Zone, it conflicts with the Land Use and Resource Management Plan (LURMP). The second comment letter clarified that Commission staff do not agree with the applicant's analysis that the project is consistent with the LURMP.

Project Size: 39.4 acres

Farmland Conversion: 39.4 acres of grazing land

Solano County

Cache Slough Mitigation Bank Project

Solano County and Westervelt Ecological Services propose to establish an approximately 350-acre mitigation bank. The project would re-establish approximately 34 acres of upland habitat and 316 acres of waters including wetlands, in or adjacent to the Sacramento River.

The mitigation bank proposes to offer 212 tidal, freshwater wetland credits that would include dual species credits for Delta smelt, North American green sturgeon, California Central Valley steelhead, Chinook salmon (Central Valley spring-run and Sacramento River winter-run), and giant garter snake; and 104 credits of floodplain, riparian credits that include dual species credits for California Central Valley steelhead, Chinook salmon (Central Valley spring-run and Sacramento River winter-run) and giant garter snake.

Zone: Primary Zone

Comments: Commission staff submitted [comments](#) Aug. 21 encouraging Solano County to adopt a suitable approach to offsetting conversion of agricultural land (i.e., mitigation), given the important of agricultural land to the Delta economy.

Project Size: 370 acres

Farmland Conversion: 370 acres of agricultural land (grazing).

Yolo County

Tide's End Multi-benefit Project

The proposed project would provide up to approximately 450 acres of tidal marsh and tidal channels; 630 acres of floodplain habitat; and 1,132 acres of managed floodplain and associated infrastructure, including managed seasonal wetlands for waterfowl,

agricultural fields, irrigation supply channels, and associated berm and road infrastructure. The restored mix of tidal, floodplain, and managed habitats would improve habitat for listed species, including Delta smelt and steelhead, contributing to the aquatic fish habitat.

Zone: Primary Zone

Comments: The [comments](#) focused on the conversion of agricultural land and recommended mitigation by preserving agricultural land at a high ratio (i.e., preserving an equal or greater acreage of agricultural land than that converted).

Project Size: 2,212 acres

Farmland Conversion: Approximately 2,212 acres of agricultural and vacant land.

2024 Membership

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John Vasquez, Vice Chair

Supervisor, Solano County

Oscar Villegas

Supervisor, Yolo County

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Representative, Central Delta Reclamation Districts

Tom Slater

Representative, North Delta Reclamation Districts

Vacant

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