

Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)
National Heritage Area Advisory Committee

Wednesday, June 25, 2025, 1 p.m.
Solano Transportation Authority Board Room
423 Main Street, Suisun City, CA 94585

1. Call to Order – Dan Ray, NHA Advisory Committee Chair

Chair Ray called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m.

2. Roll Call

A quorum was present with Chair Dan Ray, Vice Chair Elizabeth Patterson, members Diane Burgis, Dwayne Eubanks, Carol Jensen, Don Nottoli, Stuart Walthall, and alternate Douglas Hsia. Ex officio members Chris Lim, Karen Buhr, Julie Lee (for Delta Stewardship Council), and Trevor Rice. It was noted that members Morris Lum and David Stuart arrived at 1:10 p.m. and Colin Coffey arrived at 1:21 p.m.

It was noted that Member Hsia left at 1:30 p.m. during Item 6 and Member Burgis left at 2:30 p.m. during Item 10.

3. Public Comment

There was the following comment from a member of the public:

Tom Suhr of the organization Rio Vision thanked Blake Roberts for coming to Rio Vista and giving a presentation on the NHA. He said that a recording of the meeting was posted on their YouTube channel and that their newsletter featured a front-page article on the NHA. Member Hsia followed by announcing that there will be an NHA booth at the Asian Heritage Memorial Park grand opening in Isleton on May 31.

4. Approval of April 23, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Patterson motioned to approve the April 23, 2025, meeting minutes. Member Walthall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Update on NHA Activities – Blake Roberts

Roberts reported on current activities, including speaking at the California Preservation Conference in early May with co-host Alex Westhoff; participating with Elizabeth Patterson in a podcast with the Delta Stewardship Council; and joining Karen Buhr in staffing a booth at Honored Elders Day at the State Indian Museum grounds, an annual event honoring Native American elders.

He announced that the NHA Management Plan received an Award of Excellence from the Sacramento chapter of the American Planning Association and noted they are hopeful for recognition at the statewide level.

Roberts also highlighted recent sponsorships and memberships, including funding support for the Pear Fair, the Asian American Heritage Park grand opening, and the Asian Pacific Spring Festival, and for organizations such as the San Joaquin County Historical Society Museum and the Contra Costa County Museum.

Regarding the Tourism Branding and Marketing Plan, Roberts noted that the Commission approved the contract on May 15, and that administrative review by the Department of General Services is nearly complete. A kickoff meeting will be scheduled once the contract is finalized.

He also touched on bringing some of the Delta Leadership Program groups to present on their projects, such as the Junior Ranger Program, which are relevant to the NHA.

Roberts also stated that the Delta Heritage Forum, usually held in the fall, will follow last year's format but will be moved to next year due to time constraints.

Lastly, regarding the Delta Heritage Courier, which comes out bimonthly, he noted the deadline for submissions to the July-August issue was end of business that day.

Ex officio Rice asked if those cutoff dates were standardized and if he could get calendar reminders. Roberts suggested putting together an annual calendar to share with the group.

6. First Congressional Church Bell Project – Dwayne Eubanks, Project Lead

Eubanks provided the history of the Antioch Historical Society building (constructed 1910) and Antioch's role in California history. He also spoke on the First Congregational Church (built 1869) and the acquisition of its bell. The Society plans to restore the bell and display it in a custom tower. An architectural firm specializing in bell towers has prepared plans; the project is estimated at \$96,000, with \$82,000 raised to date and groundbreaking scheduled for next week. Phase two will include a pedestal and benches. Donations at various sponsorship levels for name inscriptions are accepted via the Society's website. He noted the roof will be the most expensive component, with costs varying by type of metal used.

Member Burgis asked how much more needed to be raised and about the cost of a copper roof. Eubanks replied that about \$10,000 was still needed. He added that the work would be done by local businesses, many of which were likely to donate materials

or services to help reduce costs. He also noted that the city had provided a small grant and waived permit fees which additionally lowered costs.

Member Burgis suggested contacting the East Bay Regional Park District's interpretive department regarding signage, with the possibility of including QR codes which would connect to the NHA. Vice Chair Patterson and Ex officio Rice also commented on the appeal of creating the connection to the NHA.

7. Report on Delta 250 Ad Hoc Task Group – Task Group

Roberts reported that the group is still determining its main focus, but one intention is to form partnerships that will continue beyond the America 250/California 175/Anza 250 celebrations. He said they are also discussing the main message they want to give in terms of the work they are doing. Their direction is to focus on the Delta experience, the groups within the Delta and the contributions being made to those experiences.

He also stated the California Arts Council is starting a branding toolkit for California 175/America 250, which he plans to utilize.

8. Report on Water Tour Ad Hoc Task Group – Task Group

Vice Chair Patterson reported the group is working on the idea of a boat tour and that she would like to partner with the Maritime Academy. Member Jensen outlined several ideas to pursue including the Marine Science Institute, which runs a program in Pittsburgh every January through February; the 1937 USS Potomac in Oakland, which needs to be tested to determine if it can pass through the Carquinez Strait; and Hornblower Cruises in Sacramento, which already holds a charter operations license.

Patterson added that although we are promoting Delta tourism, the Delta road conditions are not up for the task, so a better way to promote visiting the Delta is by water— “the soft way of visiting the Delta.”

Ex officio Rice suggested looking into water trail sites as another option for water travel.

9. Partnership and Passport Program Update and Provide Direction on Passport Site Criteria – Blake Roberts

This item was skipped for the sake of time.

10. Federal Funding and Work Plan – Blake Roberts

Roberts presented an update on federal funding for the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area (NHA). He explained that most NHAs are supported through the Heritage Partnership Program (HPP), with funding allocations based on the age of the NHA and whether a management plan has been approved. Since the Delta NHA's

management plan was approved in January 2025, anticipated Tier 2 federal funding for FY 2025 is \$500,000, an increase from Tier 1 of \$157,500 in FY 2024. With fund matching, the total work plan budget overall is \$1,000,000.

Roberts stated that work plans are submitted annually to the National Park Service (NPS) to describe what the funds will be spent on. The work plan must be approved by the NPS before funding is released.

Roberts reported that the FY 2025 work plan was recently submitted to the NPS; however, they have not yet received direction from the President's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding distribution of HPP funds, so funding remains on hold.

The idea to create a 501(c)(3) was discussed, as well as utilizing Prop 4 funding by partnering with the Delta Conservancy.

Roberts then gave a quick rundown of the FY 2025 work plan activities which are organized into four areas:

1. **Operations** – Agreements, contracts, subgrants, invoices, reports, project team meetings, bidding, contractor selections, and staff augmentation.
2. **Public Outreach and Partnership Development** – Meetings with the NHA Advisory Committee, task groups, and the public; outreach to tribes; informational meetings on the NHA; coordination with partners; and conference participation.
3. **Marketing** – Implementation of the Tourism Branding and Marketing Plan; marketing materials; the VisitCADelta.com website; *Delta Happenings* and *Delta Heritage Courier* newsletters; and development of a mobile application.
4. **Heritage Projects** – Passport and Junior Ranger programs; participation in America 250, Anza 250, and California 175 commemorations; the Delta Heritage Forum conference; the Delta Leadership Program; the NHA grant program; and development of welcome, wayfinding, and interpretive signs.

11. Consider New Meeting Date for August – Dan Ray

The Committee noted a scheduling conflict with the original meeting date of August 27 and agreed to reschedule the next meeting for August 20.

12. Member Announcements and Adjourn

Ex officio Rice announced the upcoming Port Chicago commemoration event on July 19, for which an RSVP is required. The NPS.gov site has a link for the event information.

Chair Ray adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.