



## SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN DELTA CONSERVANCY

### Introduction

In support of the widely recognized need to make significant progress in addressing key stressors in the Delta in a timely manner, the Delta Conservancy, a primary agency for ecosystem restoration and efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well being of Delta residents, has compiled the following list of near-term projects that can benefit the Delta ecosystem and community. Included are descriptions of the projects and estimates of cost and schedule to implement. Both the Delta Conservancy Priorities section and the Additional Near-Term Projects sections include a total funding request number.

### Delta Conservancy Priorities

The following is a list of high priority funding needs for the Delta Conservancy to continue and advance our efforts to establish a State partnership with the Delta community that will be critical for future implementation of the Delta Plan, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and ongoing efforts to implement the RPA's in the Biological Opinions for Delta smelt and salmon. **Total funding needed: \$4,800,000.**

#### 1. Delta Dialogues

- a. Background: The Delta Dialogue is a promising interest based discussion with leaders from all interest groups in the Delta. This discussion is not happening anywhere else in the system and allows the participants an opportunity to come together for an entire day once a month to have very generative and constructive conversation around Delta issues.
- b. Funding Request: \$600,000. The participants have agreed to continue the process for a minimum of 12 more months.
- c. Statewide consequences: The good will and relationships generated in this process, along with innovative ideas and conversations, have the potential to save the State hundreds of millions of dollars in future legal fees.
- d. Timeline: January through December 2013

#### 2. Delta Branding

- a. Background: The Conservancy has reached out to Delta Chambers of Commerce, recreation and tourism groups, agricultural interests and professional consulting services to design a branding effort that focuses on:

- i. Achieve brand identification for the Delta as a destination, similar to the internationally understood Napa Valley brand.
    - ii. Work collaboratively with the community to identify and develop strategies to manage increased usage of the Delta.
    - iii. Support "Delta Grown" and other local city/chamber/tourism branding efforts.
    - iv. Educate Californians about the Delta's value and significance to the California and world economies.
  - b. Funding Request: \$400,000. For planning and implementation.
  - c. Statewide consequences: To date the State has invested over \$200,000,000 in planning the Delta's future but has invested very little in the economic sustainability of the Delta. The Delta Branding project demonstrates the States expressed interest in the long-term economic viability of the Delta.
  - d. Timeline: This effort can begin as soon as funding is made available and can be completed within 12 months.
3. Early Habitat Restoration
  - a. Background: The Conservancy has been working with the NRCS, DWR, Ducks Unlimited, PRBO and the DPC to define a locally supported habitat enhancement program in the Delta. This program would focus on working with agriculture to enhance the habitat value of working landscapes, and implementation of an invasive species control program (*Arundo donax*).
  - b. Funding Request: \$2,600,000. For near-term implementation.
  - c. Statewide Consequences: The relationships that result from this effort will begin to develop an important partnership between the State and the Delta community.
  - d. Timeline: Elements of this project can begin immediately upon receiving funding. The program would be ongoing.
4. Coalition to Support Delta Projects
  - a. Background: The Coalition to Support Delta Projects has been a highly regarded effort to vet near-term Delta projects with a wide variety of Delta stakeholders and agencies - federal, State and local. The process resulted in a list of approximately 40 projects that have widespread support. The Conservancy has been identified as the appropriate agency to continue to convene this group and provide leadership in moving the restoration projects forward.
  - b. Funding Request: \$200,000 per year for 1 PY, and funding to continue to convene and facilitate the group.
  - c. Statewide Consequences: This effort has gained widespread support and respect for its unique approach of working with stakeholders to develop near-term priorities. The DSC and resources agencies have been criticized for not making near-term progress on Delta issues. Funding this effort will provide opportunities to

develop partnerships with the Delta community and will result in much needed near-term benefits. A Senate Select Subcommittee on Delta Stewardship and Sustainability recently reviewed the process and expressed support for moving identified projects forward.

- d. Timeline: This effort can begin immediately upon receipt of funding. The process is ongoing.

5. Restoration Network

- a. Background: The Conservancy has developed widespread support to convene the agencies expected to conduct ecosystem restoration in the Delta (DWR, DFG, BOR, SFWCA, Conservancy), and the Delta community to develop a restoration framework or implementation plan. The plan would identify where, how, when and by whom restoration would take place, how we collectively track efforts towards targets and objectives and how we ensure a coordinated and integrated restoration program.
- b. Funding Request: \$1,000,000. To convene and facilitate the effort.
- c. Statewide Consequences: Implementation of habitat restoration at the scale contemplated by the Delta Plan and BDCP will require extreme levels of coordination and integration. Here to fore the Delta community has not been adequately included in the planning efforts. Restoration has the greatest potential impact on the Delta community and local knowledge plays a significant role in developing effective restoration design. Absent such efforts, we are likely to repeat the accountability problems suffered by the CALFED and CVPIA programs.
- d. Timeline: The Conservancy has begun to meet with interested parties and has developed a draft MOU. Convening a steering committee and workgroups to address the many related issues can commence immediately upon receiving funding.

### **Additional Near-Term Projects**

The following projects were developed by the Coalition to Support Delta Projects. They represent the subset of projects that focused on ecosystem restoration, science and Delta as place, have widespread support from local interests and can move forward in the near-term. The Conservancy has worked with the proponents of each of these projects to compile this information. The proponents have expressed a desire for the Conservancy to be the recipient and disbursal agent for funding to implement these projects. **Total funding needed: Approximately \$172,000,000.** The state of readiness for these projects presents a natural prioritization.

#### 1. Mt. Diablo Mercury Mine

- a. Objective: Point source cleanup of the mine site and cleanup of deposited mercury washed downstream to the Marsh Creek Reservoir. Improves public health and safety by reducing mercury contaminations in fish and sediments in Marsh Creek and the Delta.
- b. Status: The Project is in planning phase. Funding is needed for the design and implementation phases: clean up of point sources of mercury and remediation of accumulated mercury.
- c. Funding Needed: \$490,000
- d. Timeline: Project is projected to be completed by December 2015.

#### 2. Knightsen Biofilter

- a. Objective: Combined flood protection, habitat restoration, and storm water/drinking water quality improvements. Unique nature of project site also provides the opportunity to develop a "Delta Shoreline" habitat area.
- b. Status: Funding would be for the acquisition of property, which is the next step. Actual sales price will be based on appraisal currently in process.
- c. Funding Needed: \$6,000,000
- d. Timeline: Project is projected to be completed in two years after the purchase of the property.

#### 3. Nigiri Project Yolo Bypass Floodplain Enhancement

- a. Objective: Seasonal creation of floodplain habitat for endangered native fishes and water flow during winter and spring on fields that remain in agricultural production in summer and fall.
- b. Status: Scientific work has started, funding for the initial engineering is committed and landowners are committed. Continuous funding source starting in 2013 is needed for managing 2500 acres of seasonal floodplain habitat.
- c. Funding Needed: \$65,000,000
- d. Timeline: Project projected to be completed in 7.5 years after initiation (Project is in initial stage)

4. Dutch Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration
  - a. Objective: Restore tidal, riparian, and upland habitats, thereby providing critically needed habitat for native fish and wildlife in the Delta, while providing an opportunity for research on tidal restoration.
  - b. Status: Have funding promised and set aside in grants to proceed with project. Project has three sites. Additional funding is needed to restore third site.
  - c. Funding Needed: \$7,000,000 - \$10,000,000
  - d. Timeline: Constructed to begin in Spring/Summer 2013. Tidal connectivity will be restored to first site in Fall 2015, second site in Fall 2016, and third site in Fall 2018.
  
5. Elk Slough Flood Control and Habitat Improvement Project
  - a. Objective: Reconstruct the head gate structure to allow fish passage and construct an operable downstream flood control gate to establish a flood protection corridor by removing 18 miles of levees from primary flood control. This project would also improve aquatic and riparian habitat along the corridor.
  - b. Status: Project proponents are working on permit applications
  - c. Funding Needed: \$5,200,000
  - d. Timeline: Project projected to be complete within 3 to 4 years of receiving funding.
  
6. Delta Subsidence Reversal/Carbon Sequestration
  - a. Objective: Develop farm-scale pilot projects and develop a verification protocol to support a Delta carbon market.
  - b. Status: Significant research has indicated that there is great opportunity to reduce ongoing carbon emissions from the Delta, stop and reverse subsidence that threatens water supply reliability, and sequester significant amounts of carbon in soils below managed wetlands.
  - c. Funding Needed: \$2,500,000
  - d. Timeline: Construction could start within a year of receiving funds, protocol development could begin immediately.
  
7. Lower Putah Creek Restoration
  - a. Objective: Enhance and restore 300-700 acres of tidal freshwater wetlands and create 5 miles of new creek channel, entirely within the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.
  - b. Status: ERP grant agreement was signed in May 2012 and will fund environmental compliance documents, project designs, and construction bid packages over the next three years.
  - c. Funding Needed: \$1,000,000
  - d. Timeline: The project will be ready for bid by 2015 and on the ground work could begin in four years.

8. Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Public Use
  - a. Objective: Increase existing and provide new long-term opportunities for appropriate wildlife dependent public use.
  - b. Status: \$10,000 can finance signs and gravel. Can be done in pieces - more funding, more components can be completed. \$1,000,000 would go toward purchasing land for the Pacific Flyway Center.
  - c. Funding Needed: \$1,000,000
  - d. Timeline: The project could be on the ground within three years when adequate funding is received.
  
9. Paradise Cut Flood Bypass Expansion
  - a. Objective: Increase the capacity of Paradise Cut and add an additional weir upstream of the current one to allow for a greater amount of flow to enter the Cut during high flow times, including necessary dredging and levee work downstream of the Cut to safely pass the additional flow into the deeper Delta channels at acceptable or no additional risk to lands of that area.
  - b. Status: Project is not ready yet. Waiting completion of the Central valley Flood Protection Plan.
  - c. Funding Needed: \$80,000,000
  - d. Timeline: Final design would be completed over a two-year period. During the same time, environmental review and permitting would begin, with construction starting in the fourth or fifth year.
  
10. Methyl Mercury Impacts Analyses for the Yolo Bypass
  - a. Objective: Collect data and analyze changes in methylmercury production and bioaccumulation that could result from (1) a proposed project to enhance fisheries habitat in the Yolo Bypass; and (2) a Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Proposal to expand the Yolo Bypass to improve flood capacity and help identify and describe management practices that could minimize methylmercury production and loads from the proposed projects.
  - b. Status: Project awaiting funding.
  - c. Funding Needed: \$100,000
  - d. Timeline: One year.
  
11. Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Watershed Models for Water Supply and Water Quality
  - a. Objective: Complete the combined WAMF, DSM2 and CalSim II Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta Watershed Models for water supply / water quality. This model was developed to evaluate flow, nutrients and salinity, but can be expanded for other uses.
  - b. Status: Project is near completion. Funding is needed for final phase of the model.
  - c. Funding Needed: \$300,000

- d. Timeline: Project is projected to be completed in August 2014.

### **Large-Scale Ongoing Restoration Projects**

These projects are ongoing, largely funded efforts by DWR and DFG. They are an important component of a comprehensive near-term package and have been included here for information purposes. **This section should be removed if more accurate or up-to-date information is provided by the agencies.**

1. Fish Restoration Program Agreement (FRPA)
  - a. Objective: The FRPA between the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) addresses specific habitat restoration requirements of the US Fish and Wildlife and National Marine Fisheries Service biological opinions for State Water Project (SWP) and Central Valley Project operations. FRPA is also intended to address the habitat requirements of the DFG Longfin Smelt Incidental Take Permit for SWP Delta operations. The goal of the FRPA program is to restore 8,000 acres of habitat in the Delta and Suisun Marsh, including 800 acres of low salinity zone habitat.
  - b. Current Projects: FRPA has identified “near term actions” that are currently in various stages of planning. Near term actions include habitat restoration and enhancement at Prospect Island, Lower Yolo at the southern end of the Yolo Bypass, Tule Red Club and Overlook Club in the Suisun Marsh.
  - c. Funding Source and Status: FRPA is estimated to cost at least \$200 million over 10 years and is funded 100% by State Water Project funds.
  - d. Timeline: The US Fish and Wildlife Biological Opinion allows DWR 10 years to implement restoration of the required 8,000 acres.
2. Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP)
  - a. Objective: The ERP is a collaborative effort between DFG, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and NOAA Fisheries Service created in 2000 to improve and increase aquatic and terrestrial habitats and improve ecological functions in the Bay-Delta to support sustainable populations of diverse and valuable plant and animal species.
  - b. Current Projects: In 2012, the ERP awarded funding to 18 projects, two of which are restoration projects: the Lower Cosumnes River Floodplain Restoration Project and McCormack-Williamson Track Flood Control and Ecosystem Restoration Project.
  - c. Funding Source and Status: For FY 2011/12, the ERP is requesting \$27.3 million for program implementation. The ERP receives state funding from Proposition 204, Proposition 13, Proposition 50, and Proposition 84.