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8/26/2011

Comments regarding DSC Agenda Item 8: "Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh"

Response emailed to the Delta Stewardship Council at: [pat.rogers@deltacouncil.ca.gov](mailto:pat.rogers@deltacouncil.ca.gov)

The following comments are submitted in support of promotion of the entire legal Delta as a unique tourist region(A), but in *opposition* to the "Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh" *as it is currently written* for the following reasons: (B) the report continues to use confusing and/or inaccurate maps; (C) the report does not accurately reflect current boating and recreational vehicle recreation statistics of the Delta and/or California, and (D) the report proposes use of taxpayer funds at a time when the state is closing down parks due to lack of funding.

**(A) Support promotion of the entire legal Delta region as a unique tourist region:** It is nice to hear the state has changed its mind regarding promoting the Delta as a tourism location. In 2003 a large group of Delta business owners, spearheaded by the Delta Chambers, requested that the State recognize the Delta as its own tourist region. The tourism commissioners did not even bother to show up for the hearing in Sacramento even

though over 100 hard working Delta folks took the time to be there to ask for promotion of the Delta.

The fact is, the state still does not promote Delta tourism and actively discourages it. For example, in January 2011, the state agency promoting use of state recreation areas intentionally

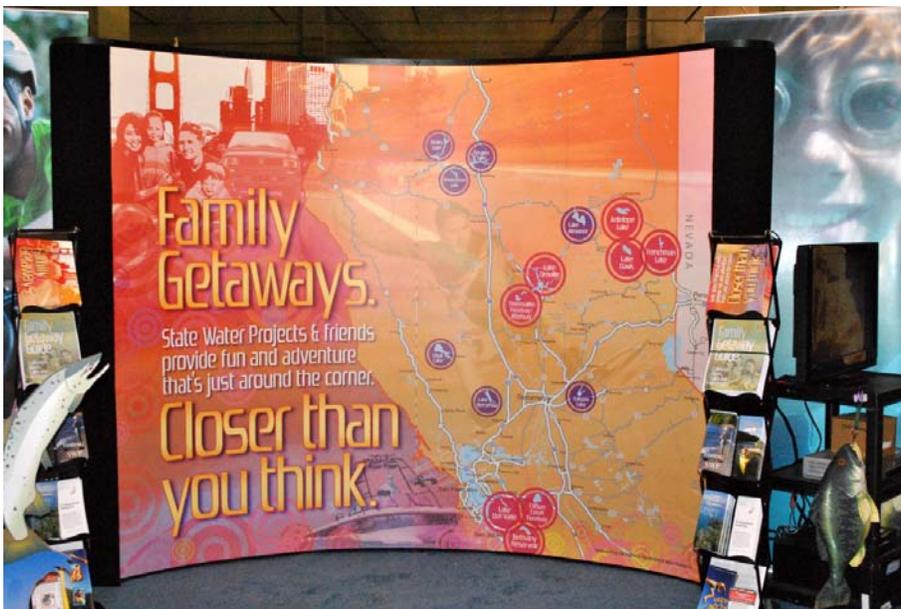


photo by Bill Wells, California Delta Chamber of Commerce. January 2011

Brannan Island and The Meadows from their huge display at the Sacramento Sportsman Show. Tax payers in the past helped to pay for the purchase of most of Staten Island, parts of Sherman Island, The Meadows area, the Stone Lakes area, Franks Track, to name just the larger government or nonprofit owned “parks”. Why were all of these excluded from the taxpayer-paid for promotion of parks or properties?

In any case, some of the concepts in the proposed plan are good, such as the hiking and biking trails, the visitor information centers, and better road and identification signs recognizing the Delta as its own recreation, historic and tourist area.

1896 Portion of map of Roads for Cyclers: Blum



trails, the visitor information centers, and better road and identification signs recognizing the Delta as its own recreation, historic and tourist area.

**HIKING AND BIKING TRAILS IN THE DELTA:**

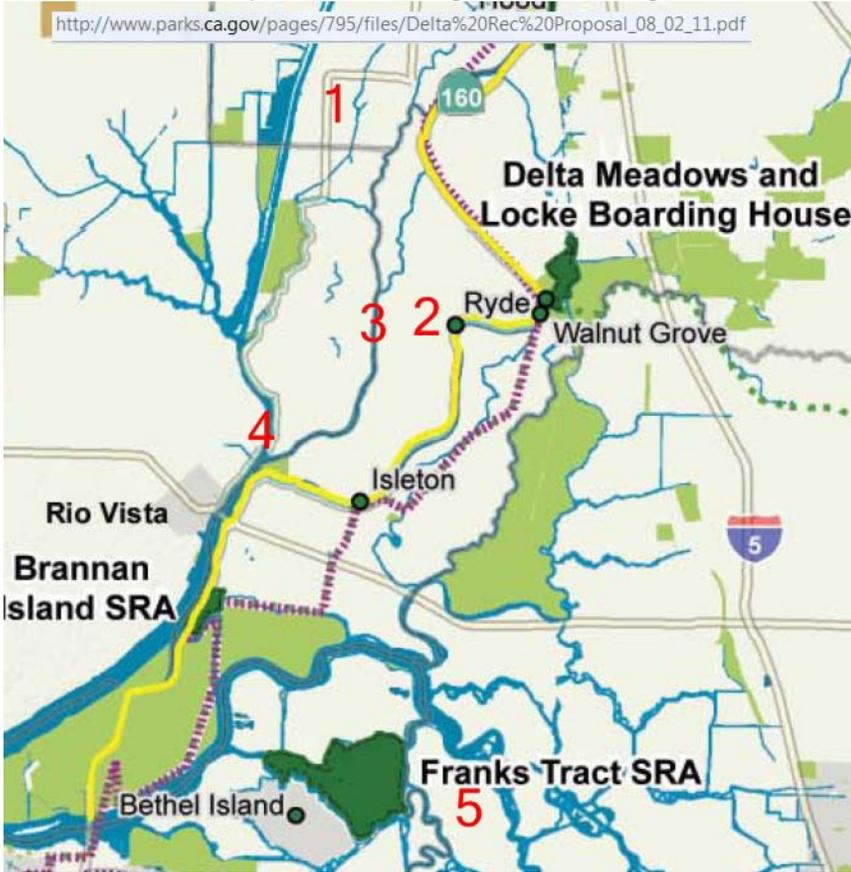
Hiking and boating trails are very good ideas, if they are not used to exclude and compete with the private businesses in the Delta. Why is the “Scenic Delta Loop” of Andrus Island excluded? Why is the “historic Delta loop” including Steamboat Slough excluded? For example, even back in 1896 people where into biking the San Francisco Bay area even up into the Delta and to Sacramento. The biking trail included riding the bike onto the ferry above Rio Vista (at that time called the ferry was called “Ashley”) for a ride over to Ryer Island, and then on

up towards Sacramento. Even today Sacramento bike riding groups favor a peaceful ride on Ryer Island and Sutter Island because it is remote from the commuter traffic of St. Route 160, and offers views of how the Delta looked along the Sacramento River and Steamboat Slough before any state water pumps were ever turned on.

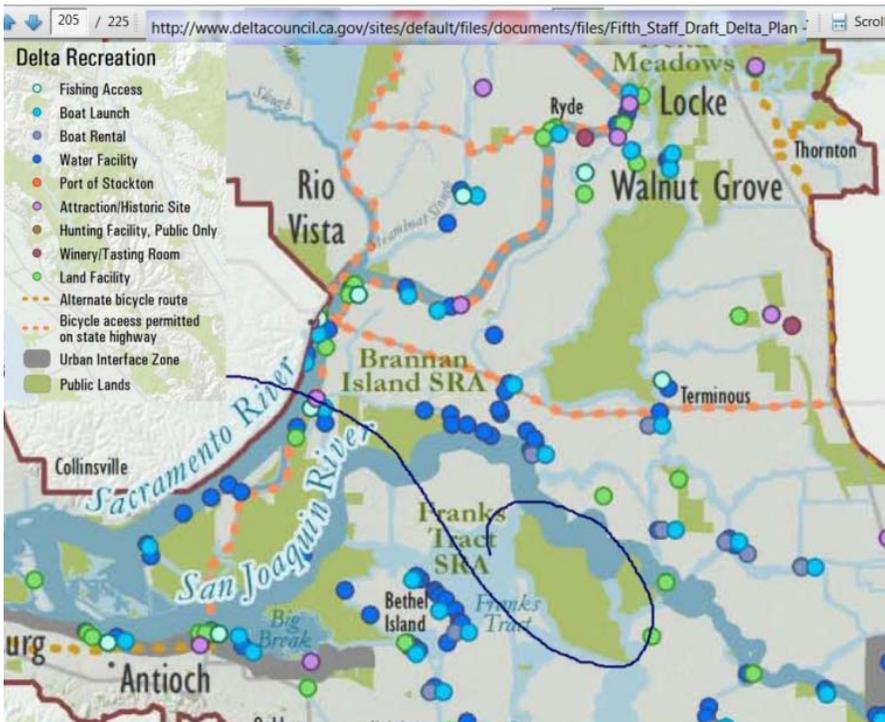
**VISITOR INFORMATION LOCATIONS:** Visitor information areas and private collaboration. Why have a visitor center at Big Break, and also at Brannon Island when there is a nonprofit called Discover the Delta Foundation started by Delta folks at 12 & 160 that can serve as a visitor center? The Delta Recreation proposal says there will be government and private collaboration but it looks more like competition. <http://www.discoverthedelta.org>

**DELTA ROADS & BOATING TRAILS:** I would like to suggest that any proposal for promotion of the California Delta region should include a detailed plan for better road access in the Delta, including larger readable road signs at all road intersection; all Delta Island names should be clearly labeled on the roads of the islands and also on maps; road lighting should be added at all intersections of Delta roads that have more than 100 vehicle passages per day; CalTrans should be required to provide more reliable and consistent access to Delta roads and ferrys under CalTrans jurisdiction. A proposal for improved water access to the Delta should include state-sponsored gas dock locations and state-sponsored floating restrooms, at locations most likely to be utilized by Delta boating and fishing visitors.

**(B) The report continues to use confusing and/or inaccurate maps.** For example, look at the map found on Page 13: On Pages 4,26 and 33 the report refers to the historic ferries



yet St. RT. 84(1) where one of the ferries is located is not labeled-why? St. Rt. 220(2) is neither shown on the map nor labeled, and that is the route to reach the J-Mac Ferry(3). Many past news articles focused on a “Historic Delta Region” driving tour that includes both the Real McCoy Ferry (4) and J-Mac Ferry(3). Steamboat Slough was one of the historic waterway routes in the state’s early history but it is not labeled or even recognized, despite its documented history. Actually, it is suggested the historic waterways be labeled consistently: Sacramento River, Steamboat Slough, Sutter Slough, San Joaquin River, Mokelumne River, Georgian Slough, Railroad Cut, the Delta Cross Channel and Cache Slough at a minimum.



Finally, the identification of public lands does not match with a similar map found in the DSC 5<sup>th</sup> Staff Draft Delta Plan, page 205. (5)

Which is the correct Map? Is *all* of Mandeville Island now publicly owned and since when?

Another example is the small map on the recreation proposal, (not pictured) showing only a few private recreation facilities recognizes along the San Joaquin River and it ignores the

existence of the other approximately 96 private marinas & RV parks in the entire Delta region; yet the map includes state parks not located within the legal Delta boundaries. (sections of the two maps are provided herein for comparison). Perhaps this recreation proposal should use the map found on the 5<sup>th</sup> Staff Draft of the Delta Plan, page 205, to provide continuity and better accuracy, but at the same time, the DSC map could be improved by labeling of the highways, state routes, major roads and island names? In other words, combine the correct data into one map that both agencies utilize, and include the private as well as public recreation location as the DSC plan does.

**(C)The report does not accurately reflect current boating and recreational vehicle recreation statistics of the Delta and/or California.** It appears that statistics on visitor days must exclude the larger Delta cities since visitor days on the water between Old Sacramento and West Sacramento dock areas account for half of the count. Antioch and Stockton also have major water recreation facilities with millions of visitor days per year. Perhaps the report should clarify it is referring only to the visitor days of the small section of the Delta around the proposed Sherman Island project? Note that I submitted substantial current documentation to the CA Dept of Recreation (May 2011) which reflects much more substantial financial benefit from the private RV and boating camping industry than the proposed recreation plan indicates.

The fact is, boaters who fish, water ski, wake board and “gunkhole” are the important recreation economic resource for the Delta region and spend at least 14,418,000 user days a year in the Delta, according to previous Delta Protection Commission reports! Below are two “print screens” from a 2007 Delta Vision memorandum on Recreation accessible presumably at official Delta Vision website <http://deltavision.org> website and if not available there go to [http://deltaREvision.com/2007\\_docs/2007\\_dv\\_Recreation\\_Memo\\_Interation1.pdf](http://deltaREvision.com/2007_docs/2007_dv_Recreation_Memo_Interation1.pdf) which is a Delta-based website that just preserves the volumes of data being generated on the Delta!

9 **Table 2: Estimated Delta Boating and Fishing User Days**

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED NO. OF GROUPS	AVG. NO. OF DAYS PER YEAR	TOTAL GROUP DAYS	AVG. NO. OF PERSONS PER TRIP	ESTIMATED TOTAL USER DAYS PER YEAR
Boating	186,000	26.1	4,854,600	2.97	14,418,162
Fishing	169,200	24.0	4,060,800	2.91	11,816,928

\*User day estimates for boating and fishing cannot be added together because this would result in double counting. Double counting would occur because most boaters also fished and many anglers also boated.

*Above and below are two “print screens” from the 2007 Delta Vision documents.*

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12 **Popular Delta Recreation Activities.** The 1996 DPR survey found that fishing  
13 from a boat was the number one recreational activity in the Delta among registered boat  
14 owners and licensed anglers. The majority of surveyed boat owners also reported using  
15 the Delta for pleasure cruising, swimming, and water skiing. Among licensed anglers,  
16 shore fishing and tournament fishing were also popular. Table 3 shows the most  
17 common boating and fishing activities reported by Delta boaters and anglers.<sup>xi</sup> The table  
18 also shows the top ten recreation activities after boating and fishing that survey  
19 respondents reported enjoying in the Delta. Because the DPR survey only included boat  
20 owners and anglers, survey results most likely under-represent the popularity of non-  
21 boating and non-fishing activities in the Delta, such as wildlife viewing, picnicking, land-  
22 based hunting, and hiking. Nonetheless, the Delta is primarily known as a boating and  
23 fishing recreation destination, and these two recreation activities account for the majority

## Context Memorandum: Recreation

'2007\_docs/2007\_dv\_Recreation\_Memo\_Interation1.pdf - Iteration 1: June 12, 2007

1 dollars (adjusted to 2006 dollars).<sup>xix</sup> Delta recreation also benefits the rest of  
 2 California's economy. In addition to money spent inside the Delta, the DPR  
 3 survey found that Delta boaters and anglers spent on average \$126 and \$163,  
 4 respectively, per trip on businesses outside the Delta. Estimated recreation  
 5 expenditures in 1995 by Delta boaters and anglers benefiting businesses located  
 6 outside the Delta were in excess of 270 million. Total Delta boater and angler  
 7 recreation expenditures benefiting California businesses were estimated to  
 8 exceed half a billion dollars in 1995. Table 6 provides a breakdown of Delta  
 9 recreation expenditures estimated by the DPR survey.

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**Table 6: Delta Recreation Expenditures in 1995**

Activity / Expenditure	Average Expenditure Per Trip (2006 \$)		Estimated Expenditures for All Trips in 1995 (2006\$)		Total Annual (2006 \$)
	Inside Delta	Outside Delta	Inside Delta	Outside Delta	
	Dollars	Dollars	1000 Dollars	1000 Dollars	
<b>Boating</b>					
Lodging	31.55	16.62	56,306	29,660	85,966
Food	50.25	31.71	89,690	56,588	146,278
Supplies	68.26	53.08	121,824	94,731	216,555
Recreation	32.83	24.90	58,591	44,433	103,024
<b>Total Boating</b>	<b>182.89</b>	<b>126.31</b>	<b>326,411</b>	<b>225,412</b>	<b>551,823</b>
<b>Fishing</b>					
Lodging	39.76	43.23	66,499	72,306	138,805
Food	39.27	37.24	65,682	62,282	127,964
Supplies	41.07	54.30	68,685	90,828	159,513
Recreation	26.70	27.97	44,664	46,783	91,447
<b>Total Fishing</b>	<b>146.80</b>	<b>162.74</b>	<b>245,530</b>	<b>272,199</b>	<b>517,729</b>

\*Note that total expenditures for boating and fishing cannot be added together. Adding them would result in double counting because many registered boaters are licensed anglers and vice-versa. The total annual expenditure estimates therefore provide a lower-bound estimate of recreation spending in the Delta.

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An economic impact analysis using the DPR survey data done by UC Berkeley economists in 1998 concluded that Delta recreation had a sizeable impact on the Delta economy.<sup>xx</sup> Using regional economic models of the Delta and California, this study estimated that Delta recreation contributed \$587 million (2006 dollars) to the Delta economy in 1995 and supported approximately 8,000 jobs in the Delta. These figures represent about 1.7% of income and 3.2% of employment in the Delta in 1995.

The “print screen” below is from the 2009 California Water Plan, which quoted a study on the preferences for recreation of California’s youth. Swimming, Jet Ski or Wave Runners, beach activities, sunbathing, wading, waterskiing and wakeboarding are all available in the Delta. Note that the youth did *not* mention non-motorized boating.

**Table 26-3 California youths' top rated activities that they would like to do more often**

Activity	Preference
Horseback Riding	47%
Sledding, Ice Skating, Snow Play	45%
Snowboarding	45%
Swimming in a Pool	45%
Jet Skis or Wave Runners	45%
Rock Climbing	44%
Beach Activities, Surf Play (including sunbathing, wading, playing on beach)	44%
Off-road vehicle use	43%
Surfing or Boogie Boarding	43%
Waterskiing or Wakeboarding	42%
Swimming in Ocean, Lakes, Rivers, and Streams	41%

Source: 2007 Public Opinions & Attitudes Survey (CSP, 2009a)

[http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2009/0310final/v2c26\\_wtrdependrec\\_cwp2009.pdf](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2009/0310final/v2c26_wtrdependrec_cwp2009.pdf)

Review a few of the previous Delta Recreation reports and comments at:

- a. <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/Reports/deltaindex.aspx>
- b. [http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/public\\_comments/prdcomments/\(07-25-05\)Aramburu\\_DPC.pdf](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/public_comments/prdcomments/(07-25-05)Aramburu_DPC.pdf)
- c. [http://deltarevision.com/1990-1999\\_docs/1994\\_delta\\_recreation.pdf](http://deltarevision.com/1990-1999_docs/1994_delta_recreation.pdf)
- d. [http://deltarevision.com/2005\\_docs/2008-2006DPC\\_recreation\\_final.ppt](http://deltarevision.com/2005_docs/2008-2006DPC_recreation_final.ppt)
- e. [http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2009/0310final/v2c26\\_wtrdependrec\\_cwp2009.pdf](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2009/0310final/v2c26_wtrdependrec_cwp2009.pdf)
- f. <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/2009-2014%20corp-trends%20and%20challenges.pdf>
- g. [http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2005/Vol\\_3/12-Delta/V3PRD12-Delta.pdf](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2005/Vol_3/12-Delta/V3PRD12-Delta.pdf)
- h. [http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2009/0310final/v4c01a03\\_cwp2009.pdf](http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/docs/cwpu2009/0310final/v4c01a03_cwp2009.pdf)
- i. <http://deltavision.ca.gov/DeltaVisionStatusTrends.shtml>

**(D) The report proposes use of taxpayer funds to expand recreational uses at a time when the state is closing down parks due to lack of funding and lack of use.** Doesn't this seem like a foolish use of taxpayer dollars? In addition the report proposes the recreation expansion in a section of the Delta that annually experiences higher than normal windy days. Most people do not want to recreate in the wind, except for wind surfers. IF the state locates recreation funding within its budget over the next 10 years, wouldn't it make more sense to invest in the state-owned resources like the Meadows, Prospect Island Preserve, Stone Lakes area and the Sacramento Old Town riverfront area?

It is also unclear whether this new plan is intended to be an *addition* to the previous plans that promoted boating, i.e. the "Delta Recreation Master Plan" or if the "Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh" replaces past reports, and motorized boating will be ignored or discouraged except in designated areas owned by the state. As all past reports regarding recreation in California clearly demonstrate, *it's about the WATER!* People want to vacation near and on the water. The Delta is an excellent location for water sports. But the plan as proposed promotes non-motorized boating which is a direct conflict of the preferred recreation activities per the 2009 State Water Plan survey. If this new "Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin

Delta and Suisun Marsh” is intended to be used for the overall Delta recreation plan for the next 50 years, it is greatly lacking content and appears to eliminate the most important aspects of Delta recreation-Boating and Fishing. A much more substantial report with adequate research into economic impacts to privately owned businesses and the Delta community towns would be needed if this latest proposal is intended to replace the previous boating and “Delta Recreation Master Plans” for the entire Delta region. Delta boating, swimming and other water sports are what should be promoted if preserving the economic viability of the Delta area is really a concern of the current state administration.

Respectfully submitted (via email)

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